

Old Kings Highway I

Matthew 15 & 16

Peter J. Scott . transcribed 2019

There is a prophetic sense in the air this morning as the New York State Senate, the Governor, and Congress went against Life as they passed this horrendous abortion law. There is a sense that God wants to say something to the Church. I checked to see how our Church corporate-prayer meeting went the other night. It is important to know what God is saying there. The sense was “*the Church was to stay the course and **not react**.*” There were a lot of prayers for Governor Cuomo and the people in charge of our government that God would do whatever He can to save them. That is our prayer focus, to change people’s hearts. Amen.

It is so hard to make that statement sometimes when we see such evil all around us. In our own flesh we want to respond to that by either defense or attack. We look at Jesus when He went into the wilderness and faced temptations. He didn’t really *react* to the devil so much as He just said the truth, what God put into His heart, how He lived His life regardless of what the devil said, or the world, or men would say. Jesus was set on what the Father’s heart was doing.

Therefore this teaching today is part six in a series “Knowing the Heart, the Intent and Purposes of God” from the gospel of Matthew. As you recall when we introduced this gospel, the first of this series, we made distinctions between what was being preached in the world by men in the synagogue, Rabbis, Pharisees and Sadducees and what Jesus was teaching. He clearly came against the teachings of tradition versus His teachings of the Kingdom of God, what Father God had in His heart and the love of God that needed to be expressed. We don’t go too far in our own walk before we realize that the Lord wants us to embrace Him first of all. He wants us to come to Him and then to embrace each other, to encourage one another. Out of that comes everything else, all of the Law and the Prophets, to love the Lord your God and to love your neighbor as you do yourself. And again, “*Love one another even as I (Jesus) have loved you,*” the new commandment.

Drawing the Line

Matthew 15¹ Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, ² “Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.”

You can see that Matthew hasn’t lost his central theme of what men say you should do versus what God says you should do. The disciples might be smelly fishermen perhaps with unwashed hands. Here we see the Pharisees believing that what you eat and how you eat is very important from a religious point of view. They believed that if you ate what was unclean then *you* are un-

clean! So they made that the premise of the Law; you need to do certain things the correct way in order to make yourself acceptable to God. We heard the prophetic word already this morning about how important grace is to us, no prophecies about judgment or how important men's traditions are, but grace.

I used to wear a tie here every Sunday. It was a tradition of men. If I didn't wear a tie to work, people would look at me funny! That tradition was expected of me. If you go to a fancy ball, one wears a tuxedo, etc. It is all traditions. However, people today are breaking traditions left and right. Traditions don't seem as important any more in the grander scheme of things.

Well, Jesus answered . . .

³ *"Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?"*

He throws it right back at them. "Wait a minute you talk about traditions? You are breaking a commandment of God.

⁴ *For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'* (found in Exodus 212:17) ⁵ *But you (the Rabbi's traditions) say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God"—* ⁶ *then he need not honor his father or mother.'* . . .

Another words they were saying, *"We don't really need to honor you or support you in your old age in any way, shape or form because I am your child, I am your present!"* How far is that from the intent and purposes of God?! How far away did they go? That's why if the Scribes or Pharisees didn't support their parents, if they were ill, oh well they can take care of themselves.

. . . *Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.* ⁷ *Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:* ⁸ *'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, . . .*

So if you think coming to Church and playing Church is going to do it for you, listen to this.

. . . *But their heart is far from Me.* ⁹ *And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'* "

Their first error was just doing things by wrote. *"I always come to Church on Sunday. I always go to home group on Wednesday. I always do this or that. I always make sure I pray. I always make sure I read the bible."* But, if your heart isn't for knowing the heart of God and understanding it, YOU MISSED IT!

