**The Book of Matthew**

**Sermon I Matthew: The Jewish Gospel**

Theme of Matthew: Jesus the [Jewish] Messiah is the culmination of salvation history and brings salvation from sin to all people.

Theme verse Matthew 5:17 Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law of the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them.

Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets. Jesus does this in a wide variety of ways.

a. In that he, unlike any other human before him, literally fulfilled all the requirements of the Law of Moses. Leviticus 18:5: “For the man who obeys them will live by them.”

b. In that through his actions he satisfied the penalty for all of us who did not fully obey the Law of Moses. By his wounds we are healed.

c. In that his life fulfilled all the Messianic expectations in the OT. the foreshadows and prefigures contained in the entire Law of Moses (the sacrifices, the festivals, the laws, the items in the tabernacle, etc.) John 5:39

He is the second Adam, He is the antitype to Isaac, he is the second Moses, he is the Son of David….

Everything the Old Testament anticipated finds its fulfillment in Jesus.

d. Jesus completes/rounds out/explains more fully what was only implied by the Law of Moses. Progressive Revelation. This is the sense in which the term is used most directly in the Sermon on the Mount. Ex: not just avoiding adultery

Ex: not just murder Ex: not just loving your neighbor.

Another theme verse

Matthew 1:21 “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (also Matthew 28:18-20?)

Secondary Theme of Matthew: The Kingdom of Heaven/God

Four Portraits, One Jesus

A. In Mark Jesus is a Man of action and he is the Suffering Servant and Savior of Mankind.

B. In Luke Jesus is the Messiah because his life and ministry to the sick, to the poor, to Gentiles—to Outsiders in general, meet the messianic expectation.

C. In John Jesus is the Messiah because of his claims about himself and because of his miracles.

D. In Matthew Jesus is the Messiah who fulfills the Old Testament prophecies.

Things to bear in mind:

A strong Jewish element. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Jewish messianic expectation.

a. Jewish customs, such as hand-washing (15:2) not explained, where Luke or Mark explain them.

b. Use of untranslated Aramaic words such as korban(27:6) raka (5:22).

c. Kingdom of Heaven rather than Kingdom of God, presumably because of Jewish sensitivities about using the name of God.

d. Jewish leaders strongly criticized.

Prophecy fulfillment:

“And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophets.” Here Matthew is helping us out in case we do not get it.

Below, \* = Matthew uses the “this was to fulfill” formula. Possibly he does this when it is not as obvious to his hearers that these are indeed prophecy fulfillment.

\*1:22-23 Isaiah 7:14 virgin birth

2:5-6 Micah 5:2 Birth in Bethlehem

\*2:15 Out of Egypt I called my son. Hosea 11:1.

\*2:17-18 Jeremiah 31:15 Tears in Ramah for the death of children.

\*2:23 He will be called a Nazarene

3:3 As in Mark, JTB fulfills Isaiah 40:3

\*4:14-16 Jesus, despite being born in Bethlehem Ephrathah, is from Zebulun/Naphtali

5:17 Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets

\*8:17 Jesus fulfills Isaiah 53:4 by healing many.

10:34-35 Jesus fulfills Micah 7:6 when families divide over the gospel.

11:2-6 John the Baptist prepares the way for the Messiah/Jesus Mal 3:1.

\*12:17-21 The Messiah a humble and gentle servant. Isaiah 42:2

13:14-15 Parables not to be understood by the hard-hearted Isaiah 6:9

\*13:35 Messiah to speak in parables Psalm 78:2

15:7-9 Disobedience Isaiah 29:13

\*21:4-5 Jesus enters Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of a donkey Zech 9:9

21:13 The temple a den of robbers Isaiah 56:7 Jer 7:11

21:16 Praise from the lips of children Psalm 8:2

21:42 Jesus rejected and becomes the capstone Ps 118:22

26:31 Shepherd struck and sheep scattered Zechariah 13:7

\*27:9-10 Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver Zechariah 11:12-13

1. Matthew 1:20-23 (Isaiah 7:14) The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel” (which means God-with-us).

This tells us that:

Jesus is the son of man (Mary)

Jesus is the son of God (Luke: by the Holy Spirit)

Jesus is God-with us. He is God, and he is with us. .

“all this” (v.22) was to fulfill this expectation

from his birth (1:22) to his ascension,

and even beyond (Matthew 28:20) Jesus is God with us.

If we are disciples of Jesus, God will be with us. Are you a disciple?

And God is with us as a family of disciples.

2. Matthew 2:15 (Hosea 11:1) tells us that Jesus is Savior, as he goes down into Egypt in order to call us out of Egypt and slavery to sin.

Out of Egypt I called my son. Hosea 11:1. Note that critics accuse

Matthew here of taking Hosea 11:1 out of context, but this is a shallow understanding of the OT and the principle of foreshadowing.

Why? Because Jesus fulfilled all the Law and the Prophets, that’s why.

a. Out of Egypt God called Joseph (his bones were carried out of Egypt)

Joseph, the chosen favorite son of Jacob, went down to Egypt as a slave.

Gen 50:24-25

Exodus 13:19 430 years later

Joshua 24:32 40 years later. Quite an Odyssey, but out of Egypt God called his Son.

b. Out of Egypt God called Moses, the prefigure of Christ.

c. Out of Egypt God called his people Israel, a foreshadow of our own being called out of Egypt.

d. Out of Egypt God called Jesus as the savior of his people out of Egypt. (It is no accident that Matthew is the one who reports Jesus going down to Egypt)

e. Out of Egypt God calls every one of us, all of who are slaves to sin (John 8:31f)

Moses left the palace of Pharaoh to live among slaves in order to save the slaves.

Moses, in a sense, went down into Egypt, but was called out of Egypt.

Jesus left heaven to live among us slaves so that he could save us from spiritual slavery.

The point of this prophecy is that Jesus, Messiah is savior of the world.

Gregory of Nazianzus:

**"What [he has not] assumed has not been healed;**

**Jesus became like us so we could become like him.**

**Q: Have you left Egypt? Have you been saved yet? If not, what are you waiting for?**

3. Matthew 2:23 “So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.”

Skeptics? Where? Matthew is playing fast and loose with the OT.

Hebrew: *nazer* = shoot, branch. Jesus lived in a town called Branchville.

Isaiah 11:1-2, 10 “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. Messiah is the branch of *Jesse* and of *David*.

Jeremiah 23:5 “The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will raise up from David a righteous Branch, a king who will rule wisely.”

Jesus is both the Branch of Jesse/David and a Nazarene.

The point: Messiah will be a king (but not the kind of king that the Jews expected)

Jesus is King of Kings. He is royalty.

Zechariah 6:11-13 He will be a priest on his throne. This is Jesus—a priestly King.

4. Matthew 12:15-21 Isaiah 42:1-4. Jesus a humble and gentle servant.

Jesus was the most powerful man who ever lived, yet he dealt gently with us sinners. Jesus will bring justice, but not with a sword. That is a great comfort to me. The Jews missed this aspect. We, too, should be humble and gentle.

He will lead justice to victory. OT Justice = making things right—as they should be.

Commentator: “The complete establishing of God’s will.”

5. Matthew 21:4-5 Riding on a colt. Jesus is King “your king”, but not the kind of king the world expects. He is a gentle and humble king. Ex:Matt 11:30 My yoke is easy and my burden light.

Zech 9:9-10 Our king will rule from the River to the ends of the earth.

How can a king who rides on a donkey rule “from the River to the ends of the earth.” (the River is the Euphrates)

Is Jesus the king of your life? Are you a citizen of his kingdom? Then you will obey the constitution of that kingdom which is in Matthew 5-7.

If time: Let’s start Mattthew:

Matthew 1:1-17 Matthew starts with genealogy.

Why? To show that Jesus is the Messiah who fulfills all that written in the Law and the Prophets!

The Old Testament (and the whole Bible for that matter) is a story about God sending a savior

Matthew is Jesus’ lineage through his mother (1:16) (Luke is through is father)

Matthew begins with Abraham (Jewish Messiah)

Luke begins with Adam to show the universal saving role of Jesus. Luke is the universal gospel.

Connects Jesus to Abraham, even more so to David, and also to Moses.

Matthew 1:1 Jesus the “son of David.” This genealogy is intended to show the royal lineage of Jesus.

The Son of David (and therefore king)

The Son of Abraham (ie. Isaac whose life was offered: and therefore savior)

Matthew identifies Jesus as King and savior.

In Luke, the birth narratives are wonderful stories. In Matthew, only that information relevant to showing Jesus fulfills prophecy, prefigure and foreshadow is used.

It is a resume of salvation history.

It stresses David taking the throne and, 14 generations later, Israel losing the throne in the exile. Then 14 generations later, Jesus takes the throne which is a (messianic) expectation of Jesus taking the throne back again. The second David.

We were with God, but we lost our place, and now, in Jesus we are finding our place again.

Its “irregularities” point out that we should not expect Jesus to only be a savior for the Jews. Tamar probably a Canaanite, Ruth a widowed Moabite, Bathsheba a Hittite, Rahab a Gentile. All four births were of suspect origin to lowly outsiders.

And of course, the birth of Jesus was considered by some to be ill repute as well.

Summarize: This is what I learn from prophecies fulfilled

Jesus is Son of Man

Jesus is Son of God

Jesus is God with us

Jesus is Savior

Jesus is a priestly King

Jesus is a humble and gentle servant/king

Jesus is son of Abraham

Jesus is son of Moses

Jesus is son of David.

Jesus fulfilled all the Law and the Prophets.

**The Book of Matthew**

**Sermon II Preparing for Ministry**

Theme of Matthew: Jesus the [Jewish] Messiah is the culmination of salvation history and brings salvation from sin to all people.

Theme verse Matthew 5:17 Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law of the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them.

Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets. Jesus does this in a wide variety of ways.

a. In that he, unlike any other human before him, literally fulfilled all the requirements of the Law of Moses.

b. In that through his actions he satisfied the penalty for all of us who did not fully obey the Law of Moses.

c. In that his life fulfilled all the Messianic expectations in the OT.

d. Jesus completes/rounds out/explains more fully what was only implied by the Law of Moses. Ex: not just avoiding adultery—not even lusting.

Last week: looked at prophecies in Matthew and what they tell us about Jesus.

**Matt 1:22-23 Jesus is God-with-us**

**Matt 2:15 Jesus a Savior who calls us out of Egypt**

**Matt 2:23 Jesus the Branch/Nazarene a priestly King**

**Matt 12:15-21 Jesus a gentle and humble servant**

**Matt 21:4-5 Jesus a humble but victorious king**

Matthew 1:1-17 Matthew starts with genealogy. Jews use genealogy to tell a story.

Why? To show that Jesus is the Messiah who fulfills all that written in the Law and the Prophets—the connection with the Old Testament

The Old Testament (and the whole Bible for that matter) is a story about God sending a savior

Matthew 1:1 Jesus the “son of David.” This genealogy is intended to show the royal lineage of Jesus.

The Son of David (and therefore king)

The Son of Abraham (ie. Isaac whose life was offered: and therefore savior)

Matthew connects with the Old Testament and identifies Jesus as King and Savior.

Luke gives Jesus’ genealogy through Joseph

Matthew gives Jesus’ genealogy through Mary Matt 1:16

Its “irregularities” point out that Jesus will not only be a savior for the Jews.

v. 3 whose mother was Tamar probably a Canaanite.

v. 5 Rahab a prostitute and a Gentile.

v. 5 Ruth a widowed Moabite

v. 6 whose mother Bathsheba was probably a Hittite,

All four births were of suspect origin to lowly outsiders.

And of course, the birth of Jesus was considered by some to be ill repute as well.

**Matthew 2:1-23 God calls Jesus “out of Egypt”**

Matthew already said Jesus is son of David and of Abraham. Now he will show him to be son of Moses.

This entire section is designed to show Jesus as the true king of Israel (as opposed to Herod), as the son of Moses and as a Messiah/King for all nations.

It also points out that Jesus is king, not just of the Jews, but of the Gentiles.

v. 2 Gentiles: Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?

v. 11 Gentiles are the first to acknowledge Jesus as King, and to worship him.

These actions fulfill foreshadows in Isaiah 60:1-6 (gold and frankincense).

“Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn”

“Your sons come from afar… You will look and be radiant, your heart will throb with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come.”

These actions remind us of the Queen of Sheba who brought similar gifts to Solomon (1 Kings 10:2) Again, we see a Gentile honoring a Jewish king.

Q: If you are a Gentile, is Jesus your king?

**2:13-19 Jesus and Moses**

This section contains prophetic references to Moses.

Like Jesus,

1. A jealous king wanted to kill him as a baby (v. 13), and killed many Jewish boys in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent being overthrown by a Jewish king.

2. Both came out of Egypt (v. 15)

“Out of Egypt I called my Son.” Hosea 11:1 In order to redeem spiritual Israel.

3. Both returned home when the jealous king died. (v. 19)

Jesus is the second Moses.

**Matt 3:1-4:16 Preparation for Jesus’ ministry**

**3:1-12 John “the Baptist.” Prepares for Jesus’ ministry.**

Focuses on prophecy-fulfillment, of course. JTB is the Elijah who is to come.

Prophetic material in this section:

Matthew 3:3 quotes Isaiah 40:3

A voice calling in the wilderness,

Prepare the way for the Lord. Prepare for Jesus’ ministry. How?

We will see.

But before that, he also adds parallels between JTB and Elijah such as

Matt 3:4 clothes of camel’s hair and a leather belt (2 Kings 1:8)

3:4 His food and solitary life

Later (Matthew 11:7-15) Jesus quotes Malachi 3:1 “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare the way before you.”

Still later (Mathew 17:12-13) Jesus says that JTB is the Elijah who is to come (Malachi 4:5)

But… What is the message of John that will prepare the way for Jesus?

Matthew 3:2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.

The message of John is repentance and preparing for the Kingdom of God.

BTW, this is also the message of Jesus in Matthew 4:17.

Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand (near). The messianic age is upon us. The true king—the one prophesied so many times—is immanent.

Q: What is the kingdom of God to you?

The Kingdom of God is a life submitted to God’s will. Is Jesus truly your king?

Who lives in this kingdom? Those who have truly repented.

Q: Have you truly repented? Have you changed you mind? Have you turned your back on your rebellion and come into a loyal obedience to God?

Why now? Because the kingdom of God is coming! This is the Day of the Lord! We need to flee from God’s wrath into safety in God’s kingdom. (v. 7)

**3:13-17 Baptism of Jesus (skip)**

**4:1-11 Jesus tested in the desert. Jesus prepared for his ministry. How? Tested**

Tested is better than tempted here. Is Jesus ready for his ministry? Will he pass the test?

Again, Matthew’s account is full in allusions to the Old Testament—especially Deuteronomy 6-8.

Deut 8:2 Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commands.

v. 1 “Led by the Spirit…” God turns around Satan’s trying to tempt us into a test which can prepare us for greater levels of ministry.

In this case, whereas Israel, under Moses, failed miserably, Jesus was triumphant. He passed the test with an A+. Again we see the theme here that Jesus is the true Israel who was called out of Egypt and tested in the desert.

Allusions to Moses

v. 2 forty days of fasting/preparation (Moses 40 years in the desert)

v. 8 shown the “whole world” from a mountain (like Moses at Mt. Nebo Deut 34:1-4)

v. 2 After forty days of fasting, Jesus was hungry. No kidding!

The temptation/trial were to:

1. v. 4 Temptation to rely on human-produced, physical things rather than on God. Will Jesus pass the test?

Jesus’ response: To quote Scripture. Specifically Deuteronomy 8:3

Q: Who or what do you rely on when the rubber hits the road? Stuff or God?

2. v. 7 Temptation to put God to the test. To do what is foolish and not wise and hope that God will save you from your foolishness. If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down…

Note: Satan even quotes scripture out of context!

Jesus’ response: To quote another scripture. Deuteronomy 6:16

“Do not put the Lord your God to the test as you did at Massah.”

Rely on God to get you out of messes of your own creation (as did Israel at Massah in Deut 6:16 Exodus 17:7 *massah* = testing, where they asked, “Is God among us or not.”). They had no water and were about to stone Moses

We should not say to God, If you will do such and such, then I will do…

If you will heal my sick daughter, then I will…

Why? Because faith is belief in things not seen… (Heb 11:1)

No putting out fleeces like Gideon did. If God does not want me to date this non-Christian he will give me a sign.

I am waiting for a sign from God about my working on Sundays.

Do not rely on God to show you a sign about something that advice or scripture can answer for you.

v. 10 Worship things other than God. To give non-exclusive loyalty to God. (Deut

6:13 “Fear the Lord your God, serve him only, and take your oaths in his name.” In the context of Deut 6:10-13 the temptation is that, when God blesses us, we rely on those things rather than on the one who gave them to us. Job, achievements, good looks, etc.

Q: How are you doing in these areas?

Summary: Preparing for Ministry

**Repent for the kingdom of God is here**

**Learn to rely on God, not on things of this world.**

**Do not test God. Just do what is right.**

**Above all, make sure that you worship God alone.**

**The Book of Matthew**

**Sermon III Kingdom Attitudes**

Theme of Matthew: Jesus the [Jewish] Messiah is the culmination of salvation history and brings salvation from sin to all people.

Theme verse Matthew 5:17 Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law of the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them.

We have covered a number of the prophecies fulfilled by Jesus in Matthew, showing that in Matthew Jesus is revealed through the way he fulfills prophecy and the messianic expectation as the son of Abraham, the second Moses and the son of David.

One more example before TSOTM

Matthew 4:12-17 Jesus begins his public ministry.

v. 13 Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which is by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali, fulfilling Isaiah 9:1-2 as this is the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali.

“In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

The coming of Jesus in his ministry is the revealing of the kingdom of God and the dawning of a great light to the people.

In case you were wondering why this is a Messianic prophecy and Matthew is not just taking it our of context: Isaiah 9:6 “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

As with all of these prophecies fulfilled, they tell us something about Jesus, which is that he is the dawning of a great light—the revealing of the Kingdom.

Skipping Matthew 4:18-22 (covered in Mark) and 23-25 (will cover in Luke)

**Matthew 5:1-7:29 The Sermon on the Mount.**

This is the heart of the book of Matthew. It is a sort of constitution of the Kingdom of God. It is the clearest and most complete description of Jesus’ teaching on how to live as a citizen in the Kingdom of God—as a disciple. Note: Seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33) is not limited to being deeply involved in the Church!

This is a sermon about the life of a disciple in kingdom of God/heaven.

Matthew 5:1-2 Jesus sits to teach, as Rabbis always did. Note, he is speaking primarily to his disciples, not to the crowd (although 7:28 does mention the crowds). (my picture is of vast crowds at the Sermon in the Mount… joke: Monty Python—blessed are the cheesemakers)

This sermon is directed primarily toward those who already recognize Jesus as their teacher. To outsiders this stuff is nonsense!!!!

5:3-12 The Beatitudes. What leads to true happiness/satisfaction?

The world will never “get” the Beatitudes. This is utter nonsense to the world.

The world sees this as foolishness, but this is the way to true greatness in God’s kingdom.

