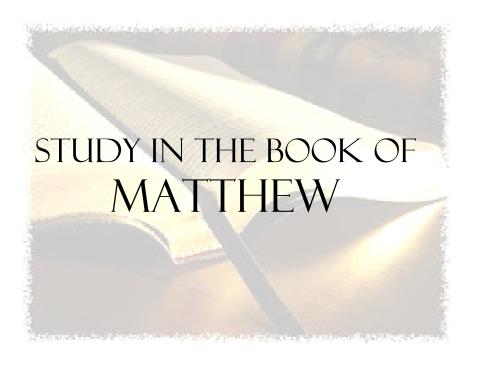


CHRISTIAN RESOURCES



By: Bishop Warwick Cole-Edwardes

INTRODUCTION

Matthew's Gospel has been called by many Bible scholars, the most important single document of the Christian faith. Historians tell us that this book was the most widely read, and the most quoted, in the early Church. While all four Gospels are important to us, it is not without reason that Matthew stands first.

"It would seem reasonable to suppose that the first Gospel was not given to the primary place in the New Testament solely because it was believed to embody some of the earliest Gospel material to be committed to writing. It was also to judge fair the frequency with which it was quoted by Christian writers in the second century, their favourite Gospel."

- TASKER -

And so some twenty or thirty years after Jesus' ascension, a Jewish disciple named Matthew was inspired by the Spirit of God to write this magnificent book, with one outstanding characteristic:

"Matthew's dominating idea is the idea of Jesus as King. Jesus walks through Matthew's pages as if in the purple and gold of royalty."

- BARCLAY -

THE KING'S BIRTH

(Chapter 1 and 2)

Because royalty depends on heredity it was important for Jesus to establish His rights to David's throne. Matthew therefore gave Jesus' human heredity as well as His divine heredity.

1. THE HEREIDITY OF THE KING (1: 1-25)

A. Human Heredity (1: 1-17)

This would seem a strange way to begin the Gospel, but to the Jews this was the most natural and the most interesting as well as the most essential way to begin the story of the King's life. The reason for this interest in the pedigree was that for the Jews it stressed the purity of Jesus' lineage. If there was a slight mix of foreign blood, Jesus would have lost His right to be called a Jew, and especially as a priest He needs an unbroken record of pedigree.

"It is to show that Jesus is no isolated figure, no mere innovator, but one who can be adequately measured only in terms of what has gone before."

STONEHOUSE –

It stresses the fact that Jesus was the son of David and this was important for the Jews because there was the dream that into this world there would come a descendent of David who would lead them to the glory which they believed to be theirs by right, that is, Jesus is the answer to the dreams of men.

It stresses that Jesus was the fulfilment of prophesy.

It stresses God's wonderful race, as it is most unusual to find names of women in Jewish genealogies, since names and inheritances come through the fathers.

But in these verses we find names of flour Jewish women:

Tamar	(v3) – The mother of Perez:	An adulteress
Rahab	(v5) – The mother of Boaz:	A prostitute
Ruth	(v5) – The mother of Obed:	A Moabite
Bathsheba	(v6) – The mother of Solomon:	An adulteress

So you see how God's grace was manifested. They were forgiven, cleansed, restored and used.

B. Divine Heredity (1: 18-25)

Verses 18, 20 and 23 makes it clear that Jesus' birth was different than any other Jewish boy.

- i) His Virgin Birth: Every child born into this world is a totally new creature. But Jesus Christ, being eternal God, existed before Mary and Joseph or any of His earthly ancestors. If Jesus Christ was conceived and born just as any other baby, then he could not be God. It was important that Jesus enter this world through an earthly mother, but not to be begotten by an earthly father. By a miracle of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary, a virgin, which safeguarded His eternity and His sinlessness.
- ii) His Work: Further indication of the uniqueness of Mary's Son and the nature of His work He would be born to perform is given in the angel's instruction to Joseph to call the child 'Jesus', meaning 'Saviour'. Jesus would come and rescue God's people from the guilt and the power of their sin.

2. THE HOMAGE TO THE KING (2: 1-12)

Little is known about the Magi, except that they were scholars who studied the stars. They came to Bethlehem to find Jesus. They found Him and worshipped Him and presented to Him gifts of gold, incense and myrrh.

- i) Gold: was a gift for a King. Jesus was a King but He was to reign not by force, but by love and He was to rule over men's hearts not only from a throne but from a cross. As Jesus is King, we must always meet Him on terms of complete submission and complete surrender.
- ii) Incense: was a gift for a Priest. It was in temple worship and at the Temple sacrifices that the sweet perfume of incense was used. The function of a priest is to open the way to God for men. Jesus paid the price with His blood which satisfied the justice of God. Jesus is the Priest who opened the way to God for men.
- iii) Myrrh: was a gift for one who is to die. Myrrh was used to embalm the bodies of the dead. Jesus was going to die for sinners.

3. THE HOSTILITY AGAINST THE KING (2: 13-18)

The Magi searched to present gifts and homage to Jesus. Herod searched to bring death to Jesus.

A. The Flight to Egypt (2: 13-15)

Joseph was warned of the danger and fled to Egypt.

"The devices of man can never thwart the ultimate purpose of God: and as Pharaoh was prevented from destroying the Israelites by God's divine intervention, so Joseph is divinely warned to escape with Mary and Jesus into Egypt."

TASKER –

B. The Massacre of the Children

Herod was known as Herod the Great and his greatest claim was that he was a magnificent builder. King Herod was also an extremely cruel man. He was furious at the Magi's deceit and kills all the boys under two years of age. This was again to fulfil scripture.

"Here is a terrible illustration of what men will do to get rid of Jesus Christ. If a man is set on his own way, if he sees in Christ someone who is liable to interfere with his ambitions and rebuke his ways, then his one desire is to eliminate Christ, and then he is driven to the most terrible things, for then if he does not break men's bodies, he will break their hearts.""

- BARCLAY -
- 4. THE HUMILITY OF THE KING (2: 19-23)
 - A. Return from Egypt (2: 19-20)

After Herod's death an angel appears and tells Joseph to leave Egypt and go to Nazareth.

B. Into Nazareth (2: 21-23)

Joseph takes his family to Nazareth. Humility is seen in the King growing up in a despised city and another prophesy is fulfilled.

"Who ever heard of a King being born in a humble village and growing up in a despised city? The humility of the King is certainly something to admire and imitate."

- WIERSBE -

THE KING'S CREDENTIALS

(Chapter 3 and 4)

Between Chapter 1 and 2, thirty years of Jesus' life is silent as He grew from child to man. As He was growing up He was within a circle of a loving, Godly home. He fulfilled the duties as the eldest son. Joseph had presumably died so Jesus supported the family as the village carpenter. He was a working man, earning a living and buying food and clothes as well as preparing for His ministry.

1. JOHN THE BAPTIST (2: 1-15)

For over four hundred years there the nation had not heard the voice of a prophet, then John appeared.

A. His Message (3: 1-2; 9-10)

John's message centred on the word repent. John was not satisfied with remorse or regret, but wanted fruit in keeping with repentance.

Repentance is the radical transformation of thought, attitude, outlook and direction. It is a turning from sin unto God and His service.

Many people came to him, the people came with sincere humility but the religious leaders refused to submit. They thought they were good enough to please God.

B. His Authority (3: 3-4)

John fulfilled the prophesy given in Isaiah 40: 3. He was dressed like, and came in the power and the spirit of Elijah. He preached the same message of judgement.

C. His Baptism (3: 5-6; 11-12)

John called the people to make a decision: to return to the Lord and be willing to receive the coming reign of God. The outward sign if their desire to make such a return lay in the readiness to receive John's baptism. It was baptism of cleansing and it was a preparation for the Greater.

D. His Obedience (3: 13-15)

Jesus was not baptized because He was a repentant sinner or an example for us to follow. It was a moment of resolve.

"It marks the call of Jesus to His public ministry, a call accompanied by the gift of the Holy Spirit and confirmed by a voice from heaven. By subjecting Himself to baptism, He finally and openly took the sin of mankind upon Him and placed himself on the altar for the sake of the redemption of the guilty ones. He Himself had no need to be baptized but He offers Himself as the substitute and representative of sinful mankind."

- GELDENHUYS -

"It was, if you like, an act of dedication, of consecration, of high resolve."

- DUNCAN -

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT (3: 16)

After Jesus had so completely and voluntarily offered Himself to God, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit came upon Him and gave to His human consciousness a perfect revelation of mystery and glory.

"The Spirit descended like a dove" does not mean He was not previously full of the Holy Spirit but merely indicates that He has now been equipped by the Holy Spirit with all official gifts to appear openly as Messiah and Redeemer.

Therefore Jesus was equipped and qualified and was now able to carry out the very difficult task which He had now fully committed Himself to.

3. THE FATHER (3: 17)

So far we have seen the Son's resolve and the Spirit's anointing. It is now altogether fitting that the voice of God's whole-hearted approval and delight should be added, so that it may become clear that in the work of saving sinners, as in every divine work, the three are one.

- i) This is my Son whom I love: This statement occurs on two occasions the Transfiguration, and under the shadow of the cross. The reference here is to His eternal Sonship.
- ii) With whom I am well pleased: From eternity to eternity God is well pleased in Him. But nevertheless the reference here is in a special sense to the pleasure of God in Him also in every respect carried out His will throughout the 33 years that He lived as perfect man on earth before His baptism, and also especially as the One who voluntarily and completely, took upon Himself the work of redemption.

And so the consent of the Holy Spirit and the voice from heaven give the final assurance that Jesus is the Messiah.

4. SATAN (4: 1-11)

After the experience in the Jordan River, Jesus is now led into the wilderness and is tempted by the devil. Here Jesus exposes Satan and his tactics.

A. The First Temptation (4: 1-4)

In the first temptation Satan attempts to incite Jesus to dissatisfaction, self-will and impatience.

It is a very subtle suggestion that our Father does not love us. The temptation was to make Jesus use His powers for the supply of His own personal needs and satisfaction. Jesus said that feeding on and obeying God's Word is more important than consuming physical food.

The lesson is real: Satan tempts us in making life easy for ourselves and never to experience trials and tribulation.

B. The Second Temptation (4: 5-7)

The second temptation was to make Jesus perform the spectacular but pointless miracle in order to compel wonder and believe of a kind. Jesus rejects all self-will, self-seeking, self-display and fanaticism as being compatible with God's Word and God's will.

C. The Third Temptation (4: 8-10)

You can't compromise God and materialism. You must worship God and God only. Jesus didn't want honour, power and materialism.

"It meant using the world's methods, but His kingdom was of a different kind, it meant a lowly path not that of earthly glory. It meant a cross. Not a crown. To look for earthly sovereignty was to worship wickedness and Jesus decisively renounced it."

MORRIS –

To summarize, these temptations were for dissatisfaction, spectacular and compromise.

5. Christ's Ministry of Power (4: 12-17)

After the death of John the Baptist, He chose John's method of ministry. Jesus preached a message of repentance and the Kingdom of Heaven is a rule, reign, and authority, rather than a place or realm.

There were four aspects of Jesus' ministry:

- i) Jesus had a preaching ministry He preached to the people.
- ii) Jesus had an equipping ministry He equipped the people.
- iii) Jesus had a teaching ministry He taught the people.
- iv) Jesus had a healing ministry He healed the sick.

