

## Matthew Notes

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### Introduction:

Matthew was one of Jesus 12 disciples. His born name was Levi. Jesus gave him the name, Matthew, which means “gift of God.” (Matt. 9:9; 10:3; Mark 2:14)

- Before being called by Jesus to be a disciple, he was a tax-collector. Matthew seems to have been religiously trained (his numerous quotations from the OT imply a formal education), but he turned from a religious life to a life of prosperity and deceit when he became a tax collector.
- Matthew makes 129 quotes or allusions to the OT Scriptures.
- Some think that Matthew was the “recorder” among the disciples and took notes of Jesus’ teachings.

Matthew writes particularly to the Jew. They had the OT as preparation for the revelation of ‘God, the Messiah in human flesh, who will come for the redemption of mankind.’ But Malachi ended with a “curse” (Mal. 4:6). Following Malachi there were 400 years of silence as humanity anticipated the fulfillment of the plan of God in the coming of the Messiah.

- “kingdom of heaven” – used 32 times
- “heaven” – used 50 times
- “hypocrites” – used 14 times (only used a total of 24 times in the entire Bible)
- “reward” – used 13 times (more than any other book of the Bible)
- “compassion” – used 4 times

Matthew is the only Gospel writer to use the word “church.” (Matt. 16:18; 18:17)

According to tradition, Matthew ministered in Palestine for several years after the Lord’s return to heaven, and then made missionary journeys to the Jews who were dispersed among the Gentiles. His work is associated with Persia, Ethiopia, and Syria. Furthermore, some traditions also associate him with Greece.

- Matthew ended his earthly ministry by being beheaded in Alexandria.

### Chapter 1:

1:1-17 – This is the introduction of the Messiah to the world. Introductions leave impressions and those impressions tell us what that person thinks is important about himself.

- Matt. 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38 contain different genealogies of Jesus Christ. Matthew gives us the line of Jesus through Joseph, his earthly father. Luke gives us the line of Jesus through Mary, his birth mother. The genealogies support the purpose of each gospel; Matthew presents Jesus as the King of the Jews, Luke presents Jesus as the Son of Man.
- Mark doesn’t contain a genealogy for Jesus, because the lineage of a servant was insignificant. And the genealogy of John refers to the eternity of Jesus because Jesus is the Son of God (John 1:1).

- 1:1 – “book of the genealogy” – This is the phrase used in Gen. 5:1 when giving the line of Adam. Here Jesus comes as the second Adam.
- This genealogy has 3 sets of 14 generations. Not every generation is listed, but it is structured this way for easier memorization.
  - “genealogy” – (Gr. “genseos”) Lit. “origins or history.”
    - This in some way is attempting to describe the origins of “the eternally blessed God.” (Rom. 9:5)
  - “Jesus Christ” – He is the theme of this book. Matthew describes Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy and Israel’s expectation.
  - “Son of David” – A Messianic phrase. (Matt. 15:22; 20:31; 21:15; 22:42; John 7:42; see also 2 Sam. 7:12-16)
  - “Son of Abraham” – Jesus is the promised seed of Abraham in Whom all nations would be blessed. (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:16)
  - “Abraham” – He lied frequently and doubted God’s promise many times. (Gen. 12-25)
    - Neither Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, nor Perez were firstborn sons.
- 1:2 – “Isaac” – He played favorites with his sons against the prophecy of God. (Gen. 24-28)
- “Jacob” – He deceived and manipulated everyone. (Gen. 28-35)
- 1:3 – “Judah” – He had sexual relations with his daughter-in-law, Tamar. (Gen. 38)
- “Tamar” – Typically, Jews didn’t include women in their genealogies. (Gen. 38:29)
- 1:4 – “Amminadab” – The father-in-law of Aaron. (Exod. 6:23)
- “Nahshon” – Exod. 6:23; Num. 7:12.
- 1:5 – “Salmon” – He married Rahab, the prostitute and foreigner. (Ruth 4:20)
- “Rahab” – Josh. 2:1; 6:17-25; Heb. 11:31; James 2:25.
  - “Boaz” – He married Ruth, the Moabitess. (Ruth 2-4)
    - God had stated in the Law that the descendents of Gentile parents were not to enter the tabernacle to worship until the 10<sup>th</sup> generation. Three generations later, David will design the Temple.
  - “Obed...Jesse” – Ruth 4:17.
- 1:6 – “David the king” – He committed adultery and murdered one of his “mighty men.” (Ruth 4:22)
- “the wife of Uriah” – 2 Sam. 11:3-4.
  - “Solomon” – He worshipped foreign gods and had 1,000 wives and concubines. (2 Sam. 12:24)
- 1:7 – “Rehoboam” – Israel was divided under his reign because of his arrogant leadership. (1 Kings 12:6-11; 2 Chron. 12:2)
- Rehoboam’s mother’s name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. (1 Kings 14:31)
  - “Abijah” – 2 Chron. 13.
  - “Asa” – 2 Chron. 14-16; 15:17.
- 1:8 – “Jehoshaphat” – 2 Chron. 17-20.
- “Joram” – 2 Chron. 21:4-20.
    - The names of Azariah, Joash, and Amaziah are omitted.

- 1:9 – “Uzziah” – He was a good king, but died a leper because he took the priesthood to himself. (2 Chron. 26)
- “Jotham” – 2 Chron. 27.
  - “Ahaz” – 2 Chron. 28.
  - “Hezekiah” – 2 Chron. 29-32.
- 1:10 – “Manasseh...Amon” – They were kings who worshipped foreign gods. (2 Chron. 33)
- Ahaz and Manasseh made their sons “pass through the fire.”
  - “Josiah” – 2 Chron. 34-35.
- 1:11 – “Jeconiah” – He led the nation as it was exiled to foreign country. (Jer. 22:24-30; 24:1; 27:20)
- Jehoiakim is omitted.
- 1:12 – “Zerubbabel” – He helped to rebuild the Temple. (Ezra 2:2; Neh. 12:1; Haggai 1:1)
- 1:16 – “Joseph” – He was Jesus’ step-father.
- “the husband of Mary” – Jesus was known to have been conceived out of wedlock. (John 8:41)
    - This is Jesus’ family! In a way, they did all of this to Jesus Himself.
    - But the dysfunctionality stopped with Him! Jesus proves that the bents of the parents are not the only determining factor for the outcome of one’s life. (Exod. 20:5; Ezek. 18:20)
  - “of whom” – Feminine singular.
  - “of whom was born” – The begots stop here, because Jesus was not begotten of Joseph. This genealogy is clearly intended to be that of Jesus’ ‘legal’ ancestry, not of His physical descent.
- 1:17 – “Christ” – The Greek for “Messiah.”
- In the OT, there were 2 pictures of the Messiah. One as the Suffering Servant and the other as the Conquering King.
- 1:18 – “betrothed” – This was the Jewish engagement. It was as binding as marriage. (Deut. 22:24)
- There were 3 steps to marriage in the Jewish world of Jesus’ time:
    1. Engagement – This could happen when the bride and groom were quite young, and was often arranged by the parents.
    2. Betrothal – This made the previous engagement official and binding. During the time of betrothal, the couple was known as husband and wife, and a betrothal could only be broken by divorce. Betrothal typically lasted one year.
    3. Marriage – This took place after the wedding, after the year of betrothal.
  - “Mary” – She was likely only 15-16 years old.
- 1:19 – “a just man” – Lit. “a true, straight, or sincere man.” His sincerity puts him into a tough spot.
- “not wanting to make her a public example” – It seems others could have been pressuring Joseph to more publically discipline her.
    - Pre-marital sex was a capital crime in ancient Israel.
  - “put her away secretly” – According to the Law, Joseph had two options; either stoning or a written divorce. (Deut. 22:13-21, 24)

- 1:20 – “he thought about these things” – This must have been a troubling time.
- “son of David” – God saw Joseph from the vantage point of His promise to King David.
  - “do not be afraid” – The only thing Joseph seems afraid of is the appearance of sin in Mary’s life.
  - “take to you Mary your wife” – This means humiliation. (Luke 1:26-35, 56)
    - “Never does Joseph appear greater than in his choice to protect Mary and the Babe with his name. He shared her shame before men and her glory before God.” (Herschel Hobbs)
  - “conceived” – Lit. “begotten.” It is the same Greek word that has been translated “begot” throughout v. 1-16.
  - “of the Holy Spirit” – This points back to Gen. 3:15, making Jesus the seed of the woman. (Luke 1:26-35)

1:21 – “Jesus” – means “Jehovah is Salvation.”

- Jesus was a common name, equivalent to Joshua in our modern language.
- Hebrew “Ja-Hoshea,” this is the 8<sup>th</sup> compound name of God in the Bible.
- “from their sins” – Jesus first saves us from the penalty of sin, then from the power of sin, and finally from the presence of sin.
- “sins” – Jesus’ mission is clear. He is not merely a guru, a mentor, a teacher, a prophet, a spiritual advisor, an ascended master, or even a king. He is a savior! (Heb. 7:26)
  - “Jesus Christ came to save sinners...” (1 Tim. 1:15)
  - Jesus “did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (Matt. 9:13)

1:22 – “fulfilled” – Used 12 times in Matthew. (Matt. 1:22; 2:15, 23; 3:15; 4:14; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 27:9)

- Matthew presents Jesus as fulfilling the OT Scriptures.

1:23 – “virgin” – (Gr. “parthenos”) Lit. “an untouched and unknown woman.”

- It is clear that Jesus was born of a virgin. Mary herself said “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” (Luke 1:34) And the religious leaders treated Jesus like a bastard-child the rest of his life. (John 8:19, 41)
- The word for “virgin” quoted from Isa. 7:14 is the Hebrew word “almah,” which can be translated “virgin, or young woman.” However, the NT Greek translation, using the context of Isaiah 7 and in conjunction with the Septuagint translation, translates “almah” of Isa. 7:14 with the Greek word “parthenos,” a word that categorically means “virgin.”
- “Immanuel” – means “God with us.” (Isaiah 7:14; 8:8)
  - Jesus has come to establish a relationship with us, not merely a religion for us to follow. The only way for us to be saved is for God to do the work that we could never do. The part that is to be decided by humans is whether or not to accept what Jesus has done for them.
- “with” – Psalm 23:4.

1:24 – “did as the angel of the Lord commanded” – Joseph obeyed and it happened as God said.

1:25 – “did not know her” – They are married, but abstaining from the sexual union until after the birth of Jesus.

- “till” – Mary had other children by Joseph. (Matt. 13:55; John 7:3)

## Chapter 2:

- 2:1 – “after Jesus was born” – Matthew skips the events of Luke 2:1-38, which detail the 100 mile journey to Bethlehem, the birth of Jesus in the caravanzari, the visit of the shepherds, and the dedication of Jesus at the Temple.
- “Herod the king” – This is Herod the Great.
  - “wise men” – (Gr. “magos”) They are commonly referred to as “magi.” This is a root word to our English word “magician.”
  - “wise men from the East” – These are Gentiles seeking the Jewish Messiah.
    - Church tradition even tells us their names – supposedly Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar. You can see their supposed skulls in the great cathedral at Cologne, Germany.
    - There may be more than three wise men with the entourage. They’ve likely been traveling for more than a year. They do not come to the manger scene, but to a house (v. 11) that Joseph and Mary likely settled into after the birth of Jesus.
    - These may have been Babylonians that were influenced by the teachings of Daniel and understood the pattern of the stars.
  - “Jerusalem” – They go to the capital of Israel because they’re looking for the King of the Jews.
    - Jerusalem is about 5 miles north of Bethlehem.
- 2:2 – “King of the Jews” – He will assume that title 33 years later, when the sign is posted to the cross.
- There is a little irony in their great effort to honor “the King of the Jews.” At that time, the Jewish people were often despised and dishonored.
  - “His star” – They attribute the star to Jesus.
    - Balaam prophesied of “A star shall come out of Jacob.” (Num. 24:17) This star may be the fulfillment of that prophesy.
    - God met the astronomers in their own medium; He guided them by a star. God will use anything to draw sincere seekers to Jesus Christ.
  - “worship” – Lit. “to bow in the dust before a king.”
- 2:3 – “Herod” – Herod the Great was ruthless and paranoid in defending his throne from any suspected threat. He stood less than 5 feet tall, but wielded a domineering authority.
- Caesar Augustus said “it was safer to be Herod’s pig than Herod’s son.” Herod killed one of his wives (Mariamne), three sons (Antipator, Alexander, and Arisobulus), a mother-in-law (Alexandra), a brother-in-law, an uncle and many others he felt were threatening the throne. But because Herod thought he was a descendant of the Jews (in which he was mistaken), he wouldn’t eat pig.
  - Matthew is the only Gospel that records this conversation. It seems that Matthew had contacts in the Roman government (possibly from his time serving as a tax collector) who could give him the details of these conversations years later.
  - “and all Jerusalem with him” – When a ruthless man in power is made angry, the people suffer the consequences.
- 2:4 – “scribes” – “These ‘teachers of the law’ were experts in the OT and in its copious tradition. Their work was not so much in copying out OT manuscripts (as the word “scribes” suggest) as in teaching the OT.” (Carson)
- 2:5 – “Bethlehem” – means “the house of bread.” The religious leaders of Jesus’ day knew where the Messiah was to come from. (Micah 5:2; John 7:42)
- Micah was written 700 years prior to the coming of Jesus.

- 2:7 – “determined” – The idea is “determined precisely.”
- “what time the star appeared” – This would let Herod know approximately when the Christ-child was born giving him the age of this baby. Herod would kill all the children of the region that were two years and younger. (v. 16)
- 2:8 – “worship Him also” – Herod didn’t bow to anyone except himself.
- 2:9 – “the star...went before them” – His star (v. 2) is moving and leading them.
- This star is like the pillar of cloud and fire that led Israel through the wilderness.
- 2:10 – “When they saw the star” – The star starts, stops, turns, and even turns off and on to direct the wise men.
- It seems that the wise men can see and follow the star, but Herod cannot.
- 2:11 – “house” – This is just less than 2 years after the birth of Jesus.
- “fell down, and worshipped” – These wealthy and powerful men are falling before this toddler.
    - We are not told that they bowed before Herod or Mary, but only before Jesus.
    - They did what they said they would; they worshipped Him. (v. 2)
  - “presented” – or “offered.”
  - “gold” – A gift for a king.
  - “frankincense” – A gift for a priest.
  - “myrrh” – A gift for a dead body.
    - These gifts would likely finance this family’s trip to Egypt. (Luke 2:24)
- 2:13 – “the Lord appeared to Joseph” – God honors the order of the house He has established. Despite the amazing character and spirituality of Mary, God still speaks to Joseph when He wants to direct the family.
- 2:14 – “Egypt” – Egypt was a foreign land traditionally hostile toward the Jews. (Hosea 11:1)
- According to Philo (ca. 40 AD), there was a large Jewish population of about one million Jews in Egypt about this time.
- 2:15 – “death of Herod” – This happened in 4 BC.
- It is a dreadful account which Josephus gives us of the death of this same Herod [Antiq. 17.146-199], that he was diseased with a disease which burned him inwardly with an inexpressible torture; that he was insatiably greedy of meat; had the colic, and gout, and dropsy; such an intolerable stench attended his disease, that none could come near him: and so passionate and impatient was he, that he was a torment to himself, and a terror to all that attended him: his innate cruelty being thus exasperated, made him more barbarous than ever; having ordered his own son to be put to death, he imprisoned more than 100 of the nobility and gentry, and ordered that as soon as he was dead they should be killed; but that execution was prevented.

- 2:16 – “put to death all the male children” – These are the first NT martyrs for Jesus.
- Satan has worked for thousands of years to prevent the coming of the Messiah.
  - In this chapter, we see three different responses to Jesus; one may say that all people respond in one of these three ways:
    1. Herod displayed open hatred and hostility toward Jesus.
    2. The chief priests and scribes were indifferent toward Jesus, all the while retaining their religious respectability.
    3. The wise men said out Jesus, and worshipped Him – even at great personal cost.
- 2:17-18 – The quote from Jer. 31:15 was given nearly 600 years prior to this.
- Jacob’s wife, Rachel, died in childbirth outside of Bethlehem. (Gen. 35:19)
- 2:19 – “an angel appeared in a dream to Joseph” – Joseph is obedient at all points.
- 2:20 – “take” – Lit. “gently take.”
- 2:21 – “came into the land of Israel” – The amplified version says, “they took a leisurely walk back into Israel.” What kind of walk would that have been with a young Jesus?
- 2:22 – “Archelaus” – He was the son of Herod the Great and even more cruel than Herod. This leads the family of Jesus to Nazareth instead of returning to Bethlehem.
- He reigned 10 years in Palestine, but was then deposed in 6 AD and banished to Vienne in Gaul due to continuous Samaritan and Jewish complaints.
  - Pilate took over after Archelaus was deposed. Because Archelaus was deposed due to turmoil in Palestine, Pilate became overly concerned with keeping the peace in Palestine to retain his position.
  - “Nazareth” – Nazarene was a virtual synonym for “despised.” (John 1:45-46)
    - Nazareth at this time had a population of around 20,000 people and had a reputation of being an immoral and wicked city. It was a stop-over city for Roman soldiers.
    - Jesus will forever be known as Jesus of Nazareth. (John 19:19; Acts 2:22; 22:8)
  - “a Nazarene” – This quote from the OT came from several separate predictions, but is primarily referring to the Branch (Heb. “nazir”) of Isa. 11:1.

### **Chapter 3:**

About 25 years pass between the chapters. (Luke 2:39-52) The Bible is nearly silent regarding Jesus’ adolescence. There are a few things that we do know:

1. Joseph died while Jesus was still at home making Jesus the “breadwinner.”
2. Jesus had at least 4 brothers and 2 sisters and they didn’t always get along well.
3. Jesus’ would have been educated in Nazareth but in all things He grew in favor with God and man. (Luke2:52)

- 3:1 – “In those days came John the Baptist.” – Malachi spoke of John. (Mal. 3:1)
- As a son of Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5), John would have grown up around the priesthood. It seems likely that he would have had the chance to enter the priesthood based on his bloodline. But somewhere along the line, he rejected the hypocrisy of the religious leadership of the day and headed out in the wilderness.
  - “in the wilderness” – It is quite true that if a man would know something of the sin of his own age, he must live in the midst of his age. But no man has ever spoken against the sin of his age with the authoritative voice of God, who has only ever lived in the midst of his age. He must also see it from a distance.
- 3:2 – “Repent” – (Gr. “metanoeo”) Lit. “to change one’s mind, to make a U-turn.”
- John was preparing the way for the Messiah. He was the greatest of all the OT prophets (Matt. 11:11; Luke 16:16), because he could point at and touch the Messiah.
  - Jesus will pick up from John’s message of repentance to present the gospel. (Matt. 4:17)
  - Repentance does not describe something we must do before we come to God, it describes what coming to God is like. If you are in New York, and I tell you to come to Los Angeles, I don’t really need to say, ‘Leave N.Y. and come to L.A.’ To come to L.A. is to leave N.Y., and if I haven’t left N.Y., I certainly haven’t come to L.A.
  - “The hardest part of being a Christian is surrender” – Rich Mullins.
  - “kingdom of heaven” – This phrase is used 33 times in Matthew and zero in the rest of the Bible.
    - The idea of God’s kingdom occurs 50 times in Matthew.
    - The kingdom of heaven is the rule of God, and is both a present reality and a future hope.
  - “at hand” – The nearness of Christ and the kingdom of heaven makes repentance all the more important. John’s call to repentance was the response to the news that the King and His Kingdom were coming.
    - Jesus brings the kingdom of heaven near to us. Eternal life starts today! (John 3:16)
- 3:3 – “Prepare” – We often fail to appreciate how important the preparing work of the Lord is. Any great work of God begins with great preparation.
- “make straight paths for him” – This is John’s mission. (Isa. 40:3; Luke 3:4-6; John 1:23)
    - Before a king would make a long journey, he would often send workers ahead to clean the debris and smooth the roads in preparation for his journey.
- 3:4 – “clothed in camel’s hair” – John’s clothing.
- “locusts and wild honey” – John’s food was kosher. (Lev. 11:22)
    - John rejected the affluence and ease, as well as the sin, of his culture and society.
    - Why didn’t John go home? (Matt. 3:11; Hebrews 11:13-16, 32-40)
- 3:5 – “all the region around the Jordan went out to him” – John’s ministry and message were attractive. The people are hungry for what he has to say.
- The influence of John the Baptist is evident decades after his ministry began, as seen in Acts 18:25; 19:3.
- 3:6 – “the Jordan” – The Jordan River was 20 miles to the east of Jerusalem.
- John was 6 months older than Jesus.
  - “sins” – This is our only real need.
  - Matt. 1:21 – This is why Jesus came.

- 3:7 – “Pharisees and Sadducees” – The religious leaders of the day.
- The Pharisees were the legalists of the Jewish religion; the Sadducees were the liberals. The Pharisees were ritualists; the Sadducees were rationalists.
  - “brood” – (Gr. “gennema”) Lit. “offspring, genus, or kin.”
  - “brood of vipers” – He is calling them sons of the devil.
    - Jesus picks up on this in Matt. 12:34; 23:33; and John 8:44.
  - “Who warned you” – John may be speaking this in wonder, as well as in judgment.
  - “flee from the wrath” – This happens through repentance.
  - “wrath to come” – Jesus brings heaven to the surrendered, but wrath to the unrepentant.
- 3:8 – “fruits of repentance” – Repentance looks like something. It is a change of mind that produces change in a life.
- It is good news we have any chance at all of escaping the wrath to come.
  - John told them, not how to be saved, but how to prove the sincerity of their repentance.
  - The great blessing of Christ’s kingdom can be valued by those only to whom sin is a burden.
  - We know a tree by its fruit. (Matt. 7:16)
  - “fruits” – The fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22)
- 3:9 – “we have Abraham as our father” – They are resting in a false security.
- Even Abraham isn’t good enough to get us to heaven.
  - “children to Abraham” – They thought one could be saved by heritage. But Abraham’s true sons live like sons of God. (John 8:39; Gal. 3:7)
    - Salvation is not passed from parents to children.
  - “these stones” – If John is still baptizing by Bethabara (John 1:28), he may be pointing at the stones memorializing Joshua bringing Israel across the Jordan and into Canaan. (Josh. 4:9, 20)
- 3:11 – “He who is coming” – John anticipates the Messiah.
- “baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” – The repentant get the Holy Spirit. The unrepentant are consumed by fire.
  - “baptize you with the Holy Spirit” – This is the promised out-pouring of the Holy Spirit promised with the New Covenant in Ezek. 37:14.
  - “fire” – At Pentecost, the tongues were “as of fire” (Acts 2:3). They weren’t actual fire.
- 3:12 – “His winnowing fan” – Jesus is on the threshing floor separating the chaff from the wheat.
- 3:13 – “Then Jesus came” – This is the point.
- This is the first active reference to Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew.
- 3:14 – “John tried to prevent Him” – John recognized Jesus’ authority and was reluctant to baptize Him.
- John said there was no external appearance to make Jesus evident. (John 1:33)
- 3:15 – “fulfill all righteousness” – Jesus’ baptism identifies Him with sinners...pointing to the cross where He will one day completely fulfill all righteousness.
- Jesus identified with sinners. (Heb. 4:14-15; 5:7-10)
  - Only Jesus can fulfill all righteousness.
- 3:16-17 – “Jesus...the Spirit of God...a voice came from heaven” – The Trinity is seen here. (Ps. 2:7; Isa. 42:1)

3:16 – “alighting” – Lit. “abiding.”

- The Holy Spirit comes upon Jesus to empower His life and ministry in the work God has set out for Him.

3:17 – “a voice came from heaven” – We do not know if anyone else besides for John and Jesus saw the Spirit and heard the voice. (John 1:33)

- “in whom I am well pleased” – Lit. “in whom I am already well pleased.”
  - Jesus hasn’t done anything miraculous or ministry-related yet. But He is a man completely submitted to the will of God the Father.
- “whom” – Singular. God is only pleased in Jesus.

#### **Chapter 4:**

4:1 – “Then Jesus” – Jesus would have personally related this encounter directly to the disciples.

- “Jesus was led up by the Spirit” – Mark 1:12 says “Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.” And this comes on the heels of Jesus’ baptism and hearing the Father say, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3:17)
  - The idea that ‘if one is suffering, than they have sinned’ is wrong! Sometimes the wilderness is necessary for us to become devoted. Jesus “learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” (Heb. 5:8)
  - No matter how we got in the wilderness, God intends to bring us through it. (Heb. 2:18, 4:15, 7:26)
- “the wilderness” – The children of Israel were brought through the wilderness, and then into the promised land. The wilderness was a time for them to become fully devoted to God. That devotion is what God wanted so they could be capable of entering the promised land. This makes the wilderness a prerequisite to the promised land.
- “tempted” – (Gr. “peirazo”) This could also be accurately translated “testing.”
  - God tests to reveal ourselves, Satan tempts to lead us astray. (James 1:12-15)
  - To be tempted is not sin. Jesus was “in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15)
  - “Your mind is like a gatekeeper; you can’t stop who comes to your gate, but you can decide what you allow in” – Joe Focht.
- “devil” – Lit. “slanderer.”

4:2 – “forty days” – When fasting, one loses the sense of hunger after 5 days until onset of starvation.

- Forty is often a number for testing and purifying in the OT: Moses (Ex. 24:18; 34:28), Elijah (1 Kings 19:8), and Israel’s wanderings (Deut. 8:2-3).
- “He was hungry” – Jesus would literally be starving.
  - It does not say that Jesus was thirsty. So it may be that Jesus drank water during the fast.
  - Dr Wilder-Smith tells how astronauts who are exposed to sensory deprivation begin to have visions and spiritual experiences. Their brains were able to interpret the stimuli they received from their 6<sup>th</sup> sense.

- 4:3 – “Now when the tempter came” – Satan comes at our lowest point and piles on.
- Satan is the slanderer (Gen. 3, Job 1), the accuser (Rev. 12:10 – “categorico.”), and the deceiver (1 John 2:16 – lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life).
  - These temptations constitute an organized and systematic attack upon man in every department of his life. This is Satan at his devious best.
  - “the tempter” – Satan is a created being who can only be at one place at a time.
    - Satan’s ultimate goal is “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” (John 10:10)
  - “If thou be the Son of God” – The class condition of “if” literally means “since.” There was no doubt that Jesus was the Son of God.
    - Satan omits “beloved” from Matt. 3:17. We have a tendency to doubt God’s love for us in the wilderness.
  - “stones become bread” – Satan is tempting Jesus to use His power for selfish purposes.
    - Lust of the flesh.
    - This is not a temptation to a ghastly sin. Satan will also tempt us to socially-acceptable sins like fear and frustration.
    - The great sin of humanity involved food. (Gen. 3:1-5; see also Gen. 25:29-34; Exod. 16:3; Num. 11:4-6; and Ps. 78:17-20)
- 4:4 – “But He answered” – Jesus is so calm around the devil.
- “Man” – Jesus answers from our position. He took our place.
  - “not live by bread alone” – Jesus is pointing to man’s real need. It’s more than physical. (Matt. 1:21)
    - One can survive on bread, but it takes more than that to really live.
  - “every word” – (Gr. “rhema”) Lit. “utterance.” This is the specific portion of the Word (the “logos”) needed for a specific job at a specific time. (Eph. 5:26; 6:17)
    - Jesus overcame Satan’s temptations by the use of the Scriptures and, in particular, Deuteronomy. But He didn’t just quote the Scriptures, He obeyed them.
- 4:5 – “pinnacle of the temple” – The Temple was 150 feet high (a 15 story building) and stood 50 feet above the Kidron Valley.
- 4:6 – “throw yourself down” – Satan wanted Jesus to doubt God, provoking Him to get proof of God’s power through special manifestation.
- The Lust of the Eyes.
  - The Jews thought the Messiah would suddenly appear at the Temple and perhaps float down from the pinnacle to the applause of the people. (Mal. 3:1)
  - “give His angels charge over you” – Satan omits “to keep you in all your ways” from Ps. 91:11.
- 4:7 – “not tempt the Lord” – The moment a man begins to tempt God, to prove trust, he proves that he does not trust. Perfect trust is quiet, and waits. Jesus refused to do anything spectacular.
- Satan was trying to get Jesus to doubt and test the Lord. Jesus had to trust and know God was there without physically seeing evidence of God’s work. Jesus had to move on in faith just as we do.
- 4:8 – “the kingdoms of the world” – Jesus is the rightful king of those kingdoms.
- Jesus saw all the kingdoms of the world “in a moment of time.” (Luke 4:5)
  - Satan is willing to give up wealth for worship.

- 4:9 – “all these things I will give You” – Satan is offering Jesus a shortcut to glory. He is offering to Christ the reward without having to go through the cross.
- The Pride of Life.
  - In the things of God, the ends do not justify the means. God’s things must be done in God’s ways for God to get the glory.
  - “worship me” – The Greek implies “worship me just once.”
    - This is a revealing insight into Satan’s heart; worship and recognition are far more precious to him than the possession of “the kingdoms of the world and their glory.” (v. 8)
    - Satan tried to divert Jesus from God’s way to Satan’s way.
- 4:10 – “Him only you shall serve” – Jesus would rather die in obedience than glory in disobedience. (Matt. 8:35)
- 4:11 – “the devil left Him” – Luke 4:13 says he departed “until an opportune time.”
- “angels come” – Up to this point Satan had Jesus alone.
  - “ministered to Him” – The created beings minister to the Creator.
    - Angels minister to us as well. (Hebrews 1:14)
- 4:12 – Approximately 8-12 months pass between v. 11 and 12, including the events of John 1:29-4:45.
- “John had been put in prison” – Thus He did not commence to exercise His definitely official ministry as King until John’s ministry ended through his arrest.
  - “He departed to Galilee” – Jesus left Judea because Herod Antipas arrested John in Judea. (Matt. 14:3-4)
    - According to the Jewish historian Josephus, there were some 3 million people populating Galilee in an area smaller than the state of Connecticut.
- 4:13 – “leaving Nazareth” – Jesus initially went to Nazareth, but was not accepted there. (Luke 4:16-30)
- “dwelt in Capernaum” – Peter’s house became Jesus’ headquarters. (Mark 2:1; 9:33)
    - Capernaum was located on a trade route. Matthew collected taxes on that route.
    - If we would be partakers with Christ in the work, we must go to Capernaum; to the fringe of things; to the despised countries, to the helpless districts; to the regions wrapped in the pall of great death, and a great darkness. It was not accidentally that Christ went and dwelt in Capernaum.
  - “regions of Zebulun and Naphtali” – That region of Galilee had a high population of and influence from the Gentiles. Therefore, the area was given very little respect by the upper class Jews of Judea.
- 4:14 – “that it might be fulfilled” – Another prophecy is fulfilled. (Isa. 9:1-2)
- 4:16 – “darkness” – The darkness was seemingly a result of their own disobedience. (Isa. 9:1-2; Ps. 107:10-14)
- “a great light” – Jesus was a light shining in darkness. (John 1:5; 8:12)
- 4:17 – “Repent” – This is what John the Baptist had been teaching. (Matt. 3:2)
- “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” – Jesus has brought the kingdom into their midst.

