



SPORTS IN FOCUS

KINGDOMS IN CONFLICT

Matthew 15:10-13 • Lesson Eight

ZOOM!

READY

- What positive signs or events in the world today give you reason to be optimistic about the days ahead?
- What negative or ominous signs tell you that the world is getting worse, and perhaps even moving toward a climatic end?

SET

Context of Matthew 14-17

Our Lord's prophetic parables underscore the truth that some people will believe the gospel, but many people will not. Matthew records in this section a number of incidents in Jesus' life that confirm this spiritual law: the hostility in His hometown of Nazareth, the hard-hearted Herod, the superficial reception of the masses, the worship of the twelve disciples, the desperate faith of a Canaanite woman and the Jewish leaders who sought to trap Jesus. Yet in the midst of this kingdom conflict, we see the true heart of Jesus for people as He performs more amazing miracles.

Keys to Text

Compassion: The Greek verb translated "compassion" means literally "to be moved in one's bowels," where the ancient cultures considered the emotions to reside. Christ represented the compassionate heart of God.

GO

Read Matthew 15:10-13

And after He called the multitude to Him, He said to them, "Hear, and understand. Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man." Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

1. What did Jesus mean by "what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man"?
2. Why would this statement offend the Pharisees?
3. Who were the Pharisees? Why did Jesus refer to them as "blind guides"?

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Last week, Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker James Harrison became a central figure in the NFL crackdown on dangerous hits. NFL commissioner Roger Goodell served notice last week that illegal hits to the head and neck would bring more significant discipline, including suspensions. His memo to teams and players followed a weekend of high-profile hits that led to a \$75,000 fine against Harrison. Many doctors have felt that the NFL for too long has rejected the overwhelming evidence that blows to the head cause long-term health problems. In other words, they think the NFL policies have not ignored the problem because of lack of evidence but in spite of overwhelming evidence. In a similar way, those who heard and saw Jesus did not reject Him because they lacked the truth, but because they rejected the truth. They refused forgiveness because they wanted to keep their sins. They denied the light because they preferred darkness. The reason for rejecting the Lord has always been that men prefer their own way to His. www.nebraskafca.org