# Gospel of Matthew Weekly Talk Ideas | Sean McGever

## Matthew Chapter 15

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| Scripture suggestion, basic overview, and background:Matthew Ch. 15 includes at least four parts: 1) Clean and unclean (vv.1-20), 2) Canaanite Woman (vv.21-28), 3) Jesus heals Gentiles (vv.29-31), and 4) Feeding the 4000 (vv.32-39). I think #4 is the best bet for most YL talks, but you could also combine #3&#4, as I’ll show below. One detail which is important, and is missed by going through the odd chapters on semester and the even in the next semester is that Jesus had recently fed 5000 (Mt. 14:13-21), this contrast is important and will be highlighted below as needed. 1. Jesus: Healer & Racial Radical (15:29-31)
	1. Jesus healed the lame, blind, crippled, mute, and others
	2. Jesus did all of this in a Gentile (Unclean) area
2. Jesus: Miracle worker & People very quickly forget what he is capable of (Spiritual amnesia)
	1. People are hungry (15:32)
	2. Disciples forget about Jesus’ power (15:33)
	3. Jesus works a miracle once again (15:34-39)
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| Possible main point(s):* Jesus is a bold God who is not put off by who you are, what you are like, or your background (in any way).
* Jesus is able to heal and do make things out of nothing.
* Are we like the disciples who have Jesus in our midst and yet wonder how to figure out our own problems?
* Where do you turn when your resources are exhausted in life?
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| What this shows us about Jesus:* Jesus is not just a man, he is God, he can heal (v.30) and do miracles (v.35-37)
* Jesus is willing to cut across cultural and societal norms (i.e. his interactions with Gentiles as a Jew)
* Jesus still does miraculous deeds even though the disciples constantly forget what he is capable of
* At least 4000 people knew first-hand from this event alone about Jesus’ miraculous abilities
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| What this has to do with our life:* Imagine the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking, and the blind seeing (v.31) this is a powerful image and shows that Jesus is not merely a human, but is fully God.
* If you think that you are an “outsider” in any way, because of how you act, what you wear, who you are, where you are from, what you believe, etc. ... these things are not barriers for Jesus to work in your life.
* We can get “Jesus amnesia” just like the disciples. They had just seen Jesus do a miracle to feed even more people, 5000 (Mt. 14:13-21) and saw him heal all these people (15:30), yet they still don’t put 2+2 together to make “4” they have no idea what to do when all the people are hungry (again).
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| Relevant technical details:* Sea of Galilee (v.29) = This is not a Jewish area, we know this too from v.31, “they praised the God of Israel”. This means that the people in this region were not Jewish, and therefore, were unclean foreigners and thought of as “pagans”. In today’s terms this could be thought of as a racial and religious foreign land.
* Disciples (v.32) = These are Jesus’ closest friends and followers.
* Gave thanks (v.36) = This is a foreshadow of the Last Supper (Eucharist [communion] = thanksgiving), this point might not make it into a YL talk but it is an important undercurrent in what Jesus is doing.
* “satisfied” (v.37) = Completely filled so that you don’t want anymore, or “stuffed”! They were really full.
* “four thousand, besides women and children” (v.38) = This could have meant as many as 8,000-10,000+ (?)
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| Possible illustrations:* Try to bring the disabilities to life: blind (turn off the lights), mute (be silent for longer than is comfortable for the crowd), lame (sit on the ground and talk about what it would be like to not be able to move). Then talk about what it would have been life for Jesus to change those things (lights on, able to speak, able to move).
* Talk about a racial, social, or cultural lesson you’ve needed to learn or change your ways. This would take a lot of transparency. The point would be to highlight that Jesus went immediately beyond these and cared for all people.
* Bring seven loaves of bread (or maybe seven rolls for the crowd), and a few fish (maybe goldfish or Swedish Fish [yum] since fish are expensive and smelly!) Pass some out, and run out... show that Jesus did a miracle, everyone was satisfied/full/stuffed! You could bring a basket too to re-enact the whole thing.
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*For more details see ylhelp.com*

Matthew 15 (NIV84)

*Clean and Unclean*

**15** Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, 2 “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!”

3 Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? 4 For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’ and ‘Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.’ 5 But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,’ 6 he is not to ‘honor his father’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. 7 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

8 “ ‘These people honor me with their lips,

but their hearts are far from me.

9 They worship me in vain;

their teachings are but rules taught by men.’”

10 Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. 11 What goes into a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean,’ but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean.’ ”

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 a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”

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 the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean.’ 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. 20 These are what make a man ‘unclean’; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him ‘unclean.’ ”

*The Faith of the Canaanite Woman*

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 suffering terribly from demon-possession.”

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.”

24 He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

25 The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.

26 He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.”

27 “Yes, Lord,” she said, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”

28 Then Jesus answered, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

*Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand*

29 Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. 30 Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. 31 The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

32 Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.”

33 His disciples answered, “Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?”

34 “How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked.

“Seven,” they replied, “and a few small fish.”

35 He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. 36 Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. 37 They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 38 The number of those who ate was four thousand, besides women and children. 39 After Jesus had sent the crowd away, he got into the boat and went to the vicinity of Magadan.