- 4:18 – “the Sea of Galilee” – 6 miles wide and 14 miles long.
- “Simon...Andrew” – Formerly followers of John, they spent some time with Jesus while in the initial stages of His ministry in Judea. (John 1:35-42)
  - “they were fishermen” – These were not the upper-class of Jewish society. They were hard-working farmers and businessmen.
- 4:19 – “Follow me” – He gives them only one task.
- Fix your eyes on Him; Jesus does the rest.
  - The call to discipleship is definite and demands total commitment.
  - “I will make you” – This is Jesus’ work.
    - God makes a life by taking it through a process. Missing the process of how Jesus worked with the disciples gives us the wrong impressions of how God works in a life.
  - “fishers of men” – That is what we see of them in the book of Acts.
    - Jesus will raise them from a lower form of fishing to a higher form of fishing, as David was led from a lower form of shepherding to a higher form of shepherding.
    - Evangelists are established as they hang out with Jesus. Healthy sheep reproduce.
- 4:21 – “mending their nets” – Jesus calls these guys while they are working. God doesn’t seem to call and use lazy people.
- 4:23 – “teaching...preaching...healing” – Jesus is healing the mind, spirit, and body. (Matt. 9:35; 11:4-5; 12:15; 14:34-36; 15:30; and 19:2)
- “teaching” – (Gr. “didasko”) We get our English word “didactic” from that work. It means that someone is directly presenting information to be learned.
  - “preaching” – (Gr. “kerusso”) Lit. “to proclaim, to declare, to announce as a herald.”
    - “Preaching is the non-compromising proclamation of certainties; teaching is the explanation of the meaning and significance of them” – Barclay.
  - “healing” – (Gr. “therapeuo”) We get our English word “therapy” from that word.
    - The “gospel of the kingdom” is that crippled and sick people are walking around healed. The deaf and dumb hear and speak. Lives are being transformed through the power of God on earth.
- 4:24 – “Syria” – The Gentile lands north of Galilee.
- “brought to Him all sick people” – They came to Jesus just as they are, illness and all.
    - There are three general words used here: 1. “sickness” (Gr. “noson”) includes blindness, lameness, fever, or dropsy; 2. “disease” (Gr. “malakian”) includes languishing illnesses as fluxes and consumptions; and 3. “torments” (Gr. “basanous”) includes torturing distempers such as gout or convulsions.
- 4:25 – “multitudes” – An estimated 20,000 people were following Jesus at this time.
- It seems that many of the people are there only for the miracles and the side-show atmosphere. Only the disciples will follow Jesus up the mountain to hear His teachings there (Matt. 5-7). Many will depart from Christ as He begins to define discipleship and refuses to produce miracles at their whim (John 6). So it seems the greater miracle is that Jesus can take four crusty fishermen from Galilee and make them “fishers of men.” Jesus will so fill them that they will change the world (Acts 4:13).
  - There is no mention of the inevitable conflict with the religious leaders yet. That seems to arise as a result of the gathering crowds. (John 2:13-4:3)

## Chapter 5:

Matthew 5:1-7:29 – The Sermon on the Mount is preached to disciples who ascended the mountain with Him. (Compare to the “Sermon on the Plain” as given in Luke 6:20-49.)

- The pattern of Jesus Christ’ teaching in Matthew was: 1. Repent (Matt. 4:17), 2. Follow Him (Matt. 4:19), and 3. Teaching on the attitudes of the kingdom that result from repenting of sin and following Jesus (Matt. 5:3-12).
- The Beatitudes are attitudes of being and conditions of the heart.
- “A fairly accurate description of the human race might be furnished to one unacquainted with it by taking the Beatitudes, turning them wrong side out and saying, ‘Here is your human race.’ For the exact opposite of the virtues in the Beatitudes are the very qualities which distinguish human life and conduct.” (A.W. Tozer, “Pursuit of God,” p. 109-110)

5:1 – “seeing the multitudes” – Jesus saw these people like no one ever saw them before. He saw them for who they really were.

- “multitudes” – There were approximately 20,000 people following Jesus at this time.
- “up on a mountain” – Those who follow Jesus up the hill get to hear and know of the kingdom.
  - Jesus is teaching the disciples, but with an eye to the hurting and broken multitudes. He is desiring to reach the hurting by forming the character of His disciples.
- “He was seated” – Sitting was the accepted posture of synagogue or school teachers. (Luke 4:20; Matt. 13:2; 23:2; 24:3)
- “disciples” – Lit. “learners.”

5:2 – “He opened His mouth and taught them” – Jesus often taught them without opening His mouth.

- “taught them” – Jesus is speaking directly to the disciples, clearly speaking of the kingdom.
  - Jesus is teaching them in a repeated and habitual action.

5:3 – “Blessed” – (Gr. “makarios”) Lit. “O, how happy.” It is a phrase of ultimate well being and spiritual joy. It is a “joy that has its secret within itself, that joy which is serene and untouchable, and self-contained, that joy which is completely independent of all the chances and changes of life.” (Barclay)

- It is God’s will for man to be blessed. (1 Tim. 1:11)
- “Blessed are” – The blessing is in every case in the present tense, a happiness to be now enjoyed and delighted in.
  - These are not conditional statements. They express a state of nature.
- “poor in spirit” – This is the opposite of trying to esteem or promote oneself. (Isaiah 6:1-5, Ezekiel 1:27) Those who refuse to esteem themselves will receive esteem from “heaven.”
  - The man who is poor in spirit is the man who is willing to be governed.
- “poor” – This could also be translated “destitute.”
  - Being poor in spirit has nothing to do with physical or material poverty.
- “the kingdom of heaven” – The kingdom of heaven is the first and last thing here promised (v. 10). It has 2 stages – a present and a future, an initial and a consummate stage. So the fulfillment of each of these promises has 2 stages – a present and a future, a partial and a perfect stage.
  - The poor in spirit are happy with the kingdom of heaven.

- 5:4 – “mourn” – Those who mourn their own poverty and empathize with others will be “comforted” by God. These are the people who are not worried about guarding themselves.
- The Greek tense is present continual. These are people that continue to mourn.
  - “Mourn” speaks of one who lost a loved one, a mourning so strong that it cannot be hid.
  - Jesus Himself was “a Man of sorrows.” (Isa. 53:3)
- 5:5 – “meek” – It is the realization and acceptance that I am nothing. (Rom. 12:3) Jesus promised that the last will be first. He watches out for the meek and gives them the earth. (Ps. 37:11)
- The meek are people “who suffer wrong without bitterness or desire for revenge.” (Bruce)
  - Meek doesn’t mean weak; it means “strength under control.” The word speaks of a powerful horse brought under control by bit and bridle.
  - Moses was meek (Num 12:3) and Jesus was meek (Matt. 11:29 where meek is translated “gentle;” see also 2 Cor. 10:1).
  - “the earth” – This could also be translated “the land,” bringing out the more immediate reference to Canaan as the promised land.
- 5:6 – “hunger and thirst for righteousness” – Those who desire to act and do right more than trying to advance or serve themselves. These individuals’ hunger “will be filled.”
- The Greek tense is present continual. These are people that continually hunger for righteousness.
  - Hunger and thirst for righteousness is Divine discontent with anything unlike God.
  - This is the only beatitude that concerns an individual person.
  - “hunger and thirst” – Hunger and thirst come when the precious meal has been spent and used.
  - “filled” – or “saturated.”
- 5:7 – “merciful” – Those who do not exact justice to satisfy their own desires. They show true, unconditional love. These people will be “shown mercy” as well. (Ps. 18:25)
- “For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with what measure you use, it will be measured back to you.” (Matt. 7:2)
  - When in doubt, give others grace.
- 5:8 – “pure in heart” – Those who single-mindedly serve Christ. They will “see God,” both now and in the future. (Heb. 12:14)
- Mt. 12:34 – “from the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.”
  - The first thing the pure in heart recognizes is that they are not entirely pure themselves.
  - “pure” – means “consisting of one thing.”
  - “heart” – That is the inner self that thinks, feels, and decides. It is also the seat of the emotions, seat of the mind, and one’s true personality or character.
- 5:9 – “peacemakers” – Those who are willing to sacrifice their own agendas and vengeance for the ultimate peace of others. “Sons” follow their fathers and imitate their actions. (Rom. 8:14)
- God is the ultimate peacemaker. (John 14:27)
- 5:10 – “persecuted for righteousness’ sake” – Those more concerned with pleasing Jesus than with protecting themselves. Those who are willing to do right even when persecuted for it, will receive the “kingdom of heaven.” (John 15:20; 16:33)
- “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.” (Mt. 10:32)

- 5:11 – “when they revile you” – This does not say “if” they revile you. (2 Tim. 3:12)
- “against you falsely” – False accusation hurts.
    - If we are prone to need to right every accusation and put out every fire, we can be sure that the evil one will provide plenty of fires to keep us from doing what God wants us to do.
  - “for my sake” – This is not a blessing of our own stupidity.
    - It is not the suffering, but the cause that makes the martyr.
    - There is animosity for Jesus that doesn’t exist for any of the other ‘prophets;’ Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, etc. Other religions get brushed off, but Christians get targeted.
- 5:12 – “Rejoice” – Lit. “leap for joy.”
- “your reward in heaven” – Jesus knows our heavenly and eternal reward will outweigh all the persecutions and difficulties of this life.
  - “persecuted the prophets” – Whereas false prophets are often popular, God’s prophets are hardly ever not persecuted.
- 5:13 – “You are the salt” – Lit. “You alone are the salt.” There is no other.
- We are the salt of the earth and light of the world when we live out the nature of the beatitudes in our lives.
  - Influence is His ultimate intention in His present government of His kingdom. If He conditions are life, it is that we may exert among them an influence that shall be for their healing and for their uplifting.
  - “salt” – Salt flavors and preserves by killing the surface bacteria.
    - When salt was rained on, it would lose its saltiness leaving only the sand.
    - “Without salt, human life cannot be sustained” – Pliny.
    - Salt is needed where there is corruption.
    - Salt is not heard, it is tasted.
  - “thrown out and trampled underfoot” – It is not just a challenge, but also a command.
- 5:14 – “You are the light” – Lit. “You alone are the light.” There is no other.
- “light of the world” – The light is Christ in our lives. (John 8:12; 9:5)
    - Light is needed where there is darkness.
    - Light is not heard, it is seen.
  - “city that is set on a hill” – Jesus is referring to the city of Sophid, which was used by sailors to take bearings when the clouds hid the stars.
- 5:15 – “under a basket” – In Jesus’ day they used small, clay lamps that would burn oil through a wick. The bowls were also clay, used for meal or flour. A bowl on the lamp would not only hide the light, but put it out as well.
- The bowl was meant to hold the oil, not hide the light.
  - “see your good deeds and glorify your father” – We serve to His glory, not our own.
- 5:16 – “Let” – Our job is not to create or shine light, but simply to allow the light He has placed in us to shine through.
- We are called to “be witnesses” (Acts 1:8), not to go witnessing.
  - “glorify your Father” – The life of a Christian is not to esteem, please, or promote oneself, but to point to God. This cannot happen unless we first personally surrender to the light in us.
  - “Father” – This is the first time in the NT that God is called our Father. Is it not accurate that the first mention should refer to men seeing the good works of his children?

5:17 – “Do not think” – This is the first negative command of the Sermon on the Mount.

- The message of Jesus isn’t only “do,” but “think.”
- “the Law or the Prophets” – The entirety of the OT Scriptures.
- “fulfill” – (Gr. “pleroo”) Lit. “complete or perfect.” The OT, in itself, is incomplete.
  - Jesus fulfills the law by being sacrificed. He exceeds it by resurrecting. (1 Tim. 1:8; Gal. 3:11; James 2:10; Rom. 4:15; 5:13; 7:7; Gal. 3:24; Rom. 8:3-4; Gal. 5:18)
  - “The law is like a thermometer, it can tell you when you are sick but it can’t make you better” – Joe Focht.

5:18 – “heaven and earth pass away” – And they will.

- “one jot or one tittle” – These were the smallest of letters and least of strokes in the Hebrew alphabet. Jot is from Greek word “iota.” (See Psalm 119:73). Tittle means “horn” and refers to any embellishment on a letter.

5:19 – “breaks” – Lit. “dissolve, annul, make invalid.”

- “teaches men” – This applies to anyone speaking on behalf of Christ. (James 3:1-5)
- “does and teaches them” – The only power of teaching is that of the doing which precedes it. No man ever teaches a commandment with power, if he is breaking it in his own life.
  - Jesus is the only One to perfectly do and teach these things.

5:20 – “exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees” – This statement would’ve been very discouraging because the scribes and Pharisees presented themselves as strict and religious. But Jesus knew their religion was merely external and hypocritical.

- “Jesus had to teach in order to show that the ideal of the kingdom in their mind was a degraded ideal. He came to teach men that character is before conduct. He came to teach them that the spiritual relation underlies the material manifestation. He says ‘Blessed,’ but never a single blessing does He pronounce upon having anything or doing anything; every blessing is pronounced upon ‘being’” – G. Campbell Morgan.
- Jesus is pointing to the heart and His standard is perfection. (Mt. 5:48)
- External religion does not mask an internal problem.
- “righteousness” – The Law is a revelation of righteousness, and as a revelation of requirement cannot become obsolete until the righteousness described is realized. But once we fully meet the standards of the Law, it no longer has power over us.
- “Pharisees” – means “separated ones.” They came into existence during the Babylonian captivity out of a desire to maintain the understanding of the Word of God.

5:21-32 – The focus is on morality.

5:21 – “it was said” – (v. 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43) Jesus doesn’t say here “you have read.” The contrast He is setting up is not between the OT and the NT, but between the Pharisees’ teaching and His complete interpretation of the Law.

- The way that Jesus interprets the Scriptures makes us all guilty before God. The way the Pharisees were interpreting the Law led them into a pompous, self-righteous existence.
- Jesus is revealing the Law’s look to the heart.
- “said to those of old” – Jesus reminds us that something isn’t true just because it is old.
- “murder” – This is translated “kill” in the KJV, but it specifically means “murder.” (Exod. 20:13)
  - Not all killing is murder (ie. capital punishment and war).

- 5:22 – “I say to you” – This exemplifies Jesus’ authority. (Matt. 7:29)
- “angry” – Lit. “a settled anger, or malice that is nursed inwardly.”
  - “angry...without a cause” – Some anger is valid. Jesus got angry (Matt. 21:12; Mark 3:5). But we are to “Be angry and do not sin.” (Eph. 4:26; see also Rom. 12:9)
    - Jesus only ever got angry when someone else was being mistreated.
    - “Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” (1 John 3:15)
  - “Raca” – Aramaic term meaning “empty” or “empty-headed.” It is a word that insults another’s intelligence.
    - These are not uncommon or particularly vulgar words, but they suggest an attitude of angry contempt.
  - “the council” – The 71-member Sanhedrin.
  - “fool” – A judgment of condemnation. It is a word that expresses contempt for another’s character.
  - “hell fire” – (Gr. “gehenna”) Gehenna was the perpetually burning city dump in the Valley of Hinnom.
- 5:23 – “your gift to the altar” – One is seeking reconciliation with God.
- “something against you” – This is not having something against them (as Jesus covers in Matt. 18), but when other are offended by you – justifiably so or not.
    - Seeking reconciliation from God who is all-powerful and unseen, but not from people who are finite and tangible, is silly. (1 John 4:20)
    - Jesus wants “mercy, not sacrifice.”
- 5:24 – “be reconciled to your brother” – The examples of Jacob and Esau (Gen. 32:3-22; 33:3-11) and Abigail and David (1 Sam. 25:17-35).
- 5:25 – “Agree with your adversary” – Treating others with mercy is the best way to get them to treat you with mercy.
- “adversary” – Lit. “against right.” Relationships are more important than justice.
    - You can apologize, even when you didn’t do anything wrong. At least apologize for the hurt, even if you did nothing to cause the hurt.
- 5:26 – “penny” – (Gr. “kodrantes”) the smallest Roman copper coin.
- Settling with the Law before coming to judgment provides us with an opportunity for God’s grace. But to stand before the Judge with no account of the Law will require a very severe judgment.
- 5:27 – “adultery” – Adultery is a sexual relationship with anyone you are not Biblically married to.
- Adultery was punishable by death under the OT Law. (Deut. 22:22)
- 5:28 – “looks...to lust” – This is referring to the second look. To look at someone and recognize their beauty or even to feel some attraction is not sin, but to look again with desire is lust.
- “lust” – Lustful looks are severe as adultery to God.
  - “in his heart” – This is where God is looking.
    - Lust doesn’t make adultery permissible, as if I’ve already done it in God’s sight anyway. The further one gives themselves over to sin, the greater the consequences.

- 5:29-30 – “right eye...right hand” – The things that are most precious and valuable to that person. It is better to pay any personal cost to holiness. But one will never get better with a mere wish to be better without taking action to personally sacrifice that which is hindering one’s life.
- “pluck it out...cut it off” – Jesus gives these instructions to get a reaction from the people that parallels His attitude toward these sins.
    - It is better to have great suffering for a short time than greater suffering for eternity.
  - “causes you to sin” – It is the sin nature of your own heart that causes the sin. Removing the instrument will not eliminate the struggle with sin.
- 5:31 – “certificate of divorce” – There were two major schools of thought at the time when interpreting Deut. 24:1. The one was the school of Shammai, who said adultery was the only grounds for divorce. The other was the school of Hillel, who said any displeasure caused by the wife was ground for divorce.
- The religious leaders of Jesus’ day often sided with the more lenient position of Hillel. It allowed for them to marry and divorce at will. Some religious leaders had married 10-15 wives as a result of this teaching.
  - Marriage and divorce: Matt. 19:1-12; 1 Pet. 3:1-7; 1 Cor. 7; and Gen. 2:24-25.
- 5:32 – “except” – Neither Mark 10:11-12 nor Luke 16:18 mention the exception of marital unfaithfulness.
- “sexual immorality” – (Gr. “pornea”) Lit. “fornication.” This is a broader term than adultery and includes any sexual activity outside of the context of marriage.
- 5:33-48 – The focus is on character.
- 5:33 – “oaths” – Can also be translated “pledges.”
- 5:34 – “do not swear at all” – Beware of the one who has to swear on something to make it seem like it is true.
- The religious leaders of Jesus’ day had a hierarchy of oaths. (Matt. 23:16-22)
  - Oaths are permitted under certain circumstances, as long as they are not abused and used as a cover for deception. God Himself swears oaths (Heb. 6:13; Luke 1:73). Jesus spoke under oath in a court (Matt. 26:63-64). And Paul made oaths (Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; Gal. 1:20; 2 Thess. 2:5).
  - “A man of many words cannot be trusted.”
- 5:35 – “Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King” – Quoted from Ps. 48:2. (See also Mal. 1:14.)
- 5:37 – “let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’” – Be a person of your word. Do not lie at all.
- Be careful of “Yes...but.”
  - “Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?...He who swears to his own hurt and does not change.” (Ps. 15:1,4)
  - Until you get into a place of “no way out,” you will never be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ without serious correction. As long as you are in the mode of running from every trial, you will never change for the better.
- 5:38 – “eye for an eye” – The eye for eye laws were given to the judges to ensure justice and equity, not to promote vengeance. But by Jesus’ day, they had made retaliation an obligation. (Exod. 21)

- 5:39 – “not to resist” – The idea is “not to resist with evil.” Evil is to be resisted, but in the right way.
- “whoever slaps you” – This is not speaking against national government protecting its people or the personal protection of our families. (Rom. 13:4) This is speaking about personal retaliation.
    - When Jesus speaks of a slap on your cheek, it was culturally understood as a deep insult, not a physical attack.
    - According to the Mishna, striking someone with the back of the hand – a very severe insult – was punishable by a very heavy fine.
  - “turn the other to him also” – We’re instructed to “bless those who persecute you” (Rom. 12:14) and to follow the example of Jesus “who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return” (1 Pet. 2:23)
- 5:40 – “tunic...cloak” – The first was an undergarment, the second was a loose outer one.
- It is better to be taken advantage of than to be stingy or selfish.
  - Soldiers gambled for Jesus’ garment while He was dying on the cross. (Matt. 27:35)
- 5:41 – “compels” – Lit. “force, press into service.” Roman soldiers could use force to make Jews carry their heavy packs.
- Jesus carried a Roman cross until His physical frame gave out.
- 5:42 – “asks” – Not “manipulates.”
- 5:43 – “love your neighbor” – Lev. 19:18 continues with “in your heart.”
- The entire sermon is pointing to the heart, but that is what the Pharisees missed.
  - Real love is unconditional. And it is the only way to keep from being a slave.
- 5:44 – “love your enemies” – Love is the law, the rule, the regulation, the principle of life that crowns everything. Go back over Matthew 5, and you will find it is so. If you love, you will never be angry without a cause, or call your brother “Raca.” Love is everything. And so the whole law is fulfilled in the one word, love. (Rom. 13:10)
- The disciples’ attitude to religious persecution must go beyond mere non-retaliation to a positive love.
  - The only way to minister in an age of Islamic fundamentalist suicide bombers is to be willing to be a martyr rather than a murderer.
  - “Love must be sincere.” (Rom. 12:9)
- 5:45 – “rain on the just and on the unjust” – Everybody goes through hard times.
- 5:46 – “even the tax collectors do the same” – Jesus taught that we should expect the character of His followers to be different from the character seen in the world.

- 5:48 – “be” – This goes much deeper than “do.”
- “be perfect” – This is the true standard of God.
    - One little sin is as if broken all of them at once. (James 2:10)
    - Perfection is not just in not doing anything wrong, but also in doing everything right. This is as impossible for the monk in the monastery as it is for us.
    - If good guys went to heaven and bad guys went to hell, then Jesus died for nothing. We are only made perfect in Christ. (Col 2:10; 4:12; Heb. 9:9; 10:14)
  - “Father” – No Jew dared to look at God as a Father to them personally.
    - Jesus refers to God as Father 12 times in the Sermon on the Mount.

## Chapter 6:

This section of the Sermon on the Mount deals with man’s relation to God.

- 6:1 – “charitable deeds” – Lit. “righteousness.”
- “to be seen of them” – This doesn’t prohibit doing good deeds before others, but is referring to motivation. Why do you do what you do?
    - “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matt. 5:16)
    - “My flesh loves for others to think that I am a deeply spiritual man” – Chuck Smith.
    - In all our actions, we should be influenced by a regard to the object, not to the observer.
  - “no reward from your Father” – The reward we are seeking is an indication as to whose opinion is most important to us.
    - Looking to receive rewards in heaven is a proper motivation for Godly actions.
    - Love is the ultimate motivation for serving the Lord. (2 Cor. 5:14)
- 6:2 – “when” – Jesus does not say “if.” These things are still to be a part of our lives.
- “sound a trumpet” – The religious leaders would blow trumpets in the street before handing out money to the poor. The poor would come, but so would all the peoples’ attention.
  - “hypocrites” – The Greek word for “play actors.” This is talking about pretending rather than being sincere.
    - When reputation is more important than character, we will be hypocrites.
    - “God cannot and will not have a relationship with pretenders” – Brennan Manning.
    - Karl Marx was raised by a devotedly Jewish father. But when the family moved to a town in Germany that was predominantly Lutheran, his father told his family that they would be changing to attending the Lutheran church. When a young Karl objected, his father announced that a young man needs to learn to make concessions for the sake of business. Marx would later write that “Religion is the opiate of the masses.”
  - “they have their reward” – If you aim for the glory of humans, you’ll get no glory from God.
  - “reward” – (Gr. “apechein”) Lit. “received payment in full.”
    - This is not talking about salvation and heaven here. (1 Cor. 3:12-15)
    - “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.” (2 Cor. 5:9)
- 6:3 – “not let your left hand know” – This is the utmost in secrecy. Only me and God knows.
- 6:4 – “your Father who sees” – God knows all. He knows our heart and motivation. So even if I don’t receive rewards from people, but I tried for their rewards, God would know and I would lose my reward from Him as well.

- 6:5 – “when you pray” – Prayer is the natural outgrowth of children who want to speak to their Father.
- The cost of prayer has been paid by Christ’s work on the cross. (Heb. 10:20)
  - “the corners of the streets” – Pharisees would stop on the street corners and pray as if the prayer was so urgent that it needed to be said right then and there. It made them look very spiritual.
- 6:6 – “room” – The ancient Greek word for “room” was used for a storeroom where treasures were kept. This reminds us that there are treasures waiting for us in our prayer closet.
- “shut your door” – How much do we know of the inner chamber and the shut door? The principle is that we go there when no one else knows; that we escape human observation for loneliness with God.
  - Privacy, directness, and simplicity are the notes of true prayer.
  - Prayers spoken to be seen of men will only get the response of men. And men aren’t capable of truly answering prayer.
- 6:7 – “do not use vain repetitions” – Lit. “babble not.”
- Jesus and Paul both prayed for specific things multiple times. Jesus isn’t speaking against repeating prayers, but in repeating mere empty words. (Eccl. 5:2)
  - Sadly, the Lord’s Prayer is probably the prayer most often uttered in vain repetition.
- 6:8 – “Your Father knows the things you have need of” – God knows your heart and prayers before you even speak them. We pray to find the fellowship of agreeing with God.
- “need” – God most clearly sees the difference between our needs and our wants.
- 6:9-13 – “In this manner” – Jesus didn’t say “pray these words,” but “in this manner, pray.” He was setting forth a pattern, not merely a prayer to be mindlessly repeated verbatim. (Luke 11:1-4)
- The Lord’s prayer: 1. Exalts God, 2. Looks for His will first, 3. Simple needs, 4. Filled with sense of forgiveness, 5. Abstaining from evil, and 6. God is in control.
  - The Lord’s Prayer beautifully coincides with the Ten Commandments.
- 6:9 – “Our” – The pronouns of the prayer are all first person, plural.
- 6:13 – “temptation” – Lit. “test.” This is not always a solicitation to do evil. (1 Cor. 10:13; James 1:3)
- 6:14 – “forgive men their trespasses” – “Once our eyes have been opened to see the enormity of our offence against God, the injuries which others have done to us appear by comparison extremely trifling. If, on the other hand, we have an exaggerated view of the offenses of others, it proves that we have minimized our own” – John Stott. (Matt. 18:21-35)
- “trespasses” – These are sins, not just personal grievances or offenses.
  - It is a good assumption at the beginning of the day to realize that people are going to sin against us this day.
- 6:15 – “neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” – This is speaking of fellowship with God, not of salvation.
- 6:16 – “when you fast” – Fasting is suffering loss, even of rights, in order that one may come into more strenuous relationship with God.
- “disfigure their faces” – Jews put ashes on their heads when they fasted to look mournful.

- 6:17 – “anoint your head” – Putting oil on the head and washing the face was reserved for joyous occasions.
- 6:19 – “lay up” – This is not saying not to earn or even save, but not to store up unnecessarily. He is talking about that which exceeds our needs.
- Doing things for the reward of human praise is storing up treasures on earth.
  - “rust” – Rust is a slow-burning fire that eats into and disintegrates your most solid metal.
  - “break in and steal” – If someone can steal your treasure, you have the wrong treasure.
- 6:20 – “treasures in heaven” – Use the present to establish the future. (Luke 16:1-10)
- Giving is not God’s way to raise money; it is God’s way to raise kids. God does not need our money, but He wants our hearts.
  - Those who have lost believing loved ones to death have sent the greatest treasures of earth ahead of them to heaven.
- 6:21 – “where your treasure is” – The treasure leads the heart. (Col. 3:2)
- An individual’s life goals are what provide direction, influence, motivation, and strength to one’s life. Where your treasure lies, your strength comes from there as well.
  - “If you have stored up for yourself treasures here on earth, then your life will be centered around the material things this planet has to offer” – Chuck Smith.
  - “Reach for earth and get nothing. Reach for heaven and get the earth thrown in” – C.S. Lewis.
- 6:22 – “lamp of the body is the eye” – Jesus is referring to our perspective.
- “good” – This can also be translated “free” or “bountiful.” (Rom. 12:8; 2 Cor. 8:2; James 1:5)
- 6:23 – “bad” – Lit. “out of order.” Looking with the wrong priorities.
- This includes sorrow and affliction and calamity and fear, as well as definite and positive and willful sin.
  - If perspective (v. 22) and priorities (v. 23) are wrong, then everything will be out of line.
- 6:24 – “cannot serve God and mammon” – No man can serve two masters, but all men must serve one. If someone thinks that they are successfully serving two masters, they are deceived. (Luke 16:13)
- The Lord God is a good Master.
  - “serve” – Lit. “slave.”

- 6:25 – “Therefore” – Because our treasures are in heaven, because we act before God, because He is making us perfect...because of all that we don’t have to worry now.
- What lasts “in light of eternity?”
  - “worry” – Lit. “drawn in different directions.” We might use the word “anxious.” (Matt. 13:22)
    - Worry is a sign that our treasure and heart are here on the earth.
    - God does not desire that we be irresponsible and refuse to plan for the future at all. 1 Timothy 5:8 tells us that “if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”
  - “about your life” – Those who store up treasures in heaven have little or no concern for their own life.
  - “what you will eat or what you will drink” – “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’” (John 4:34)
  - “life more than food” – We would be foolish to spend the majority of our lives on things that are least important.
- 6:26 – “the birds of the air” – Birds are no passive. They don’t worry, but they aren’t lazy either.
- “If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.” (2 Thess. 3:10)
  - “value” – The worry many people have over material things in life is rooted in a low understanding of their value before God. They don’t understand how much He loves and cares for them.
- 6:27 – “stature” – Jesus is referring to the length of one’s life, not the height of their body.
- 6:30 – “you of little faith” – Faith and worry are mutually exclusive; they don’t exist in the same space.
- 6:32 – “Gentiles” – Lit. “heathen, or sinners.”
- “your heavenly Father knows that you need” – Sometimes it can be easier to trust a human that has offered to pay a bill, then it is to trust God to pay all our bills.
  - “need” – Needs are different than wants.
- 6:33 – “seek first” – Lit. “be continually seeking first.”
- This speaks of priority and importance.
  - In the context, Jesus is reminding us that our physical well-being is not a worthy object to devote our lives unto.
  - “these things shall be added to you” – In this life and in the life to come. (Mark 10:29-30)
    - God will give us all that we need to do what He has called us to do.
    - He is calling us to trust Him, knowing that faith will conquer fear.
- 6:34 – “do not worry about tomorrow” – Worry is concerned about tomorrow, but we only live today.
- “Wherever I am, Lord, let me be all there” – Jim Eliot.
  - Fear motives worry, but “perfect loves casts out fear.” (1 John 4:18)
  - “trouble” – Lit. “adversity.”

## Chapter 7:

7:1 – “Judge not” – (Gr. “krino”) Judgment here is in the final sense of condemnation.

- We are to be discerning by differentiating between right and wrong (see vs. 6 and 15), but we are not to condemn them by placing an ultimate verdict upon them. (1 Cor. 2:15; 4:15; 5:3; 1 Thess. 5:21)
- “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” (John 7:24)
- The gift of discernment is given for the edification of the Body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:10)
- “Love the sinner, hate the sin.” This is what judgment means.

7:2 – “with the measure you use” – We will all be judged by the Scriptures. But when in doubt, error on the side of grace.

- We must forever maintain our attitude toward our fellow man by maintaining our relationship with God.
- The Christian is called to show unconditional love. But the Christian is not called to unconditional approval.

7:3 – “speck” – The idea is “splinter.”

- “plank” – The idea is “log or tree.” This is the judgmental attitude itself.
  - The splinter and the plank are both made of the same stuff. Our sins always look worse on someone else.

7:4 – “brother” – This doesn’t apply to unbelievers.

- “What have I to do with judging those also who are outside?” (1 Cor. 5:9-13)

7:5 – “Hypocrite” – Pretenders love to go around and judge everybody else while remaining behind the mask.

- “remove the plank” – The reason we are to remove the plank from our own eyes is to help and edify others.

7:6 – “dogs...swine” – We don’t change unbelievers from the outside-in.

- “‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’” (2 Pet. 2:22)
- The rule of thumb in advising and counseling someone is to wait for them to ask.
- “pearls before swine” – Pigs are indifferent to pearls.
- “tear you in pieces” – These are the mean street-dogs of Jesus’ day. They were dangerous, not only from the bites, but from that the bites would infect you with.
  - Teaching should be given according to the spiritual capacity of the learners.
  - The hostile and indifferent can be avoided.

7:7 – “Ask...seek...knock” in Greek are in the perfect tense. They are continuing actions.

- “ask” – means “beg, implore, or beseech.” When praying, we ask.
  - We need God’s wisdom to know the difference between sheep and swine. (James 1:5)

7:11 – “being evil” – Our earthly fathers are far more selfish than our heavenly Father.