THE KING'S PRINICIPLES – PART 1 (True Righteousness)

(Chapter 5)

In the next three Chapters, (5, 6 and 7), the Sermon on the Mount is vital as this is what Jesus want us to be.

"Here is a Christian value system, ethical standard, religious devotion, attitude to money, ambition, lifestyle and a network of relationships; all of which are totally at variance with those of the non-Christian world."

- STOTT –
- 1. WHAT TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS IS (5: 1-16)

Jesus opens His heart and pours out His mind.

A. Attitude Toward Ourselves (5: 3)

Blessed are the poor in spirit: This does not mean to be poor spirited and have no backbone at all. Poor in spirit is the opposite of the world's attitudes of self-praise and self assertion. They are the ones who have become convinced of their spiritual poverty. To be poor in spirit is to acknowledge our spiritual poverty and our spiritual bankruptcy before God. We are sinners under God's holy wrath deserving nothing but the judgement of God.

"It is to be empty of self so that we can be full of **Christ**."

- HENRY –
- B. Our Attitude Toward Our Sins (5: 4-6)

Blessed are those who mourn: As a Christian we must mourn over our sins and failures, and also for the evil rampant in the world.

Blessed are the meek: We must humble ourselves to God and acknowledge utter dependence on Him. In consequence they are gentle in their dealings with others. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: This spiritual hunger is a characteristic of God's people where supreme ambition is not material but spiritual.

C. Our Attitude Toward The Lord (5: 7-9)

Blessed are the merciful: These are those who are conscious that they are themselves unworthy recipients of God's mercy, and that but for the grace of God they would not only be sinners but condemned sinners. In consequence, they endeavour to reflect in their dealings with others something of the mercy God has shown to them, and the more they do so, the more God's mercy is extended to them.

Blessed are the pure in heart: We must be single-minded and not have a divided heart. Only God is important, not the world.

"To be pure we must keep the first and great commandment, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul mind'."

LLOYD —

Blessed are the peacemakers: These are those who are at peace with God, the authors of peace and love, and who show that they are truly children of God striving to use every opportunity open to them to effect reconciliation between others who are at variance. So we become peacemakers in a troubled world and channels for God's mercy, purity and peace.

D. Our Attitude Toward The World (5: 10-16)

Blessed are those who are persecuted: These are those who suffer because they uphold God's standards of truth, justice and purity and refuse to compromise. Salt of the earth: This implies that the world is rotten. But salt is different. Salt will preserve and add flavour.

"But for effectiveness the Christian must retain his Christlikeness as salt must retain its saltiness. If Christians become assimilated to non-Christians and contaminated by the impurities of the world, they lose their influence."

STOTT –

Light to the world: The true disciple of Christ must not through fear, remain silent about his religion. They can and they must, bear witness to the faith that is in them through personal example.

"So the disciple must 'not hide himself, but live and work in places where their influence may be felt, and the light that is in them be more fully manifested to others."

- TASKER –

2. HOW DOES TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS COME? (5: 17-20)

After the crowd heard of Christ's description of the kind of person that God blesses, they said to themselves that they could never attain those standards. SO Jesus explains His own attitude to law by describing three possible relationships.

A. We Can Seek to Destroy The Law (5: 17a)

Here Jesus makes it clear that He has come to honour the law, help people love, learn, and live the law. He never accepted the artificial righteousness of the religious leaders. Their religion was a dead ritual, not a loving relationship. We need a righteousness from God.

B. We Can Seek To Fulfil The Law (5: 17b)

Jesus fulfilled God's law in every area of His life. His birth – He was circumcised; His life – for 33 years He lived God's will; His teaching and death – by bearing the curse of the law and He fulfilled the Old Testament ceremonies. We can fulfil the law by coming to Christ and receiving His imputed righteousness and then by living for Christ which is to impart your righteousness.

C. We Can Seek To Do And Teach The Law (5: 18-19)

The Holy Spirit teaches us the Word and enables us to obey it. We are to go out and practise what we have learned and teach others.

3. HOW RIGHTEOUSNESS WORKS IN DAILY LIFE (5: 21-48)

Jesus now takes six important Old Testament laws and he interprets them for His people in the light of the new life He came to give.

A. Murder (5: 21-26)

The Old Testament law said, "Do not murder", but Jesus takes it further. He teaches that anger in the heart toward anyone, but especially to those who belong to the house of faith, is regarded by the Lord something reprehensible in the sight of God as murder. He refers to a causeless anger which may lead to explosive expressions.

B. Adultery (5: 27-30)

The Old Testament law said. "Do not commit adultery", but Jesus takes it to our looks and the look which Jesus meant was not a casual glance but a constant stare of lust. The radical way in which to deal with adulterous looks really means that at that very moment, with no hesitation, that obscene book or magazine is to be burnt. Even that intimate social tie must be broken.

C. Divorce (5: 31-32)

The Old Testament law gave grounds for divorce, but Jesus is concerned with the preservation of marriage, so that He allows one exception: marital unfaithfulness. Marital unfaithfulness is a comprehensive word which means adultery, fornication and unnatural acts.

D. Oaths (5: 33-37)

This is not a sin of cursing, but the sin using oaths to affirm that which is said to be true. Jesus teaches us that our conversation should be so honest, our character so true, that we do not need crutches to get people to believe us. Words depend on character. Oaths cannot compensate for a pure character.

E. Retaliation (5: 38-42)

The Old Testament Law said, "An eye for an eye", but Jesus said there were four principles for non-retaliation:

- i) insult
- ii) inequity
- iii) imposition
- iv) indigence

F. Love Your Enemies (5: 43-48)

The Old Testament law said, "Hate your enemies", but Jesus comes and lays down this law: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you".

The Master expects for His disciples such conduct as can be explained in terms of the supernatural.

SANDERS –

4. CONCLUSION

If we seek God's grace we seek to live and three things will result:

- i) It is a mark of our spiritual maturity
- ii) It is becoming Godlike
- iii) It is a testimony to the world.

THE KING'S PRINCIPLES – PART 11 (True Worship)

(Chapter 6)

In this passage our Lord indicates areas in which truly spirituality manifests itself and some motives which would rob us of any value. In this section on the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus contrasts hypocrisy of the Pharisees with true spirituality and sincerity that He expects from His disciples. He warns us of the dangers of self-advertisement and urges upon us the importance of being in private and what we profess in public.

1. SPIRITUAL GENEROSITY (6: 1-4)

Jesus begins by warning us of two dangers.

A. Self-Advertisement

Righteous before men: True spiritual generosity is without publicity and it is for the glory of God alone. Jesus takes it for granted that His disciples will give to the needy. If we give to be noticed by people, that will be your reward in full.

B. Hypocrisy

Religion before men: There will be no rewards in heaven, only on earth if you give to the poor simply to demonstrate your generosity. Don't let your left hand know what the right is doing. We must never draw attention to our generosity. It we give with the wrong motive, we rob ourselves of blessing and reward and rob God of glory.

2. SPIRITUAL PRAYER (6: 5-15)

Because prayer is so crucial and vital an element in the life of a believer, our Lord now gives it extensive treatment.

A. Pray In Secret (6: 6)

Jesus states the negative about praying before man as there is no sincerity and vain repetition. Jesus becomes positive and says that we must pray to God in a room. We must close the door against disturbances, distractions, and the prying eyes of people.

B. Pray In Sincerity (6:7-8)

This refers to vain repetition and formality of praying. We must pray from the heart. God does not answer insincere prayers.

C. Pray In God's Will (6: 9-13)

Jesus gives us a wonderful pattern for prayer. The purpose of prayer is always to glorify God's name, and to ask for help to accomplish His will on earth. This prayer begins with God's interests, not ours. We have no right to ask God for anything that will dishonour His name, delay His kingdom, or disturb His will on earth. Only then is it right for us to pray for our daily needs, forgiveness and protection from evil.

- i) Hallowed be thy name God's name be kept holy.
- ii) Your Kingdom come Pastors, ministers, missions, others, etc.
- iii) You will be done God's will must be done, not ours.
- iv) Daily bread Our needs.
- v) Forgiveness God's forgiveness of our sins.
- vi) Strength God's protection and strength from evil.

D. Pray With A Forgiving Heart (6: 14-15)

If we have truly experienced God's forgiveness we will be ready to forgive others. Jesus is not teaching that we must earn our forgiveness; rather He teaches us that if we truly expect God's forgiveness, then we must do the same. When we forgive each other, we are not earning the right to pray. Prayer is part of our sonship with God. Our fellowship with our brothers and sisters determines our friendship with God.

3. FASTING (6:16-18)

Jesus says that when you fast it should be part of our lives. A fast is a sign of self-denial when we are confronted with a great burden, a challenging task etc. Jesus warns us that we are not to impress people but to do it for God. The reasons for a fast is when you have a deep yearning for a closer walk with God, a great burden for reaching the lost, when you are challenged by a special temptation, and when you find yourself in a very difficult and stubborn situation.

4. SPIRITUAL TREASURES (6: 19-34)

Jesus makes it clear that the right attitude to wealth is a mark of spiritual maturity. The Pharisees were covertess, they used religion to make money. Jesus gives us four warnings against making money your god.

- i) Enslavement (6: 19-24): Jesus teaches us that materialism will enslave our heart, your mind, your will, and so that you become shackled by materialism.
- ii) Devaluation (6: 25-30): Covertess will not only cheapen our riches, but also us. We start to worry and become anxious and that is unspiritual. A person who lives for money thinks it will solve his problems. It gives a false sense of security.
- iii) Loss of Testimony (6: 31-33): Jesus says to worry about materialism is to live like a Pagan who runs after little things. The only answer to a

- materialistic spirit is to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness then all the rest of taken care of.
- iv) Loss of Joy (6: 34): Jesus shows us the way to victory over worry and materialism.
 - Faith (v30), trusting God to meet our needs.
 - Father (v32), knowing God cares for His children.
 - First (v33), putting God's will first in our lives.

5. CONCLUSION

If we practise true worship we will avoid these sins and live for God's glory.

THE KING'S PRINCIPLES – PART 111 (True Relationships)

1. OUR RELATIONSHIP TO OUR BROTHER (7: 1-5)

Jesus does not anticipate the Christian community will be perfect. He assumes there will be problems.

A. A Christian Is Never To Be A Judge (7: 1-2)

"Christ totally forbids the human institution of any law court."

TOLSTOY –

This would suspend our critical faculties in relation to other people, to turn a blind eye to their faults, to refuse to discern between truth and error. What is then forbidden? In a word, Jesus is condemning the censorious follower.

"The follower of Jesus is still a critic in a sense of using the power of discernment, but not a judge in the sense of being censorious. This is a compound sin which consists of several unpleasant ingredients. The censorious person is a fault finder who is negative and destructive toward other people and enjoys seeking out their failings. He pours cold water on their schemes and is ungenerous toward their mistakes. Worse than that, to be censorious is to set yourself up as a censor and so to claim the competence and authority to sit in judgement of ones fellow men."

- STOTT -

B. The Christian Is Not To Be A Hypocrite (7: 3-4)

Here is a position where a delicate operation is being performed. A speck of dirt is being removed from our friend's eye when a huge plank is obscuring our vision. Never exaggerate others mistakes and minimize your own.

