

Matthew Ch15v21-39 - Jesus: Hope of The Nations

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[0 : 00] Matthew 15 All our talks are recorded, so if you've missed any at any stage, you can follow up online.

We're going to start reading from Matthew 15, verse 21, through to the end of the chapter. Matthew 15, starting at verse 21, and we'll read to the end of the chapter.

Amen. So his disciples came to him and urged him, send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.

He answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. The woman came and knelt before him. Lord, help me, she said.

Jesus replied, it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs. Yes, it is, Lord, she said.

[2 : 04] Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table. Then Jesus said to her, woman, you have great faith. Your request is granted.

And her daughter was healed at that moment. Jesus left there and went along to the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down.

Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and laid them at his feet, and he healed them.

The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Jesus called his disciples to him and said, I have compassion for these people. They have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.

[3 : 08] His disciples answered, Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd? How many loaves do you have?

Jesus asked. Seven, they replied, and a few small fish. He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people.

They all ate and were satisfied. Afterwards, the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

The number of those who ate was 4,000 men, not counting the women and children. After Jesus had sent the crowd away, he got into the boat and went to the vicinity of Magadan.

Well, let's keep our Bibles open there in Matthew's Gospel, and we'll pray, and we'll ask for the Lord's help to understand his Word.

[4 : 16] Let's do that now. Father, again, we thank you for your Word.

Lord, we thank you for the Gospel of Matthew, events and the life of Jesus written down, recorded for us to hear, to learn from today.

And we pray that we may encounter Jesus afresh, that we may experience him, that we may know and understand why he has come, the response he looks for, and the future that we can have with him.

So, Father, pour out your Spirit upon us generously. May not one of us leave this building without knowing Jesus more.

That's our desire, and we ask for your help. And it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, this morning we're going to look at three things from the text.

[5 : 42] We're going to see a shocking move, a surprising response, and a stunning vision. So get ready to be shocked, surprised, and stunned.

First, a shocking move. Jesus moves towards sinners and sufferers. Jesus moves towards sinners and sufferers. Jesus is always on the move, as we've been reading through Matthew's Gospel, declaring the good news in towns and villages.

But here in Matthew 15, Jesus steps across a line, one that shocks the disciples. He crosses not just geographical and political borders, but he crosses a spiritual and social barrier.

Jesus moves towards sinners. Look at verse 21. Leaving that place. So Jesus is presently in Jewish territory around the Lake of Galilee.

So he leaves that place, and Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Tyre and Sidon are north of Galilee, into pagan territory.

[7 : 02] So you could imagine what the disciples are thinking as Jesus makes his move. You can't possibly go there. They're outsiders and foreigners.

That's where the sinners live. Now you may remember, we've met these places before Tyre and Sidon.

Have a look back with me in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 11. Go back to chapter 11, verse 20, where we come across Tyre and Sidon.

So again, Jesus has been preaching in the towns and villages, healing people. Verse 20, Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which he did most of his miracles, because they did not repent.

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! This was the heartland of Israel, the religious Jewish folk. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, if they had had the opportunity that you have had, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

[8 : 24] Let's go back to chapter 15. You see, Jesus' move is intentional and provocative. By crossing these borders, Jesus is saying, I have come for all people, no matter what their background is or what their history has been.

I am calling people to repentance. I haven't come for those who think they are good, rule-keeping religious folk. But I've come for the irreligious people, the ones who don't keep the rules, the ones who cause chaos and mayhem, the ones with messy, broken lives.

I've come to welcome sinners into my kingdom. For no one is off limits, no one is excluded, and no one is outside of my reach.

So Jesus moves to sinners, but he also moves to sufferers. Because as Jesus enters this area, look what happens, verse 22.

A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him crying out, Lord, son of David, have mercy on me. My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.

[9 : 41] Now everything about this event is making the disciples squirm uncomfortably. She's a Canaanite, a fierce enemy of the Jews.

The whole history of the Canaanites has been about attacking the nation of Israel. And she's also a Gentile, a pagan. Religiously, she's unacceptable.

She's excluded. And she's a woman. Because you don't go talking to such common people as women. You see, the Jews had very strict religious barriers to keep such people out.

The kingdom, they thought, is not open to your kind. But rather than condemnation, Jesus displays amazing compassion.

For Jesus, there is no line or barrier. He doesn't just see their spiritual need, but he sees their physical need. He empathises with her suffering.

[10 : 46] This reminds us, doesn't it, of why Jesus has come. He has come to renew this broken world and restore our disordered lives. He sees the great need of this woman.

Most likely, she's without a husband. And her daughter is suffering with a demon spirit. And he moves out towards her, crossing all of the spiritual social barriers that there are.

Look down at verse 28. Then Jesus said to her, Woman, you of great faith, your request is granted. And her daughter was healed at that moment.

This is who Jesus is. You see, he is not repulsed by our sin. He's not immune to the sufferings that we go through.

The very things that push people away from us, those who struggle, we struggle to forgive, those we find it hard to care for, these are the people Jesus is drawn to.

