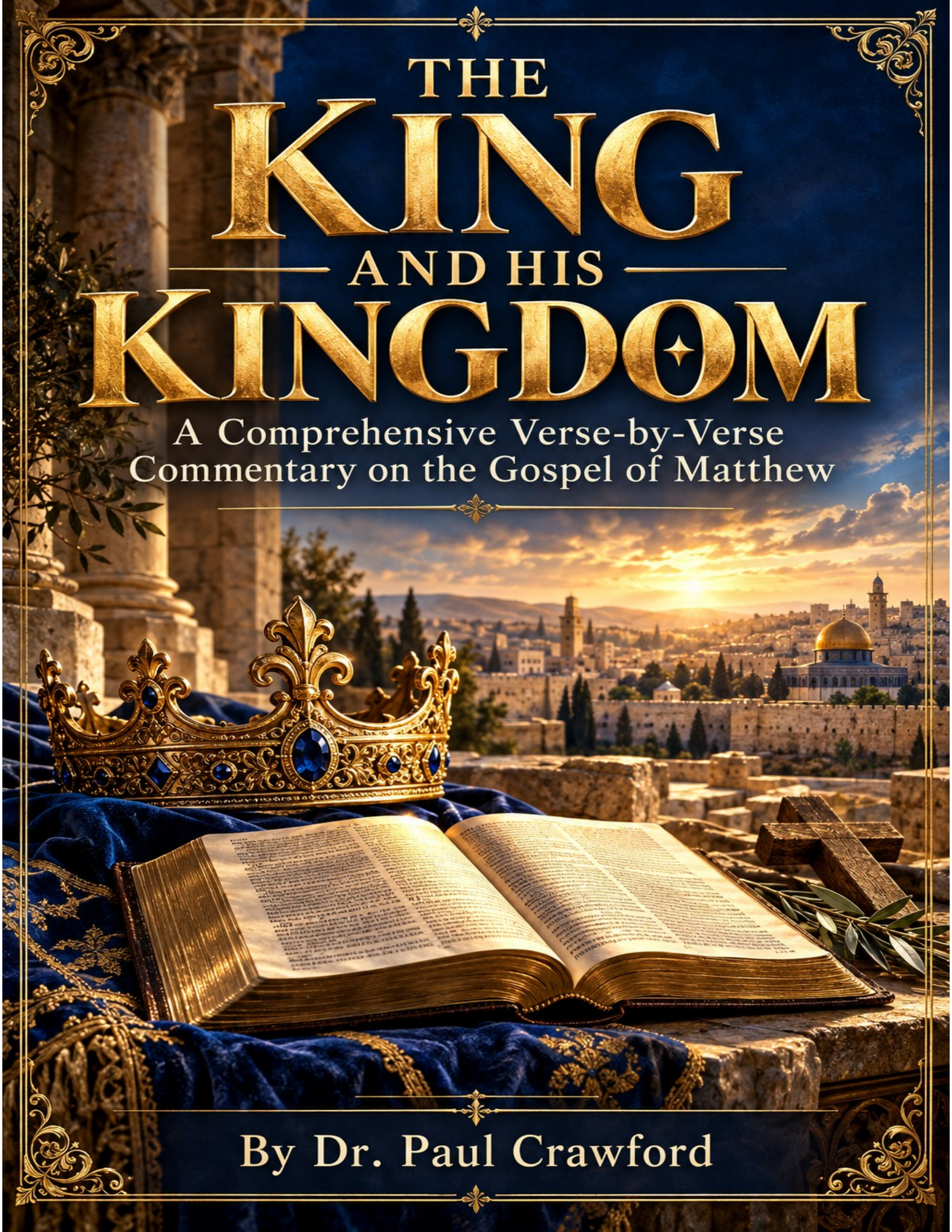
THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew



By Dr. Paul Crawford

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PREFACE

Beholding the King Through the Gospel of Matthew

THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew

By Dr. Paul Crawford

There is no greater subject upon which the human heart can meditate, no greater truth the human mind can comprehend, and no greater revelation the human soul can receive than the person and work of Jesus Christ. From the opening pages of Genesis to the closing promises of Revelation, the Holy Scriptures declare one glorious and unchanging message: God has provided a Redeemer, and that Redeemer is Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Among the four Gospel accounts, the Gospel of Matthew occupies a particularly significant place in the revelation of God's eternal plan. It stands as a divinely inspired testimony that Jesus of Nazareth is the long-awaited Messiah, the promised Son of David, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and the rightful King whose kingdom shall never end.