C. The Christian Is To Be A Brother (7: 5)

Our Christian duty is not to focus on the speck on our brother's eye while at the same time not noticing the plank in our own eye.

2. OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE UNCONVERTED (7: 6)

Jesus clarifies what our relationship to people should be when they hear the Word of God and despise it. He uses the terms of dogs and pigs; not offensively, but as typical of certain classes of people.

He preacher must throw 'holy' meat to dogs or give to unappreciative pigs. Spiritual treasures are never to be given to those who have no appreciation of the faith.

"All our zeal is to be tempered with a prudish consideration of time, places and people."

- J.C. RYLE -

"Our Christian witness and evangelistic preaching are not to be entirely indiscriminate. If people have had plenty opportunity to hear the truth but do not respond to it, if they stubbornly turn their backs on Christ, they cast themselves in the roles of dogs and pigs; we are not to go on and on and on with them, for then we cheapen God's Gospel by letting them trample it underfoot."

- STOTT-

"This teaching is for exceptional cases only. Our normal Christian duty is to be patient and to persevere with others, as God has patiently persevered with us."

- STOTT -

3. OUR RELATIONSHIP TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER (7: 7-11)

Now we are encouraged to pray to our Father in heaven.

"Nothing is better adapted to excite us to prayer than a full conviction that we shall be heard."

- CALVIN -

"He knows we are timid and shy, that we feel unworthy and unfit to present our needs to God... we think that God is so great and we are so tiny that we do not dare to pray... that is why Christ wants to lure us away from such timid thoughts, to remove our doubts, and to have us go ahead confidently and boldly."

- LUTHER -

A. All Are Attached To A Command (7: 7)

We have to:

Ask - Petition Seek - Participation Knock - Persistence

B. It Is For All God's People (7:8)

To all those who ask.

C. The Parable (7: 9-10)

Jesus uses a parable to illustrate His answer in that God only gives good gifts. He teaches them something they are familiar with, a child coming to its father with a request. If the child asks for bread, is he given a stone? If the child asks for a fish, is he given a snake?

4. OUR RELATIONSHIP TO ALL MEN (7: 11-12)

Here the sermon reaches its apex. It is a summary of the law concerning man's relationship to man. It is the full expression of our social responsibility, the principle of all social conduct.

Jesus teaches that we must go out of our way to be as kind and as helpful to others as I would like them to be to me.

To observe this principle it doesn't mean mere avoiding wrong-doing, but it involves making our neighbour's concerns our own, loving them as we love ourselves, and treating them as God treats us.

"If we put ourselves sensitively into the place of the other person, and wish for them what we wish for ourselves, we would never be mean, always generous; never harsh, always understanding; never cruel, always kind."

- STOTT -

5. A CALL TO RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP

We can see that Jesus calls us to a radical discipleship. He has explained six clear areas to live by:

Character, Influence, Righteousness, Religion, Prayer, Relationships.

6. CONCLUSION (7: 13-29)

Jesus gives three concluding points.

A. Two Ways Of Life (7: 13-14)

Two Roads – Easy (Diversity of opinions and lax morals)

- Hard

Two Gates - Wide

- Narrow

Two Destinations – Hell

- Heaven

Two crowds – Many

- Few

B. Two Types Of Teachers (7: 15-20)

False Prophets – Watch out for them

True Prophets – Test everything: Sound Doctrine and Holy Living.

C. Two Types Of Foundations (7: 21-29)

Danger of mere verbal expression

Danger of mere intellectual knowledge.

STUDY 6

THE KING'S POWER

(Chapter 8 and 9)

In the first seven chapters we see two aspects; Chapter 1-4: The person of the King, and in Chapter 5-7: The principles of the King.

We now move onto His power. The next two chapters record ten miracles by Jesus which is divided into three groups. At the end of each group, there is a teaching in discipleship.

1. GRACE TO THE OUTCASTS (8: 1-22)

To many of the Jewish people, especially the Pharisees; lepers, Gentiles, and women were considered outcasts.

A. Jesus Cleanses The Leper (8: 1-4)

"Of all illnesses which can afflict the body of man, leprosy appears to be the most severe. It afflicts every part of the constitution at once. It brings sores and decay upon the skin, corruption into the blood and rottenness into the bones. It is a living death."

- J.C. RYLE -

The leper was not just ill, he was an outcast. He had not simply lost his health, he had lost his family, his friends, his home, his livelihood.

Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. Immediately the man was well.

"Jesus is that divine Physician who can make old things pass away and all things become new. In Him is life. He can wash us thoroughly from all the defilement of sin in His own blood. He can quicken us and revive us by His own Spirit. He can cleanse our heart, open the eyes of our understanding, renew our wills and make us whole."

- J.C. RYLE -
- B. The Centurions Servant Was Healed (8: 5-13)

A Centurion is a Roman Officer in charge of 1200 men. He was kind, humble and full of faith, and in sheer grace Jesus heals the servant of the Centurion.

C. Peter's Mother-In-Law (8: 14-17)

This lady was in bed with a fever. Peter and his brother Andrew told Jesus about her need. Jesus showed her grace and healed her. It was a minor miracle with major results – there was a gathering of the whole city and the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled.

"Jesus fulfilled this prophecy in His life and not on the Cross. He bore man's sicknesses and infirmities during His ministry on earth. To say that there is healing in the atonement and that every believer has the right to claim it, is to misinterpret Scripture."

- WIERSBE -
- D. The First Discipleship Lesson (8: 18-22)

Jesus wanted people to realise a disciple must understand the implications of discipleship. These are self-denial, sacrifice, service and suffering.

Jesus was not asking this man to be disrespectful to his father but to have the right priorities in life. It is better to preach the Gospel and give life to spiritually dead, than to wait for your father to die and bury him.

"Let us learn from this passage to be aware of allowing family and social duties to interfere with our duty to Christ. Funerals and marriages, and visits of courtesy and the like, are unquestionably not in themselves sinful. But when they are allowed to absorb a believer's time and to keep him back from any plain religious duty, they become a snare to his soul."

- J.C. RYLE –
- 2. PEACE TO THE DISTURBED (8: 23 9: 17)

The people now involved needed peace and Jesus wonderfully provided that peace.

A. Peace In The Storm (8: 23-27)

As the disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee, a fierce storm arose. Jesus undoubtedly knew the storm was coming, but he stayed asleep, resting confidently in the will of His Father. In their terror, the disciples called to Christ. He got up and rebuked the wind and the waves.

B. Peace In A Community (8: 28-34)

Here is a frightening picture. It shows what Satan will do in a man's life. These men were robbed of sanity and self control, filled with fear, robbed of family and friends; and condemned to hell. It also shows what society does in a situation like this. It tried to isolate them, threaten them, and restrain them, and they were unable to change. Jesus comes to this community and He delivers the men with the power of His Word. The demons left and went into pigs. The men were not only delivered but they were restored back to sanity, society, and service.

C. Peace To A Troubled Conscience (9: 1-8)

The Lord Jesus has shown Himself powerful over the storm and the sick. Now He does the same with our sin.

This man suffered with gradual paralysis, unable to help himself. Fortunately he had four friends who through faith, hope, and love brought him to Jesus. Notice how Jesus dealt with the most important problem first; his sin and then his sickness.

D. The Second Discipleship Lesson (9: 9-17)

The illustration of the cloth shows how Jesus cane to bring spiritual wholeness. He did not come to patch us up and then let us fall apart.

In the same way, the old Jewish religion (worn-out wineskins) could not accept the Gospel (new wine).

"The lesson is the same, don't try to mix the new with the old, instead accept the new, strong, vigorous joy imparting teaching of Jesus and the salvation brought by Him. In the joy He and His teaching bring to those who by grace are transformed by it there is no room for Judaistic, legalistic, fasting."

- WIERSBE –
- 3. RESTORATION TO THE BROKEN (9: 18-38)
- A. A Broken Home (9: 18-19, 23-26)

It was difficult for Jairus to come to Jesus as he was a devout Jew and a leader of the synagogue. His great love for his dying daughter convinced him to seek Jesus.

We must learn to trust Christ and His promises, no matter how we feel, no matter what others say, and no matter how the circumstances may look.

B. A Broken Hope (9: 20-22)

This lady was subject to bleeding for twelve years. She tried all doctors and was left discouraged and disillusioned, her hopes shattered. She was ceremoniously unclean and rejected. In her despair she touched Jesus' hem of His garment as she knew that if she did she would be healed.

C. Broken Bodies (9: 27-34)

Jesus restored two blind men, a mute, and a demon possessed man due to their faith.

D. The Third Discipleship Lesson (9: 35-38)

Notice the main priorities of Jesus.

- i) He taught
- ii) He preached

iii) He healed

But he could not work alone, He needed helpers. This reminds us while the work is great, the labourers are few.

STUDY 7

THE KING'S AMBASSADOR

(Chapter 10)

In a very methodical way Matthew continues to unfold the story of Jesus. From Jesus' baptism where He accepted His task, to where we are shown His temptation which showed us His methods, and then His principles, and then, focusing on His power.

Now Jesus gives us His staff in Chapter 10.

1. THE MEN AND THEIR MISSION (10: 1-15)

A. The Men (10: 1-4)

Peter - sanguine, fisherman

Andrew - fisherman, soul winner, went to Greece and Scotland.

James and John – brothers, fishermen, 'sons of thunder', James was the first martyr, John wrote five New Testament books.

Philip – preached in Galatia and Philippi, was at the feeding of the 5000.

Bartholomew – one of the seven to whom Jesus appeared.

Matthew – a tax collector, writer of this Gospel.

Thomas – devotion, went to India and Persia.

James – the unknown Christian.

Simon – a man of daring, vision, enthusiasm.

Judas

Thaddeus

They were ordinary men; no academic background, social position, or wealth. They were great soul winners, with a great longing to reach others for Christ. They were totally surrendered to Christ.

- B. The Mission (10: 5-15)
 - i) It was delegated: drive out evil spirits and heal diseases.
 - ii) It was definite: sent out to preach.

"God's Kingship, rule of sovereignty recognised in the hearts, and operative in the lives of His people, affecting their complete salvation, their constitution as a church, and finally as a universe."

- HENDRIKSON -

iii) It was dependent: trust God to provide, a call to a simple lifestyle, be prepared for opposition.

2. WARNING OF PERSECUTION AHEAD (10: 16-23)

While the charge of vs.5-15 relates to the twelve men, vs.16-23 looks forward to a later period. Here Jesus warns us to expect opposition.

A. The State (10: 16-17)

Roman Governors and Jewish kings.

B. The Religious Leaders (10: 18-20)

Mainly the local Sanhedrin rather than the supreme Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.

C. Their Own Family (10: 21-23)

Their very nearest and dearest would thin k them mad and close the door against them. Sometimes the Christian is confronted with the hardest choice of all – the choice between obedience to Christ and obedience to family and friends.

3. WORDS OF INSTRUCTION (10: 24-42)

Here Jesus gives seven reasons not to be afraid or openly confess Christ.