- “your Father” – Jesus brings this into the context of relationship.
- “good things to those who ask Him” – Jesus makes it clear that God doesn’t have to be persuaded or appeased in prayer.
- “good things” – God only gives “good things.” (James 1:17)

- 7:12 – “Therefore” – Because God gives us good gifts, we are to act in the other person’s best interest!
- Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism all had the Golden rule in negative form. It is so much easier to fulfill the negative than the positive.
  - This summation of the law eliminates our ability to think we are fine. James 4:17 says that those who know the good and don’t do it, sin as well. But Jesus Christ came to fulfill this by acting in our personal best interest.
  - “do also to them” – This especially applies to Christian fellowship. If we would experience love and have people reach out to us, we must love and reach out to others.
  - We are to act in the other person’s best interest.
- 7:13 – “Enter through the narrow gate” – It is an imperative. The idea is “Enter now!”
- “broad is the way that leads to destruction” – This is the “all roads lead to heaven” mentality.
    - Jesus taught that not all ways and not all destinations are equally good. One leads to destruction; the other to life.
- 7:14 – “the way” – Refers to a person. (John 14:6) Be narrow-minded concerning Jesus!
- “which leads to life” – The important thing about a path is where it leads.
    - It is reasonable to evaluate a theology and philosophy by the life it produces in those who follow it. For “wisdom is justified by her children.”
  - “life” – Lit. “the life”
    - There only need be one treatment to get healed.
  - “there are few who find it” – It would be disastrous to run your whole life and only at the end discover that you were on the wrong path.
- 7:15 – “Beware” – Lit. “constantly beware, or constantly watch out.”
- The first step to combating these false prophets is to simply beware of them.
  - Discerning false prophets is everyone’s job.
  - “false prophets” – His prophecy may be perfectly accurate and his preaching may be absolutely orthodox, but the man is false. That is the man who will lead farthest from the truth.
    - One can determine a false teacher from a true teacher by which path they are pointing to.
  - “ravenous” – Translated other places as “extortioners.” (Acts 20:29; 2 Pet. 2:3)
    - The basic fault of the false prophet is self-interest. A desire for gain, or an easy life, or prestige, or the desire to advance one’s own ideas will drive any prophet false.
  - “wolves” – Aesop said you could tell the wolves from the sheep by what they are eating.
- 7:16 – “fruits” – This is not what they say, but by what they do. A lot of people do and say Christian things, but are not Christians at all.
- “grapes from thornbushes” – It is quite possible to put grapes on thorns. It is quite possible to put figs on thistles, but they cannot grow there. It is quite possible for a wolf to wear sheep’s clothing, but it cannot grow a sheep’s clothing.
- 7:20 – “by their fruits you will know them” – The fruit reveals the root.
- You can only trust fruit; you cannot trust words or appearances. And fruit takes time.
  - The fruit is not flawlessness, but fruitfulness according to the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22-23)
- 7:21 – “the will of my Father” – The work of the father is to “believe on Him who He has sent” (John 6:29). The will of the Father is that His children would be with Him (John 6:39-40).

- 7:22 – “say to Me in that day” – Jesus freely claims that He is the One people must stand before on that final day of judgment. And He is the One who is rightly called “Lord.”
- “Lord, Lord” – All who get to heaven call Him, “Lord.” But not all who call Him, “Lord,” get into heaven.
  - “we” – They are trusting the work of the denomination or church, but may not be personally involved. (Gal. 6:4)
    - The false prophets are full of self-promotion. The true attitude of a servant of God is “we are unprofitable servants: we have only done what is our duty to do.” (Luke 17:10)
  - “done many wonders in Your name” – False prophets have some power.
- 7:23 – “I never knew you” – Lit. “I never, ever, knew you.” We can know Christ personally.
- It is no surprise that humans would want God, but it is a surprise that God would want us.
  - But Jesus is asking for a real and sincere relationship. We are to know Christ personally, not just know about Him.
  - “lawlessness” – A life marked by the refusal to submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ.
    - A lifestyle of sin indicates that there is not a true personal relationship with Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8; 21:27; 22:15)
- 7:24 – “and does them” – There must be hearing and doing. (James 1:22)
- “the rock” – The rock is Jesus and His teaching. (1 Cor. 3:9; 10:4)
    - It is not in the men who build; or in the materials with which they build; but in the foundation on which they build. The foundation is everything.
- 7:25 – “founded on the rock” – Luke 6:48 says “dug down and built his house on the rock.”
- You can’t always tell which house has the right foundation by looking on the outside.
  - No doubt, the house on the sand could be built much faster by skipping the long, difficult process of digging down to the rock to find a solid foundation.
- 7:27 – “the rain descended” – The storms of life fall on both houses. Storms are inevitable.
- Jesus doesn’t keep us from storms; He helps us survive them.
  - The greatest storm of life is the storm of death.
- 7:30 – “astonished” – Lit. “troubled, agitated.” Some were bothered by what Jesus said here.
- “not as the scribes” – The scribes taught from authority by quoting the scholars. Jesus taught with authority by speaking the Word of God with His life and mouth.

### **Chapter 8:**

“There is nothing more remarkable in all of Jesus’ ministry than the fact that He never held consultations, or attempted to form a party in our sense of the word, or gave men a program. He was not restricted by party, policy, or program.” (G. Campbell Morgan)

- 8:1-15 – The Jewish religious leaders prayed daily “I give You thanks that I am free and not a slave, A Jew and not a Gentile, and a man and not a woman.”
- Gal. 3:28 – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

8:1 – “great multitudes followed Him” – Many more followed Jesus on the plains than on the mountains.

8:2-4 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 1:40-45 and Luke 5:12-16.

8:2 – “leper” – Leprosy was an incurable skin disease, known today as “Hansen’s Disease.”

- Luke 5:12 says he was “full of leprosy.” He was probably missing appendages and covered with spots.
- This man would have gone through the Lev. 13 procedure and officially pronounced unclean at some point earlier in his life.
- Leprosy thought to be caused by sin. Lepers had to warn others of their coming; yelling “unclean.” One rabbi boasted of driving a leper away with stones.
- The Bible never speaks of a leper being healed, but rather cleansed. A leper would not go to the physicians, but to the priests. So even if leprosy was not directly caused by individual sin, it certainly resembles sin in its effects and cure.
- “worshiped” – Lit. “to bow in the dust.”
  - Our condition doesn’t keep us from God and healing as long as we can take the position of worship.
- “Lord” – This is the first place in the gospel where Jesus is called Lord.
- “If you are willing” – Lit. “If you really want; if it is your heart’s desire.”
  - The leper doesn’t doubt Jesus’ ability; he doubts Jesus’ desire.
- “You can make me clean” – This leper was entirely confident in the ability of Jesus.

8:3 – “touched him” – This guy has not been touched in years. Jesus could’ve spoken a word to heal.

- It was unlawful to touch a leper without becoming unclean yourself. But the beauty of Jesus touching this man was at the point of contact the man was no longer a leper.
- “I am willing” – Jesus responds literally, “It is my heart’s desire to make you clean.”
  - Mark 1:41 says that Jesus was “moved with compassion.”

8:4 – “that Moses commanded” – The instructions for a cleansed leper are given in Lev. 14.

- “as a testimony unto them” – The cleansed leper is a witness to the religious leaders.
  - There is not one other cleansing of leprosy of a Jew to this point. (Luke 4:27)

8:5-13 – The parallel passage is in Luke 7:1-10.

8:5 – “Capernaum” – This is the city where Jesus lived. (Matt. 4:13; 9:1)

- “centurion” – Jewish elders of the synagogue and the centurion’s servant spoke on behalf of the centurion himself. (Luke 7:1-10)
  - Centurions were Roman officers in charge of 100 men. He was a Gentile.
- “pleading with Him” – This is a picture of intercessory prayer. He is speaking to the Lord on behalf of his servant.

8:9 – “also” – Jesus has the same type of authority over sickness and death.

- “authority” – (Greek “exousia”) Lit. “the kingly right and power.”
  - The throne you are submitted to directly determines the authority you walk in. The authority we walk in corresponds to our obedience to God’s Word and will.

8:10 – “marveled” – Jesus only marvels two times in the Bible. (Mark 6:6)

- “great faith” – Jesus is commending a Gentile as having greater faith than the Jews.

8:11 – “from east and west” – Jesus is prophetically speaking of the ingathering of the Gentile world.

8:13 – “as you have believed, so let it be done” – The sickness obeyed Jesus.

8:14-17 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 1:29-34 and Luke 4:38-41.

8:14 – “a fever” – Mark tells us it was a “great fever.”

- “He saw his wife’s mother” – Luke 4:38 says “they made request of Him concerning her.”
- “His wife’s mother” – Peter was married. (1 Cor. 9:5)

8:15 – “she arose” – She needs no time to gain her strength.

- “served them” – Jesus heals this woman and she immediately gets up and serves.
  - What do you make when God comes over for dinner?

8:16 – “all who were sick” – Jesus is healing every and all illness as soon as they come.

- There is no pattern or formula to the healings God performs for us.
- The presence of so much sickness among Israel was evidence of their unfaithfulness to the covenant and their low spiritual condition. God gave them the opposite of what He promised under Exodus 15:26 – “If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you.”

8:17 – “took up our infirmities” – Jesus bears all our sickness and will lift all our pain. (Isa. 53:4)

8:18-22 – The parallel passage is found in Luke 9:57-62.

8:18 – “when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart” – Jesus increased in popularity, yet He did not follow the crowds or even seek to make them bigger.

8:19 – “a certain scribe” – It was in vogue for prominent Jews to align under a popular rabbi. Jesus refuses to allow this man to think that he is right with God based on some fake, political alliance.

- “I will follow You wherever You go” – This man makes a very bold declaration seemingly without understanding the price he will have to pay to do so. (Luke 14:28)
  - There are many resolutions for religion, produced by some pangs of conviction, and taken up without due consideration that prove abortive and come to nothing: soon ripe, soon rotten.
- “wherever You go” – Jesus is headed for a storm. (vv. 23-24)

8:20 – “foxes have holes” – This is not Jesus’ home.

- This deals with provision and sacrifice.
- We are “strangers and pilgrims on earth.” (Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11)
- “Son of Man” – Used 32 times to refer to Jesus in the NT. (Dan. 7:13)
- “lay his head” – This phrase is not used until John 19:30 when Jesus lays His head on the cross.
  - Jesus didn’t tell the man that he couldn’t follow Him. But He did tell him the truth, without painting a glamorized version of what it was like to follow Him.
  - Jesus doesn’t seem to be very nice to these guys. If someone can be put off by perceived insensitivity, they have to question if they are servants or not.

- 8:21 – “another of His disciples” – Jesus had other disciples in addition to the twelve.
- “Lord, me first” – Those words don’t go together.
    - The man wanted to follow Jesus, but not just yet. He knew it was good and that he should do it, but he felt there was a good reason why he could not do it now. “If the scribe was too quick in promising, this man was too slow in performing” – Carson.
- 8:22 – “Follow Me” – Jesus only asks us to follow Him, not join Christianity or go to church or even try to be a better person.
- There are no strings attached, but following Jesus is an all-or-nothing proposition.
  - “let the dead bury their own” – This was a saying of procrastination. Jesus says leave the “spiritually” dead to gain spiritual life.
    - This deals with approval and devotion.
    - This man’s inheritance may depend on him staying around until after his father died.
    - Some live their entire lives for the approval of their parents. (Luke 14:26)
- 8:23-27 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 4:35-41 and Luke 8:22-25.
- 8:23 – “His disciples followed Him” – Jesus takes them out into the storm. There is a lesson in the storm for the disciples.
- Luke 8:22 says Jesus told them “Let us go to the other side of the lake.”
- 8:24 – “great tempest” – (Greek “mega seismos”) This is a crazy storm with hints of an earthquake and seismic tremors.
- Sometimes Jesus takes us into a storm, in the environment we know best, to show us that He is in charge of it all. This is the middle of God’s will.
  - Storms can produce character. It wasn’t a punishment to the disciples. It wasn’t a question of God’s permissive will as opposed to His perfect will. Jesus took them there on purpose to teach them something.
  - “the sea” – The Sea of Galilee is about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide.
- 8:25 – “His disciples...awoke Him” – The storm doesn’t wake Jesus, but the cry of the disciple does.
- Mark says their cry is “do you not care that we are perishing?”
- 8:26 – “little faith” – Jesus rebukes them because they failed to take Him at His word.
- “rebuked the winds” – Mark 4:39 says Jesus said “Peace, be still.” And that is literally “Be muzzled” or “Shut up!”
  - “great calm” – The winds and waves die out immediately!
    - Mark 4:41 tells us that these guys were more afraid of the calm than they were of the storm.
- 8:27 – “great calm” – The winds stopped immediately and the sea was made smooth instantaneously.
- 8:28-34 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-39.
- 8:28 – “there met Him” – Immediately following the boat ride through the storm.
- “two demon-possessed men” – Mark and Luke only mention one man, the spokesman.
    - Demon possession is a real thing.

- 8:29 – “Jesus, You Son of God” – The demons recognized Jesus.
- This answers the disciples’ question in v. 27.
  - The demons are orthodox in their faith, but un-yielded. (James 2:19)
  - Jesus questions the man, not the demons. (Luke 8:30)
- “before the time” – There is a time for the demonic world to be judged.

- 8:31 – “herd of swine” – Pig raising was an illegal industry in Israel at this time.
- There were about 2,000 pigs. (Mark 5:13)

- 8:32 – “Go” – Jesus says one word to them.
- “perished in the water” – The influence of Satan is to steal, kill, and destroy.
  - Satan cannot even touch a pig without Jesus’ permission.

- 8:34 – “begged Him to depart” – They would rather have the pigs and the profits than Jesus and the two men healed.
- Jesus grants the people’s request; He leaves.
  - Only one of the demon-possessed men wants to go with Jesus. Jesus sends him home. (Mark 5:18-19)

## **Chapter 9:**

9:1-8 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 2:1-12 and Luke 5:17-26.

9:1 – “His own city” – That is Capernaum. (Matt. 4:13)

- 9:2 – “they brought to Him” – This guy’s friends tear a hole in the roof to get him to Jesus. (Mark 2:1-12) We are not told of the paralytic’s opinion.
- “Son” – Lit. “child.” This is an endearing term.
  - “your sins are forgiven” – Jesus knew his guy wanted to be forgiven more than healed. In this scene, He is responding to people “knowing their thoughts.” (v. 4)
  - Early church tradition says this guy was paralyzed due to syphilis.

9:3 – “This Man blasphemes” – This is the first mention of opposition to Jesus. It comes as He does things that can only be attributed to God.

9:4 – “knowing their thoughts” – Jesus keeps responding the thoughts of all in this scene. He responds to the thoughts of the Pharisees, the thoughts of the man’s friends, and the thoughts of the paralyzed man himself.

9:5 – “which is easier” – It is better to be paralyzed in heaven than whole in hell. (Matt. 5:29,30)

- Jesus’ primary mission is to save people from their sins. (Matt. 1:21)

9:6 – “the Son of Man has power on earth” – Jesus Himself has the power to save and the power to heal. Any power doctors may have to heal is merely an imputed power from God Himself.

- “take up your bed” – “The bed had borne the man; now the man bore the bed” – Bengel.

9:8 – “marveled” – Lit. “feared.”

- The people would be stunned by how simply Jesus would forgive this man’s sins. The forgiveness happens without the man doing anything to earn the forgiveness.
- “glorified God” – Jesus didn’t draw attention to Himself either. The people went away glorifying God. (Matt. 5:16)
- A good way to know who the true prophets are is to see who gets the glory from their actions.
- When people met Jesus, they always walked away changed.

9:9-13 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 2:14-17 and Luke 5:27-32.

9:9 – This is all Matthew says about his own conversion.

- “He saw a man” – Jesus really saw the true man. He saw past the façade.
- Matthew was a tax collector along the Via Mare trade route in Capernaum. A Jewish tax collector working for the Roman Empire was considered a traitor by his countrymen.
- Matthew calls himself Matthew and not his given name Levi (Mark 2:14). Matthew means “gift of the Lord.” He knew he couldn’t earn God’s blessings like the Pharisees were trying to do.
- “he arose and followed Him” – Luke 5:28 says “he left all” to follow Jesus.
- Matthew left everything and lost nothing.

9:10 – “Jesus sat” – Lit. “Jesus reclined.”

- “the house” – This is Matthew’s house.

9:11 – “the Pharisees” – Sometimes you can tell a lot about a person by who their enemies are.

- “they said to His disciples” – These kinds of troublemakers always work the perimeter. When somebody confronts a teaching or decision by going to anyone other than the teacher or the decision-maker, they are revealing that they are more interested in tearing down the work than in confronting and correcting the mistake.
- “eat with tax collectors and sinners” – Sharing a meal with someone was like making yourself one with that person. Jesus came to be with us.
- It was the “sinners” who could admit their need. (Matt. 21:28-31)

9:12 – “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick” – Jesus permits the use of doctors by the sick.

9:13 – “go and learn” – The Pharisees would often say this to the common people of their day. Here, Jesus turns the tables on them.

- “mercy, not sacrifice” – Jesus quotes this a second time later in Matt. 12:7. (Hosea 6:6)
- Jesus is pointing to the heart. Mere external and insincere actions are not pleasing to God, even if they are the most religious of experiences.
- Better the smallest action out of love than the largest action done out of religious duty.

9:14-17 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 2:18-22 and Luke 5:33-39.

9:14 – “the disciples of John came to Him” – John questioned if Jesus was the Messiah after John was put in prison. The kingdom didn’t come as even John expected.

- “the Pharisees fast often” – The law set up only one fast; Yom Kippur. The Pharisees commanded fasts 2-3 times each week. (Luke 18:12)

9:16 – “unshrunk cloth on an old garment” – They didn’t have preshrunk clothing. Putting a new cloth on an old garment would cause a larger tear as the patch shrunk in the wash and drying process.

- We cannot add a little Jesus onto the old man. We need a new garment altogether.

9:17 – “old wineskins” – These were typically made of goatskins. They would dry out and crack as they aged. And when the new wine would ferment and expand in the old wineskins, it would break the dry skins.

- “both are preserved” – Trying to put Jesus into the old way of life will “ruin” both.
  - Personally, the conversion must be complete inside and out. A new wineskin without new wine leaves one empty without Jesus. New wine without new wineskins leaves one broken due to hypocrisy and legalism.
  - Corporately, this mandates that the administration and the teaching must match or both will be destroyed. The structure must be flexible enough to flex with what God wants to do next. We don’t want to just be a church that teaches the Bible; we want to be a church that believes and receives direction from the Bible.
    - o “Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be broken” – Chuck Smith.

9:18-26 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 5:21-43 and Luke 8:40-56.

9:18 – “ruler” – This is Jairus, the ruler of the local synagogue. (Mark 5:22) His religion couldn’t help his daughter.

- How would the Scribes and Pharisees feel about Jesus helping one of their own?
- “worshiped Him” – Note that this man worshiped Him and Jesus received this worship which would have been blasphemous if Jesus had not Himself been God.
- “My daughter” – The girl is 12 years old. (Mark 5:42)
- “just died” – This is an idiomatic phrase that means literally “is at the point of death, or is as good as dead.”

9:20 – “flow of blood” – This is menstrual bleeding.

- Tradition of the day attributed bleeding to immorality. This would have made her ceremonially unclean (Lev. 15), unable to have children, unable to touch her children, and has taken all her money (Mark 5:26).
- There were many strange cures to menstrual bleeding; such as carrying an ostrich egg or finding a barley kernel in the dung of a white female donkey.
- “the hem of His garment” – (Greek “kraspedon”) Numbers 15:37-41 details the tassels and hems on the Jewish men’s garments that signify consecration to God. (Deut. 22:12)

9:21 – “touch his garment” – This is her faith-in-action point.

- There are many things that we could find wrong with this woman’s faith. Yet her faith was in Jesus, and the object of faith is much more important than the quality or even the quantity of faith.

- 9:22 – “when He saw her” – Jesus stops the procession to seek the one who touched Him. She then comes forward and tells all her story to Jesus and the crowd.
- Many pressing, but one touching.
  - “daughter” – This an endearing term, like “sweetheart.” She is the only woman Jesus called daughter.
    - Jesus doesn’t just want to heal her, He wants to bring her to Himself as daughter.
    - Jairus, watching this scene, also has a daughter in need.
  - “your faith has made you well” – Jesus notes the faith of this woman.
- 9:23 – “the flute players and the noisy crowd” – These were the professional mourners hired to drive away the evil spirits.
- The Mishna required at least two flute players and one female wailer.
- 9:24 – “ridiculed Him” – Lit. “they laughed Him to scorn.”
- Luke 8:53 adds “because they knew she was dead.” The professional mourners would know death when they saw it.
  - The natural always mocks the spiritual.
- 9:25 – “when the crowd was put outside” – Remove anything that feeds unbelief.
- Abraham was instructed to “cast out the bondwoman and her son.” (Gen. 21:10)
  - “took her by the hand” – Jesus then said, “Little lamb, arise.” (Mark 5:41)
    - Only Peter, James, John and the parents saw this happen.
- 9:27 – “blind men” – There are multiple healings of the blind in the Gospels. They were a sharp rebuke to the religious leaders who had eyes and still couldn’t really see.
- “Son of David” – This is a Messianic term. (Matt. 1:1; 20:30)
    - No doubt, the faith of the blind men fastened on such great Messianic promises as this, “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.” (Isa. 35:5)
- 9:28 – “into the house, the blind men came to Him” – Persistence!
- 9:29 – “According to your faith” – They received what they believed.
- “faith” – What is the source of their faith?
- 9:32 – “mute and demon-possessed” – Satan isolates this man as he destroys him. The devil, as a means to the ends of the destruction of a life, will first isolate and eliminate the means of communication, connection, and fellowship.
- 9:33 – “the demon was cast out” – Matthew does not show any pattern to the miracles of Jesus.
- “the multitudes marveled” – People believed the deaf and dumb couldn’t be healed because they couldn’t respond to the exorcists.
    - The Jewish exorcists held the belief that they needed the name of the oppressing demon before they could cast it out.
- 9:34 – “the Pharisees” – They choose to deride Jesus rather than enjoy the blessed healings.
- “the ruler of demons” – They are giving the credit for the work of Christ to the devil.

9:35 – “then Jesus went about” – Jesus responds to the heightening criticism by stepping up His ministry. Jesus stayed on mission.

- “teaching” – (Gr. “didasko”) Lit. “didactic teaching.”
- “preaching” (Gr. “kerusso”) Lit. “to declare, proclaim, or herald.”
- “the gospel” – (Gr. “evaggelion”) Lit. “to evangelize.”
- “healing” – (Gr. “therapeuo”) Lit. “therapy.”
- “every sickness and every disease” – There was nothing He could not heal.

9:36 – “moved with compassion” – (Gr. “splagnizomai”) Lit. “to be moved in one’s bowels.”

- This was Jesus’ motivation.
- “having no shepherd” – One could say that the Jewish people of that day did indeed have some kind of spiritual guides and shepherds, namely the scribes, priests, Levites, and Pharisees. Yet for the most part they were worthless.
- “Christ accounts those people to have no ministers who have no good one” – Matthew Poole.

9:37 – “disciples” – Lit. “learners.”

- “The harvest truly is plentiful” – Jesus saw the greatness of human need as an opportunity.

9:38 – “Therefore, pray” – This is the first step to responding to the needs of those around us.

- “laborers” – Jesus is looking for workers.
- Ministry is first and foremost about hard work.

## **Chapter 10:**

10:1 – “And when He had called His twelve” – Jesus calls the disciples to move in response to their own prayers for workers to be sent into the harvest. (Matt. 9:38)

- “His twelve disciples” – Jesus prayed all night before He picked these guys. (Luke 6:12)
  - The Twelve were not chosen because of their abilities, but these were the ones He “wanted.” (Mark 3:13; see also Acts 1:13)
- “Twelve” – These twelve are chosen from the hundreds or thousands following Jesus at this time.
- “to Him” – He had previously called them to come after Him; now He calls them to come to Him. They are joining Jesus in the work.
  - “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13)
- “He gave them” – Power from God is a received power.
  - God equips those He calls.
  - A calling in one’s life is most clearly seen when they are doing the work God has called them to do.
- “power” – (Gr. “exousia”) Lit. “kingly authority.” They had the power to do miracles at will.
  - The NT Church has not been given “exousia” power, but “dynamous” power (Acts 1:8), which is power under authority. “Dynamous” power does not have the same freedom of use as “exousia,” but it is a significant power from God nonetheless.

10:2 – “apostles” – Lit. “sent out ones, or ambassadors.”

- This is the first and only time in Matthew that the twelve are called “apostles.”
- Among the “twelve apostles” were Peter the denier, Andrew the second-fiddle, James and John the hot-heads, Philip the confused, Bartholomew (Nathaniel) the skeptic, Thomas the scientist, Matthew the tax collector, James and Thaddaeus the unknown, Simon the zealot, and Judas the betrayer. These are just plain or common men! They would’ve killed each other without Jesus! The disciples are unskilled and ordinary, uncouth and diverse, yet unified around Christ. (1 Cor. 1:26-31)

10:5-15 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 6:7-13 and Luke 9:1-6.

10:5 – “these twelve Jesus sent out” – Jesus is sending them ahead of Him and His ministry.

- The context is Jesus sending Jewish disciples, so not all of these instructions apply directly to us. But there are good principles throughout that we can follow.
- The key to effective ministry is being sent by Jesus. Education, experience, ordination, a sending board, etc. are secondary to the truly called apostle walking in the power of God.
- “commanded them” – A military term meaning “to give them orders.”

10:6 – “lost sheep” – These are not the “lost tribes” that some movements emphasize.

- “the house of Israel” – The gospel went the Jew first, and then to the Gentile.
- Missions work starts at home.
- The emphasis of Jesus’ saying lies not primarily on the prohibition of a wider mission, but on the priority of the mission to Israel. Jesus’ restrictions establish priorities.

10:7 – “as you go, preach” – Christians bear their message with their lives and their words.

- In Mark 6:12, it says they were told to preach that men should “repent.”
- The disciples brought the same message Jesus preached (Matt. 4:17), simply bringing it over a much broader area than Jesus could just by Himself.
- He spends more time describing their lifestyle than their message.
- “preach” – (Gr. “kerusso”) Lit. “to announce, proclaim, or herald.”
- “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” – They were proclaiming the closeness of the kingdom, but they were not sharing the complete gospel. At this time, their message was still fairly limited.

10:8 – “Heal the sick” – They are directed to use their power to do good. It is not ‘Go and move mountains,’ or ‘Call down fire from heaven,’ but “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers.”

- “freely” – (Gr. “dorian”) Lit. “undeservedly and with no strings attached.” We are citizens of heaven, not members, and that is through unmerited or free grace.
- Acts 3:6 – “Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give unto you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’”
- You cannot give what you do not have. To be of benefit to those around you, you must be actively receiving from the Lord.
- “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)
- “give” – Our service is not to be for success or profit, but for the sake of those we service, expecting nothing in return.

- 10:9 – “Provide neither” – There must be an implicit and settled trust in the servant sharing God’s message that God will care and provide for the servant.
- It would be reasonable for the disciples to expect that God would normally meet their needs through the inspired hospitality of others.
  - “Provide” – Lit. “obtain.” This saying assures the disciples that no previous fund-raising is necessary, nor need special equipment be acquired. They can just go as they are, for the mission is urgent.
  - The story from “The Word Came With Power” on pg. 143.
- 10:10 – “a worker is worthy of his food” – Missionaries spend far too much time looking for food, and far too little time working.
- In your ministry, you can, in obedience, work yourself into a job. God is careful to “not muzzle the ox while it treads out the grain.” (1 Cor. 9:9)
- 10:11 – “stay there until you go out” – There should be loyalty shown to those who bore the ministry when it was in the infant stages, rather than to continually look to improve either the organization or the minister himself.
- 10:12 – “greet it” – The idea is “bless it,” as was common custom of the day.
- 10:13 – “let your peace come upon it” – It is good to be faithful to the ones who originally received you into an area, rather than trying to prosper yourself or move up the ranks of the intellectual and influential of that area.
- 10:14 – “shake off the dust from your feet” – Jesus is telling them to not take it personally. They aren’t rejecting the disciple, but God.
- We are not to argue people into the kingdom. We share and let them choose.
- 10:15 – “more tolerable for the land of Sodom” – Sodom and Gomorrah walked in less light. Therefore, their punishment is corresponding.
- 10:16 – “as sheep” – Without a threat and without causing fear, but innocent and simple.
- “sheep in the midst of wolves” – Sheep are dependent on the protection of the shepherd.
    - Jesus does not send out His servants militantly. They weren’t going out to fight with people, but to share the message of salvation and the kingdom of God.
  - “in the midst of wolves” – The Greek tense implies that the sheep are already in the midst of the wolves.
  - “wise as serpents” – They survive quite well without arms and legs.
  - “harmless as doves” – Without retaliating.
- 10:17-21 – “synagogues...governors...brother” – Religious, political, and family persecution.
- “Love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return.” (Luke 6:35)
- 10:17 – “synagogues” – The first persecution comes from religious leaders.
- 10:19 – “what you should speak” – Opposition gives opportunity to witness.
- The message is more important than our own personal safety.

- 10:20 – “the Spirit” – This is a prophetic statement pointing to Acts and the pouring out of God’s Spirit upon His disciples for service.
- “Spirit of your Father speaks in you” – This is speaking of persecution and not preparation for preaching.
  - We are ambassadors representing the King.
- 10:21 – “brother will deliver up brother” – Some of the most bitter persecution takes place among families.
- 10:22 – “endure to the end shall be saved” – We aren’t saved by enduring, but in believing in Jesus. However, it is the nature of believers to continue in belief.
- “the end” – It is good to consider that there will be an end of these troubles; they may last long, but they will not last always.
- 10:23 – “flee to another” – It is okay to avoid a beating.
- We are not supposed to try to fight people into the kingdom. When it turns into a fight, just back off and move on.
  - “the Son of Man comes” – Jesus is following behind the disciples and their ministry.
- 10:24 – “disciple” – Lit. “learner.”
- “the servant” – (Greek “doulos”) Lit. “bondslave.” This is a servant without rights.
  - “be like” – or “become like.” There is fellowship in identification.
- 10:25 – “be like” – Can also be translated “become like.”
- The whole theme is that of the identification of the worker with Jesus, and all that means to him as he goes forth. (Rom. 8:29)
  - We cannot and will not be exalted above Jesus. He has made us heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus, and that is enough.
  - “Beelzebub” – A Philistine god – the lord of the flies.
  - The religious leaders have accused Jesus of working by Satan’s power. (Matt. 9:34)
- 10:27 – “what you hear in your ear” – The work is a two-fold work; you are first to listen while I whisper them to you, and then you are to mount the housetop and proclaim them to men. That is the real order of Christian service. No man has anything to say worth saying to a congregation who has not been alone and waited while the Lord whispered secrets to him.
- The minister’s message will only carry weight as it was received from the Lord. It is education through relationship, not intellect.
- 10:28 – “Him who is able to destroy both” – Jesus is talking about fearing God.
- “You cannot threaten me with heaven.” Christian strength!
- 10:29 – “sparrows” – The poor bought sparrows to eat because they were cheap.
- Sparrows were cheap because they were common.
- 10:30 – “the very hairs” – God loves you so much that He condescends to become involved in the most common parts of our lives.
- “hairs” – The average head has over 140,000 hairs on it and each hair has its own number.

10:31 – “do not fear” – “The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.” (Prov. 29:25)

- The injunction to “not fear” is mentioned 3 times in 6 verses.

10:32 – “shall confess” – Greek tense is not a one-time thing, but the continual confession.

- Peter denied Jesus three times and yet was restored.
- We are called to “be witnesses” (Acts 1:8), not just do witnessing. It is more a matter of who we are rather than merely what we do.
- “I will also confess before My Father” – Jesus will claim and cover those who are His when they stand before God’s throne.

10:34 – “a sword” – The separation occurs between the saved and the unsaved.

10:36 – “enemies will be those of his own household” – Jesus understood this separation personally. His own earthly family had turned on Him. (Micah 7:6)

10:37 – “loves” – (Greek “phileo”) Lit. “to be fond of, to have affection towards.”