In vain they worshiped! Worship is a deep Spiritual presence of the Lord but *in vain* He says they worshiped, teaching as doctrine the commandments of men. There is a lot of that going around. Doctrine. Someone said to me yesterday that the pastor's function is to pastor the Church and make sure everybody

says hello to everybody. They said when the pastor is not there the sheep act wounded. I thought, “*What tradition is that?!* ” All the under-shepherds are supposed to do is to **point to the Shepherd**. If you are looking at me for salvation then I am in the wrong Church. The Church of the First Born has one Shepherd, Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd. If you come to me and ask me for advice, most of the time I’m going to ask you to go to the Lord.

Ultimately you need to hear from God. Scripture says, “*You are not accountable to me but each one of you is accountable to Christ*” (2 Timothy 2:15). When you get to heaven you are not going to be able to say, “*My pastor said . . . the elders said . . . the home group leader said . . . your husband said . . .* ” You are going to have to answer to, “*What did YOU hear from God?*” Amen.

What defiles Man?

So getting back to the Pharisees, they are defiled not by what they do, how they wash their hands or when they eat unclean foods. They are defiled in other ways.

*Matthew 15 ¹⁰ Jesus called the crowd to Him and said, “Listen and understand. ¹¹ What goes **into** someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes **out** of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”*

So we see He is going from hand washing traditions to *what* you are eating, but it is the same venue, same entrapment by the traditions of men. He says it is what comes OUT of the mouth that defiles a man. Listen, that is important to know. *Your words are important to God*. So, even when you tell a joke in jest, they are words and they are coming from your mouth. Are they bringing life or are they bringing death? Satirical jokes very seldom bring life.

I used to tell jokes a lot when I was a sophomore and junior in college. But by the time you get to be a senior you realize it is not all about jokes. So we can see here that it is time for us as a Church to grow up and realize that our words are important to God. I cannot make an idle joke any more and just walk away and say, “*That was just a joke, doesn’t make much difference.*” It is interesting to note that recently we see the Press picking up on this. According to their standards and too the standards of the world, if someone makes an off color joke, they pick right up on it and one might have to resign! And it is certainly a standard for us as well, to listen and give heed.

¹² Then the disciples came to Him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?” ¹³ He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴ Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

So are you paying attention to the world and the traditions of men? Well, best know where they are coming from. Don’t pay any attention to them! What are you doing hanging out with them! What do you care? He says they are **blind leaders of the blind**. I don’t know if there is even one News service just now this

doesn't apply to. If the blind leads the blind, both will fall into the ditch. So we need to have eyes to beware of the traditions of men, but also, we need eyes to see and ears to hear the **heart, the intent and the purposes of God**.

¹⁵ Peter said, "Explain the parable to us." ¹⁶ "Are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them. ¹⁷ "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body?" ¹⁸ But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the **heart**, and these defile them.

Why do they defile them? Not just because they are works but because they come out of your heart. So if you say an off-color joke, that is coming from your heart and it defiles you. It doesn't speak well of you. You need to change your behavior.

Notice He doesn't say, "*what you think in your brain*." Thank God. The word says to hold every thought captive. Why? Because there will be thoughts coming to you but you don't have to hold onto them and dwell upon them. If they are not God, *throw them away!* That's discipline of your thought life. That's what God has called you to do.

I remember that during the past renewal, while praying for people, certain thoughts would come into my brain saying all kinds of awful, evil things. I thought, "*What in the world is this stuff?!*" When you open up to the Holy Spirit there are other spirits around that will try to use their influence to talk to you that are not the Spirit of God. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit you need to discern and understand God and the heart of God, the intent and purposes of God.

¹⁹ *For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.*

This means evil isn't just in the outcome; it is in the heart first of all. People who commit adultery have already committed adultery in their heart. When they finally do it, it just comes out of where it already was. So we need to be keepers of our heart. If you find yourself there, start weeding the garden, turn over the soil. Let the Spirit of God renew you from within. These are the things which defile

²⁰ *These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.*"

Eating with unwashed hands doesn't defile a man at all! That's heresy in that day and hour and heresy today still. It is not what comes into a man but what comes out. Guard your heart.