Matthew does not merely introduce us to a remarkable teacher, a compassionate healer, or a revolutionary religious figure. He introduces us to the King Himself.

He is the King who was promised through the prophets, announced by the angels, worshiped by wise men, opposed by earthly rulers, rejected by religious leaders, betrayed by one of His own disciples, crucified upon a Roman cross, and raised triumphantly from the dead.

He is the King who came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

He is the King whose crown was first fashioned from thorns before His glory would be revealed to the nations.

And He is the King who declared:

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” — Matthew 28:18 (KJV)

It is this Jesus, the promised Messiah and eternal King, whom we seek to understand more fully throughout the pages of this commentary.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS COMMENTARY

The writing of *The King and His Kingdom: A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* is rooted in a profound conviction: the Word of God deserves to be studied carefully, interpreted faithfully, proclaimed boldly, and applied personally.

The Bible was never intended to be a collection of religious sayings that believers occasionally consult for encouragement. It is the inspired revelation of the living God, given to instruct the mind, convict the conscience, transform the heart, and direct the lives of those who seek to know Him.

The Apostle Paul declared:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” — 2 Timothy 3:16 (KJV)

If all Scripture is inspired by God, then every verse deserves our attention. Every statement carries significance. Every historical event, every prophetic fulfillment, every commandment, every warning, and every promise contributes to the unfolding revelation of divine truth.

For this reason, I have approached the Gospel of Matthew with the conviction that its message must be examined systematically, thoughtfully, and reverently.

This commentary has been designed to move through all twenty-eight chapters of Matthew, examining the biblical text verse by verse, with the goal of discovering not only what the Scripture says, but what it means within its proper historical, grammatical, theological, and spiritual context.

My desire is not merely to provide information about the Bible, but to encourage transformation through the Bible.

Knowledge of Scripture is essential, but biblical knowledge must never become an end in itself. The ultimate purpose of studying God's Word is to know God more deeply, understand His will more clearly, and live in greater obedience to His truth.

WHY THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW MATTERS

The Gospel of Matthew serves as a remarkable bridge between the promises of the Old Testament and their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Its opening words immediately establish the identity of the One who stands at the center of God's redemptive plan:

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” — Matthew 1:1 (KJV)

Within this single verse, Matthew connects Jesus Christ to two of the most significant covenant promises in the Old Testament.

Through Abraham, God promised that all the families of the earth would be blessed. Through David, God established a royal covenant that pointed forward to an enduring kingdom and a promised descendant who would reign.

Matthew announces that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of these great expectations.

He is the promised Seed of Abraham.

He is the royal Son of David.

He is Emmanuel, God with us.

He is the Messiah whom Israel had long awaited.

Throughout the Gospel, Matthew repeatedly demonstrates that the life, ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ were not accidental events of history. They unfolded within the sovereign and eternal purposes of God.

The repeated declarations that certain events occurred to fulfill the words of the prophets remind us that God's promises are trustworthy and that His redemptive plan cannot fail.

Yet Matthew's Gospel is far more than a record of fulfilled prophecy.

It is also a revelation of the character of the King and the nature of His kingdom.

Through the Sermon on the Mount, we discover the righteousness expected of those who belong to the kingdom of heaven.

Through the miracles of Jesus, we witness His divine authority over disease, demonic powers, natural forces, and death itself.

Through His parables, we encounter profound truths concerning faith, judgment, salvation, spiritual fruitfulness, and the present and future dimensions of God's kingdom.

Through His confrontations with the religious leaders, we learn that outward religious appearance can never substitute for inward righteousness.

Through His journey to Calvary, we behold the immeasurable cost of redemption.

And through His resurrection and Great Commission, we discover that the message of the King is to be carried to every nation.

Matthew begins with the announcement that God is with us and concludes with the risen Christ's promise:

“And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” — Matthew 28:20 (KJV)

From beginning to end, Matthew presents the Savior whose presence, authority, and kingdom stand at the very center of God's eternal purposes.

UNDERSTANDING THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

One of the most important themes throughout the Gospel of Matthew is the kingdom of heaven.

John the Baptist announced:

“Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” — Matthew 3:2 (KJV)

Jesus Himself began His public preaching with the same urgent declaration:

“Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” — Matthew 4:17 (KJV)

These words establish the kingdom as a central concern of Matthew's Gospel.