“You’re serious. You actually believe this?”

But…. If you get this, then you get everything you need for godliness in the kingdom of God.

This is the meaning of the somewhat obscure passage Matthew 6:22-23.

These are kingdom attitudes

Greek: *makarios* Does not mean blessed, but more like “happy.”

In the world it is more like Sad are the rich, the impure…

As you look at these attitudes, notice that there is a sense in which Jesus is describing himself. Jesus is the most poor in spirit, mournful, meek, righteousness-seeking, merciful, single-hearted, peace-making person who ever lived and he, arguably is also the most persecuted person who ever lived.

Pay very careful attention that you understand these words. These are the keys to the kingdom of God.

5:3 Poor in spirit = not thinking oneself as great before God. Humility before God. Unassuming. Any blessing, any greatness, if I have it at all, is from God, not myself. I deserve nothing. I have earned nothing. If I am anything, it is all of God and none of me. All the glory goes to God.

I am so fortunate to be here at all.

Why me?

I am only an unworthy servant. Luke 17:10 “So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.”

Some of us: I am pretty awesome. The church is lucky to have me.

Q: Do you have this poor-in-spirit attitude? (I don’t, at least not as I ought. I like words of praise)

Q: Who among us has this attitude? Imitate that person.

“theirs is the kingdom” = this is the kind of people who dwell in God’s kingdom. They will not have much in this world, but they will have everything in the final Kingdom.

5:4 Mourn = not necessarily bereaved, as at a death, but it denotes a life which the world would consider to be missing that which would make us happy.

R. T. France: “Those who suffer for their loyalty to God.”

Happy are those who the world thinks are missing out on the pleasures of life for the sake of the kingdom.

Happy are those who do not have what everyone thinks makes you happy.

Ex: Paul who did not have a stable family, career, home.

Ex: Sisters in the church who have willingly accepted singleness rather than go out to the world to find a husband. (I feel for them, but God says, “happy”)

Ex: Disciples who choose to stay in Merced to seek a harvest for God, even though it is not the most awesome city to live in, and even though it might hurt their career in the long run.

Live on the “wrong” side of town in order to make a difference.

Q: How has God blessed you recently in giving you suffering and heartbreak?

Q: What have you willingly gone without that the world would thing you are crazy for doing so?

Ex: Go on one year challenge, give sacrificially to keep this ministry going.

If you do these things, your comfort will come from God. You will have real, deep, heart-felt consolation and a sense of having a life of value to God and to humanity.

5:5 Meek = humble Unassuming. Similar to poor in spirit. Poor in spirit is humility toward God, meek is humility toward fellow humans.

Willing to be pushed around if it will help the kingdom of God.

The world DEFINITELY does not value this character trait!!! (yet, who do they consider great? Mandela, Theresa, ML King, Ghandi, Schweitzer, Jesus)

Christians are NOT pushovers!!! They are not “doormats.”(Jesus calls Pharisees a brood of vipers) But they are willing to be pushed over for the sake of the kingdom!

Q: Are you humble? Would people describe you as meek? Are you willing to look foolish to the world?

Q: How has God blessed you recently in humbling you and causing you to rely on him?

This is the upside down Kingdom of God. The way up is down!!!

Result: If you rely on him for everything, you will have everything—you will inherit the earth. You will rule over those who pushed you out of the way.

They laughed a Noah, but not when it started raining! Abraham, Mary, Zacchaeus

5:6 Hunger and thirst for righteousness. (Matthew 6:33 seek first his righteousness) = a deep desire for a relationship of obedience and trust in God.

Righteousness in this context is not necessarily sinlessness but a life lived rightly—a life lived as God would have us live. To be aligned with God’s will. For things to be as they ought to be.

This is not sinlessness, but intense desire to be right with God. David.

The key word here is DESIRE. Do you deeply desire righteousness?

Willingness to give great energy toward overcoming sins and doing what is right.

Are you zealous for personal righteousness?

Q: How has God blessed you recently in your seeking after repentance?

Result: If you empty yourself, God will fill you up! The stuff you pour out will be of lesser value than what God pours in, but are you ready to do this?

God wants to pour blessings into your life, but you need to clean the house to enable this to happen

5:7 Merciful. Showing grace to others as it has been shown to you (Matthew 18:21-35 Parable of the unmerciful servant)

Q: How has God blessed you recently through your showing mercy to one who did not deserve it?

Matthew 9:13 I desire mercy, not sacrifice. “Sacrifice” is purity and doing things the right way. “Mercy is putting others before you.”

There is a place for calling people to live right. Jesus could be blistering at times, especially at religious hypocricy. Jesus did this, but his natural attitude was mercy. Grace. That is why Jonah was so angry at God. “Jonah became very angry. ‘Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? This is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.

Q: Are you ever tempted to want God to send calamity on enemies and sinners?

They say “hate the sin, love the sinner”

Hate the sin = sacrifice

Love the sinner = mercy.

It is really hard to do this!!!! I say love the sinner and love the sinner (and, by the way, hate the sin)

Mercy is a posture.

Everything we do should have a redemptive quality. (Gregg M.)

Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you? To act justly (beatitude # 4) and to love mercy (beatitude #5) and to walk humbly (beatitude #1,3) with your God.

Hosea 6:6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

As disciples, we need to uphold rightness and holiness and oppose sin in all of its aspects.

But… Our first, our primary posture needs to be mercy, not sacrifice.

When people get humble before God we need to be there to lift them up.

Example: Prodigal Son That is mercy, not sacrifice. Did they have a “conversation” later? I am sure they did.

5:8 Pure in heart = undivided heart: a heart loyal to God. An inner life which is consistent with the outward profession.

This is not principally about “purity” (ie sexual purity or pure thoughts)

Q: Do you have divided loyalty? Can God count on you all the time?

Hebrew: Hesed love, covenant loyalty.

Q: Who in our church is “always there?” Daisy, Andres (and others…)

Result: If we have an undivided heart—a clear God-focus then guess what!!

We will see him. (for they will see God)

5:9 A maker of peace. We are not merely peaceful. We make peace. We create peace.

Q: How might we do this?

When we see people in conflict, we do not rest until they have come to peace with one another.

Willing to go to unsafe places to bring the estranged back together.

Q: Are you a peacemaker? Or are you a conflict avoider?

If so, then you will be a child of God!!!

5:10-16 This is the upside-down Kingdom of God.

Here he is definitely addressing the disciples, not the crowd!

5:10-12 Arguably, this is not one of the beatitudes. This is the result of how we live, it is not how we live.

Q: Why are they persecuted blessed? (because their reward is great in heaven).

Can anyone share their experience of persecution and whether they agree that this caused them to be blessed?

1 Pet 4:12-13 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice isasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”

Example of sister and Mohann Nanjudan

Example of brothers in Tamil Nadu

Example of a guy swinging a club at me in the dorm.

Example of me being pulled aside by police at CSUB

Q: Be honest with yourself. Are you capable of feeling happy if you are insulted or slandered because you are a Christian?

Matthew 5:13-16 We are the difference-makers.

5:13 We are the salt (both the one that gives flavor to and the preservative that saves from spoiling) [aside: some have tried to show that the Bible is in error scientifically here as salt, technically, cannot lose its saltiness, but this is clearly a metaphor]

What we can lose is our distinctiveness. Are you distinctive?

Last week I was eating some guacamole. To Jan: did you add lemon?

Your friend: did you add Christ?

Q: Are you salty? Are you spicing things up? Are you the one who livens things up at work? Are your actions causing others to be preserved.

2 Cor 2:15-17 We are the aroma of life or of death, depending on the one doing the smelling.

Matthew 5:14-16 We are the light (the one who illuminates, both revealing sinfulness, but also pointing the way to God)

Wait, isn’t Jesus the light of the world? (John 8:12) Yes, but he is no longer here.

If time: John 3:19-21 Light makes things clear so that people know where they are at, spiritually. Many will hate the light you throw on them.

As you walk around (fill in the blank…) do you realize that, to the extent God will preserve these people and to the extent that these people will see God, it will be because you were in their lives. Life in the kingdom is life in a glass house.

Q: Is this you? Is this how you view yourself in stores, in lines, in classes, on line, etc….?

Q: Why does this not contradict Matthew 6:1-8?

Q: In what sense is it good for us to let people “see” our good deeds and in what sense is it sinful and warned against?

Matthew 5:17-20. The key to the sermon and, to some extent, the key to Matthew.

Jesus is the completion/fulfillment of the Old Testament in the four ways mentioned above.

a. In that he, unlike any other human before him, literally fulfilled all the requirements of the Law of Moses.

b. In that through his actions he satisfied the penalty for all of us who did not fully obey the Law of Moses.

c. Everything the OT anticipated finds its fulfillment in Jesus (prophecies, foreshadows and prefigures, etc.)

d. Jesus completes/explains more fully what was only implied by the Law of Moses.

Q: Why, then, must our righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees? (because of what we have that they did not)

Matt 5:21-48 Jesus spiritualizes the Law of Moses. “It was said to you of old….”

These are practical principles for life in the Kingdom of God. Jesus moves from the actions to the thoughts.

-don’t use fighting words

-don’t entertain lust

-let your yes be yes

-love your enemy

Q: How literally should we take Matthew 5:38-42 in light of Matthew 10:16

Should we be something like a door mat?

Ex: Acts 23:1-7 Paul: “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!” Later Paul defends himself by invoking his Roman citizenship.

John 18:19-23 Jesus: If I spoke the truth, why do you strike me?

When does wise as a serpent come in and when does harmless as a dove come in?

Suggestion:

1. First of all, probably we need to grow more in letting ourself be abused rather than learning when to defend ourselves.

2. Always “go the extra mile (beyond that required by the “law”) even if you do defend yourself.

3. Generally defend the rights of others and give up your own rights.

4. Go the extra mile and turn the other cheek if it will

Lead to peace

If the hurt to you is relatively small (not in the hospital, not going bankrupt)

If doing so does not bring harm to others

If we can reasonable predict that more good than harm will be done in the big picture.

If doing so is not “foolish” even in the eyes of a reasonable Christian.

Summary 5:48 Be perfect, complete, mature. Teleon. A high calling!

**The Book of Matthew**

**Sermon IV Life in the Kingdom of God**

Last Matthew Sermon: Kingdom Attitudes

In the Kingdom of God, the attitudes God expects are:

Poor in spirit

Mourn

Humble

Hunger and thirst for righteousness

Merciful

Pure in heart

Maker of peace

5:9 A maker of peace. We are not merely peaceful. We make peace. We create peace. This is probably the only “beatitude” that the world actually would applaud.

Maker of peace with people you have been in conflict with.

Maker of peace between people and groups who have been in conflict.

Q: How might we do this?

1. Who are you estranged from? What can you do about this?

Ex. Miguel, Me and SK

2. Who do you know who is in conflict?

When we see people in conflict, we do not rest until they have come to peace with one another.

Willing to go to unsafe places to bring the estranged back together.

Q: Are you a peacemaker? Or are you a conflict avoider?

If so, then you will be a child of God!!!

5:10-16 The upside-down Kingdom of God.

Here he is definitely addressing the disciples, not the crowd!

5:10-12 Arguably, this is not one of the beatitudes.

This one is different. The others tell you that you will be blessed/happy if you act in this way.

This one is you will be blessed if this happens to you. You can be pure, you can mourn, but you cannot persecute yourself.

This one is a positive command. Rejoice and be fire up about this. “When people falsely say all kinds of things against you.

Q: Is this realistic? Yes. In the early church, when persecutions broke out, disciples flocked to that city for the privilege of being persecuted.

Q: Why are the persecuted blessed? (v. 10, like v. 3 theirs is the kingdom. These are kingdom people!

v 12 because their reward is great in heaven).

1 Pet 4:12-13 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.” (2 Tim 3:12 In fact, all those who seek to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted)

Example of sister and Mohann Nanjudan

Example of brothers in Tamil Nadu.

Brother in Bagdadh 40 mo. In prison. Leader in Amman 10 mo without contact.

Example of a guy swinging a club at me in the dorm.

Example of me being pulled aside by police at CSUB

On the other hand, I can remember hiding my Bible. I can remember times when I was a hidden Christian—when a group that should have known I was a disciple of Jesus did not.

I remember a time when a student of mine came to church and said, “Oh, I thought Christians share their faith!”

This is a heart issue. Coll 1:24 I fill up in myself the suffering of Christ.

Q: Be honest with yourself. Are you capable of feeling happy if you are insulted or slandered because you are a Christian?

Why? Because in this you identify with Christ. You become like him.

Are you truly grateful for what he has done? Really?

Matthew 5:13-16 We are the difference-makers.

The reason we are persecuted (if we are) is that we are difference-makers

5:13 We are the salt (both the one that gives flavor to things and the preservative that saves from spoiling) [aside: some have tried to show that the Bible is in error scientifically here as salt, technically, cannot lose its saltiness, but this is clearly a metaphor]

What we can lose is our distinctiveness. Are you distinctive?

Q: Are you salty? Are you spicing things up? Are you the one who stirs things up for Jesus at work? Are your actions causing others to be preserved?

This is related to the previous verse. To the extent we are distinct, to that extent we are likely to be persecuted.

2 Cor 2:14-17 We are the aroma of life or of death, depending on the one doing the smelling.

Q: Have you been stinking it up at work, in your neighborhood, in your class (to the extent that you can during Covid-19).

Jesus: As his followers, we need to be distinctive. We need to be different. We need to add spiritual “flavor” to the lives of those around us.

Our differentness is not the food we eat, the language we speak (mostly) or the clothes we wear (mostly). Our differentness is found in our poorness of spirit, our mourning over sin, our humility, our mercifulness, our purity of heart…

Q: How is it going for you?

Matthew 5:14-16 We are the light (the one who illuminates, makes distinctions clear, both **revealing sinfulness**, but also **pointing the way to God**)

Again: Distinctive.

John 3:19-21 Light makes things clear so that people know where they are at, spiritually. Many will hate the light you throw on them. There is a time for exposing the evil done at work, in your home, in your neighborhood.

Think of the most depraved party you were at. Were the lights bright or dim? Imagine turning on the lights really bright!

Example of the guy in the copy shop.

I would appreciate it if you would not use profanity.

Pointing out when gossip is happening

Is this appropriate, what we are doing here?

What we are doing here does not seem completely honest.

That seems divisive to me.

Some of us: I do not want to rock the boat.

Wait, isn’t Jesus the light of the world? (John 8:12) Yes, but he is no longer here.

As you walk around (fill in the blank…) do you realize that, to the extent God will preserve these people and to the extent that these people will see God, it will be because you were in their lives. Life in the kingdom is life in a glass house. As Christians, our lives are on display (or they ought to be).

And if you declare for Jesus, people are watching.

We are the salt and the light of this world.

Q: Is this you? Is this how you view yourself in stores, in lines, in classes, on line.?

But I am a shy person. Moses was a very shy person.

Aspect #2 v. 16 Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

There are people out there, maybe only 10%, who are looking for the kingdom of God. Like moths and a street light.

Q: Why does this not contradict Matthew 6:1-8? Do not do your good deeds for show.

Q: In what sense is it good for us to let people “see” our good deeds and in what sense is it sinful and warned against?

We talk about our life in Christ, explain why we have changed, but we do it so as to draw attention to Christ, ***not to ourselves.***

Talk about what your church has been doing to change lives.

Talk about how the lives of Noe and Florene have been changed. Miracles!

Talk about the amazing relationships in your church.

Matthew 5:17-20. The key to the sermon and, to some extent, the key to Matthew.

Jesus is the completion/fulfillment of the Old Testament in the four ways mentioned above.

a. In that he, unlike any other human before him, literally fulfilled all the requirements of the Law of Moses.

b. In that through his actions he satisfied the penalty for all of us who did not fully obey the Law of Moses.

c. Everything the OT anticipated finds its fulfillment in Jesus (prophecies, foreshadows and prefigures, etc.)

d. Jesus completes/explains more fully what was only implied by the Law of Moses.

Q: Why, then, must our righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees? (because of what we have that they did not). We are taking the kingdom of God to a new level. Jesus: the least in the kingdom is greater than John the Baptist. Matt 11:11

This is the real thing. The kingdom of God is at hand. It has arrived. What was good enough before no longer is.

We are talking about life in the kingdom of God.

These are the new, Kingdom expectations for practical living. Matt 5:3-10 Kingdom attitudes. Matthew 5:21-48 Practical living in the Kingdom of God.

Summary:

Blessed are those who actively go about bringing others together—who bring reconciliation between individuals and groups.

Happy (theoretically) are those who are abused, talked against, intimidated and dealt with unfairly because they live according to the Sermon on the Mount.

Are you salt and are you light?

Are you actively helping people to be saved?

Are you willing to be different for the sake of Christ?

Are you regularly shedding light in dark places?

Then you will be comforted, you are a child of God, you are an honored citizen of the kingdom of God and you will see God!

**The Book of Matthew**

**Sermon V Righteousness in the Kingdom of God**

Last Matthew Sermon: Citizens of the Kingdom of God are distinct. We stick out.

We are poor in spirit before God,

we mourn over our own sin and the sins of others,

we are meek/humble in our relationships with other humans,

we desperately hunger for to be right with God,

We are merciful in our dealings with each other and with others as well,

we are pure of heart in our devotion to God

we do not just seek peace, we make peace between people.

This is why we are persecuted—for righteousness’ sake, because we are the salt of the earth, the aroma of Christ and we are the light of the world. But to some we are the aroma of death and darkness does not appreciate the light.

But, there are those in our community who are looking for that salt and that light.

Therefore, we must put forth that aroma of Christ and be a city on a hill whose light shines before people in Merced.

Matthew 5:17-20. The key to the sermon and, to some extent, the key to Matthew.

Jesus is the completion/fulfillment of the Old Testament in the four ways mentioned above.

a. In that he, unlike any other human before him, literally fulfilled all the requirements of the Law of Moses.

b. In that through his actions he satisfied the penalty for all of us who did not fully obey the Law of Moses.

c. Everything the OT anticipated finds its fulfillment in Jesus (prophecies, foreshadows and prefigures, etc.)

d. Jesus completes/explains more fully what was only implied by the Law of Moses.

He is the fulfillment and the completion of all God’s plans for humanity.

Matt 5:18 Not the least stroke of the pen (the letter yod, the smallest of the Hebrew letters, which was often omitted) not the dot (the vowel marks in the Hebrew, which was not even in the original text) will disappear from the Law (of Moses) until everything is fulfilled.

But… Everything is fulfilled in Christ. He is the fulfillment of the Law.

5:19-20 Therefore… Here is what you should do.

1. We need to put the beatitudes and the practical teaching below into practice in our everyday lives.

2. Our righteousness must certainly surpass that of the Pharisees.

“whoever practices and teaches these commands (the SOTM) will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Q: Why, then, must our righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees? (because of what we have that they did not). We are taking the kingdom of God to a new level. Jesus: the least in the kingdom is greater than John the Baptist.

This is the real thing. The kingdom of God is at hand. It has arrived. What was good enough before no longer is.