- i) Suffering is to be expected (v25): Men persecuted Jesus so why should we His followers expect anything else.
- ii) God will bring everything to light (v26-27): The enemies of Jesus use secret and deceptive means to oppose the Gospel, whereas true believers are open and courageous in their lives and witness. Our task is not to please men bit to proclaim God's message.
- iii) Fear God only (v28): All that men can do is kill our bodies. Rather fear God who can throw both body and soul into hell.
- iv) God always cares for His own (v29-31: Sparrows are worthless and yet God knew every sparrow that fell to the ground. We are of greater worth. God knows us in detail.
- v) God honours those who acknowledge Him (v32-37): We must confess Christ with our lips and in our life.
- vi) We cannot escape conflict (v34-39):

"Once we have identified with Jesus Christ and confessed Him, we are part of a war. The only way a believer can escape conflict is to deny Christ and compromise his witness."

WIERSBE –

vii) We will be a blessing to others (v40-42): He who receives others receives God.

4. CONCLUSION

This ends the first section of Matthew's Gospel. We have seen the revelation of the King.

Chapter 1-4 : His person Chapter 5-7 : His principles Chapter 8-10 : His power

STUDY 8

THE KING'S CONFLICTS

(Chapter 11 and 12)

It was now up to the leaders of the nation to make their decision about Christ and instead of receiving their King, they began to rebel against Him.

1. REBELLION AGAINST HIS PROPHET (11: 1-30)

A. The Explanation (11: 1-15)

John the Baptist was in prison because he courageously denounced the adulterous marriage of King Herod Antipas to Herodias, who was his brother's wife. John the Baptist's life was drawing to a close and a violent death lay ahead.

- i) Anxious request: John was puzzled, so he sends a message to Jesus.
- ii) There was ample reply: Jesus returns the message the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers cured, the deaf hear, the dead raised, and the truth preached.
- B. The Condemnation (11: 16-24)

They were just like children, they would not dance, and they would not mourn. So this generation would not respond to either John or Jesus. No matter what John or Jesus did the people would never be pleased. So Jesus began to denounce them.

C. The Invitation (11: 25-30)

The religious leaders rebelled against John and Jesus because they were both intellectually and spiritually proud and dead. Now these verses indicate for us both the sovereignty of the Father and the responsibility of the sinner.

- i) To come: True salvation is found only in a person, the Lord Jesus Christ. His invitation is then open to those who are exhausted and burdened.
- ii) To take: This is a deeper experience. When we come to Christ, He gives us rest. When we take His yoke and learn, we find rest. To take a yoke in that day meant to become a disciple. When we submit to Christ, we are yoked to Him. He put a yoke on us that is tailor made for our lives and needs. The burden of doing His will is not a heavy one.

iii) To learn: The first two commands represent a crisis as we come and yield to Christ, but this step is into a process.

2. REBELLION AGAINST HIS PRINCIPLES (12: 1-21)

On several occasions our Lord Jesus deliberately violated some of the Jewish traditions with regards to the Sabbath.

A. Eating Corn (12: 1-8)

It was the time of the year when the corn ripens. It was the Sabbath Day and the disciples were hungry and so they took some heads of grain and ate it. The Pharisees noticed this and immediately condemned them.

We notice in this passage what excessive importance the hypocrite will attach to trivials.

So Jesus replies:

- i) Human need must not be subjected to barren legalism (v3-7).
- ii) Jesus Christ teaches that He is Lord of the Sabbath (v8).

So in straight forward language our Lord teaches that our observance of the Sabbath should never degenerate into dead outward formalism which will constitute a stumbling block to the full development of the life of a believer. Christians are to observe the Lord's day, not in the slavish spirit of the Pharisees, but in the newness of heart and life, as those who are through Christ, the beloved children of God.

B. Healing Of A Man With A Withered Hand (12: 9-14)

In the former portion Jesus taught that observance of the Sabbath must not rest on subtle, rigid regulations. Now Jesus shows us what we must do positively on the Sabbath.

Jesus, who rejects all man made Sabbath regulations regards it as sinful to leave such a man any longer in his pitiful condition while the opportunity is there to heal him.

So any religious law that is contrary to mercy and the care of nature should be looked upon with suspicion. God wants mercy not religious sacrifice. He wants love, not legalism.

3. REBELLION AGAINST HIS POWER (12: 22-37)

We notice how the hatred of the Jews seems more violent and things begin to move more and more towards His final rejection by the nation at Jerusalem.

A. The Accusation (12: 22-24)

This man that they brought to Jesus was blind, dumb and demon possessed. Jesus wonderfully healed him, but the Pharisees said He did it by the power of Satan and not by the power of God.

B. The Answer (12: 25-29)

Jesus points out that their statement was illogical and impractical. Why would Satan fight against himself? Jesus was able to cast out demons because He had first conquered Satan and so His victory was through the spirit of God.

C. Admonition (12: 30-37)

- i) No neutrality v30
- ii) No forgiveness

"Adultery, murder, blasphemy, and other sins can all be forgiven, they are not unpardonable. But God cannot forgive the rejection of His Son. It is the Spirit who bears witness to Christ, and who convicts the lost sinners."

- WIERSBE
 - iii) An unclean heart spreads to the lips v34-37
- D. REBELLION AGAINST HIS PERSON (12: 38-50)

To ask for a sign was evidence of unbelief. The wanted Him to prove that He was the Messiah. Jesus gave three responses to this challenge.

A. Jesus Reviews Their History (12: 39-42)

The heathen Ninevites repented when Jonah preached to them and Jesus is greater than Jonah.

Also the Queen of Sheba was convinced by the wisdom of Solomon and Jesus is greater than Solomon.

The main lesson behind this history lesson is this: both the citizens of Ninevah and the Queen of Sheba witnessed against the rulers of Israel.

B. Jesus Reveals Their Hearts (12: 43-45)

Jesus now stresses that He does not want an occasional spring clean.

"It means the discipline of a permanent moral revolution."

- BLANCHARD -

"It is not enough to clean house, we must also invite in the right tennent...mere religion or reformation will not save. There must be regeneration, the receiving of Christ into the heart."

- WIERSBE –
- C. Jesus Rejects Their Honour (12: 46-50)

Even our Lord's earthly family did not fully understand Him or His ministry. Some of His friends thought He was mad (Micah 3: 21). But Jesus did not want the honour that comes from people. He emphasized the family of God.

THE KING'S SECRETS

(Chapter 13)

We come to Chapter 13, a very important chapter for two reasons:

- i) It shows a definite turning point in Jesus' ministry. At the beginning of His ministry we find Jesus teaching in the synagogues, but now we find Him in the fields and on the sea shore.
- ii) Jesus now begins to use to the full His characteristic method of teaching which was in parables. Our Lord's use of parables puzzled the disciples. He had used some parables in His teaching already, but on this particular day He gives a series of seven interrelated parables, then added an eighth.

The word 'parable' means 'to cast alongside'. It is a story or comparison that is put along side something else to help make the lesson clear. But these are not ordinary parables, Jesus called them "the mysteries of heaven', In the New Testament a mystery is a spiritual truth understood only by a divine revelation so the parables would bring light to the believers and bring darkness to the unrepentant.

1. THE BEGINNING OF THE KINGDON (13: 1-9; 18-23)

In this well known parable of the sower, three things are clear:

- A. Four types of ground
 - i) Path
 - ii) Rocky
 - iii) Thorns
 - iv) Good
- B. Seed

The Word of God

- C. The Sower
 - i) Jesus is the Sower.
 - ii) We are also sowers.

"What is the lesson then...the seed is the Word of God and the soil is human hearts, so that reduced to a general law the teaching of the parable is that the result of the hearing of the Gospel always depends on the condition of the heart of those to whom it is addressed. The character of the heart determines the effect of the Word upon him".

- HENDRIKSON -

There are four types of heart:

- i) Unresponsive: Their heart has become hardened and the Gospel has no impact.
- ii) Impulsive: The problem here is that their emotions are superficial, not based upon deep rooted convictions. It is all on the surface.
- iii) Preoccupied: These are those who accept the Word and then slowly choke to death by the worries of life and the deceitfulness of riches.
- iv) Responsive: These are those who accept the Word, grow, and yield fruit.

2. OPPOSITION TO THE KINGDOM (13: 24-43)

In this passage we learn how Satan oppresses this kingdom by trying to snatch the Word from the hearts of the hearers. But when that fails, he has other ways of attacking God's work. He implants false Christians, encourages false growth, and introduces false doctrines.

A. The Tares – False Christians (13: 24-30; 36-43)

Satan cannot uproot the plant which is the true Christian and so he plants counterfeit Christians in their midst.

In this parable the good seed is the people converted through the Word. The field is the Word, so whenever Christ sows a true Christian, Satan will also come and sow a counterfeit one.

We must beware of Satan's counterfeits. He has counterfeit Christians who believe a counterfeit Gospel. He encourages a counterfeit righteousness, and even has a counterfeit Church. And so the two grow together until the Day of Judgement.

B. The Mustard Seed – False Growth (13: 31-32)

In the East a mustard seed symbolises something small and insignificant. From that small seed a large plant grows but not a tree in the strictest sense of the word. However the plant is large enough for birds to sit in the branches. The birds symbolises Satan.

"These facts suggest that the parable teaches an abnormal growth of the kingdom of heaven, one that makes is suitable for Satan to work in. Certainly Christendom has become a worldwide power with a complex organisation of many branches. What started in a humble manner, today boasts of material possessions and political influences."

- WIERSBE -

C. The Leaven – False Doctrine (13: 33)

The mustard seed demonstrates the false outward expansion of the kingdom, while the yeast illustrates the inward development of false doctrine and false living. Throughout the Bible leaven yeast is a symbol of evil. Jesus uses leaven to picture hypocrisy, false teaching and worldly compromise.

3. THE OUTCOME OF THE KINGDOM (13: 44-50)

A. The Hidden Treasure (13: 44)

The point of this parable is that the Kingdom of Heaven is a treasure so precious that those who obtain it are willing to surrender everything for it.

B. There Is The Pearl Of Great Price (13: 44-46)

As in the previous verse, willingness to surrender for the coveted prize is again stressed.

C. The Net (13: 47-50)

This parable resembles the parable of the tares among the wheat. Just as tares and wheat are allowed to grow together and not be separated until the day of harvest, so it is with the Church.

THE KING'S WITHDRAWAL

(Chapter 14)

Chapter 14 to 20 have often been called the retirement of the King. In these chapters we often see Jesus withdrawing from the crowds to spend time alone with the disciples for several reasons.

- i) the growing hostility of His enemies
- ii) the need for physical rest
- iii) the need to teach His disciples

So Jesus withdraws from the domain of Herod and now concentrates on the instruction of His disciples.

1. THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (14: 1-12)

Herod ruled from the years 37 BC to 4 AD. He was heathen in practise and a monster in character. He had nine wives and he thought nothing of killing his children or his wives. This is the Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who loved luxury and was very ambitious but his biggest sin was that he had run off with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. He listened to the voice of temptation and plunged himself into terrible sin.

A. The Great Power Of The Conscience (14: 1-2)

On hearing of Jesus' fame, Herod immediately thought he was John the Baptist raised from the dead. His conscience plagued him as he remembered his own wicked dealings with that holy man, and his heart failed within him. His heart told him that he had despised his godly counsel, and committed a foul and abominable murder and his heart told him, that though he had killed John, there would be a reckoning day.

There is a conscience in all men by nature. Fallen, as we are all born into this world, God has taken care to leave Himself a witness in our heart.

A conscience can make even kings miserable when they have wilfully rejected its advice. It can fill the princes of this world with fear and trembling. Yet the thoughtless and ungodly remember this and not sin against their consciences.

