

Be Reformed – Open the bible: study, dig and ask what the main point of the passage is
Be Charismatic – Expect the Holy Spirit: ask God to speak, minister, build up and lead us to maturity

Be Community – Love God’s people: share vulnerably, apply, pray and build each other up
Be Missional – Win the world: apply lessons to outreach, make content accessible to non-Christians

Matthew 15:21-39

21 And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.” 23 But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying out after us.” 24 He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” 25 But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” 26 And he answered, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” 27 She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” 28 Then Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

29 Jesus went on from there and walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there. 30 And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, 31 so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

CONTINUED IN MATTHEW 15:32-39

ALSO READ
Isaiah 49:6
Acts 4:29-30
James 1:27

Study Guide 7 August 2011 The Look and Feel of True Religion



Summary

At first glance Jesus may appear cruel in His initial responses to the Canaanite woman. He ignores her, refuses her and insults her. But she still persists in her pure desire for the gift of God. In the end, Jesus revealed that he did truly love this woman also; He commended her faith and healed her daughter.

What then was Jesus doing here? He was trying to communicate truths about the gospel: that salvation is from the Jews, that salvation is underserved, that salvation is given freely, and it is given by faith.

This is a contrast to the rebuke he delivers to the Pharisees at the start of the chapter. What then is true religion for? It glorifies God and not man; it works signs and wonders for the purpose of the gospel.

True religion is mercy and compassion from God, through His people to the world. It is intensely practical, as we see in James 1:27 – involved in social work, justice and involvement. It is also firmly rooted in the right handling of scripture, right doctrine and knowing God. True religion is the healing power of God for a dying world.

Key points

We are saved from God, by God for God’s glory!

Questions

- >>How much rejection, denigration and embarrassment would you be prepared to suffer for the gift of the gospel?
- >>Do you think the Jews have greater spiritual benefits from God than non-Jews?
- >>What kinds of signs and wonders do you want to see? What effect do you hope they have?
- >>How should we act if we engage in true religion? What kinds of activities and lifestyle should we be involved in?
- >>Think of three areas in your life where you build the eternal aspect of true religion.
- >>Think of three areas in your life where you build the temporal aspect of true religion.

Final thoughts

True religion is a life that is changed by the realization of the truth of the gospel.