






Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

Clean and Unclean


¹ The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and ² saw some of His disciples eating food with hands that were “unclean,” that is, unwashed. ³ (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. ⁴ When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers, and kettles.)

Q1. Who were the Pharisees and teachers of the law?

-  Pharisees were a strict group of religious Jews who advocated strict obedience to the Jewish law and traditions. Pharisees also believed in the resurrection of the dead (life after death).
-  Sadducees were wealthy, upper class, Jewish priests, who believed in the first five books of the Old Testament and rejected the authority of the remainder of the Old Testament. They profited from conducting business in the temple. Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead. (Mark 12:18)
-  The Pharisees and the Sadducees were the two major parties of the Jewish council.
-  Commentators generally agree that the Jewish law consisted of 603 rules, plus the Ten Commandments, for a total of 613 ‘laws’. God’s Ten Commandments were insufficient, so the Jewish religious leaders – over time – developed 603 additional rules to govern the everyday life of the Jew.

Matthew 23:1-5 (MSG) [In fact, Jesus commented on the extraneous laws the religious leaders had developed.] Now Jesus turned to address his disciples, along with the crowd that had gathered with them. “The religion scholars and Pharisees are competent teachers in God’s Law. You won’t go wrong in following their teachings on Moses. But be careful about following them. They talk a good line, but they don’t live it. They don’t take it into their hearts and live it out in their behavior. It’s all spit-and-polish veneer. “Instead of giving you God’s Law as food and drink by which you can banquet on God, they package it in bundles of rules, loading you down like pack animals. They seem to take pleasure in watching you stagger under these loads, and wouldn’t think of lifting a finger to help.

Q2. What does “unclean” mean to you?


-  The Pharisees believed this ceremony cleansed them from any contact they might have had with anything considered unclean.

⁵ So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?"

Q3. Is there a difference between “the traditions of the elders” and the law that God actually provided the Jews?

Q4. What was more important to the Pharisees: obeying “the traditions of the elders” or obeying the law that God actually provided the Jews?

Day 2

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⁶He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

" "These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

⁷They worship me in vain;
their teachings are but rules taught by men.' [Isaiah 29:13]

⁸You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."

Q5. What is a hypocrite?

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Q6. What does “honor with their lips” mean to you?

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Q7. If the religious leaders were saying good things about God, how could “their hearts be far from” Him?

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Q8. “They worship me in vain”: how can worship of God be wrong?

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Q9. Jesus confronted these religious leaders with the same words Isaiah used to confront the religious leaders of his time. Do you think that these leaders appreciated Jesus’ comments?

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Q10. (Silent reflection) Can you think of any traditions in your church that may be a church rule that does not serve to glorify God or His Son Jesus?

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⁹And He said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!

Q11. Jesus confronted their sin. Since Jesus loves us, is Jesus tolerant of sin?

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¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' (Exodus 20:12) and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' (Exodus 21:17)

Q12. "Honor your father and your mother" is from what?


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Q13. How should you "honor" someone?

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Day 3

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¹¹ But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift devoted to God), ¹² then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. ¹³ Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."

Q14. What was the practice of some that Jesus called-out and said they "nullify the word of God"?

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 Corban: Offering. Anyone who made a Corban vow was required to dedicate money to God's temple that otherwise would have gone to support his parents. Corban had become a religiously acceptable way to neglect parents, circumventing the child's responsibility to them. Although the action – giving money to God – seemed worthy and no doubt conferred prestige on the giver, many people who took the Corban vow were disregarding God's command to care for needy parents. (Source: Life Application Study Bible published by Tyndale House)

¹⁴ Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. ¹⁵ Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.'" (¹⁶ If anyone has ears to hear; let him hear.)

Q15. What goes into a person?

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Q16. What comes out of a person?

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Q17. What would be an example of something "unclean"?

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Day 4

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¹⁷ After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. ¹⁸ "Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? ¹⁹ For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.")

²⁰ He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' ²¹ For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"

Colossians 2:6-23

⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. ¹¹ In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.


¹⁶ Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration, or a Sabbath day. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

¹⁸ Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. ¹⁹ He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

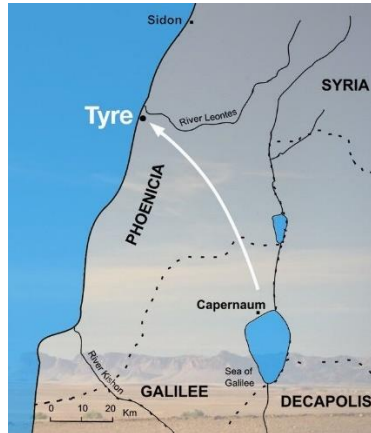
²⁰ Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules:

²¹ "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? ²² These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. ²³ Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility, and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. (Underscores are added for emphasis.) See also Romans 14:1-12 and Acts 10:15.

Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

The Faith of a Syrophenician Woman



Source: <http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/lumo-syro-phoenician-woman/>

^{24a} Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre.

Q18. Locate Tyre on the map.

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Q19. Were the people of Tyre primarily Jewish or gentile?

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^{24b} He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret.

Q20. Why did Jesus want to keep His presence secret?

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²⁵ In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. ²⁶ The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

Q21. Why do you think the woman came to Jesus?

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Q22. The mother “begged Jesus”. Could this be considered a prayer?

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Q23. Do you think that the mother believed that Jesus could help her daughter?

Q24. From this example, are there any principles that we can use to guide our prayers?

²⁷ "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."

Q25. To what people-group did Jesus come to primarily minister?

Q26. Who might Jesus consider "children"?

Q27. Who might Jesus consider "dogs"?

Q28. This seems to be a hard response. What do you think Jesus means?

²⁸ "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

Q29. Was the mother persistent?

Q30. With His seemingly rude response, could Jesus have been testing her faith?

Q31. Which is more meaningful to a person? To THINK to themselves that "I believe." Or to TELL someone "I believe."

Q32. Was it important that others in the room overheard the mother's plea and the conviction of her faith?


²⁹ Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter."

³⁰ She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Q33. Can you imagine the mother's overwhelming joy and faith and love?

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Day 6

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The Healing of a Deaf and Mute Man

³¹ Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis.

Q34. What did we recently study in which the story referenced the "Decapolis"? (Mark 5:20)

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³² There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man.

Q35. Did the people demonstrate faith and, in essence, pray to the Lord? How?

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³³ After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. ³⁴ He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!").

Q36. Why do you think Jesus guided the deaf-and-could-hardly-talk man away from the crowd?

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Q37. Why do you think Jesus sighed?

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Q38. Instead of placing His hands upon the man, why did Jesus take action and place His fingers into the man's ears and spit and touch his tongue?

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³⁵ At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

Q39. It is said that when a person through modern medical technology restores a missing sense (such as hearing or sight) it takes a while for the person to train their brain to discern sounds or images. What is remarkable about Jesus' gift to the deaf man?

³⁶ Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. ³⁷ People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Q40. Why did Jesus want the man's healing to be kept quiet?

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