The Power of Faith and Worship

The power of faith is not in the *power of faith* but in the exercise of it. When Jesus comes and we have a prayer of faith, it isn't so much that our faith is its power or has done anything, but it is Jesus Himself, manifesting Himself in

healing or in whatever way, so that your faith is rewarded. And your worship is rewarded also.

Matthew 15 ²¹ Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 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."

So she is in need. Her family is in need and she is asking for mercy. Is that a good thing? Yes. But Jesus didn't answer.

²³ Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to Him and urged Him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."

She is annoying. Why? Because she wasn't a Jew. She was a Gentile. So at this time He was not being sent to Gentiles, only the Jews.

*²⁴ But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵ Then she came and **worshiped** Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"*

That is an interesting scripture, she came first and *worshiped* Him. This scripture text isn't just about faith first; it is about worship as well. She understood who God is and she was willing to do whatever it took. Worship is beyond just that. Worship is adoration, loving from your heart. It must be in her heart saying, "Lord, help me!"

²⁶ But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."

I cannot imagine Jesus saying this! The enemy already had his plans. She is going to walk out mad. But that is not what showed up in her heart.

²⁷ And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

What wisdom the Holy Spirit gave her! Do you want to touch the heart of God? Ask the Holy Spirit. He will tell you how to touch His heart.

²⁸ Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith!

Not how great is the power of your faith, how great is your faith.

Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Talk about compassion. The traditions of men would say, "No. She is a Gentile dog. She does not deserve anything and will not get anything." But Jesus looks at the heart and was waiting for the expression of her heart, not just in worship but in her humility when she said, "Well, just give me a crumb."

I have a feeling if you ask the Lord for a crumb He isn't going to give you just a crumb. Amen.

The Compassion of Jesus Christ

Matthew 15 ²⁹ Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there. ³⁰ Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. ³¹ So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

So when you see people being healed, the compassion of God is at work. When people see the healing they are not just focused on the ministry, they see the *compassion of God* and they glorify God. They do not glorify the ministry or the man.

FEEDING THE FOUR THOUSAND

Matthew 15 ³² Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

Jesus shows His compassion again. Compassion is His motivation. He isn't just developing a ministry. If you don't seem to have a ministry, it is not your business. It is your business to have the compassion of God whether you are a prophet, teacher or praying. It doesn't matter.

He knew that on the way back to their homes they wouldn't make it. The disciples thought they were in big trouble.

³³ Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?"

In the natural you cannot do it.

³⁴ Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish."

³⁵ So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. ³⁶ And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. ³⁷ So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. ³⁸ Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. (More than 4,000) ³⁹ And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.

Wow, the compassion of the Lord and His resources are limitless. Compassion, His heart, His intent and Purpose is to feed and provide for His people. He is compassionate about they're even missing one meal.

The Pharisees and Sadducees Seek A Sign

Consider Gideon, asking God for a sign with the dew on the fleece or the other way around, on the ground. Just give us a sign. Give us some way of knowing this is You, Lord, the new job, a girl I'm interested in, a school I'm interested in going to. There are things in my life I don't know whether they are You or not. Give me a sign. I don't know if we should be looking for a sign. We already have one and that is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us. What more of a sign do we need than the death of the Lamb of God for our sin and His resurrection.

Matthew 16 ¹ Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. ² He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; ³ and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. ⁴ **A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.**" And He left them and departed.

If you don't know if a ministry is from God you might ask for a sign. An adulterous generation seeks for a sign (don't be like that). No sign shall be given except for the prophet Jonah. Jonah was in the stomach of a fish for three days and then the fish spit him back out and Jonah was able to go on with his ministry. That is the Cross. Jesus was dead and buried for three days and came back to life, resurrected. That was a sign. (Now why the disciples didn't want that explained to them is curious, unless they were afraid of the answer.)

The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees: the Traditions of Men

This theme keeps coming back in the gospel of Matthew.