- “loves father or mother more than Me” – Our love and devotion towards Christ is to exceed our love for anyone else. (Luke 14:26-27)

10:39 – “take his cross” – The cross was a means of execution. (Ex. electric chair, hangman’s noose)

- This is not self-sacrifice, but sacrifice of self.
- There may be many enemies, but the only war worth fighting is on the inside.
- “cross” – This is the first mention of the cross in the NT.
- “he who loses his life for My sake will find it” – We must lose are “soulish” life to find a “spiritual” life.

10:40 – “receives you receives me” – The believer will not be rejected by everyone.

10:41 – “prophet’s reward” – Participating with one of His servants allows us to receive of the same rewards that servant earns in our fellow-service with Christ.

10:42 – “little ones” – Jesus’ servants are the little ones. He sees them as His children. They have wilfully made themselves small so that He can increase.

## **Chapter 11:**

11:1-19 – The parallel passage is found in Luke 7:18-35.

11:1 – “in their cities” – It seems that Jesus is following the disciples, speaking in the cities they have prepared.

11:2 – “John had heard in prison” – John was imprisoned for speaking against Herod Antipas taking Herodias as his wife when she was previously married to Herod Philip. (Luke 3:19-20)

- John, the wild, wilderness man, has been in prison about 10 months. (Matt. 4:12; 14:3-12)

- 11:5 – “The blind see” – Jesus is pointing to His work fulfilling Scripture. (Isa. 35:5-6)
- Verify every ministry by the Scriptures and the life of Jesus.
  - “the poor have the gospel preached to them” – Jesus is reminding them that His power would be displayed mostly in humble acts of service, meeting individual needs, and not in spectacular displays of political deliverance.
- 11:6 – “not offended because of Me” – Jesus didn’t want John or anyone else to fall away from God because He wasn’t establishing the kingdom immediately and setting Israel free from Roman rule.
- “offended” – (Greek “skandalizo”) Lit. “stumbling over.” A scandal is unexpected.
    - John has unfulfilled expectations of Christ. Jesus hasn’t punished the religious leaders yet. He hasn’t forced the Romans out of Israel. He hasn’t set up his kingdom. And He hasn’t even visited John in prison or freed Him from prison. John’s long trial in prison has confused him.
    - John may be dealing with impatience and desperation.
    - John is not doubting his convictions regarding right and wrong, but he is questioning the methods of the Master. Jesus is very willing to answer sincere doubts brought to Him.
  - “Me” – If you cannot perfectly trust God’s method, trust God Himself.
    - Are you troubled about Jesus? Then look more carefully and comprehensively at the very things that have troubled you, and you will find the mist merge to light, and a larger understanding will end in the solution of all your problems.
- 11:7 – “concerning John” – Jesus talks good about John when John’s disciples leave.
- When God sees the righteous, He greatly rewards their faith. But if they really knew what God saw in them, they might tend to foster pride.
  - “reed shaken by the wind” – John didn’t change his message with the political correctness police and public opinion didn’t support what he was saying. He stood on the truth in the middle of everything else and didn’t compromise.
- 11:8 – “in king’s palaces” – John was in the prison, not the palace.
- 11:10 – “of whom it is written” – In Malachi 3:1. (See also Isa. 40:3)
- 11:11 – “born of women” – Christians are not born of women alone, we have also been born from above. (John 3:3-7)
- “not risen one greater than John” – John was the greatest because he could point to the Messiah. Yet even the weakest believer in Jesus is better off than John because Jesus is now in us.
- 11:12 – “violent” – This refers to the intensity of conflict and the intensity to overcome in the conflict.
- In the parallel passage it says, “The Law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.” (Luke 16:16)
  - Many of the prophets from Adam to John were martyred for their testimony.
  - “take it by force” – The kingdom will never be received passively. It is always founded on God’s work on our behalf, but God’s work will always produce a response in us.

- 11:14 – “he is Elijah” – Jesus comes two times with two different missions. Elijah comes twice as well. (Matt. 17:11-13)
- John came “in the spirit and power of Elijah.” (Luke 1:17; see also John 1:21)
  - If John the Baptist’s ministry was like that of Elijah, we remember that Elijah became depressed and discouraged also.
  - “who is to come” – Prophesied of in Mal. 4:5.
    - “I am not looking for him (Elijah or the Antichrist). I am looking for the Lord to come for me. I think that it is easy for us to get our eyes off the main attraction and start looking for little side events.” (Chuck Smith)
- 11:18 – “neither eating nor drinking” – John was an ascetic. He lived an austere life.
- 11:19 – “Son of Man came eating” – Jesus was joyful. He enjoyed His freedoms.
- No matter what God sent, they wouldn’t accept it. They simply make excuses. They are willfully ignorant.
  - Some people don’t give God any options. Church is too loose or it is too harsh; it is too meaningless or it is too heavy. Personally, when God blesses, they attribute it to their wisdom and decisions. And when God disciplines, they say He is too harsh. God cannot win in people of unbelief.
  - “wisdom is justified by her children” – Jesus asks us to evaluate life decisions based on the ends of these decisions.
- 11:20 – “He began to rebuke” – Jesus begins to change His tone. There is more urgency.
- God’s love and His rebuke of our failures go hand-in-hand. If we think it is foreign to His nature to rebuke and to pronounce woe, because we think of Him as loving and gentle, then we misunderstand love.
  - “did not repent” – They wouldn’t turn to agree with Jesus.
    - 1 John 1:9 – “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive.” Confess (from the Greek word “homoligeo”) means “to agree, or to say the same thing.”
- 11:21-24 – “Chorazin...Bethsaida...Capernaum” – The cities which Jesus cursed have been destroyed, but the ones He didn’t are still there.
- “These cities did not attack Jesus Christ; they did not drive Him from their gates or crucify Him. They simply disregarded Him. Neglect can kill as much as persecution can.” (Barclay)
  - “more tolerable” – The greater the light, the greater the responsibility.
    - This implies that there are in fact different degrees of judgment. (Matt. 12:41; 23:13; Luke 12:47-48; Rom. 1:20-2:16)
- 11:25 – “I thank you, Father” – Jesus just stops here to thank His Father.
- 8 of the 10 times Jesus prayed in the gospels, He simply turns His eyes to heaven and speaks to God.
  - Luke says at this point Jesus rejoiced in God’s selection of these men.
  - “babes” – Lit. “those not speaking.” It carries the idea of “immature.”
    - 1 Cor. 1:27 – “God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.” The weak of the world are not weak before God.
    - Acts 4:13 – The disciples were seen as “uneducated and ordinary men.”

11:27 – “reveal Him” – Our knowledge of God is a revealed knowledge.

- God is not found by the rich or understood by the smart, He is received by the humble.
- 2 Cor. 4:4 – The god of this age has blinded the eyes of those who don’t believe.
- “the Son wills to reveal Him” – The disciples still aren’t clear about who Jesus is. In John 14, Philip will ask to see the Father, not knowing that Jesus has been showing him the Father all along.

11:28 – “Come” – This is the first step. It is a coming to Jesus, not church, not information, and not morality.

- “all” – The invitation is open to all who are “heavy laden.”
- “you who labor and are heavy laden” – People labor because they are struggling to serve themselves. They won’t submit to God and God’s way, so they continue to try to find fulfillment in something God did not create them to find fulfillment in.
- “rest” – This is what we are really looking for; the peace of God in our soul. (Heb. 4:1-10; Gen. 2:1-7)

11:29 – “Take” – There is an active part of engaging that God wants us to take.

- “My yoke” – Jesus is in the other half of the yoke with us.
- “yoke” – A wooden bar, harnessing two cattle, that would be used in carrying a load. New cattle would rely on the experienced cattle to carry the load and direct the way.
  - Yokes are made for steering.
- “learn from Me” – There are things only to be learned about Jesus while in submission to Jesus and His will. It is the fellowship of doing life together.
  - It is as we take His yoke upon us that He reveals the Father to us. (v. 27)
- “gentle and lowly” – This is the only place Jesus attributes qualities to Himself. This is how Jesus wants us to know Him.

11:30 – “easy” – (Greek “chrestos”) Lit. “fit for use.” Each yoke is form-fitted to us.

- In the Bible, the only piece of wood we see on the shoulders of Jesus is the cross. Jesus is asking us to join Him there... “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20)
- “burden” – Lit. “a load carried or a toil continued to the point of exhaustion.”

## **Chapter 12:**

12:1-8 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 2:23-28 and Luke 6:1-5.

12:1 – “Sabbath” – means “rest.” (Mt. 11:28)

- The Sabbath is a sign between God and the nation of Israel. (Exod. 31:13-17; see also Exod. 20:8-11)
- For the Church, Col. 2:16 says “let no man judge you in...Sabbaths.”
- In Christ, every man is a Temple, every person is a priest, and every day is the Sabbath.
- “began to pluck heads of grain” – They are with Jesus and yet feel free to break this well-known tradition.
- “grain” – Likely wheat or barley.

- 12:2 – “when the Pharisees saw it” – Were the Pharisees doing surveillance work?
- “not lawful to do on the Sabbath” – The Talmud devoted 24 chapters to the rules for the Sabbath. Some of the Talmud’s Sabbath rules said that: wearing false teeth was carrying a burden, spitting on dirt was plowing, pulling hairs was harvesting, taking chaff off wheat was threshing, and travelling more than 3,000 feet was prohibited.
  - “not lawful” – The Law said it was okay to eat from a field whatever you could carry in your hands. (Deut. 23:25) They weren’t breaking the Law, they were breaking tradition.
    - “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?” (Matt. 15:3)
    - “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27)
  - “lawful” – You cannot be perfect in a law code system. At some point, one law will conflict with the fulfillment of another.
- 12:3 – “have you not read” – There is some sarcasm here. The Pharisees would use this phrase on the common people often.
- “what David did” – Jesus is speaking of the events of 1 Samuel 21. (See also Lev. 24:5-9)
- 12:5 – “the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath” – The priests worked hard on the Sabbath.
- To get around the fact the priests and ministers work on the Sabbath, some try to make the Sabbath more about worship than about rest. But that was not the intended purpose.
- 12:6 – “One greater than the temple” – Jesus is claiming to be superior to the temple.
- 12:7 – “mercy and not sacrifice” – Jesus quotes this for the second time. (Matt. 9:13)
- The heart is more important than outward, religious observance.
  - “guiltless” – Jesus claims that His disciples are not violating the law in this case.
- 12:8 – “Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” – Jesus is Lord over nature and time.
- Jesus is the fulfillment of the Sabbath and leads us into the rest of God we were created for. (Matt. 11:38-30)
- 12:9-21 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 3:1-12 and Luke 6:6-11.
- 12:9 – “He went into their synagogue” – Jesus went to church.
- 12:10 – “they asked Him” – They are baiting Him. It is apparent that they knew Jesus would want to heal this man.
- “lawful to heal on the Sabbath” – The Pharisaic tradition said you couldn’t heal, or doctor, on the Sabbath. You could only do what was necessary to preserve a life until the doctoring could be done the next day.
- 12:11 – “He said to them” – Mark 3:5 tells us that Jesus was angry at them because of the hardness of their hearts.
- “who has one sheep” – Jesus said “has,” not “sees.” Jesus is claiming ownership of the man.

- 12:12 – “more value than is a man” – Humans are more important to God than their rules.
- Jesus is also implying that humans are more important to Him than the animals.
  - Jesus loves this man more than the Pharisees loved their animals or their traditions.
- “if it is lawful to do good” – Jesus is saying, “Not to do good, when it is in the power of our hand to do it, is to do evil; not to save life, when we can, is to kill.” (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown)
- 12:13 – “Stretch out your hand” – This is an impossible command, but God’s commandments are also God’s enablements.
- “whole” – The hand instantaneously reformed. “Snap, crackle, pop.”
  - What was the man thinking through all of this?
- 12:14 – “how they might destroy them” – Apparently, it was wrong to heal a man on the Sabbath, but okay to plan to kill a man on that same day.
- 12:15 – “He withdrew from there” – Jesus knows when is the right time to avoid conflict.
- “He healed them all” – Jesus simply continues doing good.
- 12:18-21 – “My servant” – Quoted from Isa. 42:1-4.
- 12:19 – “He will not quarrel or cry out” – Jesus’ authority does not come from simply being loud.
- It is not that Jesus never yelled (John 7:37), it is just that He didn’t use His voice to generate authority and power over people.
  - “Let the servants of Christ, then, not estimate the value of the work done in His service by the sound of their movements and the noise of the machinery, but by the steady silent purpose and the persistent activity with which they prosecute the work given them to do.” (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown)
- 12:20 – “bruised reed...smoking flax” – The broken and burnt out.
- “bruised reed He will not break” – Jesus, the Lord over all, is remarkably gentle and personal. He has humbled Himself so that many, even “Gentiles,” will come to Him.
  - “till He sends forth justice” – Jesus is not forever gentle to the unbelievers.
- 12:21 – “Gentiles” – It was God’s plan from the beginning to redeem the Gentiles through the work of the Jewish Messiah.
- 12:22-37 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 3:20-30 and Luke 11:14-23.
- 12:22 – “blind and mute” – These were thought to be incurable because they could not respond to the exorcist.
- The religious leaders were also blind and dumb in their own way.
- 12:23 – “Son of David” – The crowds were questioning if Jesus was in fact the Messiah.
- 12:24 – “by Beelzebub” – This is the second time they say Jesus is working by the devil. (Matt. 9:34)
- They couldn’t deny the miracles, so they have to criticize the way it is done.

- 12:25 – “Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them” – The last time Jesus was accused like this, He simply left the people and continued His work. This time He stops to answer the accusation and logically destroy it.
- “kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation” – Whatever fault the devils have, they are not at strife with each other; that fault is reserved for the servants of a better Master.
- 12:27 – “your sons” – It was acknowledged among the religious leaders that some among the Jews performed exorcisms as well. (Acts 19:13)
- 12:29 – “first binds the strong man” – Lit. “he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoils.”
- 2 Cor.10: 4 – “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.”
  - Eph. 6:12 – “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age.”
  - 2 Cor. 4:3-4 – “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this world has blinded, who do not believe.”
  - The binding of the strong one was wrought out by the perfection of the Christ. Not merely by virtue of the death of Jesus, but by the virtue of His pure humanity.
- 12:30 – “with Me” – Jesus turns the discussion into a matter of relationship.
- There is no neutral ground. We are either with Jesus or we are opposing Him.
- 12:31 – “every sin...will be forgiven” – The only sin that keeps us out of heaven is the sin of rejecting Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to provide forgiveness of all sin.
- “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit” – Not merely attributing the work of God to Satan, but continually and finally rejecting the prompting of the Holy Spirit that leads to salvation.
  - Jesus isn’t saying that they have committed this blasphemy; He is warning them so that they don’t.
- 12:33 – “make the tree good” – Unless the heart be transformed, the life will never be thoroughly reformed.
- “a tree is known by its fruit” – The religious leaders are claiming that Jesus is evil. If that were the case, then Jesus’ works would be evil too.
    - Jesus is trying to get the religious leaders to make up their minds about Him. He wants them just to be consistent with how they are looking at Him.
  - “fruit” – The fruit of Jesus’ life was a mass of people healed and set free from infirmities. The fruit of the lives of the religious leaders was a conspiracy to murder Jesus.
    - There are numerous fruits in the Bible: holiness (Rom. 6:22), soul winning (Rom. 1:13), fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), giving (Rom. 15:28), good works (Col. 1:10), and praise (Heb. 13:15).
- 12:34 – “Brood of vipers” – The people looked upon the Pharisees as a generation of saints, but Christ calls them snakes.
- “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” – Our words reveal our heart.
    - “Guard your heart, for out of it flows the issues of life.” (Prov. 4:23)
  - “the heart” – This is the place of God’s primary care for humanity.

12:36 – “idle” – (NIV “careless”) – Lit. “blasphemous.” Every time you fight the Holy Spirit and reject His tug on your heart to be saved is recorded.

- Those who have accepted Jesus have their sins remembered no more. (Ps. 103:12)

12:38-50 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 3:31-35 and Luke 8:19-21; 11:16-36.

12:38 – “a sign” – Jesus has been pointing to their hearts and it is getting too close. So they take a step back and ask for an external sign.

- These men, already hardened against convincing signs, asked for one; and the asking was satirical, the asking of men who are not prepared to accept as sufficient any sign He could give, because of their personal hatred of Him.

12:39 – “evil and adulterous generation” – By John 9, anyone associated with Jesus was to be excommunicated from Jewish religious life. From this point, the tone of Jesus with the religious leaders really changes.

- “evil” – means “harmful, hurtful.” Therefore, in spite of all their teaching of the formulae of religion and morality, they were exerting an influence that was hurtful; and thus the generation which they influenced was as evil as they were in themselves.
- “adulterous” – This word is a terribly searching word, and the more so in that here it is certain that the King used it in its spiritual significance.
- “no sign will be given” – Jesus knows a sign will not change their hearts or minds. Though Christ is always ready to hear and answer holy desires and prayers, yet He will not gratify corrupt lusts and humors. Those who ask amiss, “ask and have not.” (James 4:3)
- “sign of the prophet Jonah” – Jonah himself was the message to Nineveh. His words were only “40 days and then the judgment.” But he was likely bleached white and hairless from the whale’s digestive acids as a picture of resurrection to the people of Nineveh.

12:40 – “Jonah” – Jesus treated Jonah as a historical reality.

- “three days and three nights” – Jesus was dead three days as counted by the Jewish calendar.
  - Jesus fulfilled the mission on the cross (“telletai” – paid in full). The resurrection is the physical sign/evidence of what Jesus accomplished spiritually on the cross.
- “in the heart of the earth” – This is speaking of Jesus’ resurrection from the grave.
  - These verses do not need to be interpreted as Jesus referencing a stopover He would have to make before He could be resurrected. It may be that Jesus was spiritually in Paradise during that time, instead of in Hades. (Luke 23:43; Eph. 4:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:19-21)

12:43 – “an unclean spirit goes out of a man” – The best way to drive out the darkness is to turn on the light.

12:44 – “empty” – Some people will say that they became a Christian and still felt empty. And that is because they removed stuff from their life with religion, but failed to replace that stuff with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

- For Israel, they were sent into Babylonian captivity because of their idolatry. But they came out 7 times worse due to their self-righteousness.
- There is a big difference between reform and revival. Reform without God leaves people empty. Reformation without regeneration will leave a person or a community worse in the end than at the beginning.
- It is not enough to simply remove the negative things from our lives, but we must also replace those things with something positive so that the desires are satisfied and we are not left with a greater problem. And that something positive must be a sustaining personal relationship with God.
- “put in order” – Such swept and garnished houses are attractive to demons, unless they are possessed and held by the King through His Spirit.

12:45 – “worse than the first” – Reformation without regeneration will leave a person or a community worse in the end than at the beginning.

12:46 – “seeking to speak with Him” – The members of His family had to come to take Him, because they thought Him beside Himself (Mark 3:21). No doubt, the Pharisees had so represented His ministry to His relatives that they thought they had better restrain Him.

12:47 – “brothers” – Roman Catholics claims Mary remained a virgin and Jesus had no half-brothers, only cousins. But when the Bible says cousins it means cousins. (See Luke 1:36,58 – “cousin” in KJV and “relative” in NKJV.)

- John 7:5 and Mark 6:3 refers to Jesus’ siblings.

12:48 - “who is My mother” – Mary doesn’t display any special influence over Jesus.

- It is a clear and superlative illustration of the fact that the kingdom of God cannot be established on natural lines.

12:50 - “will of the Father” – The will of the Father is to believe on the Son He sent! (John 6:29)

- “My brother and sister and mother – Jesus puts kingdom relationships before the earthly ones.
- Jesus is saying that you will have closer relationships with those in the family of God than with those in your own family if they are not a part of the family of God.
- Part of the filling of one’s life will be played out in relationships with others. Jesus shows us here that no relationship, no matter how close, can be sustained if it is pulling us away from our relationship with God and His true disciples.
- Jesus didn’t discard Mary and His half-brothers; He served her from the cross and won them to Himself without allowing them to detract from what God called Him to. (Acts 1:14)

### **Chapter 13:**

13:1-52 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 4:1-34 and Luke 8:4-18; 13:18-20.

13:1 – “On the same day” – These teachings come as the antagonism with the religious leaders is heightening and His family seeks to intervene in the confrontation.

- 13:2 – “great multitudes” – As opposed to the relatively small group that followed Him to hear the Sermon on the Mount.
- “He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood” – As per the custom of the day, the teacher sat and the people stood.
- 13:3 – “parables” – Lit. “to cast alongside.” Jesus is setting spiritual truths alongside natural realities.
- A parable is not an allegory. There is usually one main principle being highlighted in a parable.
- 13:9 – “ears to hear” – The theme of the parable is on hearing the Word of God.
- Parables are not for the lost or the lazy.
  - “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” (James 1:22)
- 13:11-17 – “hearts of this people have grown dull” – Jesus isn’t trying to hide the truth. He is speaking in a way for everyone to get something out of it. He is trying to prevent the further hardening of the hearts of those who have rejected His message to this point.
- There are times that using something dark actually helps one to see better. When the Sun is shining brightly, we put on sunglasses to see more easily.
- 13:12 – “whoever has, to him more will be given” – This refers back to v. 9. Jesus is speaking of having ears to hear. Those who are hearing and understanding the Word will be given an increasingly abundant understanding of His Word.
- 13:15 – “dull” – Lit. “fat.” The idea is ‘insensitive.’
- 13:17 – “righteous men desired to see what you see” – Even the angels desire to look into the things that pertain to the sons of salvation. (1 Pet. 1:12)
- 13:18 – “hear the parable of the sower” – Jesus said, in Mark 4:13, that this parable must be understood before the other parables can be understood.
- Jesus interprets the Parable of the Sower: the sower is Son of Man, the seed is the Word of God, the field is the world (or the hearts of people), the birds picture the evil one (the devil), and the thorns are the cares of this world.
  - Expository Constancy is to maintain the figures used to represent something in one passage to also then represent the same thing in another passage.
- 13:19 – “the word” – The chief value of the parable is seen in the fact that He speaks of the seed, and of the relation which the seed bears to the soil.
- All that is needed for life and productivity are found in the Word of God.
  - “in his heart” – However faithful the preacher and however pure the message, the effect of the preaching of the word depends upon the state of the hearers heart.
  - “the wayside” – This is the footpath through the cornfields.
    - Most of the seed would get on the field. Less than a quarter would hit the walk-way.
    - This is a picture of the hardened heart...Satan takes the Word before it even gets a chance to sink in.

- 13:20 – “stony places” – Galilee had 3 or 4 inches of soil over solid bedrock. The warm rock made things grow quickly, but the lack of soil wouldn’t let them get very large.
- This is a picture of the shallow heart...there is a tremendous emotional experience, immediate results, but no depth so doesn’t last long.
- 13:21 – “stumbles” – Lit. “offended, scandalized.” They are surprised that coming to God and the Word hasn’t freed them from all future pain and suffering.
- This typically implies a sudden collapse under pressure rather than a gradual loss of interest.
- 13:22 – “thorns” – This is a picture of a crowded heart. Other things are competing for space with the Word of God in this heart.
- “cares” – Lit. “pulled in different directions.”
  - “of this world” – Lit. “of this age.” As opposed to the eternal life to come.
  - “deceitfulness of riches” – The promise that by getting just one more thing we would be content and happy. Or the thought that if I have riches it must be because I am righteous.
    - Prosperity destroys the word in the heart, as much as persecution does; and more dangerously, because more silently.
    - “Now godliness with contentment is great gain.” (1 Tim. 6:6)
  - “choke” – Also translated “throng” in other places. Lit. “press in to squish.”
  - “becomes unfruitful” – At one time it was bearing fruit by hearing the Word, but slowly other things have crept in and the Word and the fruit are now gone.
- 13:23 – “good ground” – The goodness of this last soil consists in its qualities being precisely the reverse of the other three soils. It is soft and tender rather than hardened. It is deep rather than shallow. It is clean rather than crowded with weeds.
- “good” – Lit. “beautiful.” Jesus must love this heart.
  - “bears fruit” – This always happens later and in accordance to the seed that was sown.
    - The power for change is in the Word.
      - John 17:17 – “Sanctify them through Your Truth, Your Word is truth.”
      - 1 Tim. 3:16-17 – “All Scripture is given...that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
      - Jer. 23:28-29 – “‘The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?’ says the Lord. ‘Is not My word like a fire?’ says the Lord, ‘And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?’”
- 13:24-30 – Parable of the Wheat and the Tares.
- I wish we could always say nice things. I wish we didn’t have to talk about the negative consequences of one’s choices. I wish that we never had to talk about sin and sinners. I wish that we could always look at the good side of things. But the Kingdom of God, in addition to the good news, also has a negative aspect to it...
- 13:25 – “his enemy came and sowed tares” – The sowing of tares is a production of an imitation.
- By implication, the enemy is sowing bad seed. And as good seed (the word of God) produces children of the kingdom, bad seed produces hypocrisy and imitation.
  - “his enemy” – The man of the second sowing is a trespasser, for, as we have seen, the field was the property of the one who sowed the good seed therein.

- 13:26 – “tares” – The darnel wheat was a poisonous plant related to wheat and virtually indistinguishable from it until the ears form.
- The tares are distinguished from the wheat when both mature. The wheat bears a head of grain whose weight bows the stalk. The darnel wheat never bears fruit and stands up straight in its own strength.
- 13:30 – “grow together” – The greater indication of genuine spiritual life is not growth, but fruit.
- The environment that is good for the growth of the wheat also makes it vulnerable to tares. But any attempt to prematurely eliminate the tares would also hurt the wheat.
  - Apparently, in spiritual things, it is not good to “grow like a weed.”
  - “bind them in bundles to burn them” – “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9)
- 13:31-32 – Parable of the Mustard Seed.
- “mustard seed” – Is this seed different from that of the Parable of the Sower?
    - The mustard seed was the smallest seed they had in their day.
  - “becomes a tree” – Mustard bushes usually only grow to 3-4 ft. (In perfect conditions they might reach 10 ft.)
    - Either the tree was manipulated or had great soil (or had supernatural influence.) But we are to judge a tree by its fruit, not by its growth.
  - “tree” – The OT uses a tree as a figure of speech representing a great empire. (Ezek. 17:23; 31:3-9; Dan. 4:10-12)
  - “birds of the air come” – This tree houses some birds; representing the evil ones. (Matt. 13:4,19; Rev. 18:2)
    - This amazing tree houses some evil birds. They are mixed in together. Just because the tree grows doesn’t mean you house yourself in it.
    - In dealing with the modern church growth movement, when a church becomes what it was meant to become, then God can add to the church such as are being saved. But a desire to have a big ministry will lead us to allow all manner of false teaching.
- 13:33 – Parable of Leaven.
- “leaven” – Throughout the Scriptures leaven (yeast) is used 98 times and is always a picture of sin, as it works by rotting and decaying (Exod. 12:8,15-20). Like the Weeds Parable, the good and the bad are together. A little bad makes the whole batch bad.
    - Jesus will say in Matt. 16:6, “Beware of the leaven of the Scribes and the Pharisees.” Luke 12:1 says the leaven is “hypocrisy,” which is profession without possession. (See also Matt. 6:6-12; 22:16-21; 1 Cor. 5:6-8; Gal. 5:9.)
    - G. Campbell Morgan said the leaven represented “paganizing influences.”
  - “a woman” – She could represent the Church, as the instrument of folding the bread and depositing the leaven.
  - “hid” – There is deception involved here.
  - “three measures of meal” – This was an unusually large amount for one woman to prepare. Three measures is about 40 liters and would make enough bread for 100 people.
- 13:35 – “secret from the foundation of the world” – Paul speaks of the Church as a mystery in a similar way in Eph. 3:4-11.
- Jesus kept this secret for a long time before sharing it with these people in Capernaum on this day.

13:36 – “Jesus sent the multitude away” – Jesus takes the disciples aside. The rest of the parables are not for the Pharisees.

13:36-43 – Parable of the Wheat and the Tares explained.

- “sons of the kingdom...sons of the wicked one” – The sower (Son of Man) sows good seed. The enemy (Satan) sows bad seed. And both crops grow in the same field at the same time. The wheat and tares are nearly impossible to tell apart until harvest time. So to not hurt the wheat, God leaves the tares in place until the proper time.
  - We can let God take care of the judging. If we judge prematurely, we will hurt some of the legitimate sons of the kingdom.
  - We need discernment to avoid fellowship with bad trees, but there is no need to lay final verdict on any one now.
- “his enemy came and sowed tares” – The teaching that is accepted dictates the course of the life. Tares also started as seeds, just as the good seed was sown into the heart.
- “tares” – The tares are of no value at all, even to the one who sowed them. They merely imitate wheat and the only purpose of the tares is to interfere with the wheat.
- “the harvest is the end of the age” – There will most definitely be a judgment day when the hearts of men are judged! The Gospel prepares us for that day and for eternity.
  - This parable accounts for the evil done in the name of the church throughout history. And it puts all of it in light of a future judgment.
  - God will take care of the judging. Until then, we just love them.

13:44-46 – Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

There are two common interpretations:

1. The kingdom of heaven is the treasure (pearl) and humans are the ones who give all to get it. (But we don’t buy heaven for ourselves...it can only be a gift of God.)
  2. The Church is the treasure (pearl) and Jesus is the man who gives all to get it.
    - Any understanding of Scripture that places more of an emphasis on our responsibility and gives more reason for pride in our effort than emphasizes the love and grace of God in Christ Jesus and His sacrifice on our behalf is problematic.
- “treasure” – Israel was called in the OT the “peculiar treasure of God.” (Exod. 19:5; Ps. 135:4)
    - “The hidden treasure is the latent possibility in the world of the realization of the kingship and government of God” – G. Campbell Morgan.
  - “pearl” – Jews didn’t consider pearls to be valuable. They were valued by Gentiles. (Job 28:18)
  - “joy” – The joy that would drive Jesus through the agony of the cross must be an amazing joy.
    - “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:2)
  - “buys that field...bought it” – The idea is redeemed them.
    - Mankind, originally under the dominion of God, forfeited our lives and our land by incurring the debt of sin. Jesus pays the debt through His death on the cross, and therefore can bring both life and land back into proper dominion.
    - We were bought at a price. (1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23) We were redeemed, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold – that is commercialism; but with the precious blood of Christ. (1 Pet. 1:19)
  - “found and hid...went and sold” – He had both in His hand, yet refuses to steal them. He will pay the price for all, to redeem the one.

- 1 Tim. 4:10 – “we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.”
- John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

13:47-50 – Parable of the Dragnet

- The good fish are God’s. The wicked are destined for destruction.
- “dragnet” – This is a large net that draws everything after it and allows nothing to escape.
- “at the end of the age...separate the wicked from among the just” – Jesus shows that the world will remain divided right up until the end. The Church will not reform the world in an effort to usher in the kingdom of Christ.
  - Jesus’ parables span the entirety of the kingdom of heaven, from initial sowing (v. 3) to final judgment.
- “angels” – These are the reapers from Rev. 14:14-20.
- “the wicked” – Despite the grace of God to free people from the punishment for their sins through the death of Jesus, there are some that reject it and remain wicked.
  - Wickedness is primarily a result of rejecting Jesus. The particular sins are atoned for, covered, and washed in the blood of Jesus on the cross.

13:51 – “understood” – Lit. “to put together.”

13:52 – “scribe” – Ezra was a scribe. (Ezra 7:6)

- “out of his treasure things new and old” – This is the responsibility in the disciple until the “end of the age.” (v. 49)

13:53-58 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 6:1-6 and Luke 4:16-30.

13:54 – “Where did this Man get this wisdom” – They cannot see past the natural person of Jesus to see the spiritual realities that lie within.

- “wisdom...mighty works” – Jesus’ teachings and miracles.

13:55 – “His brothers” – These are the ones who came to take Christ away in Matt. 12:47.

13:57 – “offended” – (Greek “skandalizo”) Lit. “scandalized.” They weren’t expecting this.

13:58 – “He did not do many mighty works there” – Jesus doesn’t need their faith to do miracles, but He doesn’t force them.

- “Do not give what is holy to the dogs.” (Matt. 7:6)

## **Chapter 14:**

14:1-12 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 6:14-29 and Luke 9:7-9.