But what exactly is the kingdom of heaven?

How does it relate to the promises made to Israel?

In what sense was the kingdom present during the earthly ministry of Jesus?

How is God's reign manifested in the lives of believers today?

And how will the kingdom be fully revealed when Christ returns in glory?

These questions require thoughtful biblical consideration.

The kingdom of heaven must not be reduced merely to a future destination, an earthly political institution, or a vague spiritual feeling. Matthew presents a rich and comprehensive portrait of God's reign, centered upon the person and authority of Jesus Christ.

Where the King is acknowledged, His authority must be honored.

Where His Word is received, obedience must follow.

Where His righteousness is embraced, lives must be transformed.

And where His kingdom is proclaimed, people are called to repentance, faith, and discipleship.

Throughout this commentary, we will examine the kingdom teachings of Jesus carefully, recognizing that sincere Christians sometimes differ in their understanding of particular prophetic passages and their fulfillment.

Where significant interpretive differences exist, my intention is to examine the relevant Scriptures fairly, explain the principal considerations, and remain faithful to what the biblical text itself reveals.

The Word of God must govern our theology rather than allowing our theological preferences to govern the Word of God.

A VERSE-BY-VERSE JOURNEY THROUGH MATTHEW

There is tremendous value in reading the Bible devotionally, but there is also great value in slowing down and carefully examining the inspired text.

A single verse may contain a doctrine that transforms our understanding of God.

A brief statement from Jesus may expose a hidden condition of the human heart.

A seemingly insignificant historical detail may reveal the fulfillment of a prophecy spoken centuries earlier.

A command spoken to the original disciples may contain principles that continue to instruct believers today.

This is why a verse-by-verse approach is especially valuable.

Rather than selecting only familiar passages or concentrating exclusively upon the most frequently preached portions of Matthew, this commentary seeks to give careful attention to the complete Gospel.

We will explore the royal genealogy of Christ, His miraculous birth, His temptation in the wilderness, His teachings, His miracles, His confrontations with religious hypocrisy, His prophetic declarations, His sacrificial death, and His victorious resurrection.

We will consider the historical circumstances surrounding the events Matthew records, the religious expectations of first-century Judaism, the significance of Old Testament quotations, and the theological meaning of Christ's words and actions.

At the same time, we will continually ask an essential question:

How should the truths of this passage shape the life of a follower of Jesus Christ today?

Biblical interpretation must begin with understanding the original meaning of the text. However, faithful study should also lead us toward appropriate personal application.

The Sermon on the Mount must do more than impress us with the wisdom of Christ; it must challenge the condition of our hearts.

The miracles of Jesus must do more than inspire amazement; they must deepen our understanding of His divine authority.

The warnings against hypocrisy must do more than condemn the Pharisees of ancient Israel; they must compel us to examine our own motives.

The suffering of Christ must do more than stir our emotions; it must remind us of the seriousness of sin and the immeasurable greatness of divine grace.

And the Great Commission must do more than conclude the Gospel; it must awaken us to our responsibility to make disciples.

The purpose of biblical exposition is not merely to explain what happened long ago, but to illuminate the enduring truth God has revealed through His Word.

THE DANGER OF KNOWING ABOUT THE KING WITHOUT KNOWING THE KING

One of the most sobering lessons found in Matthew is that religious familiarity does not necessarily indicate a genuine relationship with God.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus encountered individuals who possessed extensive knowledge of Scripture yet failed to recognize the Messiah standing before them.

They knew the religious traditions.

They understood the outward ceremonies.

They were familiar with the language of righteousness.

Yet many had allowed pride, hypocrisy, and hardened hearts to blind them to the truth.

Jesus issued one of the most serious warnings recorded in Scripture when He declared:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” — Matthew 7:21 (KJV)

These words should cause every reader to approach the Gospel with humility.

It is possible to admire the teachings of Christ without submitting to His authority.

It is possible to debate theological questions without possessing genuine faith.

It is possible to become skilled in religious discussion while remaining spiritually distant from the very Savior whom Scripture reveals.

My prayer is that this commentary will never become merely an academic exercise.

I pray that its pages will encourage honest self-examination, sincere repentance, growing faith, and a deeper commitment to Jesus Christ.

We must never become so occupied with studying the kingdom that we neglect the King.

A WORD TO PASTORS, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS OF SCRIPTURE

This commentary has been written with several kinds of readers in mind.