“From those to whom much has been given, much will be expected.” (Luke 12:48)

The Pharisees were extremely devoted to the smallest possible part of the Law, but this is not sufficient for entrance into Jesus’ kingdom.

Why? Because “Those who do these things will live by them” Lev 18:5

We are talking about life in the kingdom of God.

These are the new, Kingdom expectations for practical living. Matt 5:3-10 Kingdom attitudes. (poor in spirit, mourn, meek, thirst for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers)

Matthew 5:21-48 Practical living in the Kingdom of God. The radical ethic of the Kingdom of God. (read the whole thing)

Matt 5:21-48 Jesus spiritualizes the Law of Moses. “It was said to you of old….”

These are practical principles for life in the Kingdom of God. Jesus moves from the actions (Old Testament) to the motives of the heart and to the thoughts.

The following are examples and not a comprehensive list.

Notice Matthew 5:22 But I tell you… Jesus here is implying he is speaking with absolute authority, direct from God.

Which explains Matthew 7:28-29

v. 21-26 -Don’t murder becomes don’t use fighting words “you fool” or hold bitterness in your heart.

v. 27-30 -Don’t commit adultery becomes don’t entertain lust in your heart.

v. 31-32 -Men can divorce their wives for any reason becomes don’t divorce except for marital unfaithfulness.

v. 33-37 -Fulfill you oath becomes let your yes be yes. Don’t even make oaths.

v. 38-42 -An eye for an eye becomes do not resist and evil person and go the second mile

v. 43-47 -Love your neighbor becomes love your enemy

v. 21-26 Don’t murder becomes don’t use fighting words “you fool.” or hold bitterness in your heart.

BTW, this happened in our fellowship Fri. PM.

Note v. 22 If not you are liable to hell.

v. 23-24 Like we saw earlier, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. We should obey God in the way we worship, but having the right heart toward others and showing them grace is more essential.

v. 23 We need to work conflicts out with each other. Reconcile!

We are a small church. This is great, but we will get in each other’s faces. We will give and take offense. We MUST keep unity.

But what if they are 80% at fault, and I am only 20% at fault, do I have to do this?

Yes!!! Apologize for your part, and let them decide what they will do.

Be reconciled!!! Do not be estranged.

And if we “blow it.” Let’s get it right immediately. Amen?

Matt 5:27-30 Do not commit the act becomes do not even think about committing the act.

Brothers, whether married or single, do not even think about the act.

Pornography is the most insidious poison in our culture. It will kill you.

If you struggle with lust or pornography, you have to come into the light.

Do whatever it takes to cut it off.

v. 29 If you eye causes you to sin, gouge it out.

If you access to Instagram or facebook or even the internet in general causes you to sin, CUT IT OFF!!!

If your gym membership causes you to sin….

If Netflix movies produce temptation that leads to sin, cancel your subscription.

If going back home leads you to sexual sin, don’t go back home.

Some of us like to find out what we can get away with. What can I do and still not be sinning? This is the wrong question to ask.

Don’t be prideful! You are not the exception. 1 Cor 10:12 If you think you stand firm…

How can I stay as far as possible from this sin?

Matt 5:31-32. God has always hated divorce, but as Jesus says in Matt 19, God allowed it for the Jews because of their hard hearts.

In the kingdom of God, Don’t even think about it. Period. God hates divorce, and you should too. (Malachi 2:16)

Some have almost hoped their spouse would commit marital unfaithfulness so they can have an out.

Matt 5:33-37 Do not make oaths.(a big thing in the Jewish world) Simply let your word be your word.

Matt 5:38-42 It was said, “an eye for an eye…” Lev 24:20, Ex 21:24-25, Deut 19:21

Jesus: But I, the Son of God, the one who ushers in the kingdom of God say….

Do not resist an evil person. 1. v. 39 If someone strikes you on the cheek…

2. v. 40 If someone is using the system against you… Give your cloak (the more valuable item) as well

3. v. 41 And go the extra mile…

Jesus uses three examples. He REALLY wants us to get this.

Folks, this is a radical ethic here!

Turn the other cheek…Scholars tell us this is probably not about a violent act but about someone insulting someone else.

Turning the other cheek probably is more in reference to being insulted than physically beaten.

If someone punches you, cover yourself up or possibly try to get away, but do not invite the person to hit you again.

Someone sues you for your shirt, give him your coat as well… Be willing to be taken advantage of if it will help the kingdom of God.

About going the extra mile: The Romans had a law that a soldier could commandeer and non-Roman citizen to carry their things (actually 1000 paces).

The Jews deeply resented this, but Jesus said to be willing to do more than you are asked. Why? Maybe you will convert the Roman soldier… Or the one who witnesses you doing so.

This applies in our obedience to the law, to our paying our taxes, to serving our bosses, to our behavior toward our physical neighbors.

Q: How literally should we take Matthew 5:38-42 in light of Matthew 10:16 (be shrewd as snakes, but harmless as doves)

Should we be something like a door mat?

Ex: Acts 23:1-7 Paul: “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!” Later Paul defends himself by invoking his Roman citizenship.

Acts 16:37 Paul defends his rights as a citizen, not for his sake but for the sake of the church. Acts 22:25 Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen?

John 18:19-23 Jesus: If I spoke the truth, why do you strike me?

When does wise as a serpent come in and when does harmless as a dove come in?

Suggestion:

1. First of all, probably we need to grow more in letting ourselves be abused for the sake of Christ rather than learning when to defend ourselves.

2. Always “go the extra mile (beyond that required by the “law”) even if you do defend yourself.

3. Generally defend the rights of others and be willing to give up your own rights.

4. Go the extra mile and turn the other cheek if it will

Lead to peace

If the hurt to you is relatively small (not in the hospital, not going bankrupt)

If doing so does not bring harm to others

If we can reasonably predict that more good than harm will be done in the big picture.

If doing so is not “foolish” even in the eyes of a reasonable Christian.

Matthew 5:43-47 Love your enemies.

Perhaps the most radical command Jesus ever gave. This is the ethic of the Kingdom of God.

Illustration from our debate with Shmuley Boteach and Shabir Ally.

Jesus: You have heard it said, “Love your neighbor” (Lev 19:18, your fellow Jew) and “hate your enemy.” This second is NOT in the Scripture!

Do you have enemies? A brother or sister who despises you or blatantly takes advantage.

A boss who repeatedly lies to you.

A non-Christian who laughs at you.

We love Muslims and political opponents and racists and even terrorists.

It is not inconceivable it could even be a brother or sister.

Q: What does “love your enemies” mean?

It means sincerely seeking their good above your own. This is unique to Christianity.

v. 45 If you do so you will be like God.

Summary 5:48 Be perfect, complete, mature. Teleon. This is the calling in the kingdom of God. A high calling! This is a call to be like God. Be conformed to God’s character.

We need to continually strive for growth in all of these areas. Are you making progress?

The goal of the Christian life is something we will never fully attain. It calls us ever higher.

But God, in his grace, will make up the difference. Thanks to God!!!

Summary:

Do not use fighting or condemning words—ever!

If you do, or if you are estranged with your bro or sis, make it right immediately!

Do not even think about sexual immorality. Do not harbor lust

Hate divorce

(oaths)

If asked, go the second mile

Love your enemies and seek what is best for them.

Matthew 6:1-18 The point: If you serve the church or the poor, pray, fast with “mixed motives” then there will be no blessing to you.

Q: In your service and worship, do you have “mixed motives” Is it about being seen for you? Do you seek the praise of people?

Matthew 6:15 an important passage, but see Matthew 18:21-35

Matthew 6:19-34 Kingdom values.

v. 20 store up treasure in heaven. Q: What does that mean to you?

Let your motivation be with regard to things which cannot be seen.

If you can buy it, then you should not store it up.

Things you can buy Things you cannot buy

Medicine health

Books knowledge of God, wisdom

Position favor with God

Attention love

Matthew 6:24 Jesus makes it quite black and white.

Matthew 6:25 The key passage in this section. Literally “Do not give a thought to your life.” This is an incredibly high standard.

This is what it means to seek the kingdom first (Matt 6:34)—to not give a thought to your life.

This is the meaning of Matthew 6:22-23. It took me 35 years to “get” this passage.

Jesus is saying that if you get this principle, you get everything, but if you do not get this principle, you get nothing. This concept is very similar to Matthew 22:36-40 “the greatest commandment.”

So, what do you worry about?

Matt 7:1-5 Do not judge

Matthew 7:6 But do make wise judgments.

I am not judging this person, but wisdom says to be careful.

When we study with people… This is a heart issue for us.

Matthew 7:12 The Golden Rule.

(aside: In marriage, apply the Platinum Rule: Do to others what they would want you to do to them)

Matthew 7:13-27 How to get into the kingdom vs. how to live in the kingdom (5:1-7:12)

Small is the gate, and narrow the road. Q: How do you feel about this?

7:15-20

Who is the false prophet? He whose message, if accepted, would keep you from entering the kingdom of Heaven.

How can we know?

1. by their fruit. v. 16-20

2. whether they are doing God’swill. v. 21-23 many will be shocked.

Matthew 7:24-27 Final thoughts.

Q: What is the rock?

Take-home lesson: Do these things!!!!!!

What in Matthew 5:3-7:12 do you need to put into practice?

**Matthew Sermon VI**

**What are you devoted to?**

**Seek First the Kingdom of God**

Last two weeks: Sermon on the Mount:

I. The ethical standard in the kingdom of God is something that the world cannot understand. Kingdom ethics include poverty of spirit toward God, mourning for personal sin, meekness to our fellow humans, burning hunger for being right with God, mercy/grace toward our fellow humans, an undivided heart toward God, and being a maker of peace.

Because of this ethical standard, we stick out. We are the light of the world.

Because Jesus is the fulfillment/completion of the Law and the Prophets, the kingdom has come in a new way. (Matthew 5:17)

Therefore:

Our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees.

II. Kingdom Practices.We avoid all bitterness and anger, we reject, not only sex outside of marriage, but lust in every form. We repudiate divorce, because God hates divorce. We turn the other cheek and go the extra mile—we are willing even to be abused for the sake of the kingdom of God, and we love our enemies.

Summary Matthew 5:48 Be perfect, complete, mature. Teleon. This is the calling in the kingdom of God. A high calling! This is a call to be like God. Be conformed to God’s character.

v. 45 If you do so you will be like God.

Today’s message is in two parts. Both have to do with motive of the heart.

I. Do not display your righteousness.

II. Seek the Kingdom of God first.

I. Matthew 6:1-18

Remember that, at first glance, this entire section seems to contradict Jesus’ command in Matthew 5:16 to “Let your light so shine before people that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven.”

Should I let people know how awesome I am as a Christian or not?

The solution to the problem is not that Jesus is confused!

Here is the point: If you serve the church or the poor, pray, fast with “mixed motives” then there will be no blessing to you.

“Mixed motives” means that you serve or give money or share your faith, or pray or go on a mission team or whatever to impress people—so that people will like you or will think that you are awesome, as opposed to doing it so as to serve someone or to glorify God.

Based on Matthew 5, parts of our Christian life are public, but they should never be to show off or to seek praise.

It is tempting to serve our community and even to love one another so that people will think our church is awesome and will want to join us. This is not necessarily bad, but… we need to take Matt 6:1-18 seriously.

Q: In your service and worship, do you have “mixed motives” Is it about being seen for you? Do you seek the praise of people?

My love language is words of affirmation, so I am particularly susceptible here.

For me, I can remember times in my Christian life when there was a reward ceremony in the church, and I was thinking about why I deserved my name to be mentioned. Ouch!

But… I do not want to lose the reward, and that is the warning here.

v. 2 “They have had their reward in full.”

Q: Who do you want your reward to come from, man or God? You cannot have it both ways.

v. 3 Jesus uses an idiom here: “Do not let your right hand know what your left hand is doing.

Act it out: Hey, right hand, what are you doing? Oh, nothing!

The solution Jesus’ advice:

Let us do some things purposefully that no one will know about, and let us make this a regular habit.

Jesus provides two categories here:

1. v. 1-4 Seeking praise for your good deeds. (when you give to the needy, for example.)

2. v. 5-18 Seeking praise for your religious devotion. (when you pray or fast, praise the Lord, Halleluia)

By the way, v. 6 (go into your room) is not a proscription against public prayer. In fact, Jesus prayed in public about 60 seconds later. It is about the heart.

Jesus gives the Lord’s Prayer as a model. It is simple, to the point and is not flowery. v. 7 “do not keep on babbling.”

Also note, “When you fast.” Jesus is assuming that his followers will do fasting.

For me, category #1 (wanting my accomplishments to be noticed) is the temptation.

What about you? Are you content with serving people without any praise at all?

Do you hope people will notice how spiritual you are?

Matthew 6:15 an important passage, but we will cover it in Matthew 18:21-35—the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant.

Matthew 6:16-18 Another example. Jesus uses three examples. He is really into this topic. This is more important than you think!

II. Matthew 6:19-34 Kingdom values. Seek the Kingdom First.

Matthew 6:19-24

v. 19-20 Do not store up treasure on earth. Store them in heaven.

Why not? Because our citizenship is in heaven. Philippians 3:20

If an outside observer were watching your life, what country would they think you are a citizen of?

What do you meditate on? What do you dream about?

Q: What do you treasure? The return of live sports? Retirement? The latest version of Grand Theft Auto? A great vacation? A good paying job? A boy/girl friend?

We all know these are OK to have. God may even want you to have them. God wants us to have a good life here on the earth. But if you seek these things first, they will rot in your hands. If you seek the kingdom of God first, then these things can be blessings as a byproduct.

If you steal a reward, it brings no pleasure.

If you let God give it to you, it becomes a great blessing. Up to you!!!

2023 Mexican Marathon 30,000 runners. 11,000 have been disqualified for cheating!!! (chips in their race bibs) Street cars, cars and trains.

Really? Does this make you proud to “win” by cheating?

Like the movie Chariots of Fire. The two British sprinters were Eric Liddle and Harold Abrahams. Eric Liddle gave up his place on the 100 m sprint to Harold Abrahams for spiritual reasons. Harold won the gold medal, it gave him no pleasure. He had achieved his worldly goal. OK. Great. Now I have the gold medal. So what is next? He achieved his life’s goal and found it did not satisfy. But Eric Liddle was able to treasure what he had done for life. That is why we should put our treasures in heaven.

Let us seek heavenly treasures, and accept with joy if earthly pleasures come our way.

Matthew 6:22-23 The eye is the lamp of the body is probably more like the headlight of the body—helping us to find our way.

If your eye is healthy (NIV) not a good translation. literally single or sound.

If your eye is single—laser focused on the right thing, which is the kingdom of God…

Again, it is about motives.

In the margin of the NIV it also has generous. The Greek word can also mean that. It is likely that the double meaning is used on purpose.

If you are singularly focused and generous (see v. 24) with what God has given you to serve the kingdom of God, then your whole body will be full of light.

If you see the kingdom of God correctly—the need for undivided loyalty, then you get the whole enchilada.

The point. If you get this one kingdom principle right, everything else will be clear.

Matthew 6:24 Jesus makes it quite black and white. v. 24. Q: Do you love money? Let’s be honest. All of us love money to some extent. Me and money are on a friendly basis… But… Are you “devoted” to money?

This entire section is about what you devote yourself to.

What are you devoted to? Will those who know you well, will your co-workers, will your fellow students agree?

A man can have two employers, but not two owners.

Matthew 6:25 The key passage in this section. Literally “Do not give a thought to your life.” This is an incredibly high standard.

This is what it means to seek the kingdom first (Matt 6:34)—to not give a thought to your life—to your stuff.

This is the meaning of Matthew 6:22-23. It took me 35 years to “get” this passage.

Jesus is saying that if you get this principle, you get everything, but if you do not get this principle, you get nothing.

“Do not give a thought to your life” is not an excuse to be thoughtless about your life. We need to be wise in how we use our money, our time, etc. But these thoughts should not consume us. Thoughts of God and his kingdom ought to consume us.

Matthew 6:25-34 So, what do you worry about?

This could be a ninth beatitude. Blessed are they who do not worry about their lives.

v. 26, 28 What shall we eat or drink or wear, or where shall we live?

The world does enough worrying to take care of the rest of us.

Student: Do you worry about your grades and your future job?

Boy/girlfriend: Do you worry about the course of your relationship?

Parent: Do you worry about your children?

Human: Do you worry about the economy?

Citizen: Do you worry about the direction of our government, the national debt, the wars in Ukraine and Palestine?

We need to be concerned about these things, but we need to hand them to God and “worry” about the Kingdom of God.

Jesus: Look at the birds. God seems to have them covered (literally)

Look at the flowers of the fields.

Do you believe that if you seek the Kingdom of God first, that God will be able to take care of you? Really?

So, let me ask you again, what do you worry about?

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

This is the key to the entire Sermon on the Mount.

It is what putting your treasures in heaven is about. It is what “the eye is the lamp of the body” is about. It is what “Do not give a thought to your life” is about.

This is not principally about going to church and giving sacrificially. It is about the priorities of the heart being on God and his kingdom.

It is about treasuring the righteousness that comes only from him.

v. So… Let the world worry about tomorrow. Seek his kingdom and his righteousness first.

So:

1. Do not do your amazing deeds principally in order to have people think you are so awesome. Let your reward come from God, not human beings.

2. Seek the kingdom of God first.

**Matthew Sermon VII**

**Entering the Kingdom**

Last week:

Matthew 6:1-18 (Although we should let our light so shine before people…) Do not let your religion be a performance to draw attention to yourself. Do it for God, not self.

Matthew 6:19-34 Kingdom priorities.

v. 20 Do not store up treasure on earth. Store them in heaven.

Matthew 6:22-23 The eye is the lamp of the body.

If you see the kingdom of God correctly—the need for undivided loyalty, then you get the whole enchilada—all else will be clear.

Matthew 6:24 You cannot love both God and money.

Matthew 6:25 Literally “Do not give a thought to your life.” This is an incredibly high standard.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

This week:

I. Do not judge

II. Entering the Kingdom of God.

Matt 7:1-5 Seek first the kingdom. Have incredible kingdom standards ever before you, but do not judge those who are still working on it.

v. 2 “With the measure you use…” If you are “hard” others, then God will be “hard” on you.

Romans 2:1-4 v. 3 “Passing judgment.” v. 4 you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience.

To “judge” is to pass judgment. It is to assume bad motives when you are not sure. Judging motives.

God has chosen to not judge you—at least for now. So be merciful!

Dictionary: “To have a bad opinion of someone’s behavior because you think you are better than them.”

Application: We tend to judge people in areas we are relatively strong in.

You are a neat person, but you are not very good at taking personal initiative.

So, you judge people based on neatness and ignore their personal initiative.

You are passionate about social justice, but weak on conviction about sin. You judge those who are not passionate in this area, but fail to notice that you have some real weak points on sin.

You are knowledgeable about the Bible, but have an anger problem. You think, “How could that person be so weak on knowing Scripture? But fail to make an issue out of anger in people.”

Let’s form some conviction about our own weaknesses and acknowledge the strengths in others.

But Matthew 7:5 If you do this, then you will be able to help people to grow—to work on the speck.

