

When this is in the life of Jesus? We say that Jesus was about how old when He died? Thirty-three. Here's how we believe we know that: #1. The book of Luke says that He was about thirty when He was baptized. Now, how do we get the additional three years? The gospel of John mentions, we believe, four Passovers (John 2, 5, 6, 18). And so if there are only four Passovers in the ministry of Jesus, that means that just over three-and-a-half years were covered in His ministry. The feeding of the 5,000 was the only miracle found in all four gospels. It's found in John 6 and it happens around the time of the Passover. So if this happens after the third Passover and there are only four in Jesus' life, and He died on the fourth one you know, that means that this account tonight, in Matthew 15, is less than a year before His death as the feeding of the 5,000 takes place in Matthew 14. That means that Matthew 15 through 28 deal with 1/33 of His life. That's how precious little we have recorded about His life. And then to complicate matters just a little bit more, chapter 20 is the last week of His life. Basically, you have Matthew 20 through Matthew 28:1 covering one week of Jesus' life. Twenty-five percent of the first gospel deals with one week of Jesus' life. Fifty percent of the first gospel in the New Testament deals with one year of Jesus' life. Think about how little we know.

15:1

Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is nowhere around the Sea of Galilee. It's about forty miles. It's forty miles of mountain. That's a lot of effort to harass Jesus. Forty miles the scribes and Pharisees which were of Jerusalem came.

And they were **saying, Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?** The word behind transgress there, it's pretty important because you and I read the words sin, iniquity, transgression, unrighteousness, we kind of throw them all in the same boat: "it just all means sin." And I suppose if you want to make a beeline for the definition that is true. But they are different words. For example, the word behind transgress here is the Greek word *parabainō*, which means to walk around, to go around. So the disciples of, "Thy disciples," the scribes and Pharisees are asking, "Why do Your disciples *go around* the tradition of the elders?"

For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. Now understand this, if it's a tradition of the elders we're not talking about a pump soap bottle at the kitchen sink. We're talking about a ceremonial washing. So you have these guys, these scribes and Pharisees who walked forty miles and are ready to pick on Jesus, the word is persecute if you look other places in the book of Matthew, they're taking notes on Jesus' disciples, and he says to Jesus, they say to Jesus, "Why do Your disciples go around our traditions of ceremonial hand washing?"

15:3

But He answered. Up until this point Jesus has been asked four questions in the book of Matthew. Once He was asked the question by the disciples of John the Baptist, "Are you He that should come or should we look for another?" And He answers them. Another time He's asked a question by the disciples, "What did You mean by the parable of the wheat and the tares?" And He answered them. But this is, out of the four questions, the second question that's been asked by one of Jesus' antagonizers, and Jesus does here what He did in chapter 12 when he said to Him, "Is it lawful for Your disciples to pick grain on the Sabbath day?" And what does Jesus do when His enemies ask Him questions? He answers with a question.

Why do you go around (since they wanted to talk about "going around" things) **the commandment of God by your tradition?** So now we know, based on the fact that tradition has been used twice in this passage so far, that this is not normal wash your hands before you go to dinner, this is wash your hands the way we teach in our tradition. And then He says, "Here's the real deal, guys. Y'all are the ones that walk around things. You might be true to your tradition, but in so doing you walk around the commandments of God." Well what do You mean, Jesus?

15:4

God commanded. Jesus said God commanded. Jesus didn't say Moses did. Jesus puts God's command on the face of Moses' writing and said, "God commanded."

Honour thy father and mother. What chapter is that in? Exodus 20, right. That's the Ten Commandments. We know that, right?

For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. That is not from Exodus 20, that is from Exodus 21: he that curses his father or mother shall surely be put to death. So Jesus quotes from Exodus 20, Jesus quotes from Exodus 21, and He says, "God said it. Don't forget that." When we disagree with Scripture, we have to be careful sometimes when we look at Scripture. Sometimes it's just a record of a narrative. But Jesus is very careful here to say that what Moses said in Exodus 20 was God saying it. What Moses said in Exodus 21 was God saying it. That's steep. That's very steep. The cost is high if you go around it. That's what God says.

15:5

But ye say "You Pharisees and scribes, you're at Jerusalem with the temple, here's what you say."

Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift. You probably, some of your translations probably say *corban*, which is the Greek word for "it is a gift." "I can't give it to you. Because it's a gift." That was another of their traditions. They had this little racket worked out where if you didn't want your parents to be leeches on you in your older days, in their older days, you would gift your property to the priest at the temple. And after your parents died, you and the priest would split it.¹ That's quite the arrangement. That's quite the tradition, isn't it? Jesus says, "Who's the one that's really transgressing things here? Who's the one that's trespassing? Who's the one that's really walking around things?" Jesus doesn't even answer the question, "Why do My disciples transgress your tradition? You guys are actually worthy of death. Do you think I'm going to answer a bunch of guys that are worthy of death?"

15:5-6

And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect "You've made it empty and vain." How?

By your tradition. And then, and then somehow, somehow, here's how we know when a tradition has gone wrong: when it gets elevated to the point of the word of God and all of a sudden now the word of God is not being obeyed.

15:7

Ye hypocrites. This is a very strange word in the Greek language. It means "stage player." They wanted to look like they were worshipping and they had a sort of kit ready for that. It was traditions. It was the way that they perceived, or they were perceived to others, as being right with God. How? Well, they couldn't obey God's law, or rather they didn't wish to do so, and so what did they do? They made laws they could perform that others could not. And so they started feeling very spiritual.

The scribes and Pharisees would never have said they didn't believe Moses. They would have never said, "We don't believe the prophets" (perhaps the Sadducees would have). It was the only Bible they had. They would have never have said that the scribes and Pharisees, at least the Pharisees, Saducees maybe; but the scribes and Pharisees never would they have said, "We don't believe the Bible." No. They would have said, "We make our living believing the Bible, copying the Bible, interpreting the Bible, writing the Bible in notebooks and giving them to you. We make our living with the Bible. How dare you tell us we don't believe the Bible." And yet, Jesus said that was just a mask. They only looked like they believed the Bible.

¹That last part is an assumption of mine. I don't know why they would have tried to protect their assets from their parents through this method.

Apparently there was a lot of people in this day that said, “I believe the Bible.” But when they were confronted with explicit in the Bible, they couldn’t be found playing that part.

Now listen to what He just says here: **Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you,² saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.** I think it’s interesting that the Lord says in verse 9 “Your worship is as empty as You have made My word.” You might notice in verse 6 He says, “You have made My commandments empty because you love your traditions, and so since you have made My commandments empty,” in verse number 9, “I have seen your worship as empty. It’s meaningless. You’re so busy saying what you don’t have to do.”

By the way, we’re not allowed to look at this passage and say that if someone has high standards they are a Pharisee. This passage is dealing with people that put their traditions on the same level of the word of God. You are not allowed to thumb your nose at people that have higher standards than you and call them “legalistic.”

15:10

He called the multitude. This is the first time He does it in the entire book. All the time up until this point Jesus is sending away the multitude. They find Him; He sends them away. Why does He do it? It is to call out wicked people.

Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. And again, we’re not talking about defilement like, “Oh you didn’t wash your hands. Now you’re going to get a virus.” We’re talking about ceremonial and traditional defilement.

Then came His disciples, and said unto him, Knowest Thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? Here’s what Jesus said: “Oh, I’m very sorry. Please put out a letter and some stationary for Me. I’ll sign it before we head out of the office today. I didn’t mean to offend anybody. I’ll take another swing at it. I can really tone down my language. I didn’t want anyone to be offended.” No.

Here’s what Jesus said: **Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone:** That’s why in Galatians 1:6-9, Paul says, “If one comes preaching another gospel other than that which you have received, other than that which you have received, well make sure you run them down and give them 1,000 gospel tracts and try to get them to friend you on all social media.” It doesn’t say that at all. “If one preaches another gospel unto you other than that which you have received from us, even if it’s an angel from heaven, let him be accursed.”

“I’m going to spend all my time going after religious leaders.”

Then you need to know that you are going contrary to what Jesus told His disciples. You look out for the people they are leading.

they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. You know, there’s Jesus again, talking about that whole predestination thing. I have a problem with people who have a problem with that. Another passage of Scripture where we’re told the reason someone is not going to get saved is because the **heavenly Father** didn’t **plant** them.

We win who we can by God’s grace and on the other shore we’re going to look around and we’re going to see all kinds of people that the Father planted.

15:15

² Once again we see Matthew is a fan of Isaiah, so for the eleventh time he either quotes or references Isaiah, and we’re in chapter 15.

Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? “You still don’t get this.”

Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? It’s a biological term: Eliminated

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man. And this is why James says in James 1:26: If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

Matthew 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. 35 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.