
Series Theme: *Jesus reveals a Father who is worthy of your trust.*

If a word is God's its demand is full of mercy and fulfilled by faith.

ONE: Jesus speaks the Father's word as full of grace and truth—
SOLA SCRIPTURA and SOLA GRATIA must always go together.

Matthew 15.1-28

TWO: Jesus reveals the Father's family to be as big and as broad as he's always intended—**SOLA GRATIA AND SOLA FIDE must always go together.**
Matthew 15.21-39

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QUESTIONS FOR INTERACTION AND STUDY

1. Why is it just as harmful to add to Scripture as to take away from it?
2. Are you aware of ways the Roman Catholic Church or Orthodoxy--by formally sanctifying interpretations of current and/or former church "fathers" alongside scripture --add or take away from God's Word? [*Don't spend more time on this question than the next!*]
3. How do we with Presbyterian/Reformed tradition do the same thing—even if less officially? [Consider attitudes/expectations making it harder for newcomers of different traditions to enter into our lives so they hang around long enough to learn from our biblical traditions.]
4. The "traditions of the elders" (Mat 15.2) grew up largely when Israel was in exile without the temple and its daily sacrifices. When we *exile ourselves* from living in the cross of Christ [and from daily taking up this cross to slay our sinfulness] what tends to happen to our motivation for mercy, forgiveness and forbearance?
5. In Mat 15.10-20 Jesus ties together the Pharisees lack of compassion and mercy (even by some toward parents) with what many would call *serious* sins (Mat 15.19-20). These sins each center on stealing life, relationships, property or reputation from others. Which of these and in what ways are we guilty of in our own families and churches?
6. Jesus moves [in chapter 15's events] from (a) teaching on what's clean and unclean, to (b) a healing for an "unclean" woman, to (c) gathering a second--but largely unclean Gentile--feast in the wilderness [think Exodus: Israel's being fed and formed into a nation in the wilderness].

There are **seven** loaves and fish this time and seven full baskets left over. Seven is the biblical number of **perfection/fullness** (creation). What kind of reputation and standing does Jesus show the Father as willing to give to *any neighbors* who will respond to his grace in faith? Who are the true daughters and sons of Israel and Christ's church?
7. Agree/Disagree: those who in truth can delight that they are a part of God's family in Christ will be active in finding ways to honor even *unclean neighbors* with the same accepting grace. *Why or why not?*