B. God's Children Are Often Never Rewarded In This World (14: 3-13)

If ever there was a case of godliness unrewarded in this life, it was that of John the Baptist. He was beheaded to gratify the hatred of an adulterous woman, and at the command of a capricious tyrant.

2. THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND (14: 14-21)

A. Rest Needed (14: 13a)

Jesus crossed the lake with His Disciples to a solitary place to avoid the crowds and to have the necessary leisure for continuing the task of instructing them.

B. Rest Curtailed (14: 13b)

The crowds followed Jesus on foot from the towns.

C. Compassion Shown (14: 14)

Jesus and His disciples desperately need rest, yet the needs of the multitudes touched His heart. The term 'compassion' literally means to have ones inner being stirred.

They were like sheep that had been lacerated from brutal fleecing, torn, exhausted, and wondering.

God seldom uses a man or woman who has a hard or a cold heart. Warmth within ourselves will alone create warmth in others. A person must love people or he cannot save them.

D. Hunger Anticipated (14: 15)

The disciples wanted to send the crowd away but Jesus told them not to. The disciples had little compassion.

E. Orders Issued (14: 16-21)

Jesus tells His disciples to feed them because they were quick to shake off their responsibilities. Jesus wanted then to claim God's promises personally.

"The problem with the disciples was that they concentrated all their attention on the hungry crowd. They were forgetting about Jesus, His power and His love. This forgetfulness on their part was inexcusable."

- HENDRIKSON -

Those five loaves and two fish in the hands of Jesus became pregnant with food for all the crowd. Out of His hand they were nothing, but in His hands and associated with Him, they were in contact with omnipotence.

Jesus makes everyone sit down, He gave thanks, and distributed to the people. Everyone ate and was satisfied, there were left-overs.

3. JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER (14: 22-34)

After the feeding Jesus made the disciples set out ton the other side of the lake. He then went up in a mountain side to pray by Himself. This shows His humility and His dependence on His Father.

A. The Distress Of The Disciples (14: 22-27)

The Bible tells us they were buffeted by the waves, and the wind was against them. They cried out with fear but then Jesus arrives and says it is Him and that they mustn't be afraid.

B. Practical Lesson For Our Storms (14: 28-34)

- i) He brought me here: We are in the will of God, not out of it.
- ii) He is praying for me: Jesus was on the mountain in prayer.
- iii) He will come to me: Jesus came to them in the storm.
- iv) He will help me to grow: Peter walks out to Jesus.

Peter started out well, but then he took his eyes off Jesus and focused on the waves. He became afraid and sank. So many Christians have faith to take the first step in following Christ, but not enough faith to go on as they began.

v) He will see me thorough: When they go into the boat the wind died down.

THE KING'S CONCERN

(Chapter 15)

In this chapter before us we see how Jesus taught the Jewish leaders the truth, how He exposes all their hypocrisy but in the other hand He shows the Gentile crowds His love as He met their needs.

1. HIS CONCERN FOR TRUTH (15: 1-20)

A. The Scribes And The Pharisees (15: 1-11)

The fact that Scribes and Pharisees united in this attack and came all the way from Jerusalem to speak to Jesus indicates the seriousness of their purpose.

"The tradition of the elders was the cumulative copies of oral law by which the written law and the Old Testament was interpreted, supplemented and applied to the changing circumstances of Jewish life."

- F.F. BRUCE -

While its intention was to safeguard the written laws, its effect could be to multiply some of its fundamental principles.

"Hypocrites generally attach great importance to mere outward things in religion."

- J.C. RYLE -

Look at this complaint from the Scribes and Pharisees. It was not that the disciples were covertess or self righteous, it was not that they were ungrateful or uncharitable.

- i) Accusation: It was they who were breaking God's law by practising their religions.
- ii) Illustration: By this ruling that the law concerning vows took precedence over reverence to parents, neutralized the Fifth Commandment. Property vowed to God, it was ruled, must not be used for other purposes, and if, after making such a vow, a man had nothing left for keeping his parents in need, that was too bad.
- iii) The application: Such frustration of the divine intention actually fulfils what Isaiah prophesized years previously who honoured the Lord with their lips but failed to render Him heart-obedience.

This tradition is something external while God's truth is internal. Tradition deals with ritual while God's truth deals with reality. Tradition brings empty words to the lips, but truth penetrates the heart and changes the life. God wants us to give Him our hearts, not just lip service.

B. The Disciples (15: 12-14)

They were astounded at Jesus' teaching. Jesus had offended the Pharisees, but Jesus was unconcerned. Neither they nor their teachings had been planted by God and none would last. Jesus further pointed out that the Pharisees were blind and could only leave their converts into a ditch.

C. The Apostle Peter (15: 15-20)

Jesus explains that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and goes out as human waste. Food doesn't touch the heart. But what comes out of the mouth begins in the heart and that is what defiles a person.

2. HIS COMPASSION (15: 21-39

Jesus responds to the need of the Gentiles. Not only did Jesus teach that no food was unclean but He practised His teaching by going into Gentile territory. These people were regarded as dogs by the Jews.

A. Demonised (15: 21-28)

Jesus was again withdrawing, trying to remain hidden but they found out where He was and the Canaanite woman brings her daughter. She pleads with Jesus to heal her daughter who was demon possessed. Jesus doesn't answer, not to destroy her faith, but to develop it. So she persists to ask. Jesus' disciples try to send her away but she again persists. Jesus says He was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel but she still persists.

The woman's faith was great because she persisted in asking and trusting when everything seemed against her.

"The passage is meant to teach us to persevere in praying for others. Our hearts are apt to become cool and indifferent, and to think that it is no use to draw near to God. Satan is labouring to draw us off from our prayers, and filling our minds with reasons why we may give them up."

J.C. RYLE –

B. The Sick And The Handicapped (15: 29-31)

Notice how Jesus withdraws but the crowds came to Him. Notice too His compassion and power as He heals them.

C. The Hungry (15: 32-39)

I have compassion for these people. This statement from Jesus led to the feeding of the 4000.

"It ought to encourage all who are about to begin to walk in God's ways. Let them remember that their Saviour is full of compassion. He will receive them graciously, He

will forgive them freely, He will remember their iniquities no more, and He will supply all their needs abundantly."

J.C. RYLE –

STUDY 12

THE KING'S SURPRISE

(Chapter 12)

This chapter records a dramatic turning point in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the very first time He mentions the Church and He also speaks about His death on the cross.

And so He began to prepare His disciples for His arrest, crucifixion and resurrection. Throughout this chapter there is the theme of faith and we notice four different levels of faith and how they relate to Christ.

1. NO FAITH (16: 1-4)

Their desire to silence Jesus now causes the opposing religious parties to unite in a common effort to oppose Jesus. This was in spite of their opposing beliefs.

The Pharisees believed in angels, the resurrection of the body and details of oral law. The Sadducees believed in the Torah and rejected resurrection.

But their hatred for Jesus brought them together so they came to Jesus asking Him for a sign from heaven in spite of all he had shown them already. The real reason was that they wanted to test Him so they could watch Him fail.

But Jesus simply replies:

A. Negatively (16: 2-3)

They could examine the evidence in God's world and draw valid conclusions but they could not examine the evidence He had presented. So He rebukes them because they pay attention to the changing weather conditions rather than to the event that was ushering in the Kingdom of God.

C. Positively (16: 4)

Jesus accuses them of being guilty of spiritual adultery. Jesus had mentioned the sign of Jonah before. This was the sign of death, burial and resurrection. Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection were actually a sign to Israel that He was their Messiah.

2. LITTLE FAITH (16: 5-12)

A. The Warning (16: 5-6)

Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees...

The Pharisees were trying to obtain their salvation by their own efforts – outward conformity to a certain standard. They were united in their dislike.

B. Jesus Reveals Their Little Faith (16: 7-12)

The disciples interpreted Jesus' teaching literally. They thought they weren't allowed to accept bread from the Pharisees. We learn again of their smallness of faith, because they were not taking to heart the teaching of Jesus, of His power and His love.

4. SAVING FAITH (16: 13-20)

Jesus now brings His disciples into Gentile territory, Caesarea, Philippi the Northern part of Palestine, also an area strongly identified with different religions and a centre for Baal worship. The Greek god Pan had been worshipped there, and Herod the Great had built a temple for Augustus Ceasar and note it was to that place that Jesus brings His disciples.

Jesus asked the people, who do people say that He is? Some said He was John the Baptist, others said He was Elijah or Jeremiah.

Jesus asked who Peter thought He was. Peter answered that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

By this statement Peter acknowledged that Jesus was the long awaited Anointed One, the One who as Mediator was set apart or ordained by the Father and anointed with the Holy Spirit to be His people's chief Prophet, only High Priest and eternal King.

Jesus responds: 'Blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah'. That was a reminder who he was by nature, simply a human son of a human father. He was a man who by himself could not have contributed anything worthwhile, just one human being among many. But by grace he was 'Peter'.

He reminds Peter that mere human calculation, intuition, or tradition could never have produced in this disciple's heart and mind the insight into the truth that he had just now.

The true meaning of the word 'rock' appears to be the truth of our Lord's Messiahship and divinity which Peter had just confessed.

Í will build', the figure of a building to represent the Church is found also in such passages as 1 Corinthians 3: 9 and Ephesians 2: 21. The thought is that step by step or little by little the building goes up. It increases in strength, in beauty, and in usefulness, its members considered as living stones.

Notice '...my church', i.e. the entire body of Christ. The sum total of all believers.

'and the gates of hell', represents Satan and his legions as it were storming out of hell's gates in order to attack and destroy the Church but never overcome it.

'I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven', which is preaching and discipline.

By proclaiming and openly witnessing, the Church of Christ is going to grow.

4. SERVING FAITH (16: 21-28)

Having declared His Person, Jesus now declares His work. He reminds them that He is to go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, going to be killed, and raised on the third day.

In response Peter says 'never!' Jesus then rebukes Peter: 'Get behind me Satan!' Jesus recognizes that Satan is using Peter as his agent in an attempt to seduce Jesus to try and obtain the crown without enduring the cross.

5. THE CONCLUSION

The way to blessing is through self denial. This means we must give ourselves wholly to Christ and share in His shame and in His death.

There is nothing more precious than a soul.

We must work for our rewards on the Second Coming of Christ. We will be rewarded according to what we have done.

THE KING'S GLORY

(Chapter 17)

This chapter begins with a glorious scene on a mountain top but ends with Peter catching a fish in order to pay his tax.

1. THE KING IN HIS GLORY (17: 1-13)

The exaltation of Jesus is fore-shadowed in His Transfiguration, and as we come to this event we must remember it has a two-fold purpose.

- i) To prepare Jesus to face with courage the bitter trial ahead of Him by reminding Him of His Father's constant love.
- ii) To strengthen the faith of Peter, James and John.

A. The Transfigured Lord (17: 1-2)

- i) The timing: The disciples have probably spent the last six days in gloom and wonder as they were told of Jesus' coming death.
- ii) The character: Suddenly Jesus' face shines like the sun and His clothes become white as light. This teaches us that the glory of Jesus was not reflected but radiated from within Him. There was a change on the outside, which came from within, as He allowed His essential glory to shine forth.

B. The Attended Saints (17: 3)

- i) Moses The great Lawgiver.
- ii) Elijah The great prophet.