“The problem is not the diagnosis, but the failure to begin judgment with yourself and to judge based on your strengths, not your weaknesses.”

Matthew 7:6 Do not judge, but do make wise judgments. (also v. 15-20 you can tell a tree by its fruit)

Wise judgments. That person has an anger problem. I better be careful.

That is not judging.

This person is a hopeless cause. I am glad I am not like him. That is judging.

Right now, that person does not seem to be open. I will put my time and effort into person Z. To make a reasoned judgment is not to judge.

This person I am studying with is very likely not saved.

It would not be smart to loan my car to person X. He or she can earn back my trust, but…

This car salesman is trying to manipulate me. (I know this type. They are worthless)

vs. This person is hopeless. This person deserves God’s wrath. This person cannot change. Weak Christian.

I am not judging this person, but wisdom says to be careful.

When we study with people… This is a heart issue for us.

Show wise judgment but do not judge. This is not always an easy distinction.

Matthew 7:7-11 God answers consistent, fervent prayer. Covered elsewhere.

Matthew 7:12 The Golden Rule. So… This serves as the summary of Jesus statements about Kingdom ethics beginning all the way back in 5:21-48. Jesus is the first to formulate this rule. It is not the rule of Islam or Hinduism or Judaism.

They say do not do to others what you would not want done to you. This is passive, not active.

In summary of Jesus’ expansion of the Law and the Prophets:

Would you want your enemy to love you?

Would you want people to give you the benefit of the doubt about your motive?

Would you want another man to lust after your wife?

Would you want someone who is angry at you to settle the matter?

(aside: In marriage, apply the Platinum Rule: Do to others what they would want you to do to them)

Matthew 7:13-27 How to get into the kingdom vs. how to live in the kingdom (5:1-7:12) (Enter through…)

7:13-14 Small is the gate, narrow the road, and only a few find it. This seems pretty judgmental. It seems narrow-minded. Q: How do you feel about this?

v. 13 wide is the gate and broad (easy) is the road.

Wide and easy vs narrow and hard.

Which road are you on?

What does this mean? It means what it says.

How many in Merced are true disciples of Jesus—are saved? Very few!!! 10%, 5%, 2%? Less?

(but apply the Golden Rule when talking to religious people… That is what you would want). But these are the bare facts!!!

Q: How does that make you feel? What does it cause you to do?

1. Get more people through the gate and onto the road.

2. Make sure that you and those around you stay on that narrow and difficult road.

7:15-20

Who is the false prophet? He whose message, if accepted, would keep you from entering the kingdom of Heaven.

You just have to be a good person.

You just have to “confess” Christ.

It is he or she who preaches easy believism. Just pray Jesus into your heart. Just say a prayer. One who preaches Christianity without discipleship. (see v. 21)

Are some who call themselves “Christians” false prophets? Yes!

How can we know?

1. by their fruit. v. 16-20

Praise the Lord! Halleluiah! Are you giving sacrificially? Who have you shared your faith with? In what way have you served the poor and needy? Whose lives have been positively impacted because of your ministry?

So, if others were to look at you, what “fruit” might they see?

That alone is not proof, and I will not judge, but I can see the fruit.

Note, this is not works salvation!!!!! It is how we can test whether or not a person is likely to be the real thing!!!! We are looking at fruit, which is all we can actually look at!

2. whether they are doing God’s will. v. 21-23 many will be shocked.

Why will so few make it to heaven? v. 21 Because only a very few are willing to do the will of God.

Not all who say, “Lord, Lord!” Jeremiah 7:4-8 Deceptive words…

Ex: That person seems so sincere, but they have never been baptized. How could they not be saved?

Solution, teach them more correctly, then you will discover how truly sincere they are. A sincere, humble person who wants to do God’s will respond in obedience when shown the Scripture.

What about church X? First of all, why are you trying to judge church X? But we can look at their fruit. (but when you do these things, do not judge these people. Let God take care of that)

What about the miracles? Even “charismatic” events prove nothing (although many do not agree). Even miracles prove nothing. Preaching fine sermons means nothing. Writing erudite spiritual books is no evidence. Obedience and fruit are.

So, what do I do?

It is not rocket science, folks. Do the will of the Father!!! (because you cannot control the fruit)

Matthew 7:24-27 Final thoughts.

1. Hear the words.

2. Put them into practice.

Then the rain and the storm and Covid 19 and inexcusable social injustice against people of your race, or rioting and mayhem, your faith will not fall.

Israel/Hamas, Ukraine/Russia war, chaos in our government, deaths in Lewiston, Maine.

Take-home lesson: Do these things!!!!!!

The rock is God, and the way to build on God is to hear his words and put them into practice.

So, What in Matthew 5:3-7:12 do you need to put into practice?

Do you need to grow in your kingdom attitudes?

Poor in spirit—humble before God

Mourning over things in the world you cannot have

Meek—humble before people

Hunger and thirst for righteousness

Merciful

Pure in heart

Maker of peace

Do you need to grow in your distinctiveness from the world—to be the salt of the earth or the light of the world, to spread the aroma of Christ, even if that makes you the smell of death to some and would lead you to being persecuted because you do not fit in to the world’s pattern?

Do you need to be sure that your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees?

Do you need to have a kingdom ethic in your life?

Not using angry words and working out your differences quickly

Hating lust. Not just right actions, but right heart and mind.

Going the extra mile, turning the other cheek. Being willing to be abused if it is for the sake of the kingdom of God.

Do you need to grow in loving your enemies?

Do you need stop doing good deeds and acting religious in order to be seen by people?

Do you need to repent in the area of kingdom priorities?

Do you need to find ways to put your treasure in heaven not on worldly things?

Do you to increase you love for God and decrease your love for stuff.

Do you need to learn to “not even give a thought to your life,

But rather seek the kingdom of God first and the righteousness that he will give you.?

Do you need to stop being judgmental of others?

Do you need to love as you would be loved?

Do you need to grow in simply doing what the Word of God says?

OK, so let us make some decisions right now. Let us become model citizens of the Kingdom of God.

v. 28 Jesus “spoke as one who had authority” because he has authority.

Why? Because Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. He is THE ONE who the Law and the Prophets foresaw. He is God-in-the-flesh.

**Matthew Sermon VIII**

**Have Great Faith: The Harvest is Plentiful**

Matt 7:1-5 Seek first the kingdom. Have incredible kingdom standards ever before you, but do not judge—do not **pass judgment** on those who are still working on it.

Matthew 7:6 Do not judge, but do make wise judgments. (also v. 15-20 you can tell a tree by its fruit)

Matthew 7:12 The Golden Rule. This serves as the summary of Jesus statements about Kingdom ethics. Treat others as you would want to be treated.

Matthew 7:13-27 How to get into the kingdom.

7:13-14 Small is the gate, narrow the road, and only a few find it. Wide is the gate and easy is the road to hell. This seems pretty judgmental. It seems narrow-minded. But it is true.

Why will so few make it to heaven? v. 21 Because only a very few are willing to do the will of God.

Build your house on the rock which is Jesus Christ by doing what he says.

This morning: Have Great Faith: The Harvest is Plentiful.

Matt 8:1-9:34 Jesus’ ministry of teaching, preaching and healing.

Matt 8:1-4 Jesus heals a leper/unclean.

Matt 8:5-13 Then he heals the servant of a Gentile.

Matt 8:14-15 Then he heals a woman.

Matt 8:5-13 A Centurion’s faith. parallel Luke 7:1-8

A centurion is a Roman officer of about 100. Roman soldiers not friends of Jews.

v. 8 “only say the word.”

Jesus honors great faith. A personal visit is not necessary. You do not need some sort of sign like Gideon. We do not need a sign from God to believe he will do what he says he will do.

v. 10 Do you want to impress Jesus? Have great faith!

Q: What have you done lately that required a lot of faith?

Committed to be on a mission team, to take the one year challenge, to share your faith with someone intimidating, to believe that your relative or friend will become a Christian? Quit a job which interfered with your church schedule. Put behind a boyfriend or girlfriend who was not helping you to stay close to God.

v. 12 Many Jews will be excluded from the kingdom. Why? They lack faith. Faith not nationality matters…. Many who think they are Christians…

v. 12 sons of the kingdom = Jews. Where will they be? In outer darkness! Why? Lack of faith.

v. 13 Jesus says to you: “Let it be done just as you believed it would.” This applies to us.

Remember this from the lesson: **“Let it be done just as you have believed it would.”**

Some of us have not seen God doing great things in our lives for a while. Maybe it is because you do not believe he will do great things.

Illustration: Share story about the woman in the airport in San Diego going through SLC to Kansas City.

What about getting this place to meet for $50/month.

We came here to Merced on faith, and faith is belief in things unseen.

Matt 8:1-9:34 Jesus mission of teaching, preaching and healing.

In fact… Matt 4:23 Jesus went through Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness among the people

Which is what Jesus did

Matt 8:1-4 heals a leper

Matt 8:5-13 Jesus heals the Centurion’s servant

Matt 8:14-17 Jesus heals many: Peter’s mother-in-law, drives out demons.

Matt 8:28-34 Jesus heals Legion and his friend

Matt 9:1-8 Jesus heals a paralyzed man

Matt 9:18-25 Jesus raises Jarius’ daughter and heals a bleeding woman

Matt 9:27-34 Jesus heals both a blind man and a mute

Matt 9:35-38 Jesus is making his ministry our ministry.

Matt 4:23 teaching, preaching and healing = Matthew 9:35 For us Matthew 10:7-8.

Matt 9:35 – 10:42 Parallel mission of the disciples.

Jesus’ ministry became their ministry and it is our ministry.

9:38 Are you a worker? A ministry of compassion. People are lost, without direction.

Are you frustrated with people or compassionate toward then?

This is an evangelism passage, our method is showing compassion to people.

Matthew 10:-1-4 The twelve are very diverse tax-collector (right wing, working for Rome) a zealot (left wing, hates Rome). We need all kinds too.

Matthew 10:5-42 Jesus give us our marching orders.

10:5-8 Not only is Jesus’ ministry our ministry, also Jesus’ message is our message.

Our message: Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand (Matthew 4:17)

10:9-10 first things first. Always better to rely on God, not self. Paul to Timothy: 2 Tim 2:4 Do not get entangled in civilian affairs.

V 11-15 OK to focus on the open. We are not judging but we are using wise judgment. Who is really open?

16-20 Be wise, but maintain pure motives. preach boldly. Not likely you will be arrested, but… God will be with you.

21-23, It might get rough!

vs 22 Answer: we will be hated (but we will not hate, we will love!)

v 23 If you get fired because of your faith, or if they give you hours that do not work with the kingdom schedule, get a job somewhere else.

Ex: called before a college president.

Also called before my dean for web site content.

Accused by students of being too Christian.

Cops called on at CSUB.

v. 25 They called Jesus Satan… Will you do a better job?

Matt 10:26-31

v. 26 do not fear them. The truth will come out. What is the worst they could do to you? Get you fired? Wouldn’t that be cool? Have to find a new place to live?

v. 28 kidnapped or killed?

v. 29-31 God has your back! Don’t be afraid. Do you believe this?

Like the Hebrew writer Heb 13:6 quotes Psalm 118:6-7 “So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?

Matt 10:32-33

Our job: Acknowledge God! BTW not acknowledging = denying!

If you acknowledge God, your boss may deny you. The reverse?

Q: Who would you rather have acknowledging you: God or your boss, landlord, professor or neighbor.

v. 34-39. Yes, even family!!!!

Is v. 34-36 a contradiction of Jesus being the prince of peace? (we read Isaiah 9:5-7 earlier)

Peace that passes understanding does not equal lack of conflict.

No peace = restored relationship w/God.

v. 34 conflict is a result, not a goal.

v. 37 clear loyalties

v. 37 correctly interprets Luke 14:26 hyperbole “Hate” = Love less.

Wives have been divorced, children have been disowned.

Illustration: Rhys Kiaaina Hawaiian “pagan” Wife Japanese. Buddhist.

Wife threatened, bribed with money, car. She became a Christian. Married 1991 – 2018 Rhys not allowed to enter home. Didn’t come to wedding, birth of kids will not even let him in the house or speak to him. Finally 2018 let him into their house.

Q: Where does your loyalty lie? God will send open people our way!!

10:40-42 Encouragement (we need it) You will not lose your reward.

Our “mantra” for the week?

Let it be done, just as you have believed.

Jesus has given us a ministry of teaching, preaching and healing, but it is always a ministry of compassion to harassed and helpless people.

They may not appreciate what we say. It might even get rough. Even friends and family may turn against you. But we look for those open to the message of Jesus.

But Jesus tells us if we acknowledge him before people, God will acknowledge us before God. We will certainly not lose our reward.

**Matthew Sermon IX**

**The Kingdom Has Come**

Matt 8:5-13 A Centurion’s faith.

v. 8 “only say the word.”

v. 13 Jesus says to you: “Let it be done just as you believed it would.” This applies to us.

Matthew 9:38-10:42 Jesus gives us our marching order. Jesus sends out workers into the harvest field.

Jesus has given us a ministry of teaching, preaching and healing, but it is always a ministry of compassion to harassed and helpless people.

They may not appreciate what we say. It might even get rough. Even friends and family may turn against you. But we look for those open to the message of Jesus.

This week: The Kingdom Has Come

Matthew 11:1-18 John the Baptist

Matthew 11:1-3 Jesus is teaching, preaching and healing, as he sent the twelve to do in Matthew 10 (and he sends us to do)

Background: Matthew 3:1-12 John preaches: Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is near. The axe is already at the root of the tree. Repent. John baptizes Jesus. “One who is more powerful than I.”

Matthew 4:12 John thrown into prison.

Matthew 11:2-3 John is doubting. This entire section Matt 11:2 – Matthew 16:13, when Peter confesses Christ is about various reactions to Jesus’ ministry, from doubt to skepticism to outright opposition.

Q: How do you react to Jesus?

Why is John unsure? The stress of being in prison? Jesus is not acting as the Messiah was expected to act.

He is not fasting and wearing the strange clothes of a prophet.

He is hanging out with unclean people, including lepers, Gentiles and women.

He is not apparently establishing a renewed Jewish kingdom.

If we have unresolved doubts that we shove under the rug, they tend to come out to bite us when we are under great spiritual, emotional or situational stress

v. 3 “Are you the one?” (the Messiah)

Matthew 11:4-6 Jesus: Look at my ministry. The blind, the lame, the deaf, the lepers are healed, the dead are raised and the Kingdom of Heaven is preached.

Basically, I am not fulfilling your false expectation, but I am filling the biblical expectation. It is like Isaiah 61:1-2.

“The Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, to comfort all who mourn.”

Then Jesus explains who John the Baptist is.

Matt 11:7-15 He is the one to fulfill Malachi 3:1

If we look in Mal 3:1 this is God speaking. “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me.” Here, Jesus claims to be God.

Matt 11:14 He also fulfills Malachi 4:5 “See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.” He is the Elijah who is to come.

Remember: In Matthew Jesus is the Messiah who fulfills OT prophecy.

Luke 1:16-17 Of JTB, “He will bring back many people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

John was like Elijah in many ways. Preaching by the Jordan, wearing strange clothes, prophesying.

Who cares?

1. He is the Elijah. Therefore I am the Messiah.

2. Anyone in the kingdom is greater than JTB. The kingdom of God has arrived!!!

Matthew 11:11 Anyone in the kingdom of God is greater than JTB.

You are greater than JTB. You are part of the fulfillment of the messianic kingdom. You have been saved. You have received the Holy Spirit. You have the completed gospel to preach. You are awesome!!!!

Remember that this week!

Matthew 11:16-19 Again, the theme of people’s response to the ministry of Jesus.

We played the pipe for you (Jesus)

We sang a dirge (John)

As you share your faith, some people will never be satisfied. Do not take their excuses seriously!

v. 19 Wisdom is proved right by her deeds. The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised and the kingdom of God is preached.

In Merced: lives are changed. Marriages are saved. Children are restored to their parents. Addictions are overcome. Empty lives find fulfillment in the Kingdom.

The proof is in the pudding!

You are greater than JTB, so just keep sharing!

Matthew 14:1-12 The fate of JTB John calls out Herod for marrying his brother’s wife.

Calling out sin of powerful people might just get your head cut off or your job or…

Matthew 11:20-24 The theme of responses to Jesus. Woe to Chorazin and Bethsaida (towns near Capernaum) and to Capernaum! They did not repent. The Gentiles (Tyre and Sidon) would have repented!!!

Sodom and Gomorah will be better off than them!

So do not be intimidated by those who refuse to listen to you about Jesus.

They are playing in the orchestra on the Titanic, fiddling while Rome burns.

Matt 11:25-27 Jesus not discouraged that the wise and learned are not open.

Don’t be intimidated by the religion professor who does not profess Christ. The philosopher, the influential.

Don’t be intimidated by the person who seems to have it all together, but is not together with Christ. They are spiritually ignorant.

v. 27 But you are chosen! Which is better: a CMA award or chosen by Jesus?

Matthew 11:28-30 Who is Jesus calling? The awesome people? The ones who have it all together? No! Jesus is calling the sick.

People say: You Christians are weak. You need a crutch to get through life.

Come to me all you who are weary and burdened. (Q: Are you weary and burdened outside of Christ?) I will give you rest. (the peace that passes understanding). Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Q: Is that your experience? Has Jesus’ yoke been easy?

It is only easy if we take it upon ourselves. If we fight against the yoke of Jesus, the yoke will not be easy, and the burden will not be light. Have you been fighting?

Solution: Take the yoke. Go where Jesus wants you to go. Let him lead you.

This is what we are looking for: people willing to take on Jesus’ yoke.

Matthew 12:1-8 More responses to Jesus.

Their response: Jesus is not following our traditions. (note: I used to think this was all this scripture was about, but I was wrong..)

The Sabbath was very important to the Jews, and not without reason. It was part of what made them a special people. It symbolized the final rest that we will have with God.

v. 1-2 Working was unlawful, and this included, obviously, harvesting grain, but they were not “working.” The Pharisees are not making the “burden” of following God easy or light. They are imposing unhelpful rules.

Jesus’ argument:

1. v. 3-4 David had the authority, as king, to supersede the temple regulation. He ate consecrated bread from the tabernacle which was to be discarded. 1 Sam 21:6 One greater than David is here. I am Lord of the Sabbath. (v. 8)

2. v. 5-6 The Pharisees recognized that certain things that the priests were called to do on Sabbath days would have, technically, broken the Sabbath. (for example removing the bread and replacing it with new bread. The requirements of the temple supersede the Sabbath. I am greater than the temple. (v. 6)

3. v 7-8 The key verse here is Matthew 12:7 “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” (this is his second time quoting Hosea 6:6. Also in Matthew 9:13)

Don’t let your rules govern your actions. The key is doing good to people-helping them, not applying legalistic rules.

There are commands and principles in the New Testament and in the Kingdom of God, but love, grace and mercy should always guide how we apply those commandments and principles.

Our actions and decisions should all have a redemptive purpose.

Church attendance, dealing with sin in people with mental illness, dating advice, etc.