14:1 – “Herod the tetrarch” – This is Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great. He was the ruler who wanted to make himself King. He gave himself over to sin and debauchery when the Word of God was tugging on his heart, he sinned against his conscience. Now Herod is dealing with his guilt.

- Jesus calls Herod Antipas a “fox” in Luke 13:31-32 and refuses to talk with him at all in Luke 23:6-11.
- “tetrarch” – This word means “ruler over a fourth.”

- 14:2 – “John the Baptist” – John was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb with the sole purpose in life to prepare the way for the Christ. He baptized Jesus and heard God’s audible voice from heaven. Yet, he spends the last months of his life in prison for speaking the truth to an unjust ruler and is beheaded at the request of a sinful and arrogant woman.
- Herod is disappointed in what he intended by beheading John. He thought if he could get that troublesome fellow out of the way, he might go on in his sins, undisturbed and uncontrolled.
  - “he is risen from the dead” – Herod wanted to silence the voice of John the Baptist.
- 14:3 – “prison” – John was put in the fortress of Machaerus, located about 4 miles east of the Dead Sea. It stood 3,500 ft. above sea level on a rocky ridge that was accessible from only one side.
- “Herodias” – She seems to simply be wicked and without conscience.
  - “brother Philip’s wife” – Herodias was the granddaughter of Herod the Great and daughter of Aristobulus. She would be the niece of both Herod Antipas and Herod Philip.
    - Herod Antipas was married to the daughter of Areta, the King of Petra. Philip, Herod’s brother, was married to Herodias. On a trip to Rome, Herod and Herodias fell and love, divorced their spouses, and married each other.
    - John spoke against the crazy personal behavior of his country’s rulers. He was not muzzled by political correctness.
    - Herod Antipas’ brother, Herod Agrippa, would later accuse Herod Antipas of treason against Rome. Antipas was banished to the distant Roman province of Gaul where he and Herodias committed suicide.
- 14:5 – “he wanted to put him to death” – Mark gives us more information: It was Herodias who wanted to kill John, but she could not because Herod feared John and desired to listen to him. (Mark 6)
- 14:6 – “the daughter of Herodias” – This is Herod’s niece/step-daughter. Her name was Salome. She was 16 or 17 years old and dancing a provocative, Oriental dance.
- She was a young girl used as a pawn to aid her mother’s sinful lifestyle.
  - “pleased Herod” – No doubt Herod was drunk and aroused.
- 14:7 – “promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask” – Herod is willing to give up to half his kingdom for 5 minutes of pleasure.
- 14:9 – “because of his oaths” – It is his pride that causes him to keep the oath.
- 14:12 – “disciples...went and told Jesus” – They get away with Jesus.
- Disciples dare not allow the pain of injustice to obscure their view of Jesus. Disciples can allow those injustices to force them toward Jesus in a new way.
- 14:13-21 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, and John 6:1-14.
- The feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle apart from the resurrection that is included in all four gospels.
- 14:13 – “when Jesus heard it” – Jesus is mourning the execution of John the Baptist.
- The people saw Jesus traveling by boat and ran ahead of Him to the other side.

- 14:14 – “multitude” – 5,000 men alone. 10,000–15,000 people total.
- Jesus had come to find peace and quiet and loneliness; instead He found a vast crowd demanding what He could give. He might so easily have resented the people.
  - “compassion” – Lit. “moved in the bowels.” This is Jesus’ motivation.
    - This word is used 12 times in the Gospels, and 8 of those references are to Jesus Christ.
  - “healed their sick” – Mark 6:34 says that Jesus taught them many things.
- 14:15 – “send the multitudes away” – The disciples are tired of the people.
- 14:16 – “give them something to eat” – Philip said it would take over 8 month’s wages.
- Jesus gives them a vision for the multitudes and then shows them their own inadequacy. Only then does He call us to bring our stuff to Him.
  - The situation is beyond human possibility.
  - Jesus may not settle every injustice in our lives, but is there at least one thing that He is doing that has no human reason for occurring in our lives.
- 14:17 – “five loaves and two fish” – Andrew had received this food from a little boy. (John 6:9)
- The disciples respond to this accounting by saying, “but what are these among so many?” (John 6:9)
- 14:18 – “bring them here to Me” – The only thing needed for a miracle. Give it to Jesus.
- We are never the producers, only the distributors. Jesus does the multiplying; we just hand it out.
- 14:19 – “He blessed and broke and gave” – This is not the people being guilted into sharing the food hidden in their sleeves through the young boy’s example.
- “broke” – Between the blessing and the giving comes the breaking.
  - God cannot greatly use the man He has not first greatly broken.
- 14:20 – “filled” – Lit. “glutted.”
- “baskets” – The Greek word refers to the small, personal lunch baskets.
    - This is a personal experience. As if Jesus is saying to the disciples, you give to the people what I have given to you and you will never lack because of it.
  - “the fragments that remained” – God’s miracles are never an excuse for waste.
- 14:22-36 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 6:45 and John 6:15-24.
- 14:22 – “made His disciples get into the boat” – Jesus physically put these guys on the boat because they want to make Jesus king by force. (John 6:15)
- Jesus will never be made king because of natural and physical means.
  - Jesus knows that the disciples are in more danger when surrounded by the crowds who think they can make Him king than they would be in the middle of the storm.
- 14:23 – “to pray” – Jesus’ only time alone in this two-day ministry trip was spent praying.
- 14:24 – “middle of the sea” – The disciples are 3-4 miles from shore.
- 14:25 – “fourth watch of the night” – Between 3-6am. They have been on the sea for about 9 hours.
- Mark 6:48 says that Jesus was watching them straining at the oars in the storm.

- 14:26 – “the disciples saw Him walking” – Jesus was walking as if He would simply pass them by.  
(Mark 6:48)  
- “cried” – Lit. “shrieked.”
- 14:27 – “It is I” – Lit. “I am.”
- 14:28 – “command me to come to You” – Why would Peter even ask this?
- 14:29 – “Come” – Behind every command of God is the power to cause us to live up to the command.  
- “come down out of the boat” – Peter has to drop off the side of this boat. If he goes under, there is no way for him to reach the side of the boat and get back in.
- 14:30 – “saw that the wind was boisterous” – Peter walked on the water, but feared the wind.  
Such is human nature, often achieving great things, and at fault in little things.  
- Abraham was strong in the faith because “he considered not his own body.” (Rom. 4:19)  
- “Lord, save me!” – Peter’s first reaction to sinking was to turn to Jesus.
- 14:31 – “doubt” – Lit. “to stand uncertainly at two ways.” We could say distracted.
- 14:33 – “worshiped Him” – They bow before the King.  
- John 6:21 says that as soon as Jesus stepped on the boat, they reached the shore.  
- Only Jesus satisfies always.  
- “You are the Son of God” – This is the first time we meet with so plain and open an acknowledgement of Jesus being the Son of God.  
- It is better to be in the storm with the Son of God than on the shore with a mouth full of bread and a false understanding of the King!
- 14:34 – “Gennesaret” – On the western side of the Sea of Galilee.
- 14:36 – “as many as touched it were made perfectly well” – Jesus continues ministering, healing and being around people. This is on the heels of feeding the 5,000.  
- The disciples’ ministry with Jesus extends into the second day without sleep. All of this has happened since Jesus received word of John the Baptist’s death.

### **Chapter 15:**

15:1-20 – The parallel passage is found in Mark 7:1-23.

- 15:1 – “scribes and Pharisees” – This was an official delegation sent to investigate the words and work of Jesus.  
- “from Jerusalem” – The religious leaders walked nearly 100 miles to question Jesus.

15:2 – “Your disciples” – When people cannot find fault with Jesus, they will try to find fault with His disciples (which is not a particularly difficult thing to do).

- “tradition of the elders” – The oral and written traditions were included in the Talmud and considered as binding as the Scriptures.
- “wash” – This is ceremonial, not hygiene.
  - Some Jewish rabbis considered eating with unwashed hands to be as severe a sin as committing adultery with a prostitute.
  - They just ate bread in the wilderness with over 10,000 others. There weren’t any sinks in the wilderness. They miss the miracle to nit-pick on traditions.

15:3 – “also” – Jesus doesn’t deny the transgression of the teaching of the elders.

- “you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?” – Some forsake the commands of God through tradition; others forsake the commands of God by becoming anti-tradition. We don’t want to react to culture, as much as simply go to the Word and do what it says.
  - Some examples of Church tradition include: infant baptism for salvation; catechisms to become a member of the church (and church membership et al); priestly confession and penance (and the priesthood in general); purchasing of indulgences; enforcing tithing on the church; treating a sanctuary as the “House of God;” mandating dressing up to go to church, not permitting hats, shorts, or bare feet in church services; forbidding tattoos, smoking, and the drinking of alcohol in moderation; seeker church services remaining completely inoffensive; not teaching the whole Bible; refusing to change worship style; not permitting the laity to study the Bible; treating Sunday as the Sabbath.
    - Any teaching, or counsel, or friendship, or philosophy of ministry that minimizes the authority of God in the lives of the ministers and in the lives of the people will cause all to transgress the commandments of God.
    - “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isa. 8:20)

15:4 – “Honor” – Children are to be obedient to their parents when they are young, but honor is to last a lifetime. (Exod. 20:12; 21:17)

15:6 – “of no effect” – The tradition isn’t harmless if it nullifies the Word of God.

15:7 – “Hypocrites” – Those presenting a façade that is not true of the heart.

15:8-9 – Quoted from Isaiah 29:13.

15:11 – “Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man” – Rules and traditions might be able to change some behaviors, but they cannot change the heart.

- Peter will learn this lesson again. (Acts 10:14)

15:12 – “Pharisees were offended” – Jesus didn’t set out to offend; He just told the truth. But He wasn’t going to change the proclamation of truth because a Pharisee gets upset.

15:13 – “My heavenly Father has not planted” – Jesus was in effect telling His disciples that He had nothing to do with the establishment of these Pharisees.

- 15:14 – “blind leaders” – These can be identified by those who do not give counsel from and according to the Scriptures.
- “Let them alone” – Jesus doesn’t argue with or cater to these individuals. He will not engage them along merely religious lines.
    - There was no need for the disciples to combat the Pharisees. They would be uprooted in the natural order of things by the inevitable consequences of their own course.
- 15:15 – “parable” – Peter thought this was a parable, when it was actually a fairly straightforward teaching.
- 15:18 – “those things which proceed out of the heart” – Our words and actions reveal our hearts to us.
- We are defiled from the inside-out rather than from the outside-in, and this is particularly true of ceremonial things like foods.
  - “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” (Prov. 4:23)
  - “the heart” – This the point of Jesus’ concern in our lives.
- 15:21-28 – The parallel passage is found in Mark 7:24-30.
- 15:21 – “to the region of Tyre and Sidon” – Jesus separates with the disciples and takes them outside the Jewish community.
- “Tyre and Sidon” – Located about 50 miles north of Galilee in Lebanon.
- 15:22 – “a woman of Canaan” – In the context, Jesus is teaching the disciples the difference between how their culture evaluates between clean and unclean and how God sees the distinction between clean and unclean.
- “Have mercy on me, O Lord” – Jesus had healed Gentiles before (Matt. 4:24-25; 8:5-13), but what made this different is that Jesus did those miracles as Gentiles came to Him in Jewish territory. Here, Jesus came to Gentile territory and met this woman.
  - “Son of David” – She uses this Jewish Messianic phrase.
- 15:23 – “Send her away” – The same verb in Luke 2:29 applies to a dismissal with the desire satisfied. It is entirely possible that they just wanted her to go away, and the easiest way was for Jesus to fix her problem.
- 15:24 – “He answered” – It seems He says this to the disciples.
- “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” – Jesus is teaching His disciples that this lady is not clean or unclean due to where she was born, but by the state of her heart.
- 15:25 – “worshiped” – (Greek “proskuneo”) Lit. “to bow in the dust.”
- “Lord” – No longer does she approach Him as the “Son of David.” Jesus is making her come to Him as a Gentile, because that is what she is.
- 15:26 – “little dogs” – Lit. “little puppies.” (This is not their word for “wild dogs.”)
- “take the children’s bread” – Jesus is playing on words to teach the disciples.
    - When children were finished eating, parents would wipe their hands with a piece of bread and throw the bread to the dogs.

- 15:27 – “yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs” – She submits to Jesus, despite all the stereotypes and the religious criticism, and continues to look for food from Him. She does not argue her low estate, but simply seeks the Lord despite it.
- Jesus is the bread of life. He makes you clean and fills you up.
  - “great is thy faith” – This Gentile dog puts the disciples’ faith/heart to shame.
    - We are all a minority in one context or another. Everyone gets marginalized. The Jews held themselves above the Gentiles, but they were currently suppressed by the Romans. It is a matter of how we see ourselves and how we see Jesus. True faith accepts ourselves as little and insignificant, and yet loved.
- 15:28 – “O woman” – This is a term of endearment. Jesus also used this word for His mother, Mary.
- “great is your faith” – There is a freshness of faith everywhere waiting to surprise us if we will only venture to cross the line.
- 15:29-39 – The parallel passage is found in Mark 7:31-8:10.
- 15:31 – “glorified the God of Israel” – This is Gentile territory in the area of Decapolis. Gentiles are now getting it.
- Mark 7:31-37 – Jesus heals the deaf and dumb man at this time.
- 15:32 – “compassion on the multitude” – This is the second feeding of a multitude in Matthew. (Matt. 14:13-21)
- “I do not want to send them away hungry” – Jesus feeds the hungry who come to Him.
- 15:33 – “Where could we get enough bread” – The disciples seem to be asking if Jesus is going to supply again.
- 15:35 – “He commanded the multitude to sit down” – He prepares them for dinner.
- 15:36 – “gave to his disciples” – It still works like that. He gives to us, we give to others.
- The feeding of the multitude is a lesson to the disciples. They have to continually learn where the bread of life comes from.
  - Jesus is giving His Jewish disciples a chance to serve these Gentiles.
- 15:37 – “seven large baskets” – These are the large, Gentiles baskets. They were large enough for Paul to be hidden in and let down the city wall of Damascus (Acts 9:25).
- “seven” – Seven is the number of completeness in the Bible. The Gentiles are filling out the full intended recipients of God’s grace in Jesus.
- 15:39 – “took ship” – They feed the people and get on a ship. Déjà vu for the disciples!
- “Magdala” – The home town of Mary Magdalene.

## Chapter 16:

16:1-12 – The parallel passage is found in Mark 8:11-21.

16:1 – “Pharisees and Sadducees” – These religious enemies team up to get Jesus.

- “testing Him” – Their intention in coming to Jesus is to try to trip Him up.
  - Jesus’ last instruction to His disciples concerning these hypocrites was to “let them alone” (Matt. 15:14). Jesus is here abiding by that same principle.
- “sign” – They are looking for “a wonder by which one may recognize a person or confirm who he is.”
  - They want to see more miracles on command so they can control Him.

16:3 – “hypocrites” – The religious leaders have a better understanding of the weather than their Scriptures.

- Modern examples: politics, stock market, Christian music, religious issues, business...
- “the signs of the times” – If the religious leaders had been up on their Scriptures, they would have known that Daniel prophesied of the time of the Messiah’s coming. And here Jesus is standing in front of them.

16:4 – “sign of the prophet Jonah” – Jesus had answered this request for a sign once before. (Matt. 12:39)

- The sign of Jonah was resurrection.

16:6 – “Take heed and beware” – The tenses are literally “constantly take heed and beware.”

- “Take heed” – Lit. “stare at it.”
- “beware” – Lit. “hold yourself against it.”
- “leaven” – Yeast works by deteriorating. (Mt. 13:33; 16:12; 1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9; see also Exod. 12:8, 15-20)
  - Luke says “the leaven of the Pharisee, which is hypocrisy.” (Luke 12:1)
- “leaven of the Pharisees” – Phariseeism was essentially the adding to the Word of God. They held traditions of equal or higher importance than God’s word.
- “leaven...of the Sadducees” – Sadduceeism was essentially the taking away from the Word of God. They refused to accept as Holy Scripture anything outside the first 5 books of Moses, and as a result didn’t believe in angels, the resurrection, or the afterlife. (Acts 23:8)
  - Included in the book of Mark was the leaven of Herod. Herodianism was essentially the mixing of politics and human philosophy with the Scriptures and true religion. They tried to establish religion with politics and used Scripture to promote political ends.
  - These two things have brought the greatest harm to Christianity – the addition of tradition and the removal of the supernatural.

16:7 – “reasoned among themselves” – Pooling their ignorance.

- “bread” – The disciples take this spiritual lesson and try to interpret it in material terms.

16:8 – “little faith” – Jesus is pointing to their faith. This is what He is looking for.

- Jesus just fed over 4,000 people with 7 loaves and a few fish. His work has nothing to do with their ability.

16:9 – “how many baskets you took up” – The extras were a lesson for the disciples. They couldn’t deny picking up the pieces.

- 16:12 – “doctrine” – This refers to the teaching. Pharisees added to the Scriptures. The Sadducees took away. Jesus calls adding to and taking from the Bible - hypocrisy!
- 16:13-28 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 8:27-9:1 and Luke 9:18-27.
- 16:13 – “Caesarea Philippi” – The city lies about 25 miles north-east of the Sea of Galilee. The population was mainly non-Jewish and there Jesus would have peace to teach His disciples.
- Caesarea Philippi was a town rebuilt by Herod Philip and named after Tiberius Caesar.
  - Jesus chooses an especially sinful town to reveal Himself to His disciples. Caesarea Philippi was said to be the birthplace of the great god Pan and was home to a temple dedicated to the godhead of Caesar.
- 16:14 – “John the Baptist...Elijah...Jeremiah” – The general tendency in all these answers was to underestimate Jesus; to give Him a measure of respect and honor, but to fall far short of honoring Him for who He really is.
- It is common and accepted to call Jesus a mere prophet, but to deny that He is also the Son of God and Savior of the world.
- 16:15 – “But who say you that I am?” – The most important question of eternity! Each of us answer this question as individuals before God.
- 16:16 – “Son of the living God” – Peter understood that Jesus was not only God’s Messiah, but also God Himself.
- 16:17 – “revealed” – God revealed this to Peter. This is Peter’s shining moment.
- Jesus reveals to Peter that he spoke by divine inspiration, even if he didn’t know it at the time. We too often expect God to speak in strange and unnatural ways. Here God spoke through Peter so naturally that he didn’t even realize it was the Father in heaven that revealed it to him.
- 16:18 – “Peter” – (Greek “petros”) Lit. “little stones.” (This is a masculine noun.)
- “rock” – (Greek “petra”) Lit. “giant rock.” (This is a feminine noun.)
    - The Catholic church makes a big deal out of this verse. But Peter himself knew that he was not the rock that the Church was built upon. (1 Pet. 2:4-5; see also Eph. 2:20)
  - “My church” – The Church belongs to Jesus.
  - “church” – (Greek “ekklesia”) Lit. “a gathering of called out ones.”
    - This is the first use of the word “church” in the NT. (Matt. 18:17)
  - “gates of hell” – This refers to the plans, powers, and stratagems of hell.
    - The evil one cannot prevent or prevail against a church that is moving forward under the authority of God. So Satan’s strategy is to scare and lull many in the church to keep them from proceeding into His territory.

- 16:19 – “keys of the kingdom” – Jesus is giving the true knowledge of the Scriptures to the Church.
- Scribes carried keys on their belts to signify their understanding of the Scriptures.
  - “will be bound in heaven” – The idea is “has already been bound in heaven.” This is not to get our will done in heaven, but God’s will done on earth.
  - Binding and loosing were administrative terms in daily Jewish life. Their regular sense was “to allow” and “to forbid.” To bind something was to declare it forbidden; to loose it was to declare it allowed.
  - A believer binds and looses only by affirming God’s Word in the life of another. If the temptation was to add to or take from the Word, binding and loosing (if applied properly) would merely re-center people on the Word.
- 16:20 – “they should tell no one” – Jesus admitted to being the Christ; the Messiah. But it isn’t time to tell others yet.
- Before they could preach that Jesus was the Messiah, they had to learn what that meant.
- 16:21 – “He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer” – This is the battle plan of the Messiah.
- These things are required of Jesus to be the Messiah.
- 16:22 – “began” – This suggests that Peter gets only so far before Jesus cuts him off.
- “this shall not happen to You” – Some people are terminally afflicted with the disease of always telling others what they think the others want to hear.
- 16:23 – “Get behind Me, Satan” – Satan hadn’t taken Peter over, but Peter was being swayed by Satan. Anytime we get ahead of Jesus we have yielded to Satan’s desire. (Luke 4:8)
- “Jesus was saying to Peter: ‘Peter, your place is behind Me, not in front of Me. It is your place to follow Me in the way I choose, not to try to lead Me in the way you would like Me to go.’” (Origin, quoted by David Guzik)
  - Satan continually wanted to get Jesus off the path to the cross. (Gen. 3:4; Matt. 4:10)
  - “mindful” – (KJV “savourest”) The thought of the Messiah overcoming the world through force was something Peter enjoyed and savored.
  - God savors in the sacrifice that restores humanity to fellowship with Himself. This is the “savor of rest.”
- 16:24 – “desires to come after Me” – The denying, taking the cross, and following Him begins with the desire. It starts in the heart.
- “take up His cross” – Jesus’ way is the way of the cross. (Matt. 10:38; Gal. 2:20)
  - “deny himself” – Denying self is not the same as self-denial. We practice self-denial when, for a good purpose, we occasionally give up things or activities. But we deny self when we surrender ourselves to Christ and determine to obey His will at any cost.
  - Surrender is the hardest part of being a Christian.
  - “follow Me” – It is amazing that Christ lets us follow at all; we make Him look so bad at times.
- 16:25 – “whoever loses His life for My sake will find it” – There is nothing anyone can permanently take from a Christian.
- 16:26 – “lose his own soul” – God values our soul above all else. He sent His to save our souls.

- 16:27 – “reward” – We will each receive crowns for deeds done in faith.
- The work of the Father is to believe on the Son. (John 6:29)
  - Salvation is a free gift; not a reward. (Eph. 2:8)
- 16:28 – “seeing the Son of Man” – The Pharisees and Sadducees will receive no other sign than the sign of the prophet Jonah (v. 4). But the disciples will have the privilege of seeing the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.
- “coming in His kingdom” – This is not Jesus’ second coming; He is referring either to the transfiguration or the resurrection.
    - Walking with Jesus doesn’t just mean a life of death and crosses. It also means a life of the power and glory of the kingdom of God.
    - The promise of Jesus’ kingdom was and is power over death.

### **Chapter 17:**

17:1-13 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 9:2-13 and Luke 9:28-36.

- 17:1 – “high mountain” – This is likely Mount Hermon. (Some think this mountain to be Mount Tabor, but D.A. Carson believes it to be Mount Miron.)
- Jesus takes these disciples away to pray (Luke 9:28).
- 17:2 – “transfigured” – (Greek “metamorphoo”) Clothed in light from the inside-out. His glory was not reflected, but radiated from within. (John 17:5; Rev. 19:8)
- The transfiguration was not the proof of Deity; it was the proof of absolute, essential, and victorious humanity. It was a revelation of what He is going to restore to us, if we trust Him.
- 17:3 – “Moses and Elijah” – Moses, representing the Law, and Elijah, representing the Prophets, talk with Jesus about His death and resurrection - His “exodus.” (Luke 9:31)
- Moses finally enters the promised land.
- 17:4 – “it is good for us to be here” – Peter says this because he didn’t know what to say. (Mark 9:6; Luke 9:33)
- “three tabernacles” – Peter wants to enshrine and memorialize this experience.
    - Peter’s idea would make Jesus equal to Moses and Elijah.
    - The disciples were still holding the wrong idea about the Messiah. The transfiguration and the voice were pointing to Jesus as the culmination of God’s work in human history.
- 17:5 – “bright cloud” – The actual presence of God is veiled by the cloud.
- “behold...hear Him” – The idea is, “Peter, shut up and listen to my Son.”
  - “behold” – Lit. “consider this.”
  - “hear Him” – Lit. “be constantly hearing Him.”
- 17:6 – “they fell on their faces” – They fell in fear before God.
- This is a common response before God...Ezek. 1:28, Isa. 6:4, Rev. 1:17.
- 17:8 – “but Jesus only” – Jesus was supposed to be their focus all along. (2 Pet. 1:16-17)
- Shrines and memorials take us one step away from the person of Jesus.

- 17:9 – “tell the vision to no one” – The transfiguration will boost the disciples’ faith after the resurrection, but until then it will only lead them to the wrong conclusions.
- “risen from the dead” – (Greek “ecnecron”) Lit. “risen out from among the dead.”
- 17:10 – “Elijah must come first” – The transfiguration made it clear that Jesus is the Messiah, so they try to reconcile this question from Malachi 4:5-6.
- The work of each Elijah corresponds to Jesus’ missions. John came before Jesus dealt with sin; Elijah will come before Jesus comes with power. (Rev. 11:3-13)
- 17:12 – “Elijah has come already” – Speaking of John the Baptist. (Luke 1:17)
- 17:14-23 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 9:14-32 and Luke 9:37-45.
- 17:14 – “when they had come to the multitude” – It seems Satan is always waiting with a mess at the bottom of our mountain top experiences.
- 17:15 – “my son” – Luke says this boy was the man’s only child. (Luke 9:38)
- This man has not been able to play with and relate to this boy as a normal father and son for some time. The father is relegated to a caregiver of his only child.
  - “epileptic” – Lit. “moonstruck.” These seizures are caused by demon possession. (v. 18)
- 17:16 – “they could not” – It is not a matter of desire, but of ability.
- 17:17 – “faithless and perverse” – Jesus is upset at the disciples. They don’t get it yet.
- A lack of faith will always lead to perversity.
  - The lack of faith in the imperial and Divine Person of Jesus is paralysis in the presence of the world’s need.
  - “bring him here to Me” – This is always the answer. Bring people to Jesus.
- 17:18 – “the child was cured from that very hour” – Jesus cures the boy from that time on.
- 17:20 – “Because of your unbelief” – This is the root cause of their failure to deliver the boy.
- It may be the devil in the boy was intimidating the disciples from true faith in the power of Jesus. (Mark 9:20)
  - “faith as a mustard seed” – Not as small as, but growing like a mustard seed.
  - True faith is effective because of the One the faith rests upon and not on the quality of the faith itself.
  - By faith we grasp the grace and love of God for ourselves and others.
- 17:21 – “this kind” – Likely referring to this kind of demon.
- “by prayer and fasting” – By a lifestyle of prayer and fasting, not just on the spot.
  - “But since the Lord Himself says that His disciples could not fast while He was with them, perhaps this was designed, as Alford hints, for their after guidance – unless we take it as but a definite way of expressing the general truth, that great and difficult duties require special preparation and self-denial.” (J.F.B. p. 174)
  - Prayer and fasting that increases our self-righteousness directly contrasts the faith and trust in Jesus that is needed to see a boy like this delivered.

- 17:23 – “they will kill Him” – Jesus predicts His death a second time. (Matt. 16:21)
- “exceedingly sorrowful” – This time they respond with sorrow rather than rebuke for Jesus.
    - If Jesus dies than how am I going to be Prime Minister. Plus, I think He really touched their hearts in a way they never knew before.
- 17:24 – “Capernaum” – This is where Matthew served as a tax collector. Only he records this account.
- “temple tax” – Temple tax worth one-day’s wages. (Exod. 30:13-14; 2 Chron. 24:6,9)
    - Jesus would give a lot more than this to do what they thought only they could do.
- 17:25 – “sons” – It was Jesus’ Temple. It was Jesus’ kingdom. (Matt. 21:43)
- Rabbis and priests were exempt from this Temple Tax.
- 17:26 – “then the sons are free” – Do not be yoked again in a yoke of bondage. (Gal. 4:7; 5:1)
- 17:27 – “lest we offend them” – Jesus avoided needless controversy. (Rom. 14)
- Compare Jesus’ response here with that in Matt. 15:10-12.
  - “take the fish that comes up first” – Jesus sends Peter to do what Peter knew best; fish. And Peter gets the right one!
  - “find a piece of money” – This the only miracle Jesus performed in the Scriptures concerning money.
  - “give it to them for Me and you” – Jesus, who did not owe the price, paid the price anyway for Him and Peter. This is a picture of the work of redemption Christ will pay on the cross.

## **Chapter 18:**

- 18:1-9 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 9:33-50 and Luke 9:46-50.
- 18:1 – “the greatest” – The disciples had just been arguing among themselves as to who was greatest. (Mark 9:33; see also Prov. 13:10 and James 4:1)
- This is in the context of Jesus telling them again that He will be killed and resurrected.
  - “the kingdom of heaven” – At least they have the right kingdom now.
- 18:3 – “you are converted” – It takes a change to be like a little child.
- “children” – The greatest thing about children is their sincerity. They are brutally honest.
    - They are talking about being the greatest; Jesus said they might not even get in.
    - Jesus is calling us to be child-like, not childish.
- 18:4 – “humbles himself” – The great nature of children in this culture was one of humiliation. In the context, childlikeness is not seeking for selfish greatness. (John 15:5; Phil. 2:8; James 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:6)
- Humility is not thinking less of ourselves. Genuine humility is not thinking or ourselves at all.
  - “greatest” – Jesus doesn’t rebuke their desire to be the greatest; He simply defines it.
    - God doesn’t condemn ambition. He gave us ambition for the kingdom of God. But He does condemn selfish ambition.
- 18:5 – “receives Me” – God loves the children; young and old alike.
- When we despise humble people, we actually despise Jesus Himself.
  - The kingdom is not for the proud.

- 18:6 – “millstone” – These were 300-400 pound grinding stones.
- God defends the humble, so they don’t have to defend themselves.
  - What does this say to the issue of abortion?
- “drowned” – The Jews hated drowning. They weren’t great at navigating the sea.
- This is a severe warning to parents.
- 18:7 – “offenses must come” – Offenses are guaranteed in this world. We are not to be surprised and stumbled by those who offend us.
- “woe to that man by whom the offense comes” – Be careful you are not the cause of the offenses.
- 18:8 – “enter into life maimed” – The soul is more important than the body, like life is more important than mere body parts. (Matt. 5:29-30)
- The man who had a tree fall on his leg and cut his leg off with a pocket knife to escape, only to call for help and have someone nearby to call for more help.
  - If you go to a doctor and he finds you have tumors, the wise solution is to cut them out.
- 18:9 – “hell fire” – Lit. “Gehenna.” The ever-burning dump outside of Jerusalem.
- 18:10 – “their angels” – Do not forget that the angels do not despise the children. They watch over them and guard them, and stand in heaven’s court for them. (Heb. 1:14; Ps. 34:7; 91:11)
- “their angels always see the face of My Father” – Angels guarding these little children have the constant eye of the Father.
  - Heaven is involved in the life of children.
- 18:12 – “the one that is straying” – God loves each of us as individuals.
- We are not the flock. We are all the lost sheep.
  - God greatly values the lost.
- 18:15 – “brother” – This is referring to a professing believer. (1 Cor. 5:12)
- This is not gentle permission. It is definite instruction. Any church of Jesus Christ is weak in proportion in which its members allow false pity or sentiment to prevent their being faithful to this great work of attempting to show an erring brother his fault, in order that he may be restored.
  - “sins against you” – A real sin, not just a petty grievance.
    - If in the case of a personal offense...if you cannot get over it without talking about it, then go to the person who hurt you in an attempt to restore fellowship.
    - If you have sinned against someone else, go reconcile with them before continuing in worship before God. (Matt. 5:23)
  - “you and him alone” – This is not with a posse. This is not after determining sides.
    - Our pain is not a valid reason for gossip and slander.
  - “If he hears you” – Jesus did not say that your brother must agree with you or immediately repent before you; at first, it is enough if he hears you.
  - “gained your brother” – The point here is not vengeance or winning an argument, but sincere reconciliation.
    - The word “restore” in Gal. 6:1 is a Greek word that means “to set a broken bone.”
- 18:16 – “witnesses” – These are other people who have witnessed the same sin described by the original person. These are not to be people blindly siding with that person.