The purpose of these men visiting Jesus was to show us the climax that Jesus was greater than them; greater than the law and greater than the prophets. It is also evidence that the dead will rise again. We find two men appearing on earth, in their bodies, who had long been separate from the land of the living, and in then we have the pledge of the resurrection of all.

C. The Astounded Disciples (17: 4)

These disciples suddenly awoke owing to the glow of this vision and there they saw the Saviour with the two celestial messengers. Peter who was always the impulsive one, without fully understanding the situation said, "Let us build some tents and live here."

Indirectly Peter's proposal was again an attempt to influence the Lord Jesus Christ not to choose the way of suffering but to continue to live in divine glory.

- D. The Divine Testimony (17: 5)
- i) The cloud: In the Old Testament the cloud is often associated with the presence of God.
- ii) The voice: It was the same voice that appeared at Jesus' baptism. It expressed the Father's pleasure in the Lord Jesus.

So the cloud and the voice would have proclaimed clearly to Peter that however great Elijah and Moses had been, the One standing before him was greater. Moses and Elijah were God's servants, Jesus was God's Son. They were but the stars, Jesus was the Sun. They were but witnesses, He was the truth.

E. The Practical Outcome (17: 6-13)

The disciples were perplexed but v.13 makes it clear that the disciples were clearly shown that the Lord was to be identified as the Messiah and Elijah with John the Baptist.

2. THE KING IN HIS POWER (17: 14-21)

They moved from the mountain of glory to the valley of need.

A. A Boy With A Demon (17: 14-15)

This was a very tragic picture. It caused him to have seizures so he suffered greatly and he would often fall into the fire and into the water. Out of hell there could be no greater misery. This shows us Satan's influence over young.

B. The Impotence Of The Disciples (17: 16-18)

The problem here is that earlier they had been able to cast out demons on a preaching tour, but now the power had left them. It must have been some failure in their spiritual lives. They had become jealous that some had been on the mountain. During the absence of the Lord up on the mountain, they had grown self-indulgent. Because of that they neglected their prayer and because of that their faith was weakened and they were unprepared.

C. The Cure For Impotence (17: 19-20)

The Lord Jesus expresses His disappointment and He explains that if they had faith of a mustard seed they would have been able to heal him. They should have been praying and studying God's Word, so Jesus had to do it. Faith is a living faith and must be cultivated so that it grows and does even greater exploits for God.

3. THE KING IN HIS HUMILITY (17: 22-27)

For a second time, Jesus mentioned His death and resurrection. The disciples were deeply grieved and were afraid to ask Him about it.

Then the tax collectors had come to the disciples and Jesus clarifies the position that we must pay our tax and in a marvellous miracle we see how Jesus was to get the money for Himself and the others. Jesus tells Peter to catch a fish as it will have some money in its mouth.

First someone had to lose a coin in the water. Then a fish had to take the coin in its mouth and retain it. Then some fish had to bite on Peter's hook and be caught. You cannot explain this in the natural realm.

This miracle further underlines the attributes of Jesus.

- i) His penetrating knowledge
- ii) His consciousness of Sonship
- iii) His considerateness
- iv) His absolute authority
- v) His generosity

"A Christian ought never to disturb the public peace for things of mere temporary importance."

- BULLINGER -

THE KING'S REBUKE

(Chapter 18)

There are many times we see God's children getting on each others nerves.

To live above, with saints we love, will certainly be glory To live below, with saints we know, well that's another story

In Chapter 18, we find Jesus Christ rebuking His disciples for their pride and their desire for worldly greatness. And so Jesus teaches them three essentials for unity and harmony among God's people.

1. HUMILITY (18: 1-4)

A. The Need For Humility

The discussion contained in this chapter consists of a number of Jesus' sayings dealing with different aspects of fellowship of heaven. It began by them asking who is the greatest. This could have been caused by jealously creeping among the disciples, because they had not been invited to the Mountain of Transfiguration, and appeared to have been left behind.

B. The Example Of Humility (18: 2-6; 10-14)

The disciples waited breathlessly for Jesus to name which one was the greatest. To their amazement Jesus passes them by completely and calls a little child into their midst and uses the child as an example of true greatness. This teaches us that in the kingdom of God, the lowliest and most inconspicuous, who are faithful and loyal to Christ, have definite worth. In order for this to come about, we need a change because by nature we are rebels who want to be celebrities instead of servants.

"Would we know whether we are really converted? Would we know the test by which we must try ourselves? The surest mark of true conversion is humility. If we have really received the Holy Ghost, we shall show it by a meek and childlike spirit. Like children, we shall think humbly of our own strength and wisdom, and be very dependent on our Father in heaven. Like children, we shall not seek great things in this world, but having food and raiment and a Father's love, we shall be content. What we all want is a conversion from pride to humility."

- J.C. RYLE -

In addition we learn Jesus Christ's attitude towards children and what ours ought to be. Not only does Jesus have a great love for children, but He teaches us four things:

- i) We have to become like little children
- ii) We must receive them
- iii) We must never cause them to stumble
- iv) We must never despise them

C. The Cost Of Humility (18: 7-9)

The truly humble person will build others up, never tear them down. Anything that causes them to stumble must be removed, it not, it will cause someone else to stumble. Humility begins with self-examination and it continues with self-denial. Jesus is not suggesting that we maim our bodies, because harming our bodies cannot change our spiritual position, but rather Jesus was instructing us to perform spiritual surgery and remove anything that causes us to stumble and others to stumble.

2. HONESTY (18: 15-20)

What should we do when another Christian has sinned against us or caused us to stumble.

A. Keep The Matter Private (18: 15)

You must approach the person and speak with him alone. It may be that he doesn't realise what he has said or done or even if he did it deliberately. When he sees your attitude of submission and love, it will help him to repent. But above all you must go to him with the idea of winning your brother not an argument. It is possible to win an argument and lose a brother or sister.

B. Ask For Help From Others (18: 16)

If the offender refuses to make things right, then we may feel free to share the burden with one or two other mature Christians and seek and covet their counsel. You may be the one that is wrong. If not, you all go together.

C. Ask The Church For Help (18: 17)

The problem has now grown to such a degree that it is open for the whole church to see. If, after it has been taken up before the church and still no repentance, then he must be disciplined and no longer be treated as a spiritual brother and he must be treated as an outsider.

D. Keep The Local Church Spiritual (18: 18-20)

Jesus gives us three ways to keep the church spiritual.

- i) Discipline
- ii) Prayer
- iii) Fellowship

3. FORGIVENESS (18: 21-35)

The Messianic community of God's people is first and foremost the community of the redeemed. We owe our very existence to the forgiveness of God which was made possible by the Messiah's death. Now having the experience of forgiveness of all sins, we are now to forgive others when they sin against us.

"The society of the forgiven has no meaning if those who are forgiven are themselves unforgiving."

- TASKER -

Now the parable Jesus tells has a main character who went through three stages in his experience of forgiveness.

A. He Was A Debtor (18: 23-27)

This man had been stealing money from the King and when the books were audited his crime was discovered. Unable to pay back what he owed, the King in his compassion assumed the loss and forgave his servant.

B. He Was A Creditor (18: 28-30)

He in turn was owed about 100 denarii but he was unwilling to forgive.

C. He Became A Prisoner (18: 31-34)

When the King found out about his unforgiving servant he put him in prison, tortured him and told him to pay back the full amount.

"The world's worst prison is the prison of an unforgiving heart. If we refuse to forgive others, then we are only imprisoning ourselves and causing our own torment. Some of the most miserable people in the world...have been people who would not forgive others."

WIERSBE –

We have been forgiven so much by Jesus, let us forgive others the wrongs they have done to us which is so small compared to what we have done to Jesus.

THE KING'S INSTRUCTIONS

(Chapter 19: 1-15)

The Lord was now withdrawing as the enemy was becoming more intense. The religious leaders already tried to trap Jesus over questions of the Sabbath. Now they try again over the issues of divorce. So now we have the teachings on marriage and divorce.

1. THE ORIGINAL CREATION LAW (19: 1-6)

The Pharisees were concerned about divorce, but Jesus was concerned about marriage. In answer to the questions about divorce he goes back to Genesis instead of Deuteronomy.

A. The Reason Of Marriage (19: 4)

It is not good for man to be alone so the reason for marriage was that God creates a helper for us in order to assist us to reach our complete fulfilment in life. (Genesis 1:12, 18, 21; 2: 18)

B. The Purpose Of Marriage (19: 5-6)

- i) Severance: God's blueprint for marriage directs husbands and wives to leave their fathers and mothers. It does not mean that you abandon your parents or make a geographical move. It means that you must establish an adult relationship with them and be more concerned about your mate's ideas, opinions, and practices. It means that you make the husband and wife relationship your priority human relationship.
- ii) Permanence: You must cleave or weld yourself to your wife in total commitment until death you do part. A good marriage is based on commitment rather than on animal attraction. The two people who get married must be faithful to one another regardless of what happens.
- iii) Unity: You must become one flesh. Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death.
- iv) Intimacy: "and the man and his wife were both naked and not ashamed."

2. THE MOSAIC LAW OF DIVORCE (19: 7-8)

Jesus teaches that Moses permitted divorce, but he didn't command it. The reason he permitted divorce was because of the hardness of the human heart but this was not God's intention from the start.

3. OUR LORD'S LAW OF DIVORCE (19: 9-15)

The Pharisees were concerned about the ground of divorce but Jesus was concerned with the institution of marriage.

The Pharisees said Moses' provision for divorce was a command but Jesus said it was a concession.

The Pharisees took divorce lightly but Jesus took it seriously, so much that with only one exception, He called all remarriage after divorce adultery.

THE KING'S DEMANDS

(Chapter 19: 16 - 20: 34)

We cannot follow our Lord without paying a price, after He went to the cross for us. Now Jesus explains the rightful demands that He makes upon those who want to trust Him to be His disciples.

1. WE MUST LOVE CHRIST SUPREMELY (19: 16-26)

A. Congratulations

- i) He didn't lack morality He kept the commandments.
- ii) He didn't lack outward religion He knew and obeyed all the laws of God. He was probably ruler of the synagogue.
- iii) He didn't lack sincerity No slacking or wandering away.
- iv) He didn't lack zeal He came to Jesus.
- v) He didn't lack willingness What good thing must he do to get eternal life

B. Warnings

He was spiritually dead. He had an adequate view of the law of God, he had no sense of guilt, and he tried to work his was to heaven.

C. Directions

- i) Sell your possessions
- ii) Give it all to the poor
- iii) Follow me

The man went away sad because the price was too great. When the disciples saw that they asked who could be saved. Jesus said it was impossible with man but possible with God.

2. WE MUST OBERY CHRIST UNRESERVEDLY (19: 27 - 20: 16)

Jesus now gives to Peter and the other disciples immense encouragement because they had given up everything for Christ.

A. Peter's Question (19: 27-30)

Peter reminds Jesus of how they had left everything to follow Him so Jesus says they will be blessed but the first will be the last and the last will be the first.

"The late comers into the Kingdom of God will be treated on an equality with those who have come in first."

- F.F. BRUCE -

B. There Is An Illustration (20: 1-16)

We must avoid falling prey to the 'work for wages 'spirit.

"We should not serve Him because we want to get a reward and we should not insist on knowing what we will get."