Matt 12:9-14 Adding insult to injury (but illustrating this point) Jesus heals a man with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath.

Pharisees: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?

It is always OK to serve people and to do good.

v. 13 Looking straight into the eyes of the Pharisees, Jesus says, “stretch out your hands.”

v. 14 The Pharisees are not happy about this. To them the rules superseded showing mercy. They make a fateful decision.

If Jesus were to come to our world, he would be killed again. Who would kill him? Probably people who call themselves Christians would. People who are more concerned about correct doctrine or defending their tradition at any cost.

Matthew 12:38-45 Jonah Again, different responses to Jesus.

Matt 12:38 Jesus, impress us with a miracle. Then we will believe. Put God to test.

Like we said when we studied Mark, Jesus did not do miracles on command.

We, too, had better be careful not to put God to the test by demanding he work a sign. God, help me out of this situation, and I will believe in you.

God, if you love me you will give me a job or heal me of this illness or save my sick mother from death.

Jesus: “A wicked and adulterous generation” Wow!

I will give you a sign, all right. (He knew what was in their hearts—a plan to kill him.

Kill me and I will rise on the third day (as Jonah was raised on the third day).

Like he said about Bethsaida, Chorazin and Capernaum, the people of Tyre and Sidon would be more likely to repent.

The Ninevites and the Arabs (Queen of the Sheeba) would be more likely to repent than these religious people. (praise the Lord, Hallelujah, but not living the life.)

Jesus is greater than the temple

Jesus is greater than David

Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath

Jesus is greater than Solomon (v. 42)

Stop making excuses and submit to the Son of Man, the Lord of the Sabbath, the one greater than David, the one greater than the temple. Let us submit ourselves to the one who yoke is easy and whose burden is light. Let us submit to Jesus.

v. 43-45 Otherwise all of your religious efforts will be for naught. We need to fill our life with Jesus, not with religion.

12:46-50 Jesus is turning everything upside down. In the kingdom the first loyalty is to king Jesus. Our family is those who, like us, submit to king Jesus. Whoever does his will is our brother or mother or sister.

Jesus your king has come. Submit to him!!

Don’t doubt—you are greater than JTB. You are chosen.

Don’t be discouraged when the “sharp” people do not believe. You are chosen.

But… Take Jesus’ yoke on you.

And exercise mercy, not “sacrifice.” Love before rules.

Submit to the one whose yoke is easy and light.

**Matthew Sermon X**

**Who Do You Say I Am?**

Last week: We looked at Jesus and John the Baptist and learned that anyone in the Kingdom is greater than John the Baptist.

Matthew 11:28-30 Who is Jesus calling?

Come to me all you who are weary and burdened. I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Q: Is that your experience? Has Jesus’ yoke been easy?

If we fight against the yoke of Jesus, the yoke will not be easy, and the burden will not be light. Have you been fighting against the yoke?

Solution: Take the yoke. Go where Jesus wants you to go. Let him lead you.

We saw that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. That he desires mercy not sacrifice.

Jesus is greater than the temple

Jesus is greater than David

Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath

Jesus is greater than Solomon (v. 42)

Stop making excuses and submit to the Son of Man, the Lord of the Sabbath, the one greater than David, the one greater than the temple. Let us submit ourselves to the one who yoke is easy and whose burden is light. Let us submit to Jesus.

Note: We are skipping the feeding of the 5000 and Jesus walking on water, as we will cover this when we do John.

We are skipping the scene where Jesus renounces worship according to tradition, not the Scriptures in Matthew 15:1-20. We covered this in Mark.

We are also skipping several kingdom parables. Some covered in Mark (Parable of Sower, Parable of the mustard seed .

I really want to cover the parable of the peal of great price and the treasure hidden in the fields Matt 13:44-46.

I want to cover the story of the Canaanite/Syro-Phoenecian in Matthew 15:21-28. The women heard this lesson. As an outcast, pagan woman, because of her faith, she was able to change Jesus’ mind. In Matthew the people with the greatest faith are the Roman centurion and the pagan Canaanite woman.

Matthew 16:13-20 Peter’s confesion of Christ.

Matthew 16:13 The background.

At the end of his Galilean ministry (which began in Matthew 4:12), Jesus is in Caesarea (Rome) Philippi (Greece, Philip of Macedon)—at the northernmost extreme of Israel proper. It was a very pagan city. There was a temple to Zeus there with a cave where Pan was worshipped. It was called the Gates of Pan or of Hell/Hades. Steam often came out of the cave.

Pan was a horned “god” after whom we get the idea of Satan having horns.

This is literally a turning point in Jesus’ ministry. This is the end of Jesus’ public ministry in Galilee. From here, Jesus resolutely, if slowly, sets out for Jerusalem where he will be arrested and executed. We saw in Matthew 12:14 that the Pharisees have already decided to kill him (because he said he is Lord of the Sabbath). The story is moving inexorably toward its final, tragic end.

Matthew 16:14-15 Who do you say I am?

Isn’t that the ultimate question for all of us? Who do you say Jesus is?

And is your life consistent with that confession?

The people proposed:

John the Baptist raised from the dead.

Elijah (Malachi 4:5)

Jeremiah (the prophet who was to come)

Who do you say Jesus is?

A good man

A social revolutionary

A great reformer and friend of social justice

God had already answered the question correctly in Matthew 3:17 (This is my Son, whom I love), and also by demons in Matthew 8:29 (What do you want with us Son of God?) But no human had given a correct answer so far, at least in Matthew.

But who do YOU say Jesus is? This is the moment of truth.

We have seen John the Baptist doubting.

We have seen Pharisees sarcastically demanding a sign.

We have seen unrepentant towns like Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum not responding to the miracles of Jesus by repenting.

We have seen his mother and brothers telling him to come home.

None of that matters. Who do you say Jesus is?

Just so you know, the apostles have not totally “gotten” it yet either (as we saw in Mark 8:21 “Do you still not understand?”), and as we will see, even now they do not completely get who Jesus is.

Matthew 16:16-20 Peter: You are the Messiah/The Christ—the Son of the living God.

This is the theme of Matthew: Jesus the Messiah, revealed through fulfillment of the Old Testament.

Amen!!! They get it!!!

(We say no kidding because we have seen SO MANY messianic prophecies fulfilled:

Matthew 1:22-23 virgin birth fulfills Isaiah 7:14

Matthew 2:5-6 Birth in Bethlehem fulfills Micah 5:2

Matthew 2:15 Out of Egypt I called my son. Fulfills Hosea 11:1.

Matthew 2:23 He will be called a Nazarene fulfills Isaiah 11:1-2, Jer 23:5

Matthew 4:14-16 Jesus, despite being born in Bethlehem Ephrathah, is from Zebulun/Naphtali, in Galilee, fulfilling Isaiah 9:1-6

Matthew 5:17 Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets

Matthew 8:17 Jesus fulfills Isaiah 53:4 by healing many.

Matthew 11:2-6 John the Baptist prepares the way for the Messiah/Jesus fulfilling Mal 3:1 as the voice crying in the desert, make straight the way for the Lord. And John the Baptist is the The Elijah to come, fulfilling Malachi 4:5.

Matthew 12:17-21 The Messiah a humble and gentle servant who does not break a bruised reed. Fulfilling Isaiah 42:2

Matthew 12:39-41 Jesus: I will fulfill the prophecy contained in the life of Jonah, for as he was in the belly of the fish for 3 days and nights…

Matthew 13:35 Psalms 78:2 The Messiah says, prophetically, “I will open my mouth with a parable: I will utter hidden things, things from of old.

Matthew 14:13-21 We have seen Jesus fulfilling the giving of bread by Moses when he fed the 5000.

The apostles are finally getting it… You are the Messiah: The Son of the Living God. Or are they? We will see, not quite….

Do you get it? Do you get who Jesus is—the one about whom and for whom the entire Old Testament was written.

v. 18-19 But before we do that, did Jesus declare Peter the first pope here?

You are Peter (male, pebble, petros)

And on this rock (female, giant boulder petra) I will build my church.

[side note: In Aramaic, the language Jesus was speaking in, the word would probably be *kepa* (Cephas) for both uses of the word rock]

Is the “rock” here Peter or is it his confession of Jesus as Son of God and Messiah?

Most likely it is the confession, not Peter that the church will be built upon.

The gates of Hades (imagine Jesus turning around and pointing at the Grotto of Pan) will not overcome the church.

Neither pagan Rome (Caesarea) nor pagan Greece (Phillipi) will overcome the church.

(Daniel 2:44 “In the time of those (Roman) kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, not will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms (Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome) and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever!!!

Pagan religion will not overcome the Church—God’s kingdom on the earth.

Daniel 7:26 “Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High (the Church). His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship

and obey him.”

That’s what we are talking about.

We are citizens of an all-powerful, everlasting kingdom of God, and Jesus is our king!!!

Matthew 16:19. Jesus did not make Peter (or anyone else pope). There is one mediator between God and man!!! Jesus Christ.

1. But Jesus gave Peter the “keys” (a reference to his role at Pentecost, as the first to preach a gospel sermon, opening up the kingdom of God? Maybe)

And Jesus gave authority to Peter (and the other apostles?) on earth. “What you bind on earth…. Binding and loosing refers to permitting and forbidding the doing of something.

In matters not already specifically spoken to in the Bible, Peter had authority to lead the church and make decisions, and God gives the stamp of approval to that.

Leaders in God’s church do have delegated authority in matters not specifically prescribed in the Bible (organization, church discipline, etc.) Hebrews 13:17 Submit to your leaders and their authority….

Matthew 16:21-28 Now you get it. OK, so now it is time for me to go to Jerusalem.

16:21 From that time on… Here the public ministry has ended and Jesus only works with his disciples.

Matthew 16:21 From that time on… From that time on, Jesus and the apostles made their way to Jerusalem. The die was cast. The plot was running its course.

And the course was leading to death.

We already saw in Mark that Jesus told them 3 times that he would go to Jerusalem, suffer and be killed.

v. 22 Peter: Never, Lord!!! Great irony here! You are Lord, but you had better listen to me! I do not give you permission for my Christianity to include suffering!

Q: Are you like this? Are you trying to tell God what he ought to be doing?

If you do not get that following Jesus involves suffering, they you do not get Jesus.

If you are following Jesus, you are going from Caesarea Philippi to Jerusalem—from the world to the cross, from the farthest point away from God to Jerusalem.

Jesus: Get behind me Satan! (again, remember the gate of Hades which was probably right behind Jesus as he gave these comments)

v. 24 If you are following me, then you are following me to a cross.

v. 25 Are you still trying to save your old, worldly life, or are you willing to lose that old life?

v. 26 If you hold onto the world, you can get a tiny part of it, but you will lose your soul.

v. 27 Why? Because Jesus is going to come back and a judgment day is coming.

v. 28 Jesus is talking about the Day of Pentecost. The kingdom is coming. Some of you (all except Judas) will not taste death before you see the Kingdom come.

Summary:

Who do you say Jesus is?

A good person? A social revolutionary? A wise person? A guru?

Who is Jesus? He is the Messiah, the anointed Holy One of God. He is the Son of God. He is the one who will suffer and die for us so that we can be saved from our sins.

Are you willing to follow Jesus from where you started—far away from Jerusalem at Caesarea Philippi to Jerusalem where you die with Christ?

Peter did not get it. Do you? Amen.

Matthew 17:1-9 The disciples need a boost of faith here as they travel to Jerusalem—to suffering and death. God meets this need.

Jesus takes his inner circle—Peter, James and John.

Jesus is transfigured

Parallel to Moses, who also went up on a mountain and who, when he returned from the mountain, his face was glowing. (Exodus 34:29-35)

Again, the fact that Jesus is fulfilling the Law and the Prophets is in view here, with Moses representing the Law and Elijah representing the prophets.

Moses and Elijah, both of whom met with God on a mountain.

Jesus is the new Moses. He is greater than Moses.

Peter is always ready to make a fool of himself. Let’s make three booths (like the tabernacles in the Feast of Tabernacles)

God intervenes. Who is Jesus? “This is my Son.”

Question: Who is Jesus?

Answer: He is the Messiah. He is the second/new Moses, He is the one for whom the Elijah who was to come (Matthew 17:10-13). Jesus is the Son of God—God in the flesh.

Do you believe this?

So, will you follow him from Caesarea Phillippi to Jerusalem?

**Matthew Sermon XI**

**Loving Relationships in the Kingdom of Heaven**

**Review:**

Matthew 16:13-15 Who do you say I am?

Isn’t that the ultimate question for all of us? Who do you say Jesus is?

And is your life consistent with that confession?

Peter: You are the Messiah/The Christ—the Son of the living God.

The apostles are finally getting it… Or are they?

Do you get it? Do you get who Jesus is—the one about whom and for whom the entire Old Testament was written.

Matthew 16:21 From that time on… From that time on, Jesus and the apostles made their way to Jerusalem. The die was cast. The plot was running its course.

And the course was leading to death.

v. 22 Peter: Never, Lord!!! I do not give you permission for my Christianity to include suffering! If you do not get that following Jesus involves suffering, they you do not get Jesus.

If you are following Jesus, you are going from Caesarea Philippi to Jerusalem—from the world to the cross, from the farthest point away from God to Jerusalem.

v. 24 If you are following me, then you are following me to a cross.

**Our Sermon today. Matthew 18 Loving Relationships in the Kingdom of Heaven.**

But first, an aside. The disciples (esp. Peter, James and John) need some encouragement on the way to Jerusalem).

Matthew 17:1-9 The disciples need a boost of faith here as they travel to Jerusalem—to suffering and death. God meets this need.

Jesus takes his inner circle—Peter, James and John.

Jesus is transfigured

Parallel to Moses, who also went up on a mountain and who, when he returned from the mountain, his face was glowing. (Exodus 34:29-35)

Again, the fact that Jesus is fulfilling the Law and the Prophets is in view here, with Moses representing the Law and Elijah representing the prophets.

Moses and Elijah, both of whom met with God on a mountain.

Jesus is the new Moses. He is greater than Moses.

Peter is always ready to make a fool of himself. Let’s make three booths (like the tabernacles in the Feast of Tabernacles)

God intervenes. Who is Jesus? “This is my Son.”

Question: Who is Jesus?

Answer: He is the Messiah. He is the second/new Moses, He is the one for whom the Elijah who was to come (Matthew 17:10-13). Jesus is the Son of God—God in the flesh.

Do you believe this?

So, will you follow him from Caesarea Phillippi to Jerusalem?

**Our Sermon today. Matthew 18 Loving Relationships in the Kingdom of Heaven.**

Matthew 18:1-5 Greatness in the Kingdom of God.

Who here wants to be great? (personal coaches, self-help books….)

v. 3 “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

In this story I have always assumed that Jesus is talking about having a child-like heart. (teachable, willing to be led, trusting, etc.)

A bit of that there?

This is not the main thrust of what Jesus is saying.

He is saying that we, like Jesus, must be willing to take a **lowly position** (v. 4).

Whoever humbles himself like (take the lowly position of) a child is the greatest.

Whoever is willing to put him/herself in a position where they are not in control, they are not the decider, they are not the ones who have everything figured out…

It is more like him repeating blessed are the poor in spirit and blessed are the meek. Finding your importance in unimpressive things.

The greatest is not the one who preaches with the most eloquence.

The greatest in the kingdom is not the charismatic leader.

The greatest in the kingdom is not the star athlete or the top executive who brings in the big bucks.

Illustration (negative) Muhammad Ali or Ringo Starr claimed to be the greatest.

No, the greatest in the kingdom is the one who shuns attention, who downplays his or her accomplishments, who goes into humbling and even humiliating situations. The humble servant.

That is not me…

Who is that amongst us? Maybe it is Katie Trieweiler, who is an unassuming servant. Maybe it is Francisco, who is the first one to your home when you need something fixed the day before Thanksgiving.

What about you? Are you willing to become like a little child—to take a lowly position before people, to become poor in spirit.

If so, then you will be an honored citizen in God’s kingdom.

I covered Matthew 18:6-9 in Mark.

Matthew 18:10-14 Bringing in the wandering sheep.

v. 10 Are “these little ones” children with guardian angels? I think they are us.

v. 12 Jesus: “What do you think?” All of you know what a shepherd will do with one lost sheep, right?

Me: Well, no, not exactly, Jesus, tell me!

Be willing to stop what you are doing and go out and bring in the wanderer. The “little ones” are not children. They are believers who have the lowly heart of children. They are Jesus’ humble followers.

Sharing our faith, studying with people and baptizing them is awesome. It is glamorous work. But bringing back the strays is even more essential.

Christian math: 1 > 99

By the way: I have a better plan. Let’s prevent the sheep from wandering away in the first place. Let’s do the follow-up studies, let’s make those calls to the weaker sheep.

Why? v. 14 Because Jesus does not will that anyone would perish.

Q: Who can you think of, right now who has wandered? What are you going to do?

Ezekiel 34:11-19 I will take care of my sheep. I will search for the lost, bring back the strays, bind up the injured and strengthen the weak. But how will Jesus do that? Through his child-like sheep—us, hopefully!

Matthew 18:10-14 wandering sheep. Matthew 18:15-20 Sinning sheep.

Jesus’ advice for such times is Matthew 18:15-20.

v. 15 If a disciple sins. Let’s say WHEN a disciple sins.

What should you do?

That is none of my business. It is between them and God. I will pray about it. I will tell their leader about it. I will gossip about it (well… no one says that…)

Honestly, a lot of times we can let it go. Not every sin needs to be confronted. But if your conscience does not allow you to let it go, and if you have prayed about it, here is what you need to do.

v. 15 “go and point out their fault, just between the two of you.

Don’t you hate it when people say to you, “Hey, can I talk to you in private.”

Guess who else hates it—the one calling you aside.

What if your brother or sister gets prideful and does not listen?

If your brother or sister sins, about 20% of the time, talk to them.

If they do not listen right away, about 20% of the time, bring in two or three witnesses.

If they still do not listen, about 20% of the time, bring it before the church.

If they do not listen, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Interpretation: Shun them and cut them off from fellowship altogether.

Q: How did Jesus treat “pagans and tax collectors”?

If they are no longer acting as disciples, treat them as people who are no longer disciples. Love them, reach out to them, but understand that they are no longer to be treated as disciples, because they appear not to be.

v. 18 repeats Matthew 16:19 Church leaders have delegated authority here. They are not judging, but making wise judgment (Matthew 7:1-6)

v. 19-20 One of the most taken-out-of-context scriptures in the Bible!!!

God is fully behind this process, properly done.

Matthew 18:21-35 Again, this is about how we treat one another!!

v. 21-22 Peter: That is pretty intense. How quick should I be to bring someone before the church?

Q: How forgiving should I be? What is the limit? A: As forgiving as God is.

1. After being told that we must take up our cross daily and follow Jesus to the Jerusalem—to the cross—we needed some encouragement. We needed a reminder about who Jesus is. So… we went up onto the Mt. of Transfiguration.

Then we needed some practical reminders about how we are to love one another.

2. Remember that the greatest in the Kingdom is the least—the one who willingly puts him or herself into subservient positions.