- 18:17 – “tell it to the church” – This may mean the leadership, and not the church entire.
- This is for the purpose of church discipline. Yet, even that is for restoration.
  - Church discipline is to be employed when someone is hurting and dividing the rest of the church by their sinful behavior. (1 Cor. 5)
  - “as a heathen” – We are then to evangelize this person. They are not beyond His grace.
- 18:18 – “whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven” – Lit. “whatever you bind on earth has already been bound in heaven.” We are not changing heaven’s course, only agreeing with it. (Matt. 16:19)
- This verse now comes in the context of church discipline.
- 18:19 – “agree” – Lit. “symphonize.” It is a metaphor taken from a number of musical instruments set to the same key and playing the same tune.
- 18:20 – “two or three” – Jesus isn’t looking for large numbers as much as sincerity and singularity of worship.
- “in My name” – The only stipulation is coming together in the nature of Jesus.
  - “I am there” – Jesus promises His presence to those who gather in His name. That fact that you cannot see Him or feel Him is of no import at all. We know he is there because He said He would be.
  - This breaks down all ideas of a localized meeting-place with God.
- 18:21 – “forgive him” – In a congregation where there is Biblical binging and loosing, there must also be great forgiveness and grace.
- 18:22 – “seventy times seven” – The rabbis taught people to forgive up to 3 times.
- In Dan. 9, this phrase refers to the completion of this age and stands in contrast to Lamech’s boast in Gen. 4:24.
  - Forgiveness is not a matter of mathematics, but a matter of the Spirit.
- 18:23 – “the kingdom of heaven” – God’s kingdom is a kingdom of forgiveness.
- 18:24 – “ten thousand talents” – One talent was 15-20 years of work.
- The king didn’t notice the debt until the reckoning. That is how rich our king is!
- 18:25 – “he be sold” – This is more for justice than retribution. D.A. Carson says that a slave would fetch only about 1 talent, even at top price.
- 18:26 – “patience” – Many a poor sinner is very rich in resolutions. The servant-debtor thought he only needed patience, but indeed he needed forgiveness.
- 18:27 – “compassion” – The heart of our master is filled with compassion.
- 18:28 – “a hundred denarii” – This is estimated at about 100 days’ wages.
- This servant could not have loaned a fellow servant any money at all if it had not been given him by his master.
- 18:29 – “pay you all” – This servant is only asking from his fellow servant what that man received from his master.

18:30 – “would not” – It is the matter of the will. It is a decision.

18:32 – “wicked servant” – Un-mercifulness is wickedness.

18:33 – “just as I had pity on you” – The servant isn’t wicked because of his debt, but because of his un-forgiveness.

- An unforgiving spirit shows how little we understand what we’ve been forgiven.
- A worship leader at Calvary of Costa Mesa was beat, mugged, raped, and had her throat cut. But instead of pressing charges against her attacker, she asked to talk with the man and led him to Christ. The man went on to attend church at Costa Mesa where the woman continued to lead worship. That is supernatural forgiveness.

18:34 – “torturers” – The unforgiving person finds himself tortured without relief.

- Any attempt to torture the one who hurt us by withholding forgiveness will only turn on the one refusing to forgive as Christ forgave them.

18:35 – “from his heart” – The heart is where God is looking.

- A changed heart will lead to a changed life...from the inside out.
- God never gives us a command to do something He does not also give us the capacity to accomplish. In extending grace to others, we will find more grace given to us. Therefore, the only thing He asks of us is to be willing (v. 30).
- “forgive his brother” – In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus makes our forgiveness of others nearly a stipulation of His forgiveness of us. (Matt. 6:12,14-15)

## **Chapter 19:**

19:1-12 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 10:1-12 and Luke 9:51.

19:1 – “departed from Galilee” – Jesus is entering hostile territory for the last time.

19:3 – “testing Him” – They are trying to trap Jesus.

- Jesus had already addressed the issue of marriage and divorce in the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 5:31-32.
- “for just any reason” – The two main schools of thought at that time were: 1. Hillel – who taught that divorce was permissible for nearly any reason, and 2. Shammai – who taught that divorce was only permissible for sexual uncleanness.
- Divorce was a touchy subject at that time. John the Baptist died because of it (Matt. 14:1-10). Many Jewish men sided with the liberal teaching of Hillel. Even some of the Pharisees had up to 15-20 wives through divorce and remarriage.
- Jewish law made it a command to divorce a wife if she committed adultery or if she was infertile for 10 years.

19:4 – “He answered” – Jesus uses this attempted trap as an opportunity to teach on a very important subject.

- “from the beginning” – Jesus takes them back to God’s original plan. (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:31)
  - The Hebrew for “marriage” means “to consecrate before the Lord.” The Lord takes marriage seriously.
  - God’s ideal for marriage was set for time and eternity before the fall of man. Divorce was never intended in the original design of marriage.

- 19:5 – “and said” – God dictates three steps to marriage; leave, cleave, sexual union.
- “leave his father and mother” – There has to be a separating from the parents to be united to a spouse.
    - This applies to both men and women. Women in that culture would be taken to a flat on the property of the husband’s parents, separating from her parents.
    - You know you are ready to leave and ready for marriage, when you are paying your own bills. As long as mom and dad pay your bills, they have some right to instruct you on how to live.
    - Parents need to allow for this separation, not allowing their grown children to run home after every argument and disagreement.
  - “be joined” – Lit. “to be glued to.” But it carries the idea of being “woven into.”
    - This is why divorce is so brutal. No one can cleanly separate the two that have been glued and woven together in this way. Both get torn in the end.
  - “one flesh” – This is referring to sexual intimacy.
    - Heb. 13:4 says that “marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled.”
    - 1 Cor. 7:5 says “do not deprive one another” sexually in marriage.
  - “man...wife” – God’s design for marriage is one man and one woman, for life.
- 19:6 – “one flesh” – Our lives are the result of two becoming one.
- “let not man separate” – God hates divorce. (Mal. 2:14)
- 19:7 – “command” – God never commands divorce, but He does permit it.
- “certificate of divorce” – The instruction of Deut. 24:1-4 was regarding remarriage.
    - The religious leaders are trying to make it appear as if Jesus is contradicting the Scriptures.
- 19:8 – “the hardness of your hearts” – “Divorce is never to be thought of as a God-ordained, morally neutral option but as evidence of sin, of hardness of heart” (Carson).
- People use God’s permissive grace as an excuse for further sin. This is an offense against the love and grace of God.
- 19:9 – “sexual immorality” – (Greek “porneo”) Any sexual contact outside of marriage.
- Like Bill Clinton, the Pharisees also limited the definition of adultery to sexual intercourse with another married woman to give themselves license. They thought that sex outside of marriage with a slave, a concubine, or an unmarried woman was not adultery.
  - “except for sexual immorality” – This is not obligating the innocent person to divorce the spouse who committed fornication. There can be grace and healing.
  - “married another, commits adultery” – Any divorce that is not a result of adultery, becomes adultery when there is remarriage.
    - It seems as if the innocent party is free to remarry.
  - “adultery” – The OT law punished adultery as a capital crime.
- 19:10 – “better not to marry” – Paul addresses that idea in 1 Cor. 7.

19:12 – “eunuchs” – Lit. “a castrated or emasculated man.” The idea is those forsaking marriage and sexual relationships.

- Celibacy is not more spiritual than marriage. God created marriage because it was “not good that man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18). But marriage is not necessarily better than being single. Paul said that he/she who is “unmarried cares for the things of the Lord” (1 Cor. 7:32).
- “made eunuchs by men” – Many of that day castrated their servants to prevent the servants from taking their wives or concubines and raising up children in their master’s place.

19:13-15 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 10:13-16 and Luke 18:15-17.

19:13 – “rebuked” – Mark says that Jesus was “greatly displeased” with His disciples for preventing the children to come. (Mark 10:14)

- The kingdom of God is fit for little children. (Matt. 18:3-4)

19:14 – “little children” – In Luke 18:15, these are specifically called “very young children.”

19:15 – “He laid His hands on them” – He did not baptize them, but He did bless them.

19:16-30 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 10:17-31 and Luke 18:18-30.

19:16 – “one came” – A compilation of the gospels descriptions of this man show him to be rich, young, and powerful...all that the world runs after.

- The simple act of coming to talk with Jesus was an act that put him at risk of being excommunicated from the synagogue and Jewish life.
- “Good Teacher” – This man is willing to recognizing Jesus as good.
- “what good thing shall I do?” – He is a moralist, trying to earn eternal life.
  - Religion is the human attempt to re-connect in a relationship with God. It is impossible for us to “do” anything to make that happen.
- “eternal life” – This is the first mention of eternal (or “age-abiding”) life in the NT.

19:17 – “No one is good but One” – Jesus is not presenting a morality to follow, but a person to trust in. He is trying to awaken something in this man.

- “keep the commandments” – Perfection is necessary to eternal life. (James 2:10)

19:18 – “Which ones?” – He knew he wasn’t perfect, otherwise he wouldn’t have asked.

- Jesus omits the four commandments dealing with loving God and the one on coveting.
- “murder” – Jesus specifies the command against killing. Not all killing is murder.
  - “Murder” is the unjust termination of a human life.

19:20 – “What do I still lack?” – This guy knew he was lacking.

19:21 – “be perfect” – This man lacked perfection, which cannot be earned with good works. (Heb. 7:11-19; 10:14)

- “sell what you have” – Jesus pinpoints this man’s god, which was money. (1 John 2:15)
  - “Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor...but have not love, it profits me nothing.” (1 Cor. 13:3)
- “come follow me” – A universal command. Perfection is only possible in Christ.

19:22 – “he went away sorrowful” – The riches do not make this man happy, for he is sorrowful even while maintaining his wealth.

- Jesus loved this guy (Mark 10:21), but lets him go.
- “he had great possessions” – Anything you value above the Lord is a false god. And the Law clearly states “You shall have no other gods before Me.” (Exod. 20:3)

19:23 – “hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven” – This must have blown the disciples away. They were taught that riches were always the sign of God’s blessing and favor.

- It is hard for any man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

19:24 – “camel” – The largest animal of that region in the time of Jesus.

- “a needle” – (Greek “rhaphis”) Lit. “a woman’s sewing needle.”

19:25 – “Who then can be saved?” – When we realize that we cannot get into heaven by works, then we often question if we can get into heaven at all.

19:26 – “impossible” – Apart from Jesus, salvation is impossible for all of us. (John 15:5)

- “with God” – the only chance we have of entering heaven is to be with God and rely on Jesus.
- Jesus is Emmanuel, “God with us.”

19:27 – “followed You” – This is the only thing that makes Peter different from the rich, young ruler.

- “what shall we have?” – Peter is contrasting his life in following Jesus and the life of the rich, young ruler that refused to give all to follow Jesus.

19:28 – “regeneration” – Lit. “the born again, or the new life.”

- “sit on twelve thrones” – The disciples will have a place of honor and judgment in the age to come.

19:29 – “everyone” – This applies to us too.

- “father or mother” – For some, to choose to follow Christ means necessarily to reject all familial relationships.
- “for My name’s sake” – This is the clause. Not everything can be done for His sake.
- “a hundredfold” – God will be a debtor to no man.

19:30 – “many who are first will be last” – The first who are made last are those who held the things and prestige of this world higher than the things for Jesus’ sake and the treasure of the world to come. (Matt. 20:16; 23:11)

## **Chapter 20:**

20:1-16 – This parable is directed against Peter’s implication of superiority over the rich, young ruler. Therefore, it is a parable concerning precedence in the matters of reward. (Matt. 19:27)

20:1 – “landowner” – God is the main character of this parable. It is His vineyard, His mercy, His agreement, His money for payment, and they are His hired men.

- The landowner, hiring often and quickly, was in a hurry to get the harvest in before the rains ruined the crop. This is an indication to the nature of the landowner and the urgency of the harvest.
- “early in the morning” – Lit. “at dawn.” 6am.

- 20:2 – “laborers” – Not the main characters. We are not to focus on them. We are all the same. It is only because of the landowner’s sacrifice that it’s available at all.
- “a denarius a day” – The common daily wage for a working man. This was an entirely normal working arrangement.
- 20:3-6 – “third...sixth...ninth hour” – 9am...12noon...3pm. These times correspond to Jesus’ crucifixion, sun going dark, and Jesus’ death.
- “eleventh hour” – 5pm. It is remarkable that these people waited so long. The hungry work!
    - If Peter and the rest of the disciples were hired by the landowner “early in the morning” of the instigation of the Church, we of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are those hired at “the eleventh hour.”
- 20:3 – “idle” – They haven’t been hired yet.
- 20:7 – “whatever is right you will receive” – The other workers hired through the day were not promised a specific wage. They were only promised to be paid fairly.
- 20:11 – “they complained against the landowner” – The workers hired first in the day see the landowner’s treatment of His workers as unfair.
- One eternal soul is not more important than any other soul. He has paid for them all.
- 20:12 – “equal to us” – This is not true. The workers that were hired first had the security of working in the field and got to spend more of the day around the landowner.
- “Let those who, conscious of having come in late, are afraid lest neither themselves nor their offers of service should be accepted at all, be encouraged by the assurance which this parable holds forth, that as long as the working-day of life and the present state of the kingdom of grace lasts, so long will the great Householder be found looking out for fresh labourers in His vineyard, and so long will He be ready to receive the offers and engage the services of all that are prepared to yield themselves to Him.” (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown p. 100)
- 20:14 – “I wish to give” – The landowner did nothing to explain why he did it, other than to say “I wish.” The reasons for the landowner’s generosity were completely in the landowner Himself and not in the ones who received.
- The system of law is easy to figure out: you get what you deserve. The system of grace is foreign to us: God deals with us according to who He is, not according to who we are. And since God rewards on the principle of grace, we should therefore expect surprises. He will never be less than fair, but He reserves the right to be more than fair as He pleases.
- 20:15 – “evil” – Lit. “envious.” They are thinking evil of God’s grace.
- God asks us to be faithful, not to make results. Fruitfulness in ministry is a gift of His grace, not a measurement of our spirituality.
  - We must be careful to see ourselves in relationship to God and not in relationship to the world around us. Only then can we make a right judgment.
  - We do not want what we deserve. Why would we want anyone else to get what they deserve? Grace for all is better by far.
  - “I am good” – Those who want a contract with God regarding future rewards will be disappointed. But if we leave the reward to Him so that we can just be faithful, we will find that He is good and rewards by His goodness.

- 20:16 – “the last will be first” – Repeated from Matt. 19:30.
- Jesus is the greatest servant of all. (v. 26-28)
  - “many are called, but few chosen” – Repeated again in Matt. 22:14.
- 20:17-28 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 10:32-45 and Luke 18:31-34.
- 20:17-19 – “up to Jerusalem” – This is Jesus’ final trip to Jerusalem. He is headed to the cross.
- Jesus knows what is going to happen in Jerusalem and He goes anyway.
  - “betrayed” – This is the first time Jesus predicted Judas’ betrayal.
  - “to crucify” – This is the third prediction of His soon-coming death. (Matt. 16:21-23; 17:22-23)
  - “He will rise again” – Jesus never mentions the cross without also mentioning the resurrection. He endured the cross for the crown. (Heb. 12:2)
- 20:20 – “kneeling down and asking something from Him” – She has come to Jesus and assumed the proper posture, but she asks the wrong things. (James 4:3)
- 20:21 – “one on your right hand and the other on the left” – This may be in response to Jesus telling them that they would sit on the twelve thrones in Matt. 19:28.
- James and John were cousins to Jesus. They are trying to get a favor from family. (Matt. 27:56,61; Mark 15:40; John 19:25)
- 20:22 – “drink of the cup” – These two disciples bookend the lives of the rest of the disciples. James was the first martyred (Acts 12:1-2). John was persecuted and exiled to Patmos.
- They didn’t get it. This is the cup is God’s wrath (Matt. 26:39). You can’t have this and earthly wealth!
  - “On the principle that he who is able to suffer most for His sake will be the nearest to Him in His kingdom.” (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown p. 180)
- 20:23 – “baptism” – Placed under and submitted to the sufferings of Christ.
- 20:24 – “greatly displeased” – Whenever there is competition and selfish ambition in the body of Christ is leads to indignation and great displeasure.
- 20:26 – “servant” – (Greek “diakoneo”) We get our word “deacon” from this Greek word.
- 20:27 – “slave” – (Greek “doulos”) Lit. “a slave with no rights.”
- Jesus was the ultimate servant and the exemplary slave.
- 20:28 – “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” – Real ministry is done for the benefit of those ministered to, not for the benefit of the minister.
- “ransom” – Greek word used “to pay a price to redeem a slave.”
  - “for” – Lit. “instead of, in the place of.” – Substitutionary!
- 20:29-34 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 10:46-52 and Luke 18:35-43.
- 20:29 – “great multitude” – The population of Jerusalem would swell to 2-3 million people during the Passover feast.

20:30 – “two blind men” – One of them is named Bartimeaus.

- “mercy” – This is humanity’s most basic need. We earned destruction; the only thing left is mercy.
- “O Lord” – Sometimes it takes difficulties, like blindness, to help us see better.
  - They weren’t comparing themselves to others; they were looking for Jesus.
- “Son of David” – A Jewish Messianic title.
  - The blind men could see of Jesus what the Jewish religious leaders missed.

20:32 – “Jesus stood still” – In a crowd of a multitude, Jesus stops for two men.

- “What do you want Me to do for you?” – Jesus asks us to specifically tell Him what we want from Him. (James 4:2)

20:34 – “compassion” – Jesus, on the way to the cross, stops to help two men’s eyesight. (Matt. 9:36; 15:32; 18:27)

- Jesus was never too busy to minister to individual needs.
- “their eyes received sight” – The first thing these men saw was the face of Jesus.
- “they followed Him” – If the first thing you saw in life was the face of Christ, everything else would be a disappointment. They choose to continue with Jesus.

## **Chapter 21:**

This begins the final week of Jesus’ life. Chapters 1-20 covers 33 years and chapters 21-28 cover one week.

21:1-9 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:29-40, and John 12:12-19.

21:1 – “Jesus sent two disciples” – Typically, Jesus told His disciples not to herald Him as Messiah. He would even tell the people He healed to not tell anyone that it was He who did it. Now, He is personally arranging the announcement for all to hear.

- This is the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, the day the people of Israel were to present their Passover sacrifices to the priests.
- Jesus is fulfilling the prophecy of Dan. 9:24-27 to the very day. From the command to rebuild Jerusalem (on March 14, 445 BC) to this day (April 6, 32 AD) there are exactly 173,880 days from the prophesied 69 sevens of years at 360 days/year. (Sir Robert Anderson in “The Coming Prince.) Jesus called this day “this your day...time of your visitation” in Luke 19:42.
- Jesus knows He is heading to His crucifixion. (Matt. 20:19)

21:2 – “donkey” – An animal symbolic of humility, peace, and Davidic royalty.

21:4 – “the prophet” – From Zech. 9:9.

21:5 – “King” – Jesus is taking His rightful place as king.

- “sitting on a donkey” – Jesus rides a donkey that had never been ridden before. (Mark 11:2)
- “donkey” – In Israel, donkeys were formerly beasts that great persons used to ride on. (Judges 10:4; 12:14) But after Solomon’s time, the Jews got a breed of horses. As a result, only the poor people rode on donkeys, which were mostly reserved for bearing burdens.

21:7 – “set Him on them” – This unridden donkey completely submits to its Maker.

21:8 – “branches” – Palm branches are also seen in heaven before the throne. (Rev. 7:9)

21:9 – “Hosanna in the highest” – This phrase is quoted from Ps. 118:26.

- “Hosanna” – Lit. “save now.” It is a Messianic phrase seeking salvation.
- “Son of David” – A Messianic phrase acknowledging the promise of 2 Sam. 7:10-16.
- “who comes in the name of the Lord” – Jesus was sent by God.

21:10-22 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 11:11-26 and Luke 19:45-48.

21:10 – “moved” – (Greek “seismos”) Lit. “seismically shaken”

- The population of Jerusalem would swell from 500,000 people to 2-3 million people during the Passover Feast.
- It was here, before He entered the city, that He looked over the city and wept for it. (Luke 19:41-44)

21:11 – “the prophet from Nazareth” – Compare this with Peter’s declaration in Matt. 16:16.

21:12 – “Jesus went into the temple” – Jesus goes straight to the temple to present Himself to the priests.

- Around 120,000 lambs were killed each Passover, thus culminating in Jesus.
- “money changers” – Historians tell us that Annas, the former high priest, was the manager of the enterprise, assisted by his sons.

21:13 – “cast out all” – These guys were thieves. Charging huge exchange rates for changing Roman currency to Temple/Hebrew currency and raising the price for certified sacrifices. (25 cent dove to 5 dollars.) And they were set up in the exterior court of the Gentiles, keeping the Gentiles out. (Isa. 56:11; Matt. 18:6)

- This is the second time Jesus cleared the Temple. (John 2:13-22)
- “those who bought” – Jesus drives out, not only the ones who sold, but also those who bought. They were perpetuating the market mentality in the “house of prayer.”
- “house of prayer...den of thieves” – Quoted from Isa. 56:7 and Jer. 7:11.
  - It follows in Isa. 56:8 that “the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, ‘Yet I will gather to him others besides those who are gathered to him.’”
- “den of thieves” – Great corruptions and abuses come in the church by the practices of those who use “godliness as a means for gain.” (1 Tim. 6:5) “From such withdraw yourself.”

21:14 – “the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple” – Once Jesus cleanses the Temple, we see it the way it was meant to be. Now the broken can come to Him and He will heal them there.

21:15 – “indignant” – It was ok for moneychangers to be there, but not for people to get healed.

21:16 – “Have you never read” – Jesus refers this quotation of Ps. 8:2 to Himself.

- The religious leaders prided themselves in reading the Scriptures, but they missed the point of them entirely.

21:17 – “Bethany” – Jesus spent the evenings of His final week before His crucifixion at the home of Mary and Martha.

21:18 – “hungered” – What was Jesus hungry really for? (Matt. 4:2; John 4:32)

- 21:19 – “fig tree” – Biblically, the fig tree speaks of Israel. (Judges 9:10; Jer. 24; Joel 1:6; Hosea 9:10)
- “no fruit” – The first fruits of the fig tree precede the leaves. This tree has the appearance of fruit, but is instead barren. This is a deceptive or hypocritical tree. (Isa. 28:4)
  - These are clouds without rain. (2 Pet. 2:17; Jude 12)
  - It is worth noting that the two destructive miracles of Jesus (also the demise of the pigs in Matt. 8:30-32) were not directed towards people.
- 21:20 – “whither away so soon” – The disciples are surprised at the quickness of the fig tree’s withering, but in just a few years (in 70 AD) Jerusalem will be entirely wiped out.
- 21:21 – “if you have faith” – Faith is what Jesus was looking for in the nation of Israel.
- This promise of God’s answer to the prayer of faith was made to disciples, not to the multitude. This is a promise to those who are following Jesus.
- 21:22 – “believing” – Our faith can only rest upon what God Himself has promised.
- The purpose of prayer isn’t to get my will done, but to get God’s will done. Disciples that are more concerned with God’s will than their own are serving disciples who see remarkable answers to prayer.
- 21:23-46 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 11:27-12:12 and Luke 20:1-19.
- 21:23 – “authority” – They ask this because Jesus cleaned out the Temple the day before.
- “who gave you this authority” – They were trying to discredit Jesus’ ministry before the people or incriminate Him before the Roman authorities.
  - Jesus didn’t have the right certificate or degree; He wasn’t educated in the right institution or under the right teacher. So they wouldn’t accept His teaching.
  - “The people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” (Matt. 7:28-29)
- 21:24 – “I likewise will tell you” – Jesus was quite willing to tell them, if they were ready to receive His answer. He was perfectly prepared to declare what was the nature of His authority (Matt. 7:28-29), and whence He obtained His authority, to men who were ready to receive it.
- The religious leaders raised the question of Jesus’ authority, but He answered by raising the question of their competence to judge. If they cannot be sincere enough to answer Jesus’ question, then they will not understand His answer to their question, even if He tells them.
- 21:25 – “The baptism of John – where was it from?” – The authority for John’s ministry came from the same source as that of Christ’s.
- 21:26 – “we fear the multitude” – The religious leaders feared the people more than they feared lying to the Son of God. (v. 46)
- “multitude” – There were probably thousands of people watching this scene.
- 21:27 – “we do not know” – Their hypocrisy is keeping them from the Truth that can save them.
- 21:28 – “what do you think?” – Jesus gives the next two parables to confront and incriminate the Pharisees.

- 21:29 – “he regretted it” – Lit. “to be filled with sorrow.” This son realized his mistake.
- True repentance is the first step. You have to admit a need or a hurt before it will get better.
  - “and went” – More important than what we say, is what we do.
- 21:32 – “tax collectors and harlots” – The invitation has gone out to the “bad and good.” (Matt. 22:10)
- “when you saw it, you did not afterward relent” – God would have accepted the repentance of these people, even if they were “shamed” into it.
- 21:33 – “vineyard” – A common reference to Israel. (Deut. 32:32; Ps. 80:8; Jer. 2:21; Isa. 5:1-7)
- 21:34 – “fruit” – God is looking for fruit. (Gal. 6:16)
- The moments we turn away from Jesus and make anything else at all more important than being with, knowing, or obeying Him alone, we become more like the Pharisees than we would ever wish.
- 21:35 – “beat one, stoned one, and killed another” – Mat. 23:35.
- 21:38 – “this is the heir” – This is not done in ignorance. They know who they are killing.
- 21:41 – “destroy those wicked men” – They are pronouncing their own judgment.
- 21:42 – “The stone” – Jesus is quoting from Psalm 118 again. (Ps. 118:22-24)
- Jesus will be one of three “stones” to us:
    - 1) To the religious and self-righteous, He is a stumbling stone. (Isa. 8:14-15; Rom. 9:23-33; 1 Cor. 1:23)
    - 2) To the unbeliever, He is a crushing stone. (Dan. 2:34)
    - 3) To believer, He is the chief cornerstone. (Isa. 26:18; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-5)
- 21:43 – “the fruits of it” – “Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.” (Matt. 3:8)
- 21:44 – “grind him to powder” – To be broken is better than to be crushed.
- Which one He is depends on which relationship we take with Him. You are going to have one two relationships with Jesus. He’ll either be your Lord and Savior, or He’ll be your judge. If you fall on Him in repentance, you will be broken (Psalm 51:17), but you’ll come into a new, rich, full life. If He is your judge, you’ll be ground to powder with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9).
- 21:46 – “sought to lay hands on Him” – They are again afraid of the people, but their desire to kill Him proves Jesus’ preceding parable.

## **Chapter 22:**

- 22:2 – “a marriage for his son” – The entirety of human history is the story of God taking a bride for the Son.
- 22:3 – “call those who were invited to the wedding” – It is God’s invitation. His calling comes loud and often.

- 22:3 – “would not come” – It is a matter of the will, a decision. The opportunity is there, but some will choose not to.
- 22:5-6 – “made light...killed them” – There are two different classes of unbelievers: the one is simply indifferent, the other is absolutely hostile.
- 22:5 – “made light of it” – Choosing lesser things over the Son makes light of Him.
- Luke 14:15-20 – The “excuses” dealt with home, business, and family.
- 22:6 – “killed them” – This is as the son was killed. (Matt. 21:39)
- 22:7 – “his armies” – This is a picture of God’s armies.
- This is specifically referring to Titus Vespasian and the Roman armies who will destroy Jerusalem in less than 40 years. They are used as God’s servants.
  - “destroyed those murderers” – The first thing the king will do is to destroy those who killed His servants and wouldn’t come to the wedding.
- 22:8 – “worthy” – (Greek “axios”) Lit. “to weigh as much as.” (Col. 1:10)
- 22:10 – “both bad and good” – Our sin doesn’t keep us out of heaven, only rejecting Christ does that. (Matt. 21:31-32)
- 22:11-12 – “not...without” – The “not” of v. 10 is a statement of fact. (He wasn’t wearing a wedding garment.) The “without” of v. 11 is a statement of thought. (He thought he didn’t need a wedding garment.)
- The wedding garment was provided by the king for the purposes of honoring the prince and uniformly clothing the guests. This man walked past the garments, because he thought he didn’t need them. He thought he was worthy.
- 22:11 – “wedding garment” – Those who choose Jesus are clothed in His righteousness. (Zeph. 1:7-8)
- “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, My soul shall be joyful in the my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation.” (Isa. 61:10)
  - “And to her (the Church, the Bride of Christ) was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteousnesses (literally) of the saints.” (Rev. 19:8)
- 22:12 – “speechless” – Lit. “muzzled.” (1 Cor. 9:9)
- 22:14 – “many are called, but few are chosen” – Repeated again from Matt. 20:16.
- 22:15-46 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 12:13-37 and Luke 20:20-44.
- 22:16 – “with the Herodians” – Pharisees, the Jewish loyalists, and Herodians, the Roman sympathizers, on the same team to bring down Jesus.
- “You are true and teach the way of God in truth” – In their attempted flattery, they are reflecting what the common people held to be true of Jesus. In reality, they are convicting themselves.
  - Beware of excessive compliments and flattery.

- 22:17 – “lawful” – This does not refer to Roman law (there is no question about that), but to the Law of God. The question is: Is it permissible for the people of God to support a pagan emperor?
- 22:18 – “wickedness” – (“evil intent” NIV) They asked this question to tempt and trap Jesus. If Jesus says “no,” the Herodians will go to Herod and report this as an insurrection. If Jesus says “yes,” the Pharisees will denounce Jesus to the people as a Roman sympathizer.
- “you hypocrites” – Jesus is directly calling them out in return.
- 22:19 – “show me...they brought” – They convicted themselves. They are submitting to Rome too.
- Jesus didn’t have a penny on His person.
- 22:20 – “whose image” – As the image of Caesar was impressed on the coin, so also is the image of God impressed upon us.
- On the coin was the inscription, “Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of the divine Augustus.” On the other side of the coin, Caesar was portrayed as the High Priest.
- 22:21 – “Render” – Lit. “give back.”
- Honoring God does not mean that we have to dishonor our government, as long as our government is not directly confronting God’s word for our lives. (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17; 1 Tim. 2:1-4)
  - Jesus is making it clear that there are 2 kingdoms; the kingdom of God and the kingdom of men.
  - “things that are Caesar’s” – The money is nearly inconsequential. God wants the heart.
- 22:23 – “who say there is no resurrection” – Sadducees were the rationalists of the day. They believed that this world is all there is (Acts 23:8). They are trying to disprove the resurrection.
- Lazarus, who Jesus recently raised from the dead, may be in this crowd.
  - The Sadducees only held the Pentateuch to be Holy Scripture.
- 22:24, 31 – “Moses said...by God” – They claimed the Scriptures to be written by Moses; Jesus claims they were inspired by God.
- 22:24 – “his brother shall marry his wife” – The Levirate marriage. (Deut. 25)
- 22:28 – “who wife of the seven will she be?” – This is a circular question.
- Some questions are dumb questions. They shouldn’t dictate life and practice.
- 22:29 – “not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God” – They have two problems: they didn’t know the Scriptures or the power of God.
- To worship God properly, we must know both the Scriptures and God’s power. Jesus said elsewhere we “must worship in Spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24)
  - “not knowing” – They are ignorant of these things of God, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. 2:9-10)
  - “not knowing the Scriptures” – It is possible to have much Bible knowledge, yet not fundamentally know the Scriptures.
- 22:30 – “in the resurrection...in heaven...angels of God” – Jesus affirms the resurrection, heaven, and the existence of angels.
- Death is not an end; it is a connector to eternity.

22:32 – “I am” – Not ‘I was.’ The relationship continues after death. (Exod. 3:6)

22:33 – “astonished” – Lit. “driven beyond self-control.” The common people loved it.

22:34 – “silenced” – Lit. “muzzled.”

22:35 – “lawyer” – He was a teacher of the Law.

- This man seems relatively sincere. (Mark 12:34)

22:36 – “which is the greatest commandment” – The rabbis reckoned up 613 commandments of the law, and distinguished them into the greater and the lesser.