To the pastor who faithfully stands before a congregation each week, I pray that these studies will provide useful exegetical insights, theological clarity, and practical assistance in preparing sermons that honor the biblical text.

To the Sunday school teacher and Bible study leader, I pray that the explanations and cross-references will help communicate the truths of Matthew with greater confidence and understanding.

To the student of theology, I pray that this work will encourage disciplined study, careful interpretation, and a lifelong commitment to sound biblical doctrine.

To the new believer, I pray that the Gospel of Matthew will become a foundation upon which a growing knowledge of Jesus Christ can be established.

And to the lifelong student of Scripture, I pray that familiar passages will once again come alive with renewed wonder, deeper understanding, and fresh appreciation for the glory of the Savior.

No commentary, including this one, should ever be considered a substitute for the Bible itself.

Commentaries are tools. Scripture is the authority.

The words of human authors must always be measured against the inspired Word of God.

I therefore encourage every reader to keep an open Bible nearby, examine the passages carefully, compare Scripture with Scripture, and prayerfully seek wisdom from the Lord.

As the Bereans were commended for searching the Scriptures to determine whether the things they heard were true, so should every Christian cultivate a discerning and diligent approach to biblical study.

FROM THE MANGER TO THE THRONE

The Gospel of Matthew presents one of the most extraordinary contrasts in all human history.

The One who possesses all authority in heaven and earth entered the world in humility.

The promised King was born into circumstances far removed from the splendor of earthly royalty.

He possessed no earthly palace.

He commanded no political army.

He sought no throne established by human ambition.

Instead, He walked among the poor, touched the unclean, healed the afflicted, welcomed the outcast, and proclaimed the good news of the kingdom.

He demonstrated greatness through humility.

He revealed authority through obedience to the Father.

He displayed power through compassion.

And He accomplished redemption through sacrifice.

The religious authorities rejected Him.

The crowds eventually turned against Him.

His disciples scattered in fear.

Roman soldiers mocked His kingship and placed a crown of thorns upon His head.

Above His cross, an inscription identified Him as the King of the Jews.

To the watching world, the crucifixion appeared to be the ultimate defeat of His royal claims.

But the cross was not the defeat of God's redemptive plan.

It stood at the center of that plan.

Through His death, Jesus Christ gave His life as the ransom He had foretold. Through His resurrection, He demonstrated His victory over death.

The King who was crucified is the King who rose again.

The One who was rejected is the One to whom all authority has been given.

The One who commissioned His disciples continues to call men and women to repentance, faith, and obedience.

And the One who promised to return will fulfill every purpose that the Father has appointed.

What a glorious Savior!

What a marvelous Redeemer!

What an everlasting King!

MY PRAYER FOR EVERY READER

As you begin this journey through the Gospel of Matthew, I encourage you to approach each chapter with an open Bible, a prayerful heart, and a sincere willingness to be taught by the Word of God.

Do not hurry through the passages merely to complete another chapter.

Consider the words carefully.

Examine the context.

Follow the cross-references.

Reflect upon the doctrines being revealed.

Allow the warnings of Scripture to search your heart.

Allow its promises to strengthen your faith.

Allow the commands of Christ to direct your conduct.

And above all, keep your eyes fixed upon Jesus.

My prayer is that those who study this commentary will gain far more than an increased familiarity with the Gospel of Matthew.

I pray that they will come to understand more clearly the majesty of Christ, the holiness of God, the seriousness of sin, the necessity of repentance, the wonder of salvation, and the responsibilities of kingdom discipleship.

I pray that struggling believers will find encouragement.

I pray that those confused by Scripture will discover greater clarity.

I pray that pastors will be strengthened in their preaching.

I pray that teachers will be equipped to instruct others.

I pray that those who have grown spiritually complacent will be awakened to renewed devotion.

And I pray that those who do not yet know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will recognize their need for Him and respond to the truth of the Gospel.

If this commentary helps even one person understand the Scriptures more faithfully, love the Lord Jesus more deeply, and walk in greater obedience to His Word, then it will have served a worthy purpose.

THE KING STILL REIGNS

We live in a world marked by uncertainty, conflict, moral confusion, spiritual deception, and kingdoms that rise and fall.

Human governments change.

Earthly rulers come and go.

Nations experience triumph and tragedy.

Generations pass into history.

Yet above the shifting circumstances of this world stands an unchanging truth:

Jesus Christ is King.