Matthew 16 ⁵ Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. ⁶ Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." ⁷ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread." ⁸ But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? ⁹ Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? ¹⁰ Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? ¹¹ How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? . . .

It is not about natural things. It almost never is when Jesus speaks to me in prayer. He uses natural things but He is more interested in what is in the heart than what is on your skin.

¹¹ . . . I did not speak to you concerning bread?—but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”¹² Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the **doctrine** of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

What was the doctrine? The doctrines were the traditions of men, what they took out of the Torah which became Law to them rather than wanting to know the intent, the heart of God. They just wanted *to do* things. Jesus really did want to know what was in the hearts of His own men though.

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

Matthew 16 ¹³ When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”

So He is asking them a question but it is not really the question He wants answered. Do you get that?

¹⁴ So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

If you go around and ask people who they think Jesus is today you would get worse answers than these. But Jesus wasn’t interested in these answers.

¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do **you** say that I am?”

What’s in your heart? Where are you guys going with this.

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

This is the first time in the New Testament that there is a proclamation of who Jesus is in a very clear and succinct way. He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. It doesn’t say just the Messiah but says Son of Man, Son of God.

¹⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock (this revelation) I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

What will the gates of Hades not prevail against? The idea that Jesus was and is the Son of God.

¹⁹ And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven, (He’s going to open up their understanding on what the Kingdom of God is.) and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

He’s giving the Church power in this revelation that Jesus is the Christ. He’s the Son of God.

²⁰ *Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.*

That's pretty powerful. What is in the heart of God? He sent His Son to forgive you of your sins. He sent His Son so He could die on the cross and be resurrected from the dead. He sent His Son so that He could be sitting at the right hand of the Father, sending you the Holy Spirit, that you could be filled with that Holy Spirit to such a degree that the love of God would be expressed through you to your fellow Christians and to men who wonder about what is going on in your heart.

You could be sitting next to somebody on an airplane or anywhere for that matter and they could say, *"There is something about you. What is it?"* There you go. That's your "open door." Tell them, *"Well I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. More importantly I know in my heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. More importantly I know in my heart the intent and purposes of God through the Holy Spirit which He provided for me."* Wow, now that's different!

Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection

Matthew 16 ²¹ *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*

There's your sign, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Well this didn't sit well with the traditions or logic of men, not even the logic of the disciples. One of His best, Peter, took Him aside and began to rebuke Him saying, *"Well, are you kidding, far be it for You. This is NOT going to happen to You."* Well if my brother came to me and said, *"You know I am going to have to go to Washington and I am going to be killed there."* I would respond, *"You don't have to go any where. You don't need to do this!"* I would try and protect you. If one is not hearing from the Lord, that would be the response!

²³ *But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

He knew from *where* that statement came from. Not just from the heart of men but it came from the pit of Hell because it was against Him doing what Father God wanted Him to do. So He recognized that Peter was doing a logical man-thing response. But He also realized it was a temptation from the enemy that was coming to Jesus personally, which is why Jesus personally responded to the enemy himself. *"Get behind Me, Satan, I know you way too well. You even speak through Peter. I know your purpose."* Now He turns to Peter, not to Satan, *"You are not mindful of the things of God but the things of men."*

So He addresses two people, Satan and then Peter. That is cool.

Well oftentimes we have the mind of men and not the mind of God. As much as I've walked in the Spirit of the Lord I never say, "*Lord, I know it all.*" I never say, "*My decision will be right (or wrong).*" I know whatever decisions I might make, God will work it together for good for those who know God and are called according to His purpose. I know that. *However* my heart is that I would **know** His intent, that I would **know** His purpose, that way I would **know** His will. You know when I first came to the Lord, the most important thing was just to know the will of God. I'd pray to know the will of God. Well, that is predicated with knowing the heart, intent and purpose of God.