22:37 – “love” – (Greek “agape”) A supernatural, God-given, God-like, love. Devotion!

- Jesus sums up the commands of the entire OT in one word; love. This is what God wants from us...not just worship, or service, or sacrifice.
- “We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19) Humans are built to respond. We do not initiate love for God, but we respond to the love He has given to us in Christ.
- “the Lord” – Jesus is Lord. (Acts 10:36; 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11)
- “all” – This includes all of a person.

22:39 – “the second is like it” – These two commandments are intricately linked.

- “love your neighbor” – If we love God, we will also love those around us. Otherwise, we are liars. (1 John 4:20)
- “as yourself” – This does not mean that we need to learn to love ourselves so that we can love others. The Bible assumes that we already love ourselves.

22:40 – “all of the prophets” – Jesus sums up the entire Old Testament in one word – love.

22:42 – “Whose son is He?” – This is the question we must all answer.

- “the Son of David” – From the prophecy of 2 Sam. 7:10-16.
  - The Jews were not looking for their Messiah to be the Son of God. They were (and many still are) looking for their Messiah to a great man to deliver and prosper his people.

22:44 – “The Lord said to my Lord” – Lit. “Jehovah said to Adonai.” (Ps. 110:1)

22:45 – “David calls Him ‘Lord’” – Jesus is the Son of David, and also the Son of God. (Rom. 1:4; Rev. 22:16)

- No father in a patristic society would ever call his son, Lord!

22:46 – “no man was able to answer” – Thousands of people on the Temple Mount are dead quiet.

- This sets the stage for Jesus’ final message to the nation of Matt. 23.

### **Chapter 23:**

23:1-39 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 12:38-40 and Luke 20:45-47.

(See also Luke 11:37-54)

- 23:1 – “to the multitudes and to His disciples” – Jesus spoke these things to the multitudes and His disciples about the scribes and Pharisees. He is warning those who follow Him to not be like the Jewish religious leaders.
- Jesus will turn to speak to the scribes and Pharisees in v. 13.
- 23:2 – “sit in Moses’ seat” – Lit. “they sat themselves in Moses’ chair.” They are usurping the authority of Moses and of the Word.
- The Jews spoke of the teacher’s seat as we speak of a professor’s chair.
- 23:3 – “they bind heavy burdens” – The scribes and Pharisees were bad examples because they expected more of the people than they did of themselves.
- The burden of the religious leaders stands in stark contrast to the burden of Christ which is easy and light. (Matt. 11:30)
  - “The commands of the Lord are not burdensome.” (1 John 5:3) God’s commands bring life.
  - “observe and do” – Leadership’s hypocrisy doesn’t reduce our responsibility. We are not responsible to men, but to God and must be careful not to throw out the baby with the bathwater, but stick with the Word. (James 1:22)
  - One can backslide into sin and rebellion or frontslide into legalism and human effort; both are equally bad.
- 23:5 – “to be seen by men” – Our good works are to bring glory to God. (Matt. 6:1)
- “phylacteries” – Little boxes containing scripture usually tied to one’s forehead or arm. (Deut. 11:18)
  - “borders of their garments” – Hems of blue on their garments were meant to remind them of God and their heavenly calling. (Num. 15:38-40)
- 23:6 – “love” – It is not wrong to be given these things, it is only wrong to love them.
- There is something in our human natures that loves the stage, honor, and recognition.
  - We are to be indifferent to worldly exaltation.
- 23:7 – “Rabbi” – This is being called by your job title. Why do we esteem that so highly?
- 23:8 – “you are all brethren” – Titles elevate one person over another, but we stand as equals before the Lord God.
- Jesus is trying to remove the human hierarchy of the religious system.
- 23:9 – “Father” – This is speaking in a spiritual sense. (The same goes for “Teacher” in v. 8.)
- We have a heavenly Father and that is sufficient for us.
- 23:11 – “your servant” – A true minister of God avoids elevated titles in favor of lowly service. (Matt. 19:30; 20:16)
- We can see the heart of a servant most clearly when the servant is acting like a servant even when being treated like a servant.
  - The truest servant is Jesus Himself! (Phil. 2:3-11)
- 23:12 – “humble himself” – Humility is the first characteristic of one who’s met God.
- You can’t know anything until you first admit that you don’t know everything. Humility puts us farther ahead in the things of God than pride and esteem.

- 23:13-29 – There are 8 “woes” listed here.
- Jesus began His public ministry with 8 “blesseds” and concludes His ministry with 8 “woes.”
  - There is great heat and anger to this speech, but there is also great compassion (v. 37). In His final appeal to these religious leaders, Jesus is trying to shock them out of their complacency and hypocrisy.
- 23:13 – “hypocrites” – Lit. “play actors.” They “say, and do not do.” (v. 3)
- “you shut up the kingdom of heaven” – The religious leaders weren’t right with God for themselves, and therefore were falsely portraying an image of God and a means of salvation that were keeping the people from a righteous relationship with God. (Matt. 5:19)
- 23:14 – “devour widows’ houses” – Under the pretense of consoling a widow who just lost her husband, they would scam into the trust or inheritance for their own gain. (James 1:27)
- In AD 70, the Romans found \$2.5 million in silver and \$3 billion in gold from the Temple and its treasury. This money came from the poor of Israel who were coming to worship and sacrifice at the Temple.
- 23:15 – “travel land and sea to win one proselyte” – Their zeal in evangelism did not prove they were right with God.
- In this respect, the religious leaders were similar to the Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses of today. They were courageous and energetic messengers, but with a false message.
  - “twice as much a son of hell” – Their religiosity keeps them from seeking God.
    - Their business was not to turn men unto God, but merely to convert them to an opinion.
- 23:16-22 – “swears” – This system of oaths reveals what they truly value; they set the things of earth above the things of God and heaven. (Matt. 5:33-37)
- 23:19 – “Fools” – (Greek “moronos”) Lit. “morons.”
- “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” (Ps. 14:1)
- 23:23 – “tithe” – The OT Jew was required to tithe (Lev. 27:30). The NT doesn’t require a specific number of 10% for the tithe. Rather it speaks of giving as something that comes from the heart. (2 Cor. 9:6-7; see also Luke 11:42; Luke 18:12; Heb. 7:5-6)
- “mint and anise and cummin” – The smallest of their herbs. They were meticulous in the small things and totally missed the bigger things.
  - “neglected the weightier matters of the law” – It is both possible and common to be distracted with relatively trivial matters while a lost work perishes.
- 23:24 – “gnat...camel” – Both are unclean animals. (Mark 7:15)
- “strain out a gnat” – Lit. “to spit out, gag out, or vomit out a gnat.” (Lev. 3:17)
  - “swallow” – Lit. “gulp down.”
- 23:25 – “extortion” – This word is translated “greed” in Luke 11:39.
- Many religious leaders place a large emphasis on money.
- 23:26 – “cleanse the inside of the cup” – This doesn’t work naturally, but spiritually we are cleaned from the inside out. True righteousness starts on the inside.
- “There are many people doing the right things in the wrong ways. What they are doing may be right, but the attitude in which they are doing it is completely wrong” – Chuck Smith.

- 23:27 – “whitewashed tombs” – The tombs were painted white so that people wouldn’t accidentally come into contact with one and become unclean. (Num. 19:16)
- Paul called the High Priest a “whitewashed wall” in Acts 23:3.
  - “appear” – God is never fooled by what we show on the outside. He sees what we actually are, not what we appear to be to other men. (1 Sam. 16:7; Ps. 51:16)
  - “uncleanness” – Lit. “putrid-ness.”
- 23:29 – “build the tombs of the prophets” – They professed to venerate the dead prophets, but they rejected the living prophets.
- 23:31 – “sons of those who murdered the prophets” – The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.
- 23:33 – “vipers” – Hypocrisy is a poison and will affect the lives of others. (Matt. 3:7; see also Gen. 3:1)
- “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” (Luke 12:1)
  - “escape the damnation of hell” – Their only hope of escape is to surrender to Jesus Himself.
  - “hell” – Lit. “gehenna.”
- 23:34 – “crucify” – The religious leaders will fulfill Jesus’ parable by killing him. (Matt. 21:33-39)
- 23:35 – “Abel to...Zechariah” – Abel was the first OT martyr (Gen. 4:8). Zechariah was the final OT martyr (2 Chron. 24:20-22 – 2 Chronicles was the last book of the Jewish scriptures).
- 23:36 – “generation” – (Greek “genos”) – Lit. “race, people.”
- The Jews have been seriously persecuted throughout their history, but they are still here. God has preserved a race that many have tried to annihilate.
- 23:37 – “Jerusalem” – means “city of peace.”
- Ironically, the city of Jerusalem has known very little peace.
  - “I wanted to gather your children” – Jesus’ heart still longs for these people.
  - “you were not willing” – They are exerting their will over the will of Jesus.
    - Jesus will even die for those not willing to come to Him.
- 23:38 – “Your house” – The Temple is no longer God’s house. The people have taken it over.
- “desolate” – means “empty, torn down.”
- 23:39 – “see Me no more till” – This is a reference to Jesus’ second coming when He will return to the nation of Israel and many of Israel will be saved. (Zech 12:10)
- The nation of Israel rejected and killed Jesus when He came the first time, but He does not completely cast them off. His arms are stretched out still. (Rom. 10:21)
  - Rom. 11:26 – “all Israel will be saved.”

## Chapter 24:

The Olivet Discourse. There are over 300 Scriptures (1 in 10 NT verses) referring to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It is the single most referred to topic of the New Testament.

- 24:1 – “Jesus went out and departed from the temple” – Jesus would contend no more with the religious leaders and would never again come to the Temple in His earthly ministry.
- It seems that the disciples are responding to Jesus saying “Your house is left to you desolate.” (Matt. 23:38)
  - “the buildings of the temple” – The Temple, originally built by Zerubbabel and Ezra (Ezra 6:15), was remodeled and expanded by Herod the Great in a project that took over 80 years.
  - Though remodeled by a Roman leader, even the Jews thought highly of their Temple.
- 24:2 – “do you not see” – The physical façade was inhibiting their spiritual perception.
- “not one stone shall be left here upon another” – In the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple under Titus Vespasian in 70 AD a drunken soldier started a fire that engulfed the Temple. Ornate gold work from the roof melted down in the cracks between the stones of the wall. To retrieve the gold, the Roman soldiers toppled the walls and pried apart each of the stones.
  - The stones were as large as 37x18x12ft. and near 120 tons.
  - “thrown down” – The literal and specific fulfillment of this prophecy establishes the tone for the fulfillment of the rest of the prophecies in this chapter.
- 24:3 – “Tell us” – The disciples ask three questions, but seem to think all three are going to happen at the same time. Jesus will unpack them in His answer.
- In Luke 21, Jesus is asked slightly different questions and therefore gives a slightly different answer.
  - To this question Christ gave the longest answer He ever gave to any question in the NT. The answer doesn’t end until Matt. 25:46.
  - “the sign” – We are to understand the signs of the times. (Matt. 16:3)
- 24:4-14 – Jesus is answering the question, “When will these things be?” (v. 3)
- This time period is marked by religious deception, political upheaval, and natural disaster.
- 24:4 – “Take heed that no one deceives you” – This is Jesus’ first and most prominent instruction in this teaching. (v. 3, 4, 5, 11, 24)
- 24:5 – “saying, ‘I am the Christ’” – This deception will happen within the Church and outside of the Church. (Dan. 9:27; John 5:43; Rev. 6:1-2)
- In reference to Jesus’ actual return, He says in v. 27, “For as lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”
  - “deceive many” – Jesus is warning His disciples of spiritual deception.
  - 2 Tim. 4:3-4 – “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, they will heap up for themselves teachers.”
  - 2 Thess. 2:9-12 – “because they did not receive the love of the truth...God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie.”

- 24:6 – “wars and rumors of wars” – There are over 32 million active soldiers in the world. Over 50% of the world’s scientists work for the military and over 40% of the world’s spending goes to the military.
- “See that you are not troubled” – Because these things are not directly connected with Christ’s soon return, they should not stumble the true believer of Jesus.
- 24:7 – “kingdom against kingdom” – This speaks of world wars.
- Both world wars happened in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
  - “famines” – As the population expands exponentially, the shortfall of food will only increase.
  - “pestilences” – Lit. “deadly infectious diseases.”
  - “earthquakes” – With nuclear testing, pulling oil out from between rock layers, and the increased use of seismic weapons, it is of no surprise that the earthquakes are increasing.
- 24:8 – “beginning” – Jesus said “Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.” (Luke 21:28)
- “sorrows” – Lit. “birth pains.” These things will increase in frequency and intensity as we near the end. (Isa. 13:6-11; 1 Thess. 5:3-5)
  - The signs are wars, pestilences, famines, and earthquakes. (See also Rev. 6.)
- 24:9 – “and kill you” – All the disciples, except John, were martyred for Christ.
- “hated by all nations for My name’s sake” – This is either referring to the persecution against the Church or the hatred of the Jews.
  - There are more Christians persecuted today around the world that at any other time in human history.
  - “all nations” – Even in the beloved United States of America.
- 24:10 – “betray one another” – Much persecution comes from supposed fellow believers.
- 24:11 – “many false prophets will rise up” – Political upheaval is the environment for false Messiahs.
- 24:12 – “lawlessness will abound” – A result of sin is a loss of love for the things of God.
- Followers of Christ should expect to see society become worse and worse.
  - “abound” – Lit. “multiply.”
  - “the love”- (Greek “agape”) – Others’ sin can drive the agape out of the believer.
- 24:13 – “endure unto the end” – We aren’t saved by enduring, but real faith stands firm. (Heb. 10:39)
- “saved” – Lit. “delivered.” This is not speaking of eternal salvation.
- 24:14 – “this gospel of the kingdom” – This is a message of true transformation, not merely of behavioral reform.
- “in all the world” – This is not a requirement limiting Christ’s return. He can return at any time. Even the early Church was anticipating His return for the gospel had come to “all the world.” (Col. 1:5-6)
  - Rev. 14:6 – An angel with the everlasting gospel flew throughout the heavens.

24:15-28 – Jesus is now answering the question, “What will be the sign of Your coming?” (v. 3)

24:15 – “when you see” – Jesus speaks of this sighting as yet future. This, therefore, cannot refer to the abomination of Antiochus Epiphanes in 170 BC as quoted in 1 Maccabees 1:54.

- “abomination of desolation” – The anti-Christ setting himself as god at the Temple. (Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; 2 Thess. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:14-15)
  - We know from Ezekiel 38-39 that there is an imminent invasion of Israel perpetrated by Russia, Iran, Syria, and Turkey that will be miraculously thwarted by God Himself. It seems likely then that the 7 year peace treaty referred to in Daniel 9:27 will come on the heels of that conflict and begin the period of “Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7; see also Dan. 12:1). The Great Tribulation is the final half of that seven year period and begins with the “abomination of desolation.”
  - 2 Thess. 2:4 – “in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (See also Rev. 11:2)
  - Former Prime Minister of Israel – “Israel would be willing to worship anyone, even the devil himself, if he promised to rebuild the Temple.”
- “see” – Lit. “to perceive with the eyes.” This is written to those in Jerusalem at the time of the abomination of desolation.
  - Judea...housetop...Sabbath (v. 16-20) indicates this to be a Jewish context.

24:16 – “mountains” – Sela is modern-day Petra (Isa. 16:1-5; Rev. 12:6) in Jordan.

24:21 – “great tribulation” – The Great Tribulation has not taken place yet. John wrote Revelation AD 95. The destruction of Jerusalem was in AD 70.

- The Church will be “caught up together” with Jesus for we are not appointed to wrath. (1 Thess. 4:17; 5:9) The Tribulation is the only time in human history where the desolation doesn’t come from Satan, but directly from God.
- “No good husband beats up the bride before the honeymoon” – Joe Focht.

24:22 – “the elect’s sake” – Likely referring to Israel. (Isa. 45:4; 65:9,22; Rom. 11:28)

24:23 – “Then” – This may refer to the conclusion of the Tribulation period.

24:24 – “to deceive” – If you base your belief on anything other than the Scriptures, especially on miraculous signs, you are in a dangerous position. (2 Thess. 2:9-10)

- “if possible” – Greek class condition is “if, and it is not possible.”

24:25 – “I have told you beforehand” – Jesus feels severe heartache and urgent love for His people. This is a warning to sons and daughters, so they might come to Him before it is too late.

24:27 – “as the lightning” – Jesus’ return will not be a secret (unlike what JW’s think). (Rev. 19:11-16)

- You won’t need a prophet to tell you that the Messiah is here; you only need eyeballs.
- “Son of Man” – Jesus uses this title to refer to Himself more than any other. He uses it 81 times in the Gospels.

24:28 – “eagles” – This is not “vultures” as the KJV translates it. The Greek word speaks of eagles.

- 24:29 – Jesus proceeds to answer the question, “And of the end of the age?” (v. 3)
- “the tribulation” – The Great Tribulation.
  - “sun will be darkened...moon will not give its light” – Isaiah 34:4 and Joel 2:10 prophesied of these things. (Rev. 6:12-14)
- 24:30 – “the sign of the Son of Man will appear” – This follows the Tribulation and comes after the sun and moon go dark.
- “the Son of Man coming on the clouds” – Spoken of in Acts 1:11.
- 24:31 – “elect” – Likely referring to the Jewish nation again.
- 24:32 – “fig tree” – Also seems to be a picture of Israel. (Jer. 24:2; Hosea 9:10; Joel 1:7)
- Israel regained its land in 1948. It captured Jerusalem in 1967, but Moshe Diane immediately ceded it to Jordan.
  - Israel is the key to future prophetic events. Politics centers in Jerusalem. (Deut. 30; Isa. 11:11-12; Zech. 2:6)
- 24:33 – “it” – Probably should be translated “He.”
- 24:34 – “generation” – (Greek “genos”) Lit. “race.”
- 24:35 – “My words will by no means pass away” – “But the Word of the Lord endures forever.” (1 Pet. 1:25)
- 24:36 – “no one knows” – This is the overarching principle of this final section.
- This automatically lets us know whether Harold Camping was right or not regarding his date for the end of the world.
  - “day and hour” – Jesus expects us to be aware of the times and the seasons, but no man knows the day or the hour.
- 24:37 – “days of Noah” – Marked by a population explosion, deviate sexual practice, evil imaginations, demonic activity, and overwhelming violence. (Gen. 6:1-11) But the main principle regarding Noah’s day is the suddenness of the flood once it finally came.
- “That the coming of the Son of Man takes place as an unknown time can only be true if in fact life seems to be going on pretty much as usual – just as in the days before the flood” – Carson.
- 24:38 – “eating and drinking, marrying” – Security and sensuality are likely to be the epidemical diseases of the latter days. All slumber and sleep, and at midnight the bridegroom comes.
- “until” – No one will know that Jesus is coming until He in fact comes.
- 24:39 – “took” – (Greek “airo”) Lit. “to take away in judgment.”

24:40-41 – “one will be taken and the other left” – The children of this world and the children of light will be left to co-mingle right up to the end.

- “taken” – (Greek “paralambano”) Lit. “taken to one’s self.”
  - This Greek word is also used in Matt. 1:24; 17:1 and John 14:3.
  - The heart of Jesus is as a groom’s longing for his bride.

24:41 – “grinding at the mill” – Agriculture will continue until that day.

24:44 – “be ready” – What would you do differently if you knew that Jesus was coming tomorrow?

24:45 – “Who then is a faithful and wise servant” – Our Lord asked this question and from that moment the prophecy which had been dealing with the earthly people of Israel passed to a revelation of the present responsibility of His own disciples and the Christian Church. In Matt. 24:45-25:30, we have a section of the section of the prophecy which deals with the Church’s responsibility.

- In this section, Jesus described inward attitudes. While everyone who has trusted Jesus Christ as Savior is going to heaven, not every believer is ready to meet the Lord.
- “servant” – Lit. “bondslave.”
  - We prove our loyalty in the Church of God to the absent Lord, by the measure which we serve one another; and we shall prove our disloyalty by the measure in which we beat and slay our brethren.
- “household” – Lit. “therapy.” Those of Christ helping others. (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19; Rev. 22:2)

24:46 – “Blessed” – There is a blessing on those who look for Jesus’ return.

- “will find so doing” – Jesus is speaking to the Church here, encouraging them to be busy about His business until He comes. Specifically, the work is feeding and caring for His people.
  - The Church must not take on the doomsday prepping mentality of isolation and preparation to survive the coming judgment on this world.

24:48 – “is delaying his coming” – Any time a person declares the necessity of some event before Christ’s return, they are in essence saying, ‘Jesus must delay until...’

- 1 Thess. 5:1-10 – “the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.”
- 2 Pet. 3:3-11 – “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.”
- The dilemma that forms between the sign of the abomination of desolation and the fact that no man knows the time of Christ’s coming is resolved by seeing that there are actually two second comings. One is in the air, for the Church – commonly known as the Rapture. The other is to the world, coming with the Church – commonly known as the Second Coming of Jesus.

## Chapter 25:

It is evident in each of these parables that the responsibility of these servants is always to their Lord and to Him alone.

25:1 – “Then” – Referring to the time after Jesus returns.

- “likened” – This is a parable. Not every point can be stretched to apply beyond Jesus’ reason for giving this parable.
  - The purpose of this parable is not to teach about eternal security.
- “bridegroom” – This is a beautiful picture of Jesus coming for His bride.
  - There were three stages to a Jewish wedding in that day. The first was Engagement – a formal agreement made by the Fathers. The second was Betrothal – the ceremony where mutual promises were made. And the third was Marriage – approximately one year later when the bridegroom came at an unexpected time to consummate the wedding with his bride.
  - During the year of betrothal, the groom would often prepare a home for him and his bride on his father’s property. It was here the newly married bride and groom would live following the wedding ceremony.
- “ten” – The Talmud said there were usually ten lamps in a bridal procession. It was a common size of a wedding party.
  - The Jews never held a synagogue, circumcised, kept a Passover, or contracted marriage, but ten persons at least were present. (Ruth 4:2)
- “virgins” – Bridesmaids were responsible for preparing the bride to meet the groom.
- “lamps” – Long torches with oil-drenched rags (like in the Indiana Jones movies).
  - Representative of the Word of God through the Scriptures. “Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” (Ps. 119:105)

25:2 – “wise...foolish” – The difference is not between good and bad, but between the wise and the foolish. This parable is referring to prudence and thoughtfulness more than to goodness.

- One can miss heaven by merely being foolish as easily as one can miss it by being wicked.
- Both the wise and the foolish were called to attend the bride, and both came with lamps. But only some were genuinely filled with the oil to light the lamps at the grooms appearing. The same is true for every company of professing believers; they can come together and look similar to the human eye, but the Lord alone knows if they have received for themselves the true oil of His Holy Spirit to be born again to everlasting life.
- “five were wise” – The wise virgins are such as have no eyes, no thought, no care for anything except the Bridegroom, and the hour of His approach.

25:3 – “oil” – Representative of the Holy Spirit throughout the Scriptures.

- Zech. 4:6 – The oil is “but by My Spirit says the Lord of hosts.”
- Eph. 1:13 – “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”

25:5 – “they all slumbered and slept” – There is no condemnation for sleeping in this parable. Some are resting in the Lord; others are under a false sense of security.

25:7 – “trimmed their lamps” – Literally means “to put their torches in order.”

- 25:9 – “buy” – The price of salvation was paid by Christ on the cross.
- Rev. 3:18 – “I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire.”
  - Isa. 55:1 – “Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat.”
  - “for yourselves” – No other person can help you on that day.
    - Though we have the benefit of the communion of the saints, and the faith and prayers of others may no redound to our advantage, yet our own sanctification is indispensably necessary to our own salvation.
- 25:10 – “those who were ready” – Being ready is the main point of this parable.
- “the door was shut” – This is similar to the days of Noah when God shut the door before the rains started. (Gen. 7:16)
- 25:12 – “I do not know you” – This speaks of relationship and is a decisive formula of rejection, rather than a mere statement of fact. (Mt. 7:23)
- 25:13 – “Watch therefore” – Walk in, be led by, depend on, and be filled with the Spirit.
- 25:14 – “man traveling to far country” – Jesus Himself.
- “his own servants...his goods” – Everything starts with and belongs to the Lord.
    - Jesus commits the goods of His kingdom to us, His servants. This is a strange plan.
  - “servants” – (Greek “doulos”) Lit. “bondslave, or slave with no rights.”
- 25:15 – “talents” – It’s a weight (about 75 pounds), not a value. Its worth depends on whether it is gold, silver, or copper.
- These are not just abilities, but relationships, knowledge, possessions, time, authority, etc.
  - “according to his own ability” – God doesn’t give out talents indiscriminately. He only gives what His servants can handle. He is a good steward of His resources.
    - “The talent which each man has suits his own state best; and it is only pride and insanity which lead him to desire and envy the graces and talents of another” – Clarke.
  - “he went on a journey” – This parable speaks about what we are to be doing as we wait for Christ’s return.
- 25:18 – “his lord’s money” – It wasn’t his money, so he should be handling it the way his lord wanted it handled.
- The source determines its value.
- 25:19 – “After a long time” – Already nearly 2,000 years.
- 25:20 – “you delivered to me five talents” – One of the first steps to being a faithful servant is to identify what God has first given to us.
- “I have gained” – This speaks of hard work and diligence on the servant’s part.
    - This is not speaking of salvation, which is not of works (Eph. 2:8-9), but of the rewards for faithfulness in service to the Lord.
    - The only way to be productive and makes gains on what we have been given is to continually surrender them back over to the One who gave them to us. We have to trust God enough to use the surrendered talents to their maximum potential in our lives.

25:21-23 – “five more talents” – This parable is not talking about how these talents were used (ie. Did they win people to Jesus?), but in whether or not they were increased (ie. Do we have more of that talent now than we did 2 years ago?).

- “faithful” – The idea is “full of faith, truly believing.”
  - The key lesson is to be faithful. We are not asked to be great, only faithful.
  - The greatest proof of a spiritual gift in the life of the believer is the use of that gift. Gifts are not merely to be talked about and understood, they are to be used for God’s purposes.
  - Will we trust God enough to handle the talents He has given us to their maximum potential?
- “few things” – Even those receiving the most have only received but a few in the overall scope of things.
  - There are no “big” ministries in God’s perspective. He laid out the universe with the span of His hand. But how we handle the “small” things is infinitely important in the eyes of God, because He is the one who gave us those things.
- “ruler over many things” – The reward was the same for both servants, even though one was given five talents and the other was given two talents. Each performed the same according to the resources they had received.
  - Our faithfulness to our talents will correspond to the scope of our authority in God’s kingdom.
- “the joy of your lord” – Our faithfulness brings God joy (Zech. 4:6-10) and our faithfulness allows us to participate in that very joy.
  - Faithfulness and contentment go together. It is difficult to be faithful with something unless you are content in that situation. And it is very difficult to be content if you have no desire to be faithful.
- “your lord” – How we handle our talents reveals who our lord is.

25:24 – “one talent” – The greatest hindrance to faithfulness is the perspective that our “little” gift is unimportant or insignificant and therefore not worth of our time and energy

- “a hard man” – This servant seems to be accusing the master.
  - He is using this false image of God as an excuse to not serve the Lord. This is infidelity. He is trying to silence his own conscience by traducing his absent Lord.
  - Jesus said “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...For My yoke is easy and My burden light.” (Matt. 11:28,30)

25:25 – “afraid” – This fear is the result of a lack of faith.

- To be faithful to the Lord, we must be full of faith in the Lord.

25:26 – “wicked and lazy” – The master points out the true reason why this servant handled his talent this way.

- “lazy” – We rarely see laziness as a real sin, something that must be repented of before the Lord.
  - It is not that this servant used God’s resources in a harmful way. He simply didn’t use them at all. It is negligence, as much as anything, that harmed this man.

25:29 – “more will be given” – God releases His goods to the faithful, for He knows they will properly use what He has entrusted to them.

- It seems that our portion in heaven is somehow connected to our faithfulness with God’s things on earth. It may be the jewels in our crowns that we continuously toss back to the feet of Jesus throughout eternity.

- 25:31 – “When” – There is no question that this judgment is coming.
- “He will sit on the throne” – Jesus will ultimately serve as judge. (Ps. 110:1; Eph. 1:22)
  - “the throne of His glory” – This is not the Great White Throne of Rev. 20:11.
    - The specific context applies to Israel and the people remaining after the Tribulation. But the general principles also apply to us in the Church age.
- 25:32 – “nations” – (Greek “ethos”) Lit. “multitude, or group.”
- The word “nations” in Matt. 25:32 means “Gentiles,” and it is in the neuter gender in the Greek. The word “them” in that same verse is in the masculine. This means that the nations will be gathered before Jesus Christ, but He will judge them as individuals.
  - “one from another” – This seems to be speaking of nations on the whole being separated for blessing or judgment.
- 25:34 – “the King” – Jesus sits on the throne of judgment as the King.
- “inherit the kingdom prepared for you” – Jesus is preparing a heavenly home for His people. (John 14:1-3; Col. 1:27)
    - Those who are anticipating Christ’s return live ready for His return.
- 25:40 – “My brethren” – It seems these are the believing Jews from the Tribulation period.
- Jesus said “whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother...” (Matt. 12:50)
  - “Honor widows who are really widows...she who is really a widow...trusts in God.” (1 Tim. 5:3,5)
  - “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4)
  - If God so identifies with His people, how much more should we? It is not just giving to the poor; it is giving with the poor. (1 Cor. 9:22) Jesus became Immanuel (Matt. 1:23) so that He could understand our infirmities and be a merciful and faithful High Priest (Heb. 2:17).
  - “did it to Me” – The responsibility is defined by their relation to the Lord. (Col. 3:23; 1 Cor. 10:31)
- 25:41 – “prepared for the devil and his angels” – God didn’t prepare hell to punish humans. It was prepared for the devil and will be a just punishment for him. Humans choose to go there.
- 25:45 – “you did not do it to Me” – They are not cursed for doing anything wrong, but for failing to do anything right.
- “How can we ply luxuries upon ourselves, when someone next to us is going hungry?” (Chuck Smith)
- 25:46 – “everlasting punishment...life eternal” – This is not teaching annihilationism. Both heaven and hell last forever.
- “righteous” – It is Jesus’ righteousness that is imputed onto us through faith alone.
    - That righteousness is reflected in day-to-day decisions. No one is saved by actions, but faith without works is dead. And true faith will work. (James 2:17)
    - Love will flow out to others that has been poured into by God.

## Chapter 26:

26:1-30 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 14:1-26; Luke 22:1-23; and John 12:1-11; 13:1-3,10-11,18-30.

26:2 – “the Passover” – The feast commemorating the deliverance of the nation of Israel as a result of the death of the firstborn who were not in houses covered by the blood of the lamb. (Exod. 12)  
- The blood of the lamb was a “sign” pointing to Jesus. (1 Cor. 5:7)

26:3 – “Caiaphas” – He was appointed by the Romans to serve as the High Priest and held that position from AD 18–36.  
- According to Josephus, “About two years after our Lord’s crucifixion, Caiaphas and Pilate were both deposed by Vitellius, then governor of Syria, and afterwards emperor. Caiaphas, unable to bear the disgrace, and the stings of his conscience for the murder of Christ, then killed himself.”

26:4 – “by trickery” – Jesus acted openly to heal; the religious leaders acted secretly to kill.

26:5 – “not during the feast” – Jerusalem swelled to over 2 million people during Passover. The religious leaders would not want to cause a riot during the Feast.  
- This is when Jesus said He would be betrayed. (v. 2)  
- “lest there be an uproar” – They had no concern for truth, justice, or the proper observance of the Feast, but only with the response of the people  
- This is the main theme of politics in our current culture.

26:6 – “Jesus was in Bethany” – Matthew places this event out of chronological order to demonstrate how these events are working together to bring Jesus to the cross. (John 12:1)  
- “the house of Simon” – What a crowd at Simon’s house: Martha the workaholic, Lazarus who used to be dead, the disciples, Simon who used to be a leper, and Mary.