His authority does not depend upon the approval of humanity.

His truth cannot be overturned by changing cultures.

His promises cannot be defeated by earthly opposition.

His kingdom is not subject to the limitations of human power.

And His victory is not uncertain.

The same Jesus who walked the dusty roads of Galilee, taught upon the mountainside, stilled the raging sea, raised the dead, and willingly went to Calvary is the risen Lord who reigns with all authority.

The Gospel of Matthew invites us to behold Him in the fullness of His revealed identity.

Not merely as a historical figure.

Not merely as a moral example.

Not merely as a religious teacher.

But as **the promised Messiah, the crucified Redeemer, the risen Savior, and the eternal King.**

It is my privilege to invite you on this journey through the inspired testimony of Matthew.

May every chapter illuminate the Scriptures.

May every verse deepen our understanding.

May every truth direct our hearts toward Christ.

And may this study move us beyond simply learning about His kingdom to living as faithful subjects of the King.

For when all is said and done, the central message of Matthew is not complicated:

The King has come. The King has conquered. The King reigns. And the King will come again.

To Him be all glory, honor, dominion, and praise, now and forevermore.

Amen.

Dr. Paul Crawford

Author of The King and His Kingdom

A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” — Matthew 6:10 (KJV)

PROLOGUE

The King Before the Kingdom

From the Promises of Eternity to the Fulfillment of Prophecy

THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew

By Dr. Paul Crawford

BEFORE THE FIRST VERSE WAS WRITTEN

Before the first words of Matthew's Gospel were written, before the prophets lifted their voices, before David sat upon Israel's throne, and before Abraham received the promises of God, there existed a divine purpose that would forever change the course of human history.

That purpose centered upon one person.

Jesus Christ.

The promised Messiah.

The Son of the living God.

The King of kings and Lord of lords.

Long before Bethlehem became the birthplace of the Savior, God had revealed His intention to redeem fallen humanity. From the earliest pages of Scripture, the unfolding story of redemption pointed toward the coming of One who would accomplish what no earthly ruler, religious system, or human effort could ever achieve.

He would overcome the power of sin.

He would fulfill the righteous requirements of God's law.

He would reconcile sinners to their Creator.

He would conquer death through His resurrection.

And He would establish the certainty of a kingdom that would never be destroyed.

This was no ordinary king.

His reign would not depend upon military conquest, political alliances, or the fragile loyalty of earthly subjects.

His throne would not be secured through human ambition.

His authority would not arise from the approval of men.

He was the promised King whose coming had been foretold by the prophets and whose mission rested within the sovereign purposes of Almighty God.

The Apostle John would later write:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” — John 1:1 (KJV)

The King whom Matthew introduces in the opening chapter of his Gospel did not begin His existence in Bethlehem.

His birth marked His entrance into human history as the incarnate Son of God, not the beginning of His eternal existence.

The infant born of Mary was the eternal Word made flesh.

The One who would walk the roads of Galilee was the One through whom all things were created.

The One who would stand silently before Pontius Pilate was the One before whom all humanity would ultimately stand in judgment.

And the One who would wear a crown of thorns was worthy of every crown of glory.

To understand the Gospel of Matthew, we must first understand this extraordinary truth:

The King did not become King when He entered the world. He entered the world as the eternal Son, to fulfill His messianic mission and reveal the kingdom of God.

THE PROMISE THAT BEGAN IN EDEN

The story of the King and His Kingdom finds its earliest redemptive promise in the opening chapters of Genesis.

God created humanity in His image and placed Adam and Eve within the Garden of Eden. They enjoyed fellowship with their Creator, lived under His authority, and experienced the goodness of His provision.

But when sin entered the world through human disobedience, that fellowship was broken.

The consequences were devastating.

Shame replaced innocence.

Fear disrupted communion with God.

Suffering entered human experience.

Death became the inevitable consequence of sin.

Humanity, created to live in obedient fellowship with God, had rebelled against the divine King.

Yet even as God pronounced judgment, He revealed a promise of hope.

Speaking to the serpent, the Lord declared:

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” — Genesis 3:15 (KJV)

This passage has long been understood within Christian theology as the first announcement of the coming Redeemer.

A descendant of the woman would confront the serpent and bring decisive victory over the evil represented by him.

The conflict would involve suffering, but the final triumph would belong to the promised Seed.