Nobody told me that for many years. Just know the will of God. How do I come to know that? Well, read the word a lot, pray, listen to other Christians. All of that is true but knowing the heart of God is *actually touching the Lord Himself*, the hem of His garment, for healing not just in our body but in our whole soul. He can come and bring strength and understanding for this brain which is broken.

I have a lot of degrees. But, they are worth nothing compared to what the Holy Spirit has revealed to me. It is almost like . . . no matter what possessions I may have, no matter what degrees, whatever, my wife is more valuable. Just so, God is much more valuable than it all.

When you put things into perspective, everything changes. You are trying to make decisions on all of these circumstances when you should make your decisions based on the heart, intent and purposes of God. When we follow our own strength and our own understanding, the end can be pretty deadly. Isaiah says we are all like sheep that have gone astray. How did the sheep go astray? They did what was right in their own mind. So I could say, "*Well, I'm born again, filled with the Spirit. I can do whatever I want now.*" No. Then you are going to be like a lost sheep again. You need and will *always* need the Good Shepherd. We are not complete without Him. If I don't go to the throne room and spend time with Him on a daily basis and understand His heart, how can I, or why would I want to live? Just to live out my life? No. I want the intent and purpose of God.

Finally Take Up Your Cross

Matthew 16 ²⁴ *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*

I thought this was beyond the cross, the resurrection. Yes, but there are things you are going to have to die to.

²⁵ *For whoever desires to save his life* (I just want whatever I have to be secure and safe, more insurance, better healthcare, 401K . . . whoever desires those things first) **will lose it**, *but whoever loses his life* (gives it up) *for My sake will find it.*

That's because your life is not in those things.

²⁶ *For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (The answer is pretty obvious.)* ²⁷ *For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

Wow, let's talk about living for the end time. It is one of judgment on judgment day.

²⁷ *For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

Then where will your health insurance be? Where then will your car and your home and all the things you have be? Well, they won't count any more. What will count is what is here in your heart! Isn't that good? It is. One of the hardest things to understand is this next verse.

²⁸ *Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom."*

Traditionally that has meant to be a reference to when Jesus came into His Kingdom and sat down at the right of the Father and sent us His Holy Spirit. Which did happen at the event of Pentecost, the birth of the Church. But the point is that we have a different perspective as Christians. We have an eternal perspective.

I heard someone speak about the understanding of prophecy. It is important to note that prophecy is not just predicting about what is going to happen in the future. It is also knowing what has happened in the *past* and knowing what is happening *now* as well as the *future*. It is like God suddenly reveals something to you that is eternal. When you prophesy it may be about the past or about the present or the future but it goes beyond that. It is really touching the eternity from heaven from the heart of God. So, prophets, it is really an awesome responsibility. But it is also a wonder that touches everyone of us, even if we don't prophesy. Everyone of us hear the voice of God in our prayer closet When we read the word of God, we hear the voice of God while reading the text. We might be listening to our brother or sister; we hear the voice of God from their mouth! We are hearing a prophetic sense of eternity in our heart. We drink it in. It brings us life.

I know why you came here this morning, not just to worship, not just to pray, but it was that God Himself would breathe into you the breath of life like He is so faithful to do. That's why I come to Church. That's why all do it.

Let's pray: What a privilege it is to know You in a way we've described this morning. We don't pretend to live there every moment of every day even though that might be our intent. I pray, Lord God, that You would give us the grace that you spoke about today, not a grace to transgress but a grace to walk forward in Your purposes. I pray that we would have a greater love for the people in this world, not in the sense of desire or

coveting anything there, but rather that we would reach out to them with the gospel of the Kingdom. We pray for healing in their physical bodies, healing in their mind and in their thoughts. We pray especially for that to happen. More importantly reveal Yourself through the Holy Spirit to them whether it be a governor of a state, or any other leader in Washington as well. Lord, we need You more today than ever in our own lives, in the world we live in. We ask You to go forth in strength and power of what faith does by your grace in us. In Jesus' name. Amen