

How Do I Know Who Jesus Really Is?

Matthew 15:29-39

Introduction – The Question That Comes in Suffering

A. Read Passage, Pray

B. Many know who Jesus is theologically, but struggle to know His heart.

C. The Fundamental Question

1. "How do I know Jesus is good? How do I know who He is for me?"

2. Often, suffering and unmet expectations bring this question to the surface (cf. John the Baptist in Matt 11:2-3).

D. Epistemological Concern – Seeing is not the same as perceiving.

1. Many saw Jesus' miracles but responded differently (Pharisees vs. Gentiles).

2. What determines whether we truly perceive Jesus?

E. Transition to the Text – *Matthew 15:29-39 answers this question through Jesus' actions.*

II. I Know Jesus by Seeing How He Responds to the Broken (*Matthew 15:29-31, Matthew 9:9-13*)

A. The Gentile Crowds Recognize Jesus Through Their Need (15:29-31)

- 1.They bring the lame, blind, crippled, and mute.
- 2.They come helpless and burdened, and Jesus heals them all.
- 3.The crowds' response – *They marvel and glorify the God of Israel (15:31).*

B. The Pharisees Fail to Recognize Jesus Because They Do Not See Their Need

- 1.Matthew 14:34-15:1-2
- 2.Matthew 9:12-13 – *“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick... I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”*
- 3.Key Contrast:
 - a.The Pharisees do not see their need and cannot recognize Jesus.
 - b.The tax collectors and sinners see their need and perceive Jesus rightly.
- 4.This same contrast appears in Matthew 15:
 - a.The Gentile crowds recognize their need → They respond in worship.
 - b.The Pharisees remain blind → They assume they are spiritually whole.

C. Tying This to Matthew 15:1-20

1. The Pharisees focus on external defilement, missing the true corruption of the heart (Matthew 15:18-20).
2. Because they do not recognize their sin, they cannot perceive who Jesus really is

D. Key Summary & Application

- 1. Those who recognize their brokenness will see Jesus more clearly than those who assume they already see.*
- 2. Challenge: Do I see myself as needy before Christ, or do I assume I have Him figured out?*

III. I Know Jesus by Hearing What He Reveals About Himself (*Matthew 15:32-34, Matthew 15:29-31, Matthew 11:25-30*)

A. Jesus Reveals His Compassion Verbally (Matthew 15:32-34)

1. In the first feeding (Matt 14), Jesus' compassion was editorial.
2. Here, He says it directly: *"I have compassion on the crowd."*

B. Jesus Reveals Himself Through His Works as the God of Israel (Matthew 15:29-31)

1. Isaiah 35:5-6 describes the healing of the blind, lame, and mute as the work of God Himself.
2. By doing these miracles, Jesus is revealing Himself as the God of Israel.
3. The Gentiles recognize this and glorify the God of Israel (Matthew 15:31).

C. The Connection to Matthew 11:25-30 – Jesus' Self-Disclosure as "Gentle and Lowly"

1. Matthew 11:25-27 – Revelation is given to the humble, not the proud. Because they do not recognize their sin, they cannot perceive who Jesus really is

a. *“You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children.”*

b. Spiritual perception is a gift, not a human achievement

2. Matthew 11:28-30 – Jesus' Heart

a. *“I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*

b. Why is this important? Many misunderstand Jesus as harsh or distant.

c. If we do not perceive Jesus' heart rightly, we will not trust Him rightly

D. Key Summary & Application

1. *If I want to know Jesus, I must not only hear what others say about Him but listen to what He says about Himself.*

2. *Encouragement: Jesus' compassion is not an occasional feeling—it is essential to who He is.*

IV. I Know Jesus by Trusting How He Provides (*Matthew 15:35-39, Matthew 15:21-28*)

A. The Disciples' Struggle to Trust (Matthew 15:33)

1. Despite already seeing a feeding miracle, they doubt again.
2. “*Where are we to get enough bread?*” (15:33) – Isn’t this the same question we ask in suffering?

B. Jesus Provides, But Sometimes in Unexpected Ways (Matthew 15:21-28)

1. The Canaanite woman comes to Jesus asking for help.
2. Jesus at first seems to reject her, yet she persists in faith.
3. The Lesson:
 - a. Jesus always provides, but sometimes not in the way or timing we expect.
 - b. Our perception of Jesus is often limited by our expectations—just like the disciples in 15:33.

C. Key Summary & Application

1. *I know Jesus when I trust Him to provide, even when it looks different than what I expect.*
2. *Challenge: Am I looking at Jesus through my doubts or through His past faithfulness?*

V. Conclusion – Returning to the Question: Who is Jesus for Me?

A. If you are suffering, doubting, or feel distant from Jesus, you are asking the right question.

B. But Matthew shows us the answer:

1. He responds to the broken.
2. He reveals His heart to the weary.
3. He provides for those who trust Him.

C. What Keeps Us from Knowing Jesus?

1. The Pharisees expected a Messiah who fit their mold.
2. The disciples struggled because they saw scarcity, not Jesus' sufficiency.
3. The Gentiles simply received—and they saw Jesus more clearly because of it.

D. Final Exhortation

- 1. Jesus is known not by force, but by faith—not by striving, but by coming to Him weary and heavy-laden.*
- 2. Will you trust His heart?*