From that moment forward, Scripture unfolds the story of God's redemptive purpose.

Generation after generation would pass.

Kingdoms would rise and fall.

Civilizations would flourish and disappear.

Yet the promise of redemption would remain.

God had spoken.

And what God had promised, He would accomplish.

THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

Centuries later, God called a man named Abram to leave his homeland and journey into a land that the Lord would show him.

The significance of this calling extended far beyond the life of one individual or the establishment of one nation.

God declared:

“And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” — Genesis 12:3 (KJV)

The promise given to Abraham became a foundational element in the unfolding history of salvation.

Through Abraham's descendants, God would establish the nation of Israel.

Through Israel, He would reveal His law, raise up prophets, demonstrate His covenant faithfulness, and prepare the historical setting for the coming Messiah.

Ultimately, the blessing promised to the nations would be fulfilled through Jesus Christ.

This is why Matthew begins his Gospel with the declaration:

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” — Matthew 1:1 (KJV)

Matthew's opening words are not merely genealogical information.

They are a theological announcement.

The One whom God promised has come.

The covenant purposes revealed through Abraham are moving toward their fulfillment.

The long-awaited blessing for the nations is found in the person and saving work of Jesus Christ.

From the very first verse, Matthew wants his readers to understand that the appearance of Jesus in history is inseparable from the promises of the Old Testament.

The Gospel cannot be properly understood apart from the covenant faithfulness of God.

THE THRONE PROMISED TO DAVID

As the centuries passed, God raised up David to become king over Israel.

David was not a perfect man. His life included remarkable victories, serious failures, profound repentance, and extraordinary expressions of faith.

Yet God established a covenant with him that would carry enormous significance for the future of His people.

Through the prophet Nathan, the Lord declared:

“And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.” — 2 Samuel 7:16 (KJV)

The promise pointed beyond the temporary reign of David and the successive kings of Judah.

No ordinary human monarch could fulfill its ultimate significance.

David would die.

Solomon would die.

The kings who followed would rise and fall.

Some would seek the Lord.

Others would lead the nation into idolatry and disobedience.

Eventually, Jerusalem would experience destruction, and the Davidic monarchy would cease to function as an independent earthly throne.

But the promise of God had not failed.

The coming Messiah would be the promised Son of David.

He would possess the royal identity to which the covenant pointed.

His authority would transcend the limitations of ordinary human kingship.

His reign would fulfill the purposes of God.

Once again, Matthew's opening verse becomes tremendously significant.

Jesus Christ is identified as the Son of David because Matthew is presenting Him as the promised royal Messiah.

He is not merely a descendant within Israel's history.

He is the King in whom the covenant promises reach their intended fulfillment.

THE PROPHETS SAW HIS COMING

Throughout Israel's history, God spoke through His prophets concerning the coming Messiah.

Their messages emerged in different generations, often during seasons of national rebellion, political instability, judgment, exile, and suffering.

Yet amid their warnings, the prophets also proclaimed hope.

Isaiah announced:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” — Isaiah 9:6 (KJV)

Micah identified Bethlehem as the place associated with the coming ruler:

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel.” — Micah 5:2 (KJV)

Zechariah described a humble King entering Jerusalem:

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” — Zechariah 9:9 (KJV)

Daniel received a vision of One like the Son of Man receiving dominion and an everlasting kingdom.

The prophets proclaimed a coming King, but they also foretold the suffering through which God's redemptive purposes would be accomplished.

Isaiah described the Servant who would bear the sins of many.

The Scriptures revealed both the glory of the Messiah and the suffering associated with His saving mission.

These prophetic themes would converge in Jesus Christ.

He would be born in Bethlehem.

He would be called out of Egypt.

He would minister in Galilee.

He would teach in parables.

He would enter Jerusalem in humility.

He would be rejected and suffer.

And through His death and resurrection, He would accomplish the work of redemption.

Matthew repeatedly connects the events of Jesus' life to the writings of the prophets.

He does so because he wants his readers to recognize that Jesus is not an unexpected interruption in Israel's history.

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment toward which the redemptive promises of Scripture have been pointing.

FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF WAITING

Between the closing period of the Old Testament prophets and the opening events recorded in the New Testament, the Jewish people experienced centuries of political upheaval, cultural change, foreign domination, and growing anticipation.

The Persian Empire gave way to Greek influence.

The conquests of Alexander the Great spread Greek language and culture across much of the ancient world.