3. We are reminded to take the time and effort to bring in lost sheep, to bring back those who have strayed, and to help people to avoid straying in the first place.

4. Even if they are not lost, if they are still around, but they are caught up in some sort of sin, we need to take a risk, talk to them personally about it and, hopefully, win them back to repentance.

5. And will be reminded of perhaps the most important of all, but that is for next week.

**Matthew XII**

**The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant**

1. After being told that we must take up our cross daily and follow Jesus to the Jerusalem—to the cross—we needed some encouragement. We needed a reminder about who Jesus is. So… we went up onto the Mt. of Transfiguration where we met with God and were told Jesus is his Son—with him I am well-pleased.

Then we needed some practical reminders about how we are to love one another.

2. Remember that the greatest in the Kingdom is the least—the one who willingly puts him or herself into subservient positions.

3. We are reminded to take the time and effort to bring in lost sheep, to bring back those who have strayed, and to help people to avoid straying in the first place.

4. Even if they are not lost, if they are still around, but they are caught up in some sort of sin, we need to take a risk, talk to them personally about it and, hopefully, win them back to repentance.

Today: Matthew 18:21-35 The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant.

18:21-22 After Jesus tells the apostles how to treat one who sins, Peter puts two and two together. This requires a lot of mercy and forgiveness on my part. How far does this go? What is the limit to forgiveness? Surely there is a limit!

Jesus did say to love our enemies, but surely this only goes so far…

In typical Jewish/Parisaical fashion he wants a number—a rule limiting his level of forgiveness. My friend betrays me 4 times… 5 times… 7 times? (the number of perfection or completion)

Jesus: No! 77 times or seven times 70.

Peter is not dumb. He gets it. An infinite # of times! Forgive without limit.

As an intellectual thing, this is easy to grasp, but on an emotional level, this is astounding!!!!

Jesus explain!!!

Matthew 18:23-35

For context, a talent is an amount of gold—about 75 pounds. $2000/oz x 16 oz./lb x 75 lb = two million dollars. This is roughly my lifetime earnings.

I only have 9,999 talents to go!

So ten thousand talents means 20 billion dollars!!!

A denarius was a day’s wage, so 100 denarii is not exactly “peanuts.” In today’s terms it might be $10,000.

In this story the king is God.

In this story the man who owed $20 billion is you.

In this story, the one who owes you 100 denarii ($10,000) is your brother or your sister in Christ (or it could be a family member or a neighbor or a co-worker, but in the context (v. 35) it is about your brother or sister in the church.

This story is about how God’s forgiveness of us and our forgiveness of others.

Q: What do we learn from this passage about God’s forgiveness?

v. 25 “Sold” metaphorically, is sent to hell. (v. 33) The wages of sin are death!

v. 26 “Be patient with me! I will pay it all back. We were delusional. We thought we could pay God back. We thought we could earn our way to forgiveness.

The flesh believes in works salvation. All world religions believe in works salvation.

More than we could ever pay.

Another point: The king had entrusted a lot to this guy—he had a lot to forgive. God entrusted a lot with us. What have you done with the life he so generously gave you?

1 Cor 4:2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

v. 27 He took pity on us and outright forgave the debt. His forgiveness appeared to be unconditional. There were no strings attached.

It was more than the servant would have had the nerve to ask for.

But it is actually conditional, as we will see—on our forgiveness of others.

v. 28 But… Someone had sinned against him.

Fact: If you are in the church long enough, someone will sin against you. Someone will grievously sin against you.

v. 29 “Please be patient with me.” In this case, the other person could have paid him back.

Q: What is the worst thing, typically, that one of us might have to forgive?

Sexual abuse by a family member. Abandonment by a parent. Betrayal by a trusted friend or colleague. Corruption that destroys a business you were running.

In the church. You might be ignored. You might be disrespected. You might be taken advantage of financially. You might even be lied about.

Q: According to this parable, how much more does God have to forgive us that we have to forgive our fellow human? 20,000,000,000/10,000 (to be fairly exact it is 2,000,000/1)

The point: not that we were not sinned horribly against ($10,000 some of us were), but that our debt of sin to God is so great, and we have already been forgiven.

Matthew 18:32-34 God is very angry at us for not forgiving our sister or brother.

Result: symbolically, we were sent to hell.

Illlustration: Imagine you handmade a gift for a friend. You put dozens of hours into making the gift. It represented your love for your friend. But, when you gave it to your friend, he or she laughed, threw it on the ground and stepped on it. How would you feel?

This is what it is like when we do not forgive our brother or sister.

Q: [You are the only person in the room right now] What is the hardest things for you to forgive?

Parental mistakes, betrayal by a friend, being ripped off by someone you trusted, being publicly insulted…. I have heard of a story of members here trusting another member financially and losing their shirt!

Matthew 18:35 This is serious business!!

Has God forgiven you much? God expects you to forgive generously as well.

Colossians 3:12-13 Bear with one another and forgive one another if (when!) any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you. (fully, without hesitation, generously).

Matthew 6:14-15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Conclusion: It is absolutely imperative that you forgive those who sin against you. It is the natural corollary to our having been forgiven of God. Arguably, this is the only unforgivable sin.

Is there anyone whose sin you are still holding against them? What will you do about this?

To forgive is not necessarily to forget, but it is to let go of the anger, the bitterness, the holding back of one’s love.

What about if they do not apologize to you and admit their fault?

The Bible has something to say about that, and we will not cover that this morning, but Matt 18, Coll 3 and Matt 6 still hold. You must, in the end, forgive them. Your personal health and your salvation are at stake.

What if they have already died? It is too late to tell them you forgive them, but it is not too late to forgive them—to let it go.

Remember… 100 denarii vs 10,000 talents $10,000 vs $20 bil

Two take-home points:

1. We have been forgiven of massive sin against God. Our debt to him is great. It sent Jesus to the cross, and any thought of us paying him back is nonsense!!!

2. God, in his grace, is prepared to remove the entire debt without reservation.

3. Actually, there is one reservation. We MUST forgive the much lesser offenses against us.

**Matthew Sermon XIII**

**The Messiah Comes to Jerusalem**

**Review:**

Last week: Parable of the Unmerciful Servant. Matthew 18:21-35

God’s forgiveness is like $20 billion.

Our forgiveness of others is more like $10,000

Conclusions: 1. God has trusted us with a LOT and he has forgiven us MUCH.

2. We need to forgive those who sin against us.

Matthew 6:15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

This week:

We have already covered Matthew 19 in Mark. (divorce, little children, Rich Young Ruler) So we are going straight to Matthew 20. Jesus is about to enter Jerusalem.

Matthew 20:1-16 The Parable of the Workers in the Field.

Q: Is this fair? Is this just?

(Note the parallels with the Prodigal Son and his jealous brother)

Notice he pays the last hired first, almost as if he were making a point to those hired first, who surely said to themselves, “this is not fair!”

Did those who work all day receive less than they deserved?

Romans 9:14-15, 19-24 Context: Jews are complaining that the Gentiles are so easily saved. Parallel between this parable and the Jew/Gentile relationship.

Which of the workers are you? Are you “envious”? (v. 15)

Which is better, to work all day, or to work for just an hour?

For me, personally, I have been a disciple 45 years and I am a bit tired.

Rather than complain that God is unfair, we should rejoice at his grace and generosity and the opportunity to serve him for so long.

Conclusion: v. 16 Many who are first will be last and the last first.

This is the upside-down Kingdom of God.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Matthew 5:5

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Matthew 5:44

Whoever takes the lowly position of a child is the greatest in the kingdom. Matthew 18:4

Leave the 99 and go for the one who strays. Matthew 18:12

Oh, and by the way, Matthew 20:25-28 Whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

How about you. Why are you here? To be served or to serve and use your life so that many can be ransomed from sin as well? What would those who know you say about that? Let us be honest with ourselves here.

Matthew 21:1-11 Jesus enters Jerusalem as a king.

Is Jesus showing his omniscience or did he prepare this ahead of time? We do not know.

This is the fulfillment of so much prophecy. They left Caesarea Philippi. Now they have arrived in Jerusalem.

Jesus knows exactly what he is doing. The Messiah must die in Jerusalem.

All of human history points to the events about to unfold in Jerusalem.

Daniel 9:24-26 The Messiah is coming to Jerusalem seventy “sevens” after the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. [note Daniel 9:2 these are years] Ezra 7:11-26 7th year or Artaxerxes 458 BC 458 – 490 = -32 But no year zero, so AD 33

[v. 26 the Messiah will be killed during the 70th week AD 26-33]

v. 26 he will be put to death…

Matthew 16:21 “Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things… and be killed…

The entire Bible points to this moment!!!! The King/Messiah has to die in Jerusalem.

Zechariah 9:9 Jesus is declaring himself king.

Jesus does not ride in on a horse, he arrives, “gentle, and riding on a donkey.”

Your Savior rides in on a donkey. Normally, kings ride in on a horse, but not Jesus. Why? Because blessed are the meek. And whoever takes the lowly position of a child is greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and many who are first will be last and the last first, and whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant. The Son of man did not come to be served but to serve.

v. 9 Let us join the crowds!! Hosannah to the Son of David! Blessed in He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosannah in the highest heaven!!!

Hosannah means “save us.”

This is the reverse of the vision of Ezekiel, when God left the temple.

Ezekiel 11:22-24 God leaves the temple through the East gate and goes up the Mt. of Olives.

David as well. 2 Sam 15:23, 30-32.

Matthew 21:12-13 Jesus clears the temple. Gentle?

Technically, he is clearing the temple court, not the actual temple.

Here Jesus fulfills Zechariah 14:21 “And on that day there will no longer be a merchant in the house of the Almighty.” (note Zech 14:1, 8, 9, 20)

This is a deeply symbolic act. The kingdom of God has arrived and the Messiah is changing everything.

Jesus is overturning the traditions of the Jews. He is overturning your life! He is driving out the world. Everything will be made new!

Jesus is a lion (he overturns the tables) and a lamb (gentle and riding on a donkey).

Rev 5:5-6 Here, Jesus is both. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah. (v. 5)

He is a lamb, looking as if it had been slain. (v. 6)

To you he will be either a lion or a lamb. Which will it be?

Lion: Matthew 16:23 Jesus to Peter, who tempts him to not go to Jerusalem. “Get behind me Satan!”

Matthew 23:29-36 Jesus to the teachers of the Law and Pharisees: “Woe to you, teachers of the Law, you hypocrites!” “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape from being condemned to hell!

Lamb: but right after he is a lamb Matt 23:37-39 O! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chick under her wings…”

Like a lamb:

Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

John 7:53-8:11 v. 11 “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

“No one sir,” she said “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

Matthew 12:15-21 He healed all who were ill… This was to fulfill…

(Quoting Isaiah 42:1-4) Here is my chosen servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight… He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory.”

Note v. 4 How will Jesus bring justice to the nations if he is like a lamb?

If it takes a lion he will be a lion.

So, who is Jesus a lion to? Who is Jesus a lamb to?

Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for [when you do] I am gentle and humble in heart.

Matthew 21:18-22 Jesus curses a fig tree.

This act, as his entry on a donkey and as his clearing of the temple is deeply symbolic. Jesus is teaching about his coming as king to Jerusalem.

The disciples were amazed at the miracle! They still do not get it.

This act is symbolic. The fig tree represents the Jewish people. Jesus came to them, expecting to yield a great crop. Jesus says to Israel: “May you never bear fruit again!

Jesus comes to us, expecting to yield a crop. Hopefully, we will bear much fruit.

Like the Parable of the Vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-5) God planted a vineyard, and he expects us to yield fruit. “What more could have been done for her.”

Summary:

The first will be last and the last will be first. The upside down kingdom of God.

Jesus the gentle king comes to Jerusalem to die.

Jesus is both a lion and a lamb. Which will he be with you?

**Matthew Sermon XIV**

**Coming Into the Kingdom**

Introduction:

This is our New Years sermon. I will not be talking about resolutions or even plans for 2024. But, a brief comment.

We are a very young church with very young Christians we need to nurture, strengthen and mature. This year we will emphasize the basics of Christianity and we will be doing training in the basics of Christian relationships and Christian living.

We will grow in Bible knowledge.

We will grow in our quiet times and our relationship with God.

And we will grow. My goal: 40 by the end of 2024.;

**Review: Last week: Jesus Enters Jerusalem**

Matthew 20:1-16 The Parable of the Workers in the Field.

Those who work in the kingdom of God for many years receive the same reward as those who come to work at the last hour. God’s justice is surprising by human standards, but rather than complain that God is unfair, we should rejoice at his grace and generosity. Besides, would it not be better to serve longer than to have served for less time? So, why complain?!

Matthew 21:1-11 Jesus enters Jerusalem as a king.

This is the fulfillment of so much prophecy. They left Caesarea Philippi. Now they have arrived in Jerusalem. The Messiah must die in Jerusalem. All of human history points to the events about to unfold in Jerusalem.

Jesus comes as king to Jerusalem but he does not ride in on a horse, he arrives, “gentle, and riding on a donkey.”

This is a deeply symbolic act. The kingdom of God has arrived and the Messiah is changing everything.

Matthew 21:12-13 Jesus is a lion (he overturns the tables) and a lamb (gentle and riding on a donkey).

*Matthew 21:18-22 Jesus curses a fig tree.*

*This act, as his entry on a donkey and as his clearing of the temple is deeply symbolic. Jesus is teaching about his coming as king to Jerusalem.*

*This act is symbolic. The fig tree represents the Jewish people. Jesus came to them, expecting to yield a great crop. Jesus says to Israel: “May you never bear fruit again!*

*Jesus comes to us, expecting to yield a crop. Hopefully, we will bear much fruit.*

Today: **Coming into the Kingdom of God.**Matthew 22:1-14 and Luke 14:15-24 The parable of the wedding banquet.

The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a banquet for his Son.

The king is God.

The banquet is the kingdom of God—whether it is the church or “heaven” is left unclear on purpose.

Point: Being in the kingdom is like being at a banquet. We have abundant provisions!

v. 5 They paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business.

Luke 14:16-21 A parallel passage.

Q: Have you been making excuses for not taking part in the things of the kingdom? Not out sharing with us on campus, or missing meetings of the church, or taking part in the campus conference in March…

I have work. I do not have the time. I do not like driving in the mountains…

v. 18 I just bought a field.

Q: What do you think about his excuse? Shouldn’t he have checked out the field before he bought it?

I just started a new program at the university.

Didn’t you consider whether this would interfere in your commitment to God before you signed up?

I just started a new job.

Didn’t you ask if you could have Sunday and Wednesday evening off before you took the job?

v. 19 I just bought five yoke of oxen. I have to make sure they are OK.

I already paid for my vacation. I did not know that the church was going to have a campaign.

I planned to move to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when I retired a long time ago. Sure, there is no church there, but, I planned this before I was baptized.

I know that we are going to plant a church in Stockton in 2025, but that is not convenient to me right now.

v. 20 I just got married. Q: Why can’t a married person come? Hmmm.. [Note: The Jews had a custom that a newly wed man got one year off from military or other compulsory service]

We are in love. Sure, she is not a disciple, but this is love.

We are living together and already have a child together, what do you expect?

Example: Oscar Rodriguez in San Diego….

Back in Matthew 22:6 Note: The king does not beg them to come. He sends us out to find good-hearted people. Poor, lame, uneducated, illegal aliens, whoever…

v. 6-7 This is what happened to the prophets and to God’s Son, and it foreshadows the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

v. 8 God says, OK, the Jews are not interested, now let us go to the Gentiles.

v. 10 So his servants went over to UCM, MC, Food Max, the mall and invited all kinds of people.

v. 11 Who is this person who is not wearing correct wedding clothes?

Gal 3:26-27 It is people who have not been clothed with Christ! It is people who have not been baptized into Christ.

This man completely shocked!!!! He was totally convinced he belonged at the banquet.

Many will be surprised on that day!!! It is our job to teach them correctly and help them to put on Christ!!!

Who is this man? He is literally thousands of people right here in Merced who think that they are saved, but they are not!

I sure hope this is not you!

Matthew 22:15-46 The Pharisees and the Saducees try to trap Jesus, either to discredit him or to give basis for his arrest.

Matther 22:15-22 The Pharisees: We will not have any great preaching points here. Let’s just be impressed with Jesus’ wisdom!

v. 17 This is the poll tax levied on every Israelite by Rome.

If he says yes, he will be called a collaborator with the Romans. The tax was the cause of a rebellion by Julian of Galilee in 6 BC. He will lose the support of many radical Jews.

If he says no, he can be charged with sedition and give evidence that could be used against him when they had him arrested and tried before Pilate. They think they have Jesus between a rock and a hard place.

Q: Is it lawful. Is it acceptable for a Jew to show obeisance to a pagan emperor?

Jesus: Whose image is on this coin (the Roman denarius required by the poll tax)? The emperor. The Jews were not allowed to use coins with a “graven image” on it.

It had the inscription “son of God” on it. They used their own copper coins without the objectionable image on it, and only used the denarius to pay the tax. These coins were dirty.

Jesus: “render” ie give back these coins to Caesar.

The principle: Loyalty to God supercedes loyalty to any state, but it is not violated by submission to governing authorities. (which is consistent with Romans 13 Submit to governing authorities and pay your taxes)

This would make the zealots happy, because he condemned the Romans, while at the same time avoiding saying anything illegal. A very shrewd answer.

Matthew 22:23-33 Now the Sadducees take their shot. They are the rulers and oversee the temple.

Next: What about the law of Levirate Marriage? Deut 25:5-6

The Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection. They only accept the Pentateuch. The Pharisees accept the entire Jewish canon (including Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:2) and believe in the resurrection.

They think they have Jesus trapped!!!

They are discussing the law of Levirate Marriage Deut 25:5-6, which was designed to prevent women from being completely abandoned.

The Pharisees and you believe in the resurrection, but what about this!!!????

Jesus: the brilliant teacher and theologian responds:

They are “in error” for at least two reasons:

You do not know the Scripture: First, they assume that the situation in heaven is the same as on earth. But they are wrong. No marriage in heaven.

In a world of eternal life, procreation is not needed!!!

Question for us: Do you KNOW the Scripture, or is your knowledge superficial, like that of the Sadducees???

You do not know the power of God: Second, they misinterpret the Bible, as the resurrection is real.

Question for us: Do you KNOW the power of God?

Then Jesus cleverly argues for the resurrection from the Pentateuch, using Exodus 3:6. YHWH is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but he is the God of the living, not the dead, so there is life after death.

v. 33 The Sadducees cynical trap/question had the opposite effect of that desired!

Q: Are you astonished at Jesus’ teaching? You should be!

Matthew 22:34-40 Pharisees: Good job, Jesus!

The Pharisees take a second shot!!! OK, you are so smart, let’s see you answer the hardest question of all!!!

v. 34 Picture this. The Pharisees have a pow-wow.

Pharisee #1: OK. We are smarter than the Sadducees. We know the Bible better than they do. So, how are we going to trap Jesus.

Pharisee #2 an “expert”: I know. Let’s ask him the hardest question of all!