[11 : 54] The kind of people we keep at arm's length because of their sinful past and their struggling life, Jesus embraces them.

So whatever your sin may be today, whatever suffering you may be experiencing, let's understand this, you are not outside the reach of God or off limits to the mercy of God.

Jesus doesn't avoid sinners and sufferers. Jesus moves towards people like us, people who sin and people who suffer.

That is good news. So, the shocking move. second, a surprising response.

Jesus commends those with great faith. He commends those with great faith. Jesus' interaction with this woman is full of surprises and we're just going to focus on two of them.

[13 : 07] First, Jesus responds with silence. We can imagine the scene there as this woman comes to Jesus. She's loud and desperate.

She doesn't care, does she? Verse 22, Lord, son of David, have mercy on me. My daughter, my daughter, she's suffering terribly.

How does Jesus respond? respond? Verse 23, Jesus didn't answer a word.

Silence. Nothing. I mean, this isn't the Jesus we know, is it? It's almost as if Jesus is ignoring her.

But we mustn't interpret the silence as exclusion and rejection. Something that the disciples jumped to. Look at the rest of verse 23. So his disciples came to him and urged him, send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.

[14 : 19] They want nothing to do with a pagan outsider. No, Jesus is silent because he wants to teach the disciples and us that this woman is not only welcome, but she's an example to us all of how we should respond to Jesus.

Of course, Jesus could have answered her immediately. He could have healed her daughter straight away. No problem. His delay is that he doesn't care, or is not that he doesn't care, but his concern is that we would learn.

So Jesus responds with silence. And second, Jesus responds with commendation. You see, when Jesus does eventually break his silence, look at what he says, verse 24.

He answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. Well, that was true, wasn't it? Jesus came for those to whom he was sent, the people of Israel.

But Jesus had also come for the nations, for all people. And that's what he wants the disciples to learn. He wants them to see how this woman, an outsider, how she responds.

[15 : 45] So verse 25, the woman came and knelt before him. Lord, help me, she said. It's a face that is desperately dependent on Jesus.

It's a recognition that without the intervention of Jesus in my life. I am lost. I've got no hope. Lord, help me.

But Jesus is still not ready to act. He wants us to grasp the kind of faith that he commends. Verse 26, he replied, it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.

Well, what on earth is that about? Well, Jews referred to outsiders like this woman as dogs. It was insulting, racist, misogynistic.

That's why the disciples were so quick to tell Jesus, send her away, we don't want her kind around us. We don't want anything to do with her.

[16 : 58] So Jesus as if kind of goes along with it and confronts her with this view as if to say, what are you going to do about that? Is it not right that you take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs?

Is it right to take the Messiah who came for the Jews and give him to the Gentiles? Her response is just brilliant.

Verse 27. Yes it is Lord, it is right. Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table.

Just as dogs get to eat the scraps from their master, so we will receive from the Jews what they don't want.

I know I don't deserve Jesus the Messiah. I know I'm not worthy. I have nothing to offer. I have nothing to bring. I'm a sinner and a sufferer, but I desperately need you.

Her faith is urgent, but it's humble. She sees not how great she is, but how great and gracious that Jesus is.

[18 : 17] And so verse 28, Jesus said to her, Woman, you have great faith. Far from ignoring her, Jesus commends her, this is the kind of faith that I seek from all people, people who see their desperate need and run to Jesus urgently, but humbly.

Now we've got to be careful how we interpret this great faith. It's not the size or measure of her faith that Jesus commends, but the greatness of the one in whom she trusts.

You see, it's not about how great I am, but seeing how great my sin is, and how great Jesus is to forgive.

It's not about my great ability or strength to get through things in life, but seeing how helpless and hopeless we are. It's running to Jesus as our saving king and crying out urgently but humbly, Lord, help me.

This is the right response for sinners and sufferers. This is the kind of faith that Jesus commends. of the kingdom.

[19 : 42] So we have a shock, we have a surprise, and we have a stunning or spectacular vision. Jesus gives us a foretaste of heaven.

You see, as Jesus moves out towards sinners and sufferers, as he welcomes those with faith, so Jesus is giving us a foretaste of the kingdom to come.

And the feeding of the 4,000 shows us this. First, look at the crowds that come. Once again, verse 29, Jesus is on the move.

And verse 30, great crowds come to him. Now, you may remember we've come across a similar event like this, haven't we? Just last week in chapter 14, there it was the feeding of the 5,000. But apart from some minor differences, what we read in chapter 14 and chapter 15 are almost identical. Both have large crowds, both is about an event where people have no food, Jesus miraculously feeds everyone who's there, there's plenty left over in the baskets, and they all go home satisfied.

[21 : 10] The same kind of story. However, there's one significant difference. The crowds. Not the number of people who are present, but the identity of the people who are present.

You see, in chapter 14, it was all about Jesus down by the lake in Jewish territory. But here in chapter 15, they're all from a Gentile pagan background.