- WIERSBE -

We must not fail to recognise God's sovereignty and His right to distribute favours as He pleases. We must be far removed from envy. Our reward should be the shear joy of serving Christ.

3. WE MUST GLORIFY CHRIST COMPLETELY (20: 17-34)

A. The Clear Announcement Of Jesus' Death (20: 17-19)

They were now on their way to Jerusalem when Jesus was going to be betrayed, condemned, mocked, flogged and crucified. Jesus knew this was what lay ahead of him. All was spread before His mind like a picture but He knew that without the shedding of His blood there could be no forgiveness. Knowing all this He went willingly to the cross.

B. The Request From The Mother (20: 20-28)

We often find today that mothers are more ambitious for their children than children are for themselves. She wanted greatness for them, not Godliness. The place of honour is not a reward or compensation for the service, the service is honour.

C. The Blind Men Of Jericho (20: 29-34)

The last lap to Jerusalem took Jesus through Jericho and here He was going to heal Bartimaeus and his friend. Here Jesus puts into practise what He had just taught His disciples. He became a servant to two rejected blind beggars. This incident illustrates the perseverance of the blind men in the face of discouragement and the power and compassion of Jesus.

THE KING'S JUDGEMENTS

(Chapter 21: 1 – 22: 14)

We begin with the fourth major section of Matthew's Gospel. Here the Lord is going to reveal the sins of Israel and explain why religious leaders reject Him and His message.

1. SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS (21: 1-11)

These verses contain a remarkable passage in the life of our Lord. They describe His public entry into Jerusalem when He came for the last time.

A. Our Lord's Perfect Knowledge (21: 1-3)

Here Jesus sends two of the disciples into the village. He tells them exactly where the donkey will be and that they will be questioned and He tells them how to answer.

B. Jesus Fulfilled Prophecy (21: 4-5)

The prophecy occurred 550 years earlier through the ministry of Zachariah, yet the people were so spiritually blind they were unable to see the significance, and so too will the prophesies of the second coming be fulfilled.

C. The Worthlessness Of Mans Favour (21: 6-11)

Of all these admiring crowds who thronged around our Lord, four days later not one would stand with Him. Now they shouted 'Hosanna', but in four days they would shout 'Crucify Him'.

"This is a pitiful picture of human nature – this is a proof of the utter folly of thinking more of the praise of man than the praise of God. Nothing in truth is so uncertain as popularity: it is here today and gone tomorrow; it is a sandy foundation and sure to fail those who build upon it."

J.C. RYLE –

2. HYPOCRISY (21: 12-22)

Jesus performed two acts of judgement: He cleansed the temple and He cursed a fig tree. Both were contrary to His usual manner of ministry but both revealed the hypocrisy of Israel; their inward corruption, and their outward fruitlessness.

A. Cleansing The Temple (21: 12-16)

Jesus drove out of the Temple all those who were buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the tables selling doves. He reminded the

people that the Temple was a house of prayer. They had made it into a den of robbers.

"Christ Jesus is and remains the divine Purifier. For He is perfect in love as well as in righteousness and holiness. He cannot tolerate deceit or unrighteousness."

GELDENHUYS –

B. Cursing The Tree (21: 17-22)

This is an instance almost without parallel in all our Lord's ministry. It is only occasionally where Jesus makes one of His creation suffer in order to teach a spiritual truth.

Here was a tree full of leaves but barren of fruit, a striking resemblance of Judaism. There was only one outward show: temple, priesthood, feats, the Old Testament, Levites and sacrifices; but destitute of fruit: nor grace, fruit, spirituality.

3. OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD (21: 23 - 22: 14)

Here Jesus relates a series of three parables in order to explain by what authority He could cleanse the Temple.

A. They Rejected God The Father (21: 23-32)

One son compared to the publicans had for some time refused obedience but afterwards repented and obeyed. But the other son like the Pharisees, pretended to go but didn't do it.

B. They Rejected The Son (21: 33-46)

Here a landowner plants his vineyard, digs a wine-press, builds a watchtower, goes away on holiday, and hands it over to the tenants to look after. These tenants killed the owner's servants who came to ask for their money. This happens again until he sends his son. They kill his son too.

The landowner would refer to God.

The tenants would refer to the Scribes and the Pharisees.

The vineyard would refer to Israel.

The servants would refer to the Prophets.

The son would refer to Jesus.

C. They Rejected The Holy Spirit (22: 1-14)

Here the king prepares a banquet for his son and invites the guests but they refuse to come, and some killed the servants. Then he invited all those off the streets who wanted to come. One of the guests was not wearing wedding clothes and so was thrown out. So we must wear the garments of God's righteousness.

4. CONCLUSION

The leaders of Israel were guilty of spiritual blindness, hypocrisy, and disobedience, but instead of repenting they decided to attack Him, argue with Him, and reject Him.

THE KING'S DEFENSE

(Chapter 22: 15-46)

It's Tuesday of the Passover week and again the Lord's enemies try to trap Him by using a series of loaded questions. Four questions were involved.

1. A POLITICAL QUESTION ABOUT TAXES (22: 15-22)

A. Beware Of Flattery (22: 15-16)

How smooth and honeyed these words were. They thought that by good words and fair speeches they could throw Him off guard.

B. The Marvellous Wisdom of Jesus (22: 17-22)

Jesus knowing their intention said that they were hypocrites and asked them why they were trying to trap Him.

The Pharisees believed one shouldn't pay taxes and the Herodians believed one should pay taxes. Here the two opposites have joined forces to trap Jesus. Jesus says give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and give to God what is God's. We must honour and obey and render to authorities what is due and we must more importantly honour and obey God.

2. A DOCTRINAL QUESTION ABOUT THE RESURRECTION (22: 23-33)

The Sadducees denied the resurrection and spirits. Their argument was who would a woman be married to if one husband died, and she married another?

A. They Didn't Know The Scriptures (22: 23-29)

There is no need for marriage in heaven because there will be no death. Therefore it will not be necessary to bare children to replace those who die. At death we will be as sexless as the angels.

B. They Didn't Know The Power Of God (22: 30-33)

Jesus grounded the doctrine of resurrection securely in the being and character of God. Jesus answered their claim that there was no resurrection by referring to Moses, (Exodus 3: 6).

3. AN ETHICAL QUESTION ABOUT THE LAW (22: 34-40)

The Pharisees had 610 commandments:

245 were positive 365 were negative

Now they wanted to know which was the greatest.

Jesus replies that we must love the Lord our God, with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind. The king of commandments is love:
With all your heart – all your affection
With all your soul – all your life
With all your mind – study the Word
With all your strength – be active for God

4. A PERSONAL QUESTION ABOUT THE MESSIAH (22: 40-46)

Making a decision about Christ is a matter of life or death. The evidence is there for all to examine. We can examine it defensively and miss the truth, or we can examine it honestly and humbly and discover the truth, believe and be saved. Religious leaders were so blinded by tradition, position, and selfish pride that they couldn't and wouldn't see the truth and receive it.

THE KING'S DENUNCIATION

Chapter 23

This is the most remarkable chapter in all the four Gospels. It contains the last words which Jesus spoke in the Temple. They consist of a sharp rebuke of the doctrines and practices of the Scribes and Pharisees.

"This was our Lord's last public message. It is a scathing denunciation f false religion that parades under the guise of truth."

WIERSBE –

1. EXPLANATION TO THE CROWD

In this section Jesus explains the basic flaws of Pharisaical religion.

A. They Had A False Concept Of Righteousness (23: 1-3)

The people are urged to obey what the Pharisees taught from the Word, but not to follow their experience because their righteousness meant outward conformity to the Law of God. They ignored the inward condition of the heart. Religion was merely obeying rules. Inwardly they did not obey the Law.

B. They Had A False Concept Of Ministry (23: 4)

To the Pharisees, ministry was handing down laws and adding to their burdens. Jesus came to lighten our burdens, but legalistic religion always seems to make burdens heavier.

C. The Had A False Concept Of Greatness (23: 5-12)

To them greatness was recognition by men and praise from men, They were not concerned about the approval of God. They used their religion to attract attention, not to glorify God. The Pharisees used religious ornaments, looked for position, and sought for titles of honour. Jesus says true greatness is to serve.

1. DENUNCIATION OF THE PHARISEES (23: 13-36)

Here are seven laments, a description of false religion.

A. Shutting Up The Kingdom (23: 13-14)

Teaching man-made traditions instead of God's truth.

B. Destroying The People (23: 15)

By winning them over to their legalistic system.

C. Greedy For Gain (23: 16-22)

They were blind to the true values of life as they had their priorities confused.

D. Exalt The Trifles Above The Serious (23: 23-24)

They majored in minors. They forgot about the important things.

E. Defiled In Heart (23: 25-26)

The Pharisees were self indulgent and greedy. They were outwardly clean, but inwardly defiled.

F. Hypocritical (23: 27-28)

THE Pharisees were like white wasted tombs. Outside they were white but they were filled with defilement and death on the inside.

G. Persecutors (23: 29-36)

The very men that pretended to honour dead prophets, could see no beauty in a living Christ.

"We learn from this whole passage how abominable is hypocrisy in the sight of God."

- J.C. RYLE -

3. LAMENT OVER JERUSALEM (23: 37-39)

Jesus spoke these words of lamentation as a sincere expression of His love for Jerusalem and His grief over the many opportunities for salvation that they had passed by.

The image of a mother bird gathering her brood is a familiar one. It is a picture of love, tender care and a willingness to die to protect others.

THE KING'S RETURN - PART 1

Chapter 24

Jesus now comes to deal with the fall of Jerusalem and the coming of Christ a second time, and the end of the world.

1. THE OCCASION (24: 1-3)

It is a Tuesday morning, a few days before the Passover Lamb is going to offer Himself as an atonement for the sins of His people. As Jesus passes by the Temple, the disciples draw attention to its beauty and marvellous architecture to which Jesus replies that soon it will be deserted and destroyed. When it was to occur, led Jesus' famous discourse on the end times.

2. JESUS PREDICTS VARIOUS COMING EVENTS (24: 4-14)

- A. Religious deception (v5)
- B. Wars (v6)
- C. Famines and earthquakes (v7-8)
- D. Persecution (v9)
- E. World wide chaos (v13)

But in spite of all the above, he who stands firm to the end will be saved. In addition Jesus says the Gospel will be preached to the whole world before He comes.

3. THE GREAT TRIBULATION (24: 15-28)

Here Jesus refers to the fall of Jerusalem. He divides it into two sections.

A. As Jerusalem was falling they would run to the hills in terror, but the oncoming Roman Legions would cause stress on a scale unprecedented and restricted only by the merciful intervention of God, who for the elect's sake would limit its duration which was unequalled from the beginning of the world. (v15-21)

The elect would have to endure the anguish of those terrible days alone, for it was not then that the Son of Man would come to avenge His people. (v22-28)

4. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (24: 29-30)

- A. It is the time of Great Configuration
- B. It is a time of Rejuvenation
- C. It is a time of Self-Realization

D. It is a time of Harmonization

All nature, gloriously transformed, will, as it were, sing a symphony. There will be concord and harmony everywhere. There will be variation, to be sure, but a most delightful blending of sounds so that the total effect will be unity. It is clear that the Lord's return will be seen as well as heard. When the Lord begins to descend, the souls of the redeemed leave their heavenly bodies. The saints still living on earth at the moment of Christ's return are changed, and all the saints now go to meet the Lord. It is a doctrine of great comfort.