26:7 – “a woman came to Him” – This was Mary of Bethany. (John 12:3)  
- “precious ointment” – Spikenard worth about a year’s wage. Mary was saving this for a special day – maybe her wedding. She didn’t use it on Lazarus when he died, but saved it for Jesus.  
- Mary was continually at the feet of Jesus (Luke 10:39) and therefore knew more about Christ’s death and preparation for the cross than did His disciples who had been with Him continuously for nearly 3 years.

26:8 – “His disciples” – Judas was the one to start this dissension. He is looking for the money from this ointment. (John 12:4-6)  
- “waste” – Nothing given to Jesus is a waste!  
- Could Jesus still smell the ointment on the cross?  
- Jesus will call Judas the “son of perdition.” (John 17:12) Perdition means “waste.”

26:10 – “Why do you trouble the woman?” – Jesus sticks up for Mary to the disciples.  
- “a good work” – What they call a waste (v. 8), Jesus calls a good work.  
- “I wish we were all of us ready to do some extraordinary thing for Christ – willing to be laughed at, to be called fanatics, to be hooted and scandalized because we went out of the common way, and were not content with doing what everybody else could do or approve to be done.” (C.H. Spurgeon)

- 26:11 – “you have the poor with you always” – Jesus is not saying that practical service of the poor is not good (James 1:27). It is just that service to any person is to never outweigh or precede our love to the Lord.
- 26:12 – “for My burial” – This poor, ordinary woman knew more of Christ’s sacrifice than the disciples did.
- 26:13 – “a memorial to her” – When was the last time we made an impractical decision simply to show our love for Jesus?
- Her sacrifice accomplishes nothing for Christ, but it shares great love with Him.
- 26:14 – “Judas” – means “praise.”
- “Iscariot” – Likely refers to Carioth in Judah. Judas was likely the only disciple to come from the region of Judea. The rest of the disciples came from the more rural regions of Galilee.
- 26:15 – “What will you give me?” – Judas is selfish. Mary gave a year’s wage; Judas sold out Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
- What about all the miracles Judas saw and did?
  - “thirty pieces of silver” – The price of a gored slave. (Exod. 21:31; Joel 3:3,6; Zech. 11:12-13)
- 26:17 – “the first day of the Feast” – This was the preparation day.
- “where?” – Jesus didn’t let Judas know ahead of time so he couldn’t prepare an ambush.
  - Peter and John go ahead and make preparations. (Luke 22:8)
- 26:20 – “sat down” – They reclined at a triclinium. Jesus sat in the second seat; the host’s seat. Judas sits in the third; the guest of honor. John in the first and Peter, across the table, in the last. (John 13:23)
- This is a meal, not a board meeting.
- 26:22 – “is it I?” – Judas must’ve been a good pretender. The disciples didn’t peg him immediately.
- All the teaching concerning false prophets in the NT has a definite precedent in Judas.
- 26:23 – “dipped his hand with Me in the dish” – Jesus and Judas were sharing a dipping bowl. This was a tremendous act of friendship.
- “Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.” (Ps. 41:9)
- 26:24 – “if he had not been born” – This could be said of every person who refuses the sacrifice of Jesus to cover their sins.
- 26:25 – “Rabbi” – Judas never called Jesus Lord, always Rabboni – teacher.
- Judas has already made the deal to betray Jesus...yet he asks this question.
  - “is it I?” – Judas has already taken the money to betray Christ. He is simply asking this question to cover himself in front of the other disciples.
  - “You have said it” – At this point, Satan enters Judas and he goes out to betray Christ. (John 13:27)

- 26:26 – “Take, eat” – The Passover and the Lord’s Supper are pictures of a greater, spiritual experience that Jesus calls us to have with Himself. (John 6:32-35; 48-58)
- The sacrifice of Jesus (the atonement, the Passover) allows us the freedom to partake of Jesus (and, therefore, God Himself).
  - “bread” – This was unleavened bread, for leaven was a type/picture of sin.
  - “blessed and broke it” – Jesus blessed and gave thanks for the sacrifice He was about to give.
- 26:27 – “the cup” – In the Passover, the third cup was “the cup of blessing.” (1 Cor. 10:16)
- In Gethsemane, Jesus will speak of another cup His never offers to us. (v. 39)
- 26:28 – “the new covenant” – Jesus provides new access directly to God. All of the observances of the Passover Feast and the OT worship were just looking forward to the actual Lamb of God. (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-13)
- “this is My blood...which is shed” – Hebrews tells us His blood was shed once, for all.
  - “for many” – (Greek “peri”) Lit. “on behalf of many.” This is substitutionary.
  - “for the remission of sins” – Lit. “to accomplish the remission of sins.”
- 26:29 – “new” – Lit. “new in nature, something altogether different.”
- “with you in My father’s kingdom” – This is the fulfillment of all of God’s plan for us from the foundation of the world, that we would be with Him for eternity.
- 26:30 – “sung a hymn” – Most likely the Hallel psalms of Ps. 115-118.
- Ironically, Psalm 118 includes “This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” (Ps. 118:24)
- 26:31-35 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-46; and John 13:36-38.
- 26:31 – “made to stumble” – They will be scandalized with or offended in Jesus.
- “strike the Shepherd” – Satan still uses this strategy to scatter the sheep. (Zech. 13:7)
- 26:32 – “I will go before you to Galilee” – When they forsake Him, He doesn’t forsake them.
- “If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” (2 Tim. 2:13)
  - The disciples do not seem to remember this command following Christ’s resurrection.
- 26:33 – “if all are made to stumble...I will never” – Peter is clearly comparing himself to the rest of the disciples.
- 26:34 – “roosters” – Roosters were unclean and therefore were supposed to be removed from Jerusalem during the Passover Feast.
- 26:35 – “I will not deny you” – No doubt, Peter (and all the disciples) is/are very sincere. But Peter was self-confident and highly overestimated his own strength. He did not know himself; he did not know his weakness or his power, he did not know the forces coming against him, he did not know how dark the darkness could be, or how terrible the temptation might become.
- Disciples must know their weakness before they’ll be effective witnesses of Christ.
  - Peter’s boldness will actually lead him to argue with Jesus on this matter. “To obey is better than sacrifice.” (1 Sam. 15:22)
  - Luke says that none of the disciples’ faith failed despite their lack of courage.

26:36-46 – The parallel passage is found in Mark 14:32-42.

26:36 – “Gethsemane” – means “oil press.” The place of crushing olives to make olive oil.

- Jesus frequently visited Gethsemane. (John 18:2)
- To travel to the Mount of Olives from the city of Jerusalem, Jesus and His disciples would have to cross the Kidron Valley flowing with the blood of the sacrifices from Passover.
- The moon was at the full, as we know by the Feast that was being observed.

26:37 – “sorrowful” – It is called “agony” (Luke 22:44), a conflict. It was not any bodily pain or torment that He was in, nothing occurred to hurt Him; but whatever it was, it was from within. He troubled Himself. (John 11:33)

- “deeply distressed” – Lit. “homesick, away from home.” His distress is not due to the soon-coming crucifixion, but from that reality that He will be separated from God. He has never felt this way before. To this point, He has always been with the Father and done what the Father told Him.
- “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that is cannot save...But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you.” (Isa. 59:1-2)

26:38 – “exceedingly sorrowful” – Luke says that Jesus’ “sweat became like great drops of blood.” This is the medical condition called ‘hemotidrosis.’

- Hebrews 5:7 – Jesus “offered up...vehement cries and tears...and was heard because of His godly fear.”
- “watch with Me” – Jesus is asking for their fellowship in His sufferings.

26:39 – “if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me” – Taking this cup is absolutely necessary for our salvation. Salvation is not possible unless He takes the cup. (2 Cor. 5:21)

- If there is any other way for us to be made right with God, then Jesus died an unnecessary death.
- Jesus carried our sorrows. (Isa. 53:3-4; Mark 14:34; Luke 22:45)
- “this cup” – This is the cup of the eternal wrath of God on the sin of humanity. (Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17-23; Jer. 25:15-29; Rev. 14:9-13)
- “not as I will, but as You will” – Jesus surrenders His will to the Father.
- In Matt. 4:9-10, Satan offered the kingdoms of the world to Jesus, if only He would bow to him. Jesus refuses to submit to Satan, preferring to suffer in the will of God and to receive the kingdom of heaven from the Father’s hand.

26:40 – “could you not watch with Me?” – His enemies, who watched for Him, were wakeful enough (Mark 14:43); but His disciples, who should have watched with Him, were asleep.

- Jesus’ closest earthly friends let Him down when He needed it most. “Loneliness is a part of the human experience” – Rich Mullins.

26:41 – “spirit is willing” – When that part of man that is spirit is under the control of God, it strives against human weakness. (Ps. 51:12)

26:42 – “this cup cannot pass away from Me” – Jesus realizes the absolute necessity of receiving this judgment.

26:44 – “prayed the third time” – Praying multiple times is not evidence of a lack of faith.

- 26:45 – “still sleeping and resting” – How long did Jesus watch and pray over His sleeping disciples until the betraying mob arrived?
- 26:47-56 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-54; and John 18:1-12.
- 26:47 – “multitude” – John says this was a “cohort” of at least 600 men.
- 26:48 – “kiss” – This is a common greeting in that culture.
- 26:49 – “kissed Him” – Lit. “kissed Him repeatedly and tenderly.” Judas is messing up the sign.
- John tells us that Jesus asks who they are looking for as they approach Him. They say Jesus of Nazareth, and Jesus said “I am” and they all fell down. (John 18:1-11)
- 26:51 – “cut off his ear” – The final miracle of Jesus before His crucifixion is to heal the ear of an adversary that was removed at the failure of one of His disciples.
- John 18:10 tells us that it was Peter that cut off Malchus’ ear.
- 26:53 – “twelve legions of angels” – This is 72,000 angels. A Roman legion had 6,000 soldiers.
- One angel in the OT killed 185,000 Syrians in one night. (2 Kings 19:35)
- 26:56 – “all the disciples forsook Him” – Christ, as the Savior of souls, stood thus alone; as He needed not, so He had not the assistance of any other in working out our salvation. He bare all, and did all Himself.
- 26:57-75 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 14:53-72; Luke 22:54-71; and John 18:13-18,24-27.
- 26:57 – “led Him away” – Jesus was not led by soldiers or ropes, but by love.
- He was brought into Jerusalem through that which was called the Sheep Gate, for that was the way into town from the Mount of Olives; and it was so called because the sheep appointed for sacrifice were brought that way to the Temple.
  - Jesus was led “as a lamb to the slaughter.” (Isa. 53:7)
- 26:58 – “Peter followed Him” – John tells us that Peter gets in because John has friends there guarding the gate to the courtyard of the High Priest. (John 18:15-16)
- That means that John is there too as Peter is denying Jesus. The failure of fellow disciples of Jesus Christ is not only an offence to Christ, but also to the rest of the body (as Peter’s was to Jesus and John). But later we find Jesus restores Peter and causes Peter and John to work very closely together to share Jesus with others after Pentecost. It seems that Peter is a reminder to us to readily accept those Christ has restored from their failures as well. We must give as much room for repentance as Jesus did on the cross...even to those who should have known better or those who have crossed us personally.
- 26:59 – “to death” – They have the outcome set in their minds already.
- In the Sanhedrin are Annas, Caiaphas, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Gamaliel, and probably Saul of Tarsus.
- 26:61 – “destroy the temple of God” – When Jesus said that, He was referring to His own physical body. (John 2:21)

- 26:63 – “I put you under oath” – Caiaphas places Jesus under an official oath. (Lev. 5:1)
- “Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God” – This is the question the religious leaders really want Jesus to answer, because this is ultimately why they want to kill Him.
  - There seems to be an assumption in the question that the Messiah would be the Son of God. The Jewish religious leaders would know the prophecy of Isa. 9:6.
- 26:64 – “it is as you said” – Jesus is claiming to be the Messiah...the Son of God! (Ps. 110:1; Dan. 7:13; Matt. 24:30)
- 26:65 – “tore his clothes” – Jewish tradition obligated the High Priest to tear his clothes at blasphemy.
- 26:66 – “He is deserving of death” – But Rome would not execute anyone for blasphemy and they had taken the right of capital punishment from the Jews by AD 4. (Ps. 22; Zech. 12:10)
- 26:67 – “spat in his face” – Spitting in someone’s face was a sign of total disdain.
- “He hid not His face from shame and spitting.” (Isa. 50:6)
  - “others struck Him” – Mark 14:65 tells us that Jesus was blindfolded while they beat Him. He cannot see the punches to duck or deflect the blow.
  - “I gave My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.” (Isa. 50:6)
  - “He giveth His cheek to him that smiteth Him; He is filled with reproach, and yet keeps silence.” (Lam. 3:28,30)
  - “They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.” (Micah 5:1)
  - Isaiah 52:14 says that “His visage was marred more than any man.”
  - Peter, John and others can see Jesus getting beat. Jesus didn’t make a sound!
- 26:73 – “those who stood by” – One of them was a relative of Malchus, the man whose ear Peter cut off with the sword. (John 18:26)
- 26:74 – “to curse and swear” – (Greek “anathema”) He is pronouncing everlasting judgment on himself.
- “a rooster crowed” – Roosters weren’t allowed in Jerusalem during the feast. They were considered unclean.
- 26:75 – “wept bitterly” – This is part of Peter’s sifting process. It is preparing him for the work God has in store for him. (2 Pet. 3:17 – “beware lest you also fall.”)
- Luke 22:61 says that as the rooster crowed the Lord turned and looked into Peter.
  - The steps of Peter’s denial: 1. Overconfidence in the flesh (v. 33), 2. Sleeping when he should’ve been praying (v. 39), 3. Activity instead of piety in unsheathing the sword (v. 51), 4. Following Jesus at a distance (v. 58), and 5. Warming himself at the enemies’ fire (Luke 22:55).
  - Jesus would later restore Peter privately (Mark 16:7; 1 Cor. 15:5) and publicly (John 21:15-19).

## **Chapter 27:**

27:1-10 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1; and John 18:28.

27:1 – “the chief priests and elders” – The Sanhedrin was not legally allowed to convene at night (which they did in the case of Jesus), so they meet together the next day to officially pronounce judgment and declare charges they will present to Pilate.

- 27:2 – “delivered Him to Pontius Pilate” – The Jews and Pilate hated each other to begin with. A Jewish upheaval would cost Pilate his job.
- History shows us that Pontius Pilate was a cruel and ruthless man.
  - It was nearly a mile from Caiaphas’ house to Pilate’s.
- 27:3 – “Judas...seeing that He had been condemned” – The priests were moving across the courtyard, from the place where they had met in the palace of the High Priest to the palace of the procurator...and suddenly this man, Judas, confronted the procession of priests, with Jesus in the midst.
- “remorseful” – not “repentant” as in the KJV. Remorse and repentance are two entirely different things, and sometimes remorse actually prevents repentance. Remorse has more concern for the consequences of the action; repentance recognizes the guilt of the action itself.
    - True repentance leads to a change in behavior. Mere remorse can drive one to depression and despair, but generally doesn’t make anything better.
  - “brought back the thirty pieces of silver” – Judas didn’t spend any of those coins. He didn’t get one moment of enjoyment from that money.
- 27:4 – “innocent blood” – Judas, who spent so much time with Jesus and was moved to betray Jesus, could find no fault in Christ.
- Only one person has ever been completely innocent, Jesus Christ.
  - “What is that to us?” – The religious leaders place all the blame and guilt on Judas. They have used and abused this man, and now they just get rid of him when they are done.
- 27:5 – “hanged” – This probably means Judas impaled himself on a stick. It could also mean that Judas hung himself by the neck, only to fall off the rope post-mortem and break open from the fall. (Acts 1:18)
- Suicide is Satanic. The end of Satan is to get us to end our lives apart from repentance and the acceptance of the grace of Jesus Christ.
- 27:6 – “not lawful” – This is so hypocritical. They continually only follow the parts of the law that benefit themselves. (Deut. 23:18)
- “price of blood” – They are indicting themselves in the purchase of Jesus’ death.
- 27:7 – “bought with them the potter’s field” – They use Judas’ money to buy the field. (Acts 1:18)
- 27:9 – “Jeremiah the prophet” – Directly quoted from Zech. 11:13 and alluded to in Jer. 18:2-12; 19:1-13; and 32:6-9.
- 27:11-26 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 15:1-15; Luke 23:1-25; and John 18:28-40.
- 27:11 – “before the governor” – The chief priests stayed outside Pilate’s house to remain clean for the feast. So Pilate was running back and forth between the two parties.
- The Jews and Pilate hated each other to begin with. The Jews upheaval would cost Pilate his job.
  - “The King of the Jews” – This was the charge the Pharisees trumped up against Jesus. Pilate couldn’t try a man merely claiming to be a King.

- 27:14 – “answered him not one word” – Jesus, when reviled, reviled not back. (1 Pet. 2:23)
- “marveled greatly” – The character of Jesus shines through despite the fact that Jesus doesn’t speak or defend Himself.
- 27:15 – “governor’s custom” – Pilate is trying to get Jesus off in a way that placates the crowd.
- Only the Bible makes mention of this custom. Could it be that Pilate made up this custom specifically for this situation?
- 27:16 – “Barabbas” – means “the Son of the Father.” The people have to choose.
- Barabbas was an insurrectionist and a murderer. (Mark 15:7; Luke 23:19)
- 27:18 – “because of envy” – Pilate knows this is the motivation of the religious leaders, so he tries to play the crowd against the leadership.
- Just a few days earlier the crowds were calling for Jesus to “Save now!”
- 27:19 – “that just Man” – This is the true verdict of Christ.
- God is trying to reach Pilate through the dreams of his wife.
- 27:20 – “the multitudes” – This is what holds the greatest power in Pilate’s life, above his wife and even his own convictions.
- 27:21 – “They said, ‘Barabbas’” – This world has had hundreds of tyrants and insurrectionists ruling in the place of Jesus since this decision was made.
- 27:22 – “What then shall I do” – Pilate had no backbone to stand up for his convictions.
- This is the key question for every person who has ever lived!
  - “crucified” – My sin killed Him.
- 27:23 – “cried out the more” – When losing an argument, yell louder.
- 27:24 – “washed his hands” – Nobody can wash off this death. All must make a decision about Jesus...and no decision is a decision of “no.”
- Pilate needs his heart washed, not just his hands.
- 27:25 – “His blood be on us” – They are pronouncing their own judgment which would go on for nearly 2,000 years from 70AD when the Romans took Jerusalem.
- Christ had told them, that upon them would come “all the righteous blood shed upon the earth.” (Matt. 23:35)
- 27:26 – “scourged” – This is a whipping using a many-stranded whip that had bone and metal imbedded into the strands. The intention of the scourging was to inflict as much pain as possible and weaken the body for crucifixion. Many times the victims would die at the scourging. And the hemotidrosis the night before would’ve made His skin overly sensitive.
- Romans were not under the moderation of the Jewish law, which forbade scourgings of more than 40 stripes.
  - Jesus didn’t make a sound! To name the accomplices would reduce the beating. “as a sheep before its shearers is silent...” (Isa. 53:7)

- 27:27-66 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 15:16-47; Luke 23:26-56; and John 19:2,17-42.
- 27:27 – “garrison” – This detachment is called a “speira.” In a full “speira” there were 600 men. It is not likely that there were as many as that in Jerusalem at this time.
- 27:29 – “Hail, King of the Jews” – The Roman soldiers had a game called “Kill the King.” When played to the end, the one to deal the death-blow on the victim was the winner.
- 27:32 – “as they came out” – Victims would have their hands tied to the 30 lb. crossbeam placed behind their head.
- “Cyrene” – Located in North Africa, Cyrene was about 800 miles from Jerusalem.
  - “Simon” – Simon of Cyrene was making the once-in-a-lifetime, very expensive trip for the Passover feast, but was made unclean by carrying the cross.
    - Simon and his family may have later become followers of Christ. (Mark 15:21; Rom. 16:13)
  - “compelled” – Simon had no choice but to carry the cross.
    - Jesus was too beaten to carry His own cross. In addition, the Roman soldiers liked to tie a red rope to the foot of the one carrying the cross beam, only to pull the rope at times to make the prisoner fall. It is likely after one of these falls, that Jesus couldn’t get back to His feet.
- 27:33 – “Golgotha” – called “Calvary” in the Latin.
- Just outside Damascus Gate there is a face of a cliff that has caves that give the appearance of a skull as a result of the mining of stone from that area.
- 27:34 – “He would not drink” – This was a sour wine mixed with myrrh/gall that served as an anesthetic. Jesus does this with full control of His mind and complete feeling of pain.
- 27:35 – “the crucified Him” – With the crossbeam placed on the ground, they would spread out the victims arms and nail him to the crossbeam with spikes through his wrists. They would then lift that crossbeam and place it on the post. After that they would overlap the feet and nail them together to the post just below the heel.
- So brutal was crucifixion, Roman citizens ordinarily were not crucified. In fact, crucifixion was never mentioned in polite society, so degrading was this form of capital punishment.
  - Jesus was “made a curse for us” for “cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” (Gal. 3:13) Jesus died “even the death of a cross.” (Phil. 2:8)
  - The crucifixion begins at 9am. (Mark 15:25, 34)
  - “garments” – Soldiers performing an execution were given the right to the prisoners clothes as payment for their services.
    - Jesus is crucified to give eternal life, these guys settle for his robe.
- 27:36 – “they kept watch over Him” – Is this like watching a baseball game or a TV show?
- 27:37 – “the accusation” – The sign was written in Hebrew (the language of heaven), Greek (the common language), and Latin (the language of the learned).
- “King of the Jews” – Jesus is officially executed for being the King of the Jews. (John 19:21)
- 27:38 – “two robbers” – One of these robbers would eventually repent and trust in Jesus. (Luke 23:39-43)

- 27:39 – “wagging their heads” – This is a cultural sign of disdain. Sometimes it would come with a loud cry and the waving of hands.
- 27:40 – “If You are the Son of God” – You cannot tell who Jesus is by how He looks or by what circumstance He is in. This is not the health-and-wealth gospel.
- 27:41 – “mocking” – The religious leaders mocking an innocent man while being crucified. Was this part of their law? What good do it do?  
 - Their mocking of Jesus actually reveals much of His true nature.
- 27:42 – “He saved others; Himself He cannot save” – He could only save others because He did not save Himself.
- 27:44 – “Even the robbers” – But before the end, even one of the robbers will turn to believe in Jesus. (Luke 23:40-43)
- 27:45 – “from the sixth hour until the ninth hour” – From 12noon until 3pm.  
 - “darkness” – The eternal cup of God’s wrath and separation from the Father.  
 - Jesus’ sacrifice covered it all; every human beings’ cup of eternal damnation!  
 - Dionysius, at Heliopolis in Egypt, took notice of the darkness and said, “Either the God of nature is suffering or the machine of the world is tumbling into ruin.”  
 - “all the land” – Luke tells us that it was “all the earth.”  
 - This is more than merely a solar eclipse. The Passover was a lunar feast and held during full moon, making a total solar eclipse impossible.
- 27:46 – “My God” – This is the only time in the Synoptic Gospels where Jesus addressed God without calling Him, “Father.”  
 - “God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Cor. 5:21)  
 - “why have you forsaken Me” – Quoted from Ps. 22:1  
 - It is said that Martin Luther sat 8 hours transfixed on this verse. And when he finally got up he only said, “God forsaken of God, who can understand it?”  
 - Jesus was forsaken of the Father so that we never would be. (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5)
- 27:48 – “to drink” – The drink was to loosen His mouth to make the last statements from the cross loud and clear.
- 27:50 – “cried out again with a loud voice” – John tells us He said, “It is finished.” (John 19:30)  
 Luke then tells us that His final words from the cross were, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” (Luke 23:46)  
 - “yielded up His spirit” – Lit. “He sent His spirit away.”  
 - No man took His life from Him; He gave it willingly. (John 10:18)  
 - The shortest crucifixion on Roman record was 32 hours, the longest was 13 days. The crucified would literally suffocate to death by their own weight. But many times the wild jackals would eat the prisoners from the feet up, before they even died.  
 - Pilate is so surprised at the brevity that they pierce His side to verify His death.

- 27:51 – “veil of the temple was torn” – The veil was woven material 80 ft high and 8-12 inches thick. There were cherubim woven into the fabric of this veil. (Acts 6:7)
- The cherubim were introduced in the Garden of Eden after the fall to guard the way between God and fallen man. (Gen. 3:24) The veil continued to prohibit fallen men (Jews and Gentiles) from entering the presence of a Holy God.
  - “But your iniquities have separated you from your God.” (Isa. 59:2)
  - We now enter into the throne of grace boldly through “the veil, that is, His flesh.” (Heb. 4:16; 10:20)
  - “Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away...we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor. 3:16,18)
- 27:53 – “after His resurrection” – Matthew doesn’t place this chronologically.
- Jesus is the firstfruits of the resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:20)
- 27:54 – “this was the Son of God” – Was the centurion saved here? He has seen crucifixions before, but none like this one. (Luke 23:34)
- “was the Son of God” – Not just “was,” but “is” the Son of God.
- 27:55 – “ministering” – (Gr. “diaconeo”) Lit. “deacon.”
- 27:57 – “Joseph had taken the body” – Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus oppose the Sanhedrin, risking excommunication (John 9), to bury Jesus. (John 19:38-42)
- Joseph had opposed the Sanhedrin in their sentencing of Jesus. (Luke 23:51)
  - Isaiah 53:9 – “with the rich at His death.”
- 27:58 – “asked for the body of Jesus” – Typically, the bodies of crucifixion victims were cast into the fires of the Hinnom Valley.
- Despite Jesus telling many that He was going to be crucified, no one had made preparation for His burial.
- 27:59 – “wrapped it in a clean linen cloth” – The head and body were wrapped separately. The body would be wrapped with strips of cloth and spices placed between layers of cloth.
- This took time and great expense...in addition to giving up the Passover and the tomb cut by hand out of rock.
- 27:60 – “a new tomb” – There could be no confusion as to which body was resurrected on that day.
- 27:61 – “Mary Magdalene was there” – The women remain near Jesus clear to the end.
- 27:63 – “we remember...that deceiver said” – The religious leaders are aware that Jesus had previously spoken about His resurrection.
- “while He was still alive” – The Jews and Romans surrounding Jesus’ crucifixion knew that Jesus had died on the cross. The “swooning” theory has no grounds from the Biblical account.
- 27:65 – “as secure as you know how” – Jesus supersedes all human “know how.”

27:66 – “setting the guard” – A Roman watch was 16 soldiers, expert fighters.

- “sealed the stone” – They would’ve crossed the opening with ropes and sealed it in the middle. If a person broke the seal, they were crucified upside-down. If a Roman soldier fell asleep on watch, they’d kill all of the watch. The soldiers would light another soldier’s kilt on fire if they started to doze off. (Acts 12:19; 16:27-28)

### **Chapter 28:**

28:1-15 – The parallel passages are found in Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-8; and John 20:1.

28:1 – “after the Sabbath” – This was the Lord’s Day. (John 20:19,26; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10)  
This was also the day of the Feast of Firstfruits, looking to the harvest to come.

- The resurrection of Jesus fulfills the Feast of Firstfruits, as His resurrection is the guarantee of the resurrection of those who believe in Him.
- “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary” – The women are the first to go.
- These ladies are going to anoint the body of Jesus with spices. They are not expecting to meet a risen Jesus.

28:2-4 – Matthew got this information from an eyewitness, one of his Roman friends.

28:2 – “rolled back the stone” – The stone was rolled away, not to let Jesus out, but to let His disciples in.

28:4 – “the guards” – The Roman soldiers Pilate gave to the Sanhedrin to keep the body of Jesus from being taken by the disciples.

- “shook for fear” – Lit. “uncontrollable quaking.” These guys were the toughest of Rome! They were used to seeing crucifixions and beating up the victims, but this frightens them.

28:5 – “do not be afraid” – Contrast the angels’ treatment of the women with that of the soldiers.

28:6-7 – “Come, see...go quickly and tell” – This should be like us.

28:6 – “He is risen” – There are several examples in the Bible of people being resuscitated before this, such as the widow’s son in the days of Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-24) and Lazarus (John 11:38-44). However, Jesus didn’t merely resuscitate, He resurrected to His glorified and eternal body.

- “Come, see” – The invitation to see the place where He lay is appropriately addressed to the same people who had watched the body being deposited.
- Going into the tomb would make them unclean for the rest of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- “the place where the Lord lay” – The graveclothes lay there like an empty cocoon. There was no sign of struggle, the graveclothes were not in disarray. Even the napkin (which had been wrapped around His face) was folded carefully in a place by itself.

28:7 – “going before you into Galilee” – As Jesus had previously told them in Matt. 26:32.

28:8 – “fear and great joy” – What a mixture of emotions.

- 28:9 – “Jesus met them” – In Rev. 1:12-18, Jesus is described in a bright light and loud voice. Here is comes so simply that He is mistaken for the gardener.
- “Rejoice” – or “Hail.” This was the common greeting of the day.
  - “held Him by the feet” – Mary has a death grip on Jesus. Jesus had to tell her not to hold onto Him. (John 20:17)
    - Their response to Jesus is drastically different, while His relationship to them is surprisingly the same. His love for them has not changed.
- 28:10 – “My brethren” – These guys deserted Jesus, but He still sees them as brothers. It is His mercy that allows us to be brethren.
- In Mark, Jesus specifically notes that the ladies tell “and Peter.” (Mark 16:7)
- 28:11 – “reported to the chief priests” – The Roman guard goes to the chief priests instead of their superiors. They know where there orders were really coming from.
- This fulfills Jesus’ prophecy: “If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one ride from the dead.” (Luke 16:31)
- 28:13 – “His disciples came at night” – These guys would not give their lives for a lie! The willingness of the disciples to die martyrs’ deaths indicates their belief in the resurrection.
- This cover-up attempt shows the darkness of these priests. They knew the truth of the resurrection, yet they rejected the truth and lied to others about it.
  - Buddha is in a pot in a temple, Mohammed is in his tomb, Xoraster is in his tomb, Confucius is in his tomb, but there is an empty tomb in Jerusalem. Jesus is risen!!
  - “while we slept” – This is foolishness. If it was true that the guards were so soundly asleep not to hear people move the stone out of the way and carry out the body, then how could they know it was the disciples who stole the body?
- 28:17 – “some doubted” – They see the resurrected Christ, yet still don’t believe. How?
- 28:18-20 – “all” – Used 4 times. All authority, all nations, all things, and implied in always, even to the end of the age.
- 28:18 – “all authority” – (Greek “dynamous”) Our personal authority comes from being submitted to right authority ourselves. This power flows through us from the source of true authority.
- 28:19 – “go” – Lit. “as you are going.” The tense here is a statement of fact, not a command to move. Where you are is where you are to be teaching.
- Our ministry always starts at home. A change in location is not the secret to a newly effective ministry.
  - “make disciples” – Jesus doesn’t instruct us just to make converts, but learners.
  - “baptizing” – Not circumcising, making a strong distinction from the Jewish religion.
  - “in the name” – Lit. “into the name.” Speaking of allegiance to Jesus.
  - “name” – (Greek “onama”) This is singular.
  - “Father...Son...Holy Spirit” – The Trinity.

28:20 – “teaching” – The only way to make learners is to teach.

- “The real ministry of the Church should be that of teaching God’s truth to men” – Chuck Smith.
- “I am” – YWHW, the burning bush said this. The final ‘I am.’ “I am with you.” This is not just what Jesus did in the past or will do in the future, but what He does now!
  - This is not just about what Jesus did in the past or what Jesus will do in the future, but the essence is what Jesus is doing in us and for us right now. This is a relationship that nobody and nothing can take away.
- “with you always” – Jesus sent His disciples on a mission, but He did not send them alone. He forever remains our Immanuel, God with us. (Matt. 1:23; Col.1:27; Heb. 13:5)
  - It is better to work with Jesus, than merely to work for Him.
  - G. Campbell Morgan tells the story, “Many years ago, I was sitting by the side of an aged saint of God, an old woman of eighty-five. I had been reading this chapter to her, and when I finished I looked up at her and said, ‘That is a great promise.’ She looked up and said sharply, with the light of sanctified humour in her eyes, ‘That is not a promise at all, that is a fact.’”