They're still outsiders. Look at the response of the people as they gather. Look at the end of verse 31. They praised the God of Israel.

They're obviously outsiders, but they've come to have an encounter with Jesus, God's king. So in praising the God of Israel, they are declaring that he is their God too.

Once again, Jesus is showing that he's come for all people, regardless of what their background or social situation is. His desire is to bring people from all nations to himself, that they might worship him.

[22 : 25] In fact, the sheer number of people who are gathered, look at verse 38, which doesn't include all the women and children who are there, is a foretaste of heaven.

It's a picture of the crowds, the thousands that are beyond number of sinners and sufferers who've responded in faith and will be gathered together in God's eternal kingdom.

Well, you say, how is there a vision there about God's eternal kingdom? Well, let's look at the feast that is to come. You see, as the crowds gather, Jesus begins to feed them, doesn't he?

He takes a bit of bread and a few fish and he feeds these thousands of people before him and they're all satisfied. But Jesus isn't just showing off.

He isn't just being generous. Jesus is giving us a vision of what is to come. You see, one of the ways the Bible looks forward to heaven is a feast, a celebratory meal that includes people from all nations rejoicing in their salvation.

[23 : 47] Isaiah the prophet gives us a foretaste of what this is like. Keep your finger in Matthew 15 and let's go back to Isaiah chapter 25.

Isaiah chapter 25. Here the prophet Isaiah is giving a foretaste, a picture of the eternal kingdom to come.

Let's pick it up, chapter 25 and verse 6. let's read from verse 6.

On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine, the best of meats and the finest of wines.

On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all people, the sheet that covers all nations. What's that? Well, verse 8, he will swallow up death forever.

[25 : 09] The sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces. He will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.

In that day they will say, surely this is our God, we trusted in him and he saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in him. Let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.

salvation. Let's go back to Matthew 15. Isaiah's vision is of a mountain.

Picture it in your minds, where people from all nations are gathered and people are healed and death is destroyed. Their relationship with God restored and they celebrate with rich food.

it's a spectacular vision. And now look what we have here in Matthew 15. Look carefully at what Jesus does.

[26 : 15] Look at verse 29. Where does Jesus go? Up the mountain. What happens in verse 30? great crowds come to him.

Verse 31. People are healed and restored. The lame walk, the blind see. Verse 36. What does Jesus do for them?

He provides a meal. Okay, it's just fish and bread. It's a long way off the best of meats and finest of wines. but, verse 37, they are all satisfied.

Jesus is not only highlighting the spectacular vision of Isaiah, Jesus is saying, I am the one who's come to fulfil this vision. I am the one who makes all of this possible.

What I am doing on the mountain is just a foretaste of my glorious eternal kingdom. You see, for sinners and sufferers, the best is yet to come.

[27 : 26] Yes, Jesus healed all these people, but what would happen to them? Well, they would all die at some stage, wouldn't they? Probably through another disease or sickness.

Yes, Jesus fed all of these thousands of people, but within a couple of days they would wake up with hungry bellies needing to be fed again. You see, what Jesus was doing was, was just temporary.

Jesus came for something greater, something eternal. He came to deal with all of my sin and to destroy the pain of death.

He died on the cross and he rose from the grave so that I might share in his eternal kingdom. Don't settle for what is past.

Set your eyes on the vision to come. God will come. You see, here we are being shown Jesus who moves out towards sinners and sufferers.

[28 : 27] He welcomes all who respond in urgent but humble faith. And he promises us a seat at the table in his eternal kingdom.

A kingdom where sin and suffering will be no more. and he will wipe the tears from our eyes and we will be satisfied forever.

No longer living by faith but feasting forever with the king. What a shock.

What a surprise. What a stunning vision for all who run to Jesus. Let's pray together.

our Father God, we come just as we are today.

[29 : 41] You see into our hearts, you know our sin, you know our mess, some of it is public, some of it is desperately secret.

You see our lives and you see our suffering. Some of that is very public too and people know how we hurt and how we struggle.

But yet we know that some of our suffering is deep down and no one knows the torment that we may face. How wonderful to know today that Jesus welcomes us as we are.

Come to Jesus, receive forgiveness, receive that healing, that restoration. salvation. Come to him and know a glorious future, urgently and humbly depending on him in faith.

Father, help us to go, knowing that it is you alone who will satisfy us completely. Help us to walk by faith and not by sight as we look forward to that wonderful feast, being seated at the king's table, served by the Lord Jesus himself, sharing in a wonderful meal to celebrate our homecoming, our salvation.

[31 : 24] Thank you for what we have in Jesus today. Amen. But we're going to sing a celebratory song.

There's a higher throne than all this world has known where faithful ones from every tongue that welcome from every nation those who have faith in Christ.

I invite you to stand and sing and if you are trusting in the Lord, you will want to sing this out in praise and thanksgiving. Let's sing together.

Amen. Amen. ■ dele's water There is a higher throne That all thoughts of us And never overcome through His heart That earth You will come to gak deeds Into pits We will S Rash Instagram Hon

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