5. LESSONS FROM THE FIG TREE (24: 32-35

Jesus is saying here that it is certain that Jerusalem is going to fall and signs are clear.

6. THE APPLICATION (24: 36-51)

A. Be Ready (24: 35-44) B. Be Faithful (24: 45-51)

THE KING'S RETURN - PART 11

(Chapter 25)

We now continue with the Lord's prophetical discourse.

1. PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS (25: 1-13)

This is a solemn parable. The timing of it refers to the second coming of Christ. These virgins represent the professing Christians. Some are wise, and some are unwise. The bridegroom is Christ and the oil is the Holy Spirit.

- A. The Church Is A Mixed Body (25: 1-4)
- B. The Church May Become Neglectful (25: 5)
- C. Jesus will return suddenly (25: 6)
- D. The Changes Jesus Will Bring (25: 7-13)
 - i) to the Godly: They will go into blessedness
 - ii) to the ungodly: They will be cast into darkness

2. PARABLE OF THE TALENTS (25: 14-30)

If the first parable teaches us to be watchful, this teaches us to be faithful in our work.

- A. All Christians Have Received Something From God (25: 14-15)
- B. Many Make Bad Use Of Their Talents (25: 16-18)
- C. One Day We Will Have A Reckoning With God (25: 19)
- D. True, Hardworking Christian Will Receive An Abundant Reward (25: 20-23)
- E. Unfruitful Members Will Be Condemned (25: 24-30)
- 3. PARABLE OF THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS (25: 31-46)

There are few passages in the whole Bible more solemn and heart=searching than this.

A. Who Will Be The Judge? (25: 31)

Jesus Christ.

B. Who Will Be Judged? (25: 32-34)

All mankind.

C. In What Manner Will The Judgement Be Conducted? (25: 35-45)

According to evidence.

D. The Final Results (25: 46)

Heaven or hell.

4. CONCLUSION

Jesus focuses on His second coming and He exalts us as His people to watch, work and be converted.

THE KING'S PREPARATION

(Chapter 26: 1-56)

Jesus' teaching is now over and His passion is about to begin. The Sanhedrin had resolved to execute the Lord. We come with reverence to the closing chapters as we read of His suffering and death.

1. AT BETHANY: WORSHIP VERSUS WASTE (26: 1-16)

A. Mary (26: 6-7)

She is the sister of Martha and Lazarus and is mentioned three times in the Gospels and in each occasion she was at the feet of Jesus. A deeply spiritual lady who brings to her Lord the very best she could bring. She brings and anoints Him with perfume which cost her one year's wages. It was spontaneous, single-minded and sacrificial. She found at His feet her blessing and she brought to His feet her burdens. She had listened to His Word, so she knew that soon Jesus would die and be buried. Instead of anointing His body after His death, she did so before His death, in an act of faith and love.

B. Judas (26: 8-9)

A tragic picture, whose only response could be 'why such a waste?' Judas, like all the other apostles appeared to believe and to give up all for Christ's sake and like them he went out and preached, but he never changed.

"Judas' life is a warning to those who pretend to serve Christ but whose hearts are far from God. He is also a warning to those who waste their opportunities and their lives."

WIERSBE –

C. JESUS (26: 10-16)

Jesus explains it was something beautiful she had done. Her act of worship caused joy to Christ, fragrance to her home, and blessing to the world. Her devotion encourages us to love and serve Christ with our very best.

2. IN THE UPPER ROOM: FAITHFULNESS VERSUS BETRAYAL

A. Preparation For Passover (26: 17-19

It was necessary to purchase and prepare the materials for the Passover Feast. It was also necessary to find a place.

B. Announcement Of A Betrayer (26: 20-25)

Up to the very end the disciples did not know that Judas was the traitor. During the feast Jesus announced the presence of a traitor. He gave the dipped bread to Judas. The 'Satan entered into Judas' and he left to do his task.

C. Institution Of The Lord's Supper (26: 26-30)

It was after Judas left the room that Jesus instituted something new, the 'Lord's supper'. It is a sign of remembrance and it looks ahead (v29).

3. GETHSEMANE: SUBMISSION VERSUS RESISTANCE (26: 31-56)

A. The Disciples' Failure Announced (26: 31-35)

This announcement was probably made as the band of men made their way to the garden. Peter says he will never falter and the Lord warns him.

B. Jesus' Surrender Accomplished (26: 36-46)

Jesus left eight of His disciples at the entrance to the garden while He, Peter, James and John went further into the garden. Not with a fear of death (v38), Jesus now experienced being made sin and a curse for mankind. He totally submitted to His Father's will (v42).

C. The Arrest Achieved

Judas came and kissed Jesus to show who must be arrested. While Jesus was being arrested, Peter reached for his sword, and cut off a servant's ear.

"Misplaced zeal leads Christians to do the wrong things in the wrong place and to do them badly."

- F.F. BRUCE -

Jesus reproves Peter and adds a solemn declaration of perpetual significance (v52).

All the disciples deserted and fled.

THE KING'S TRIAL

(Chapter 26: 57 – 27: 26)

1. CAIAPHAS (26: 57-68)

Probably this trial took place in a large upper room of that wing of the palace where Caiaphas lived. The Sinless One to be subjected to a trial conducted by sinful men was in itself a deep humiliation. To be tried by such men, under such circumstances made it infinitely worse. Greedy, serpent-like, vindictive, rude, sly hypocritical Caiaphas; crafty, superstitious, self seeking Pilate; superficial Herod ... these were His judges.

It had been decided long ago the Jesus must be put to death, and the motive behind this was envy.

In reality the trial was a farce. It was a mistrial and it was illegal on several grounds.

- i) No trial for life was allowed during the night, yet Jesus was tried and condemned between 1-3a.m. on Friday.
- ii) The trial of Jesus was a result of a bribe.
- iii) Jesus was asked to incriminate Himself.
- iv) The Jewish law did not permit the sentence to be pronounced until the day after the accused had been convicted.

2. PETER (26: 69-75)

A. How It Happened

- i) First denial (v69-79)
- ii) Second denial (v71-71)
- iii) Third denial (v73-74)

B. How Peter Felt Afterwards

Peter remembered Jesus' warning and he breaks down and weeps. He must be careful of the danger of self-confidence and laziness.

3. JUDAS (27: 1-10)

Judas returns to the scene full of regret and remorse after hearing that Jesus had been condemned.

"The Greek word 'remorse' indicates not a sorrow for sin that leads to a change of mind and action, but a regret at being caught, a remorse that leads to despair. Peter

truly repented and Jesus restored him. But Judas did not repent, and this led to his suicide."

- WIERSBE -
- 4. PILATE (27: 11-26)

A. Pressures

- i) Political He was a failure as a General
- ii) Personal His wife
- iii) Psychological (v18)

B. Predicament

- i) The morality of Jesus
- ii) The majesty of Jesus

C. Plans He Made

- i) Detracted from his responsibility (v24)
- ii) Depersonalized the issue (Lk. 23: 7)
- iii) Decentralized the issue (v15-18)
- iv) Dodges the issue (v24)

THE KING'S SUFFERING AND DEATH

(Chapter 27: 27-66)

1. MOCKED BY THE SOLDIERS (27: 27-30)

The official indictment against Jesus was that He claimed to be King of the Jews. The soldiers gathered to make sport of Jesus. They wished to have fun with the King of the Jews.

A. They disrobed Him (27: 28)

They strip Jesus of His garments in order so that in their mockery they may take the next step.

B. They robed Him (27: 28)

This was probably a discarded and faded soldier's mantle, representing the royal purple.

C. They crowned Him (27: 29)

Rivulets of blood must have started to run down His face, neck and other parts of His body.

D. They sceptered Him (27: 29)

Having forced Jesus to sit down, in his right Hand they now place a sturdy reed... for a King.

E. They mocked Him (27: 29)

F. They spat on Him (27: 30)

They now descent to a lower level that the beasts.

G. They hit Him (27: 30)

2. THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS (27: 31-44)

A. Simon of Cyrene (27: 32)

Thos condemned to be crucified had to carry their own cross. Jesus was emotionally, spiritually, and physically finished which made it impossible for Him to carry His cross. Simon of Cyrene is then forced to carry the cross.

B. The Legionnaires (27: 33-38)

They offered Jesus wine but He refused because He wanted to endure with full consciousness all the pain that was in store for Him, in order to be our perfect substitute. They then nailed Jesus to the cross and divided His clothes and cast lots.

C. The Bypassers (27: 39-40)

They shook their heads in contempt and arrogance and hurled abuse at Jesus.

D. The Chief Priests, Scribes and the Elders (27: 41-43)

They lost every bit of dignity and joined with the bystanders in giving experience to their contempt of Jesus. Their ridicule was mixed with hatred and envy.

E. The robbers (27: 44)

The robbers too in the same manner began to verbally abuse Him, so now the insults were coming from almost every side. In the midst of it all Jesus remains silent.

- 3. THE DEATH OF JESUS (27: 45-46)
- A. Darkness (27: 45)
- B. The Cry Of Agony (27: 46)
- C. The Mockery And The Sympathy (27: 47-49)
- D. Death (27: 50)
- E. Signs (27: 51-56)
 - i) The curtain torn in two
 - ii) Earthquake led to the graves being opened
 - iii) People raised from the dead
 - iv) The Centurion made a statement of faith
 - v) The ministering woman

4. THE BURIAL OF JESUS (27: 56-66)

Jesus dies at three o'clock in the afternoon. The disciples had fled and Joseph comes to bury Jesus. He wrapped the body, put it into the tomb with a big stone across the entrance and stationed a guard.

THE KING'S VICTORY (Chapter 28)

1. THE LORD RISEN (28: 1-10)

The Sabbath had come and gone, it is now Sunday morning at dawn, the first day of the week. The two Marys both came to look at the tomb. They came to anoint the body to prevent rapid decomposition.

An angel appeared, rolled back the stone and sat on it. The marvellous radiance was proof of His decent from heaven. The sparkling lustre of His garment indicated His holiness.

The guards were so overcome with fright that if anyone has been present at the scene he could hardly have guessed what was shaking more: the earth or the guards.

Christ's resurrection was the work of God. The Father raised Him from the dead. So did the Spirit and the Son took back the life which He had laid down.

The angel encourages them not to be afraid for Jesus has risen and go tell the disciples.

2. THE GUARD BRIEFED (28: 11-15)

While the believers were worshipping the living Christ, the unbelievers were plotting to destroy the witness of the resurrection. They organised a meeting and devised a plan and gave the soldiers a large sum of money, a story to spread, and an assurance of freedom from punishment.

3. THE GREAT COMMISSION (28: 16-20)

A. Trusting His Power (28: 18)

- i) The source of His authority; has been given to me
- ii) The extent of His authority: all authority on heaven and on earth

B. Carrying Our His Programme (28: 19)

- i) Therefore go: right now
- ii) Make disciples: through baptism and teaching

C. Believing His Promise

- i) For whom: those who are obeying the commission
- ii) Until when: very end of the age

"It is everything to be a Christian. None have such a King, such a Priest, such a constant Companion, and such an unfailing Friend, as the true servants of Christ."

- LIVINGSTONE -