What is the greatest commandment? To the Jews, some commands were more weighty than others, but all 613 were equally binding. They hope they can accuse Jesus of repudiating parts of the Law.

Jesus’ response is brilliant and it is original!

Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Leviticus 19:18

“All the law and Prophets hang on these.” In other words, everything God asks us to do he does so because he loves us and everything he asks us to do, he wants us to do, not so as to earn salvation, but because we love him. Without love binding things together, it is all a religious burden.

Jesus has already quoted Hosea 6:6 twice. I desire mercy, not sacrifice. Love is what binds all the Scripture together!!! It is what binds all of Christianity together!

It is what binds the “trinity” together.

Giving preeminence to Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Leviticus 19:18 does not invalidate the other 611 laws. It gives them meaning and purpose!

Gal 5:6 The only thing that matters is faith, expressing itself in love.

Wait: Doesn’t obedience matter? Yes, of course!!! But the kind of obedience God wants is obedience motivated by love, not by obligation.

Here is a question for us this morning. It is not complicated:

Do you love God with all your heart, your soul and your mind?

Are you willing to apply this love of God to loving your neighbor (which Matthew 5:43-48 told us includes your “enemies”) as you love yourself.

Then, welcome to the Kingdom of God!!!

The questions for us:

1. Will you accept the invitation to the banquet? Will you drop everything right now and come into the kingdom of God? Have you put on the proper clothes in Christian baptism?

2. Are you ready to love God with all your heart, soul and mind? And to apply that love of God to loving all of your fellow humans?

Then you are ready to come into the Kingdom of God!

**Matthew Sermon XV**

**Weightier Matters**

**Review:**

Matthew 22:1-14 The parable of the wedding banquet.

The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a banquet.

Q: Have you been making excuses for not taking part in the things of the kingdom?

Are you the person who is at the banquet and is not wearing the proper clothing?

Gal 3:26-27 It is people who have not been clothed with Christ! It is people who have not been baptized into Christ.

Jesus vs. the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Jesus shows great—dare I say—miraculous wisdom in answering their questions.

This morning: Weightier Matters

I. Matthew 23:1-39 Seven Woes on the Pharisees.

Matthew 23:1-12 Jesus is speaking to “the crowds and to his disciples (ie. to us).

Matthew 23:13-39 Jesus is speaking to the Teachers of the Law and Pharisees.

Matthew 23:1-12

As we read this, remember, he is speaking to his apostles and his disciples, not to the Pharisees.

v. 3 Note: He is not suggesting a rebellious spirit. Obey the Pharisees, but…

Two problems here:

1. v. 4 These religious people tie “heavy burdens” (as opposed to Jesus whose burden is easy and light Matthew 11:28-30).

2. They are not willing to lift a finger to help their followers carry these burdens.

What are these burdens? They are religious duties which are

1. not specifically biblical and

2. are not tied to loving God. (We will see specific examples in 23:13-39 when he is speaking to the Pharisees)

Because, like we saw last week, Gal 5:6 “The only thing that matters is faith, expressing itself through love.”

So, if I am not into it, if it is not out of love, then I should not obey?

No! Do it anyway, but please move to the place where it comes from love.

As opposed to Colossians 2:20-23 They lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. That is why they are heavy burdens. Note v. 23 the Pharisaic “appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body…”

1. Heavy burdens.
2. Not lifting a finger to help.

v. 5 They are asking you to do this, not because they care about you and love you, but so that they can look good, religiously, in front of people. v. 5 “Everything they do is done for people to see.” It is about being religious, not about loving God.

Honestly, this message is more for Jan and me than the rest of you, but anyone with any leadership role, even in a discipling relationship: Listen up!

v. 5 Phylacteries wide (boxes on heads and straps on arms) (see picture)

v. 8-9 Do not call anyone “Teacher” or “Father.” Equivalent today: “Most Reverend” or “Pope” (which, by the way, means Father)

Funny example: Jeff Hungerford and I formed a threesome with a Catholic priest and Jeff pulled out Matthew 23:9.

(btw, calling your father “father” or even someone your spiritual “father in the faith” is OK!) The problem is exalting humans in a way which might rival our honoring of Jesus.

BTW: Do me a favor and do not call me Pastor, even to others. I am NOT a pastor.

I am a minister, but then again, every disciple of Jesus is a minister.

Jesus sums up his response to us concerning the Pharisees with this:

v. 11-12 The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

How many times has Jesus said this in Matthew?????

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Matthew 5:5

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Matthew 5:44

Whoever takes the lowly position of a child is the greatest in the kingdom. Matthew 18:4

Leave the 99 and go for the one who strays. Matthew 18:12

Matthew 20:25-28 Whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

It is not about status, but service.

Matthew 23:13-26 for now Now Jesus is talking directly to the Pharisees with seven “woes”. “You”

Side note: In the NT the Pharisees are not necessarily the bad guys. After the Abomination of Desolation (next week) they were the Hasidim—the righteous ones who restored Judaism to its original purity. Even in Jesus’ day, they were the ones who took the Hebrew Bible seriously. They were the ones who preached the holiness and the sovereignty of God. And, as we will see, many of them became Christians.

The term pharisaism applies to the majority who did what we will see below.

What is the worst possible charge that can be laid on any disciple, but especially on any leader of disciples?

v. 13 “You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces.”

Q: How do they do this? By making worship of God a matter of rules and regulations. By majoring in the minors. By not seeing the kingdom.

It is like Matthew 6:23 “If your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness.” If you do not get what the kingdom of God is about, then you get nothing. It is about being the least of all. It is about being merciful, about being a peacemaker, about loving your enemies, about loving God. If you miss this, no amount of religion will move you one step closer to God. This is what the kingdom of God is about. It is about real love.

It is seeing Christianity as a religion, not as a kingdom.

A weird fact: There is no Matthew 23:14. The manuscripts used in the Middle Ages, when the verses were chosen they had an interpolation from Mark 12:40, but none of the oldest manuscripts of Matthew included this verse!

v. 15 Wow!

Ex: v. 16 “If anyone swears by the temple it means nothing, but if you swear by the gold in the temple you are bound by that oath.”

Matthew 5:33-37 Jesus has already said for Christians, do not even make oaths at all. But… for the Pharisees, making rules about such things is their “thing.”

How about just loving people and, therefore, doing what you said you would do (rather than making an oath)!!!

v. 23 you make sure that people give 10% on Sunday and that they have a quiet time every day, but you do not care about the people. What about mercy, what about loving the person?

You make sure that the sisters do not wear inappropriate clothing. You pull out a ruler, but you don’t notice that you said it in an unloving way.

You make sure that the brother does not spend time alone with the sister, but you don’t notice that he is really hurting inside and is feeling lonely.

A profane word slips out of a young disciple and you jump down their throat, but you fail to ask where that came from. “You must have really been hurt.”

v. 23-24 Weighing out a tenth of your spices. (note: Jesus is not condemning weighing out the tenth…) Are you straining out a gnat (impure) but swallowing a camel (the largest animal in the Middle East, also impure)?

They neglect the “more important matters.” “weightier matters”

Q: Do you major in the minors of Christianity?

This is the key verse today. Q: What are these “weightier matters?”

Jesus: What really matters? v. 24 What is the “camel?” (as opposed to the gnat)

The “camel” is justice, mercy and faithfulness. It is to act justly toward your fellow human being. It is showing mercy to people, even as you help them to do right and not to do wrong. It is to live in a faithful hesed relationship with God.

Are you treating the downtrodden and those in disadvantaged situations justly?

Are you showing mercy, even as you call people to do what is right?

Are you being faithful to God? Do you have a pure heart?

Without the inward righteousness, the outward observance is meaningless, so why focus on that?

This reminds us of Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

Jesus is not saying it is unimportant to “clean the outside of the cup” (v. 25) or to “whitewash the tombs” (to prevent touching them, and therefore becoming ritually unclean, v. 27) or to get to church on time, or to stop using profane words in your conversation, or to wear modest clothes…

It is a little like when Jesus said to take the plank out of your eye before you take the dust speck out of your sister’s eye. He did not say to not remove the dust speck…

Q: What is more important to you: enforcing the rule or loving the person? It needs to come from love and concern, not from rules, even if the rules are good.

Whitewashed tombs. They whitewashed tombs, not so they would look beautiful, but so that people would not accidentally touch them, and therefore become ceremonially unclean.

You look good. You clean up well for church, but your heart has grown cold toward God. You harbor deep-seated sin in your heart.

It stopped being about love a while ago…

Is that you?

v. 29-36 Woe to you Pharisees.

Woe to you religious persons who no longer care about the weightier matter of Justice, mercy and faithfulness—who are Christians of the head, but not the heart. Who are still here, but more concerned about rules and regulations than about loving God and his people.

v. 32 Wow! He says, “Go ahead kill me. You might as well…”

v. You religious people are snakes and vipers.

Jesus, tell me how you feel about such people!

Q: What makes you angry? What made Paul angry? (legalism, law vs faith)

What made Jesus angry? Religiosity without heart—faithfulness to God and mercy to our fellow humans.

v. 35 “From the blood of Abel (Genesis 4:4) to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berekiah (2 Chron 24:22 the last book of the Jewish Bible)

v. 36 A prophecy which came true in AD 70 (see Matthew 25)

But… notice v. 37

Is Jesus upset? Is Jesus angry?

Sure, but notice. Matthew 23:37-39 Jesus REALLY LOVES these Pharisees and teachers of the Law.

If only… Jesus desperately wants to show mercy, not justice to them.

v. 37 but they were not willing.

Q: Are you willing to let Jesus gather you in like a hen does her chicks?

And notice this: Paul, a Pharisee became a Christian. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, he became a Christian. Acts 15:5 A number of the Pharisees believed.

Jesus desperately wants them to come to their senses. Sure, he is upset, but he feels for them. He loves them. He cares deeply about them. He longs to “gather them together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

v. 39 Another prophecy. This is my last visit to you until I come again at the end of time (see Ch 25)

The questions for us:

1. What really matters to you? Is it faithfulness (hesed) to God and mercy toward people, or is it doctrine and religious rules?

2. Are you willing? Are you willing to be gathered under the wings of Jesus? Are you willing to accept the weightier matters of justice, mercy and faithfulness to God?

**Matthew Sermon XVI**

**Preparing to Meet God**

**Review:**

Matthew 23:1-39 Seven Woes on the Pharisees.

v. 4 These religious people tie “heavy burdens” What are these burdens? They are religious duties which are not tied to loving God.

Gal 5:6 The only thing that matters is faith, expressing itself in love.

Are you straining out a gnat but swallowing a camel?

The “camel” is justice, mercy and faithfulness.

The questions for you:

Are you willing? Are you willing to be gathered under the wings of Jesus? Are you willing to accept the weightier matters of justice, mercy and faithfulness to God?

Today: Preparing to Meet God.

Q: to get us started. Are you ready, right now, to meet God?

Matthew 24:1-39 End Times

Note the transition Matthew 23:39 Jesus is saying his final good-bye to the temple. He is done with the old Judaism. “You will not see me again until…” Leads straight into the “Olivet Discourse” Matt 24-25.

Matthew 24:1-3

Now, Jesus goes up on the Mt. of Olives, which is on the East side of the city. This is fulfillment of the prophecy in Ezekiel 11:22-23. When God left the temple, he went up on the Mt. of Olives. At that point, the temple was doomed! Symbolically, when Jesus leaves the temple, it is doomed. Matthew 24:2 Jesus points toward the temple. See those stones. Not one will be left on another.

v. 3 The end of the age is both the end of the Jewish age (AD 70) and the end of the “Christian age” The end of the “last days” when Jesus comes back. The disciples confuse the two and Jesus never clears up the confusion—for a reason.

As we go forward, keep three things in mind:

1. This is about the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the end of Jewish age.

2. This is about the second coming of Jesus at the end of the age.

The two are theologically connected as a coming of the Kingdom, as a “Day of the Lord.” This is similar to Ezekiel who often intertwined the two.

3. Practical: This is about our need to stay focused and to be prepared to meet God.

The interpretation is hard, but the application is straightforward.

Matthew 24:4-14

v. 5 Josephus (The Jewish Wars) tells us about many of these false Messiahs.

v. 6 “the end” is the end of the Jewish age in AD 70.

Jesus: Do not get distracted by wars, rumors of wars, famines, pandemics, great recessions, and (even legitimate concerns about social justice) earthquakes, persecutions, people falling away, false teachers,…

People will always tell you these are the absolute last days. Jesus’ advice: Ignore them!!! They are just “the beginning of birth pangs.”

v. 13 The key: stand firm to the end!

v. 14 Jesus’ vision of the gospel being taken around the world was completed by AD 70. Acts 1:8 “to the ends of the earth.” Acts 17:6 These men have caused trouble all over the (Greek and Roman) world.”

Matthew 24:15-25

v. 15 is key. “as spoken by Daniel” (Daniel 9:27, 1 Maccabees 1:57)

The Abomination of Desolation is when Antiochus Epiphanes put a statue of Zeus with his face on the statue on 167 BC Daniel 11:31 and also when Titus offered pagan sacrifice at the same place (as prophesied in Daniel 9:27).

All of this is fulfilling prophecy and prefigure.

AD 70 Titus burns down the temple and offers pagan sacrifice on the site (Josephus)

v. 16 “flee to the mountains” Eusebius tells us that they fled to Pella.

Josephus’ Jewish Wars give much detail to these terrible times.

v. 17-25 Again, don’t lose focus. Don’t go for false Messiahs and end-time prophecies. (Moonies, Mother Goddess, JWs etc…)

About v. 26 it switches to end times/the second coming of Christ.

Matt 24:26-35 Be ready!

v. 27 Now we are talking about the second coming—the return of Jesus.

The real actual end will be unmistakable. Don’t worry about that. (ex sudden darkness in Spokane after Mt. St. Helens) This is NOT the chaos of the Jewish Wars.

v. 29 classic apocalyptic literature. Not literal. (parallel: Isaiah 13:10, 34:4)

v. 30 note: All the peoples (not just Jerusalem) [Matt 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn. We will either mourn now, or we will REALLY mourn when Jesus comes back because it will be too late. Man, I am really in trouble now!]

v. 31 A loud trumpet call reminds Jews of the Feast of Trumpets at which the Rabbis told the Jews to be ready for the day of Judgment. It is a foreshadow of the second coming and final judgment.

v. 32-34 So sorry. This could be confusing, now he switches back to AD 70 (forty years later) Q: How many of us right now listening to this service will still be alive in forty years? (this generation will not pass away)

Matt 24:36-51 This is what this entire discourse is leading to/about! Be ready! Now our sermon starts.

It will be a complete surprise. There will be no specific identifying sign. It will be sudden. Do not listen to those who say differently (and there are many).

v. 37 As in the days of Noah. People laughed at Noah.

v. 38 Eat, drink and be merry. They will laugh at us. You are too uptight. Why are you always in church? Illustration at CU: Are you studying for a final exam?

But when it started raining and the door to the ark was shut….  
They laughed at the Jews marching around Jericho, but when the walls fell…

Thy ridicule you, but when Jesus comes back. It will be awesome. Imagine what it will feel like. I was right!!!!!

v. 40-41 One will be taken. This is not a rapture. Some will be taken to Jesus’ side and others will not. So… Where will they go? Where did those not in the ark go? What happened to those in Jericho? (they died… they were judged)

v. 42 Keep watch! That’s it!!!

What should I do to prepare for the coming of Jesus? Now let’s apply this:

Live as if it might happen today. v. 43 If the owner had known… But the point is that he does not, so live that way every single day! v. 44 be ready.

Q: How to be ready? v. 46 be doing good when he comes!!! (or when you die)

(like in the Parable of the Tenants in Matt 21)

Live as if it will not happen in my lifetime or in the lifetime of those who come after me. Do both!!

If you were to die tomorrow, how would you act today?

Plead with my friends to become Christians, call my family, tell them I love them.

Well… act that way today!!!

Illustration: They guy in Milwaukee who died while Ron Quint preached.

v. 46 It will be good for that servant whose master finds him faithful.

v. 48 But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, “My master is staying away a long time…” Q: Is there a sin you have been holding onto and concealing? What do you need to do today? Is there a deeply unresolved relationship in your life? What do you need to do this week?

I’ve got time…. Maybe so, but act as though you do not!

v. 51 Note: “He will be cut to pieces…” If you are in Christ and the Holy Spirit lives in you, you may not need to fear this, but how will you act anyway (given that this is your mother or your brother or your co-worker?

Matthew 25:1-13 The Parable of the foolish and wise virgins. Same message.

v. 1 At that time… When Jesus returns, or the day you die…

a. Matthew 24:36-51 Be ready for Jesus to come back today.

b. Matthew 25:1-13 Be ready for Jesus to come back several years from now, (v. 5 It was a long time coming…) or not until after you die.

This week, this month, have you been wise or foolish?

All ten “virgins” are symbolic of people who have been saved!

v. 4 kept oil in reserve. v. 5 a long time—like 2000+ years.

v. 7 A short wick burns dimly but a too-long wick wastes fuel and produces soot. A well-trimmed light burns brightly but does not waste fuel.

Q: How can you keep your lamp full?

Notice that those with extra oil could not share with those who ran out. You cannot vicariously drag your brothers and sisters to heaven.

We share the Christian life together, but we enter heaven one at a time.

v. 11-12 Do not let yourself be these foolish virgins. Stay close to God, keep your Christian commitments, stay close to brothers and sisters, stay tied in to the church, walk in the light, be open…

Summary:

Keep watch, be ready! You do not know when Jesus will come back (or you will die).

Be ready for Jesus to come back today.

Be ready for him to come back after a long and fulfilling spiritual life.

Keep watch, be ready!

**Matthew Sermon XVII**

**Sheep and Goats**

**Review:**

Matthew 24:1-23:13 Preparing to Meet God.

1. This is about the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the end of Jewish age.

2. This is about the second coming of Jesus at the end of the age.

3. This is about our need to stay focused and to be prepared.

Jesus: Do not get distracted by wars, rumors of wars, famines, pandemics, great recessions, and (even legitimate concerns about social justice) earthquakes, persecutions, people falling away, false teachers,…

v. 13 Stand firm to the end!

v. 37-38 As in the days of Noah…. A complete surprise

What should I do to prepare for the coming of Jesus?

Live as if it might happen today.

Live as if it will not happen in my lifetime or in the lifetime of those who come after me. Do both!! If you were to die tomorrow, how would you act today?

Plead with my friends to become Christians, call my family, tell them I love them.

Matthew 25:14-30 The Parable of the Talents.

v. 14 Again, it will be like… What does “it” refer to? The second coming of Jesus (or the end of your life, whichever comes first). (remember 25:1 “at that time…)

This is a second parable about the return of Christ.

This parable is helping to answer the unanswered question from 25:1-13. How do I keep my lantern full? (we tend to answer by saying good quiet times) Answer: by doing things for God—by actively serving him!

v. 14-18 God has given us all various talents. The amount is not the chief issue here. Are some more “talented?” I suppose, but God does not care about that. It is what you did with that talent.

BTW, the word talent in English comes from this parable.

Also, note that God gave us 1, 2, 5, or 10 talents. A talent is $2,000,000! God has give you a lot of stuff to work with.

v. 19 After a long time. It is like the Parable of the Ten Virgins.

v. 19-23 5- and 2- talent servants/disciples had doubled what the master/God had given them.

They were not like the fig tree of Matthew 21:18-22 or the unfruitful workers in the Parable of the Tenants in Matthew 21:33-41 “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end” and “rent the vineyard to other tenants.” (v. 41)

v. 21 In the kingdom of God, the reward of faithful service is not a great pension. It is even more faithful service! The reward of hard work for God is:

1. Even more hard work God? Yes!

2. Share God’s happiness. This is what makes God happy, and what makes us happy. I have work for you to do in the New Heaven and Earth.

v. 21 3. We hear those blessed words, “Well done, good and faithful servant! I LOVE that phrase.

I think about Chris and Gary Simmons. John and Alisa Sparks. Manny and Sandy

Q: What about you? Are these the words you expect to hear? Do you long for them?

If you want something done, who should you ask? Ask a busy person!

Some of us had demanding parents for whom we were never good enough. I hope that was not you. God is not that way. He expects us to earn something with what he has given us, but he is not a taskmaster. It is for our good! The things he expects us to do are also what make us happy and fulfilled.

v. 24-27 The other guy… I know that you are a selfish God and an unloving God, so I protected myself. I knew that you were just using me, so I watched out for number one.

None of us actually say that, but…

v. 26 You wicked and lazy servant! You could at least have put it in a bank!

Take the talent away from that one, and give it to the one who will use it.

You could have given your stuff to someone else who could have done something for me with it. You would not study the Bible with people, you could at least have given your money to someone who would.

You would not share your faith or help with our community service activities. You could at least have encouraged those who did.

I do not want to hear those words.

What do I learn from this parable? God expects results.

I have two questions:

1. What is your talent? What is your gift? What has God given you?

2. What are you doing with it/them? Ephesians 2:10-11 We are “created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do

1 Peter 4:10-11 (read it).

1 Cor 4:2 God requires that those who have been given a trust, must prove faithful.

My gift is teaching. I LOVE teaching. Eric Liddle Chariots of Fire. When I teach, I feel God’s pleasure.

If your gift is doing crafts, then put on a craft event for the church on zoom.

If your gift is computers, build up our social media presence.

If your gift is as a handyman, then be handy.

If your gift is fixing cars, fix cars for Christ.

If you have the gift of evangelism (Zane) use it to reach out to people.

If your gift is serving the needy (Andres) find a career that uses that gift.

Q: What is your talent? Luther, what is your talent? Rosa, what is your talent? Egypt, what is your talent?

Remember, we are talking about who will be in heaven and who will be in hell.

This is how we keep our lamps full. (Matthew 25:4)

In case you were not sure:

Matthew 25:31-46 Sheep and Goats.

For now, just read 25:31-33

Matthew Ch 24 Jesus talks about God coming to destroy Jerusalem in AD 70, and he talks about his second coming.

Matthew 25:1 At that time…

Matthew 25:14 Again, it will be like…

Matthew 25:31 When the Son of Man comes in his glory. Q: Which is he talking about? The Second Coming, obviously!

25:32 All the nations will be gathered before him. This scene is not represented often in Scripture. Daniel 12:2-4 Rev 20:11-15

Imagine the scene!!!!!

Jesus is doing the judging here. This confused me for a time. John 3:17 (condemn the world but to save it), John 12:47 “I did not come to judge the world, but to save it.”

True. That is now why Jesus came to this world to take on flesh and to die for our sins. He did not come here to judge the world, but when he returns at the end of time, it will not be to save, but to judge.

Matthew 25:34-46 Q: So, who will be in heaven?

v. 34 Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father: take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. This has been God’s plan all along.

Who will be in heaven?

Matthew 25:35-40 Those who served God. How? By serving and looking after his disciples (these brothers and sisters of mine).

Q: v. 40 “the least of these my brothers and sisters.” Is he only talking about how we have loved, served and taken care of his disciples? Maybe, but let us not worry about that. Does this distinction matter?

Isaiah 58:6-12. Read it.

Who will be saved? Those who worship, serve and obey God. How do we do this? By being his instruments to serve humanity.

The point: We will not remain saved because we have believed the correct doctrines. We will remain saved to the end because we have acted in this world as God would act in this world—by feeding the hungry, by inviting in the stranger, by clothing the homeless, by helping the sick and visiting those in prisons, either literal or figurative. By making those phone calls to the weak or those not getting the attention they need.

When we study the Bible with people we are feeding the spiritually hungry, we are inviting the spiritually alienated into God’s kingdom, we clothe the spiritually unclothed (like the guy at the banquet who was not clothed with Christ), by helping the spiritually sick, and by helping to free those who are spiritually imprisoned.

Let me be honest here. This passage bothered me a bit. Is this works salvation?

James 2:24 “You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.” James 2:26 “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.”

These things—feeding the hungry, inviting in the stranger, clothing the homeless, helping the sick and visiting those in prisons—is what sheep do.

These are the things our faith needs to be combined with, otherwise our faith is dead.

On Judgment Day God recognizes his sheep—those who have been doing these things, because this is what his sheep do.

This takes us back to Matthew 24:45-46 “It will be good for that servant who finds him doing what he was instructed to do when he returns.”

Matthew 25:1-13 Who were the wise virgins? They were the ones who prepared by keeping plenty of oil in their lamp. How do we do this? By praying and reading the Bible.

Sure, but Jesus says to keep your lamp full for the day of his return we need to feed the hungry, invite in the stranger, clothe the homeless, help the sick, and visiting those in prisons—be these things physical or spiritual. We need to be about the business of the kingdom of God. That is how we keep our lamps full.

Here is the encouragement:

God says that when we do this, we do it to/for God.

Q: How do you love God? Is it a feeling?

Illustration: Children, how do you make your parents happy?

Matthew 25:41-46 Some did not do this. They did not…. They lived a self-focused, self-centered, self-interested, self-indulgent life.

25:41 the eternal fire prepared, not for you (God only prepared his kingdom for us), but for the devil and his angels. It was not God’s plan for us to be in hell.

Summary: God wants and expects us to use what he has given in service to his kingdom—to increase our talents.

More specifically, God wants us to use those gifts, talents, ability, time, energy to take care of the needs of our fellow-Christians and others as well—to feed the physically or spiritually hungry, to invite the stranger and care for him/her, to clothe the physically or spiritually unclothed, to heal the spiritually or physically sick, to visit the spiritually or physically imprisoned.

If we do, God will say “Well done, good and faithful servant, come share my happiness in eternity.”

**Matthew XVIII**

**Death, Burial and Resurrection: We Should Have Known It Was Coming**

Matthew 25:14-30 The Parable of the Talents.

v. 14-18 God has given us all various talents. God expects us to use them in service to the Kingdom. v. 21 In the kingdom of God, the reward of faithful service is:

1. Even more faithful service.

2. We hear those blessed words, “Well done, good and faithful servant! I LOVE that phrase.

Matthew 25:31-46 Sheep and Goats. Who will be in heaven?

Matthew 25:35-40 Those who served God. How? By serving and looking after his disciples especially, but also people generally.

The point: We will not be saved because we have believed the correct doctrines. We will be remain saved to the end because we act in this world as God would act in this world—by feeding the (physically or spiritually) hungry, by inviting in the (cultural or religious) stranger, by clothing the homeless, which includes helping them to be clothed with Christ in baptism, by helping the sick and visiting those in prisons, either literal or figurative. By making those phone calls to the weak or those not getting the attention they need.

If we do, God will say “Well done, good and faithful servant, come share my happiness in eternity.”

**The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. We Should Have Known It Was Coming**

Remember Matthew 5:17 Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them.

Matthew is the gospel which reveals Jesus through his fulfillment of the prophetic messianic expectation.

We already saw prophesied that he would be born of a virgin and be God-with-us.

We learned that God would call Jesus out of Egypt, as he called Joseph, Moses, and Israel out of Egypt.

That he would be the branch of Jesse, a Nazarene, a priest and a king

That he would be a humble king, entering Jerusalem on a donkey

All this comes to a head in his death, burial and resurrect. Matthew tells the story through fulfillment of prophecy, and I will do the same.

1. Matthew 26:1-2 Why must the Messiah be crucified on Passover?

Answer: Because Jesus is the perfect, unblemished Passover lamb, through whose death we escape death ourselves. And he is a perfect Passover lamb, through whose death we are able to escape from slavery to sin. He is the one who, like the Passover lamb, had none of his bones broken and who, like the Passover lamb, was to have his blood smeared on a wooden beam.

All of us were under a death sentence, as were the firstborn of both Israel and Egypt. Praise God that Jesus “passed over” our sins, but this had to happen on Passover.

2. Matthew 26:3-5 Humans are planning his death, but God had planned it long before they did.

Zechariah 12:10 “They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. Here there are references to the means of death of Jesus, to the fact that the one who will be pierced will be God-in-the-flesh, and that it will happen on Passover.

Jesus prophesied these events many times before Matthew 16:21, 17:22-23, 20;18-19)

3. Matthew 26:6-13

Note: John 12 This is Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus

v. 8 Why this waste? Jesus: Loving and serving me extravagantly is not a waste! Selling your home, quitting your job, moving to another city, going in a mission team may seem extravagant to unbelievers, but to Jesus it is a beautiful thing. Loving and serving the poor is an important priority in the Christian life, but serving Jesus takes precedence.

Q: What extravagant thing will you do for Jesus? What??????

Why is Jesus anointed with some very expensive perfume? v. 12 “to prepare me for burial.” (this expensive nard comes from India and is used to perfume the dead) To fufill the prophecy that the one who saves will be the anointed one (Daniel 9:24 “seventy sevens to finish transgression, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy One in Jerusalem) Messiah (meshiach) means Anointed One.

A little irony here: Normally they do not anoint a body BEFORE the burial! Jesus totally gets what is going on here.

4. Matthew 26:14-16 Why was Jesus betrayed for thirty pieces of silver? Zechariah 11:10-13. “The price at which they priced me.” The price of a slave at that time. Also the price of a slave in Exodus 21:32. Notice: “me” ie Messiah is God.

Jesus is sold for the price of a slave because he gave his life as a ransom for many from slavery. Matthew 20:27-28.

Also prophesied when Joseph was betrayed by his brothers for 20 pieces of silver, the approximate price of a slave at that time. Genesis 37:28

[Why did Judas do this? Had he concluded that Jesus was a false prophet? Not likely. My guess is that he felt Jesus was going in the wrong direction. He wanted Jesus to initiate an armed rebellion and he thought that his actions would precipitate such an action]

5. Matthew 26:17-30 Jesus initiates the process which will lead to his death. Jesus turns the seder/Passover meal into a foreshadow/prophecy of the Communion meal.

If you think it is a coincidence that Jesus was killed on the eve of the Passover, when the Passover lamb was killed, you are certainly wrong!

There are a lot of prophecies fulfilled here!

Note: the Passover meal normally would have a lamb, as well as bread, wine and bitter herbs, but this one had none because it was celebrated one night early. Why? Because Jesus, the Passover lamb had to be killed on 14 Nisan, which would normally precede the Passover. Jesus, the Passover lamb, had to be killed on the day of the Passover.

v. 18 “My appointed time has come.” There are two words for time in Greek. One means time, as in time of day or scheduled time. The other is *Kairos*, which means climactic moment, fullfillment moment or consummation. The time of consummation has come. All is going exactly as planned. Jesus is “the lamb who was slain from the creation of the world” (Revelation 13:8)

6. v. 21-23 “the one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me.” fulfills Psalm 41:9 “Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me.”

[By the way, this is how we now do the Lord’s Supper in the MCC. We dip the bread together into the bowl.]

v. 24 All of this is “as it is written.” (including the method and means of betrayal)

7. v. 26 This bread is my body. In other words, I am the lamb for this particular meal, but remember that fact by eating the bread of the Lord’s Supper.

8. v. 27 Jesus took the cup. This was the third cup in the Seder (out of four total). It was called by the Jews the cup of redemption. Again, Jesus knows exactly what he is doing and what prophecies he is fulfilling.

v. 28 This is my blood poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Isaiah 53:12 “Because he poured out his life unto death…by which he “bore the sin of many…”)

This wine reminds us that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” (Heb 9:22)

When we take the Lord’s Supper, we are remembering this event. We are in a sense eating Jesus. In this Passover the bread and wine take the part of the lamb. We are joining in, participating in, remembering the death of Jesus whose blood was shed on a wooden cross-beam so that God would pass over our sins.

9. Matthew 26:31-35, 56 Zechariah 13:7 Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

10. Matthew 26:36-44 A cry of the deepest imaginable emotional pain. Luke: sweat mixed with blood. Psalm 22:1 My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish.

Father: How can you forsake me like this. We see a deep, emotional, intimate relationship between Father and Son.

v. 45-46. Jesus is now ready for the rest of the prophecies to be fulfilled.

Summary:

Will you be like Mary at Bethany. The Passover Lamb is being prepared. He is ready to pour out his life for you. What will be your nard? What extravagant, crazy ridiculous thing will you do for the Lamb, for the Passover Lamb, for the Messiah?

**Matthew XIX**

**Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus**

Summary:

Last week we saw many prophecies fulfilled as we approached the death of Jesus.

1. Matthew 26:6-13 Mary anoints Jesus with pure, expensive nard. Why? Because Jesus is the Messiah—the anointed one

Will you be like Mary at Bethany. The Passover Lamb is being prepared. He is ready to pour out his life for you. What will be your nard? What extravagant, crazy ridiculous thing will you do for the Lamb, for the Passover Lamb, for the Messiah?

2. Matthew 26:14-16 Why was Jesus betrayed for thirty pieces of silver? Zechariah 11:10-13. “The price at which they priced me.” The price of a slave at that time. Also the price of a slave in Exodus 21:32. Jesus is sold for the price of a slave because he gave his life as a ransom for many from slavery.

3. So many prophecies fulfilled in the Last Supper. Jesus is the perfect Passover lamb who must be sacrificed on 14 Nisan so that God can “pass over” our sins. Why must the Messiah be crucified on Passover? As Israel escaped from bondage in Egypt because of the death of the firstborn at Passover, so, we, too, are able to leave slavery to sin because our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. Like the Passover lamb, the blood of our Passover Lamb has been shed on a wooden cross-beam.

Matthew XIX The Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus Prophesied.

1. Matthew 26:31-35, 56 fulfills Zechariah 13:7 Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

Would you have denied Jesus? Would have fled in his hour of need? 1 Cor 10:12 “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you do not fall.

Jesus was well aware of Zechariah 13:7

2. Matthew 26:36-44 A cry of the deepest imaginable emotional pain. Luke: sweat mixed with blood. Psalm 22:1 My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish.

Father: How can you forsake me like this. We see a deep, emotional, intimate relationship between Father and Son.

Jesus is anticipating great physical pain.

Jesus is anticipating the shame of hanging naked in front of sneering crowds.

Deuteronomy 21:23 Cursed is anyone who is hung on a pole.

v. 45-46. Jesus is now ready for the rest of the prophecies to be fulfilled.

The chairos has come.

3. In Matthew 26:47-53 Jesus’ own prophecy that the one who dips his hand into the bowl with me will betray me is fulfilled.

Again, Jesus is totally in control here. He can call 10 legions of angels. But he did not.

Matthew 26:54-56 The Scriptures must be fulfilled. Which one? All of them, but especially Zech 13:7 (strike the sheep…) Jesus submitted to fulfilling Scripture, even when it meant horrible torture, shame and death. Judas thinks he is in control. The Jewish leaders think they are in control. They are wrong! Jesus is totally in control here.

4. Matthew 26:59-64a, [also 27:13-14, as we will see] Isaiah 53:6-7 Like a sheep before her shearers….

Imagine the self-control to not defend himself!

5. Matthew 26:64b-68

Here Jesus fulfills Psalm 110:1 The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

And Jesus fulfills Daniel 7:13-14 Jesus is the one who will come on the clouds of heaven.

v. 65-68 Jesus fulfills Isaiah 53:3 “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

6. Matthew 27:1-10 Why was the money thrown down and why was it used to buy a potter’s field?

The 30 pieces of silver thrown into the house of the Lord and used to by a potter’s field fulfills Zechariah 11:12-13. v. 13 “And the Lord said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—the handsome price at which they priced ***me!*** So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the Lord.”

In Matthew 27:32-44 MANY prophecies are fulfilled.

7. Matthew 27:32 They took him outside the city to Golgotha. Fulfilling the prefigure in the sin offering. Leviticus 4:11-12 The body of the sin offering was taken outside the city/camp and burned because it was a detestable odor to God.

8. Matthew 27:34 Wine mixed with gall fulfills Psalm 69:21 “They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.”

9. Matthew 27:35 When they had crucified him… fulfills Psalm 22:16 They have pierced my hands and my feet.

10. Matthew 27:35 Cast lots to divide his clothing Psalm 22:18 God used those who killed Jesus to fulfill this prophecy. (in John 19:23-24 we learn that they both divided into four piles and cast lots for his inner garment!)

Matthew 27:45-54

11. Matthew 27:45-46 Psalm 22:1 My God, My God… His last words were the fulfillment of a prophecy.

12. Matthew 27:47-54 The curtain torn in two. All of this prefigured in the tabernacle and the temple. The way to God was now opened. Heb 10:19 We can now walk boldly into the Holy of Holies “by a new and living way through the curtain, that is his body.

[13. Matthew 27:57-60 Isaiah 53:9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death. It was not normal for a victim of crucifixion to have an honorable burial, but Jesus was laid in the tomb of the wealthy Pharisee Joseph of Arimathea.]

14. Matthew 28:1-7 Resurrection on the third day. We should have known.

Matthew 17:22-23 I will rise on the 3rd day.

Also John 2:19 Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days.

Also Matthew 12:40 As Jonah was three days and nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Also Genesis 22:1-16 On the third day Abraham received his son Isaac back from the dead. (Hebrews 11:18 figuratively…)

Also, the Feast of Firstfruits. On the 16th of Nisan. Leviticus 23:10-15

v. 11 “On the day after the Sabbath.” ie on the day after the Passover, which is the 16th of Nisan. This is the third day.

14 Nisan Passover lamb killed (Jesus killed)

15 Nisan Passover celebrated, including eating of the Passover lamb.

16 Nisan. The Feast of Firstfruits. Celebrating the harvest when there really is nothing to harvest.

Jesus is the firstfruits from the dead. 1 Cor 15:20-22.

Think about what Jesus did for you!!!

He knew exactly what was coming: Betrayal, abandonment, false accusation, mocking, spitting, scourging, crucifixion, shame, humiliation, torture…

And finally taking the sins of the whole world on his shoulders and being forsaken by his Father.

For Christ’s love compels us, for we are convinced that Christ died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all that those who live will no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raise.

And do not forget that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day.

You, too, can die with him, so that you can live with him.

What will you do for this Jesus?

Jesus’ resurrection on the Feast of Firstfruits makes him, literally, the firstfruits from the dead, as he is the harvest before the harvest. His resurrection is a harbinger of the final resurrection.