Later struggles for power brought suffering and resistance, including the events associated with the Maccabean period.

Eventually, Rome emerged as the dominant imperial power.

By the time of Jesus' birth, the land of Israel existed under Roman supremacy, with Herod the Great ruling Judea as a client king.

The Jewish people lived with the weight of foreign political control.

Religious leaders sought to preserve the traditions and identity of their people.

The Scriptures continued to be read.

The promises of God continued to be remembered.

Expectations concerning the Messiah took different forms among Jewish groups, but the hope of divine deliverance remained a powerful feature of the age.

Some anticipated a royal deliverer who would restore national independence.

Others emphasized priestly, prophetic, or apocalyptic expectations.

Many longed for the defeat of Israel's enemies and the restoration of the nation's glory.

But the Messiah would not simply conform to every expectation placed upon Him.

He would expose the deeper bondage of sin.

He would announce the nearness of the kingdom of heaven.

He would call sinners to repentance.

He would teach that true righteousness must proceed from the heart.

He would reveal that greatness in His kingdom is expressed through humility and service.

And He would accomplish salvation through the cross before the full revelation of His final victory.

The King who came was greater than the expectations of those who awaited Him.

THE NIGHT HEAVEN TOUCHED EARTH

In the small village of Bethlehem, during the reign of Herod the Great, the promised Messiah entered the world.

There was no royal procession announcing His arrival.

No earthly army assembled to protect His throne.

No imperial decree celebrated the birth of the true King.

Instead, the eternal Son of God entered human life through the miracle of the virgin conception and was born of Mary.

Matthew records the angel's message to Joseph:

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” — Matthew 1:21 (KJV)

His very name testified to His saving mission.

The angel did not announce that Jesus had come merely to overthrow Rome.

He did not declare that the child would simply reform Israel's political institutions.

He announced something far greater.

He would save His people from their sins.

This was the deepest need of humanity.

Political oppression was real.

Economic hardship was real.

Religious corruption was real.

Yet beneath the visible problems of the human condition stood the universal reality of sin and separation from God.

The promised King had come to confront humanity's greatest enemy and accomplish the redemption that no earthly ruler could provide.

Matthew further explains that the birth of Jesus fulfilled the prophetic significance of the name Emmanuel:

“Which being interpreted is, God with us.” — Matthew 1:23 (KJV)

Consider the wonder of those words.

God with us.

Not a distant deity unconcerned with human suffering.

Not a powerless religious symbol created by human imagination.

Not merely another prophet speaking on behalf of heaven.

The eternal Son had taken upon Himself true humanity.

The Creator had entered His creation.

The King had come among His people.

And the world would never be the same.

A KINGDOM UNLIKE THE KINGDOMS OF MEN

Throughout history, human beings have pursued kingdoms built upon conquest, wealth, influence, and personal ambition.

Emperors have expanded their territories.

Monarchs have defended their crowns.

Military leaders have sought victory through superior force.

Political rulers have promised security, prosperity, and national greatness.

Yet even the most powerful human kingdoms remain temporary.

Their leaders grow old.

Their institutions change.

Their power diminishes.

Their monuments eventually crumble.

But the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus Christ rests upon an entirely different foundation.

Its authority belongs to God.

Its righteousness reflects the holiness of God.

Its citizens are called to repentance and faith.

Its moral character is revealed through the teachings of Christ.

Its final triumph is guaranteed by the sovereign purposes of the Lord.

When Jesus began His public ministry, He declared:

“Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” — Matthew 4:17 (KJV)

This announcement was revolutionary.

The kingdom was not presented merely as a distant expectation with no relevance to the present.

In the arrival and ministry of the King, God's redemptive reign was being powerfully revealed.

The sick were healed.

Demons were cast out.

Sinners were called to repentance.

The poor heard the good news.

The Scriptures were fulfilled.

The authority of the King was demonstrated in word and deed.

Yet the kingdom also possessed a future dimension, pointing toward the final judgment, the vindication of the righteous, and the consummation of God's purposes.

Matthew's Gospel calls us to appreciate both the present demands and the future hope of the kingdom.

The King has come.

The kingdom has been announced.

And the final fulfillment of God's redemptive purposes remains certain.

THE KING WHO CAME TO DIE

Perhaps the most astonishing truth revealed in the Gospel of Matthew is that the promised King came to give His life.

Ordinary kings expect their subjects to die defending them.

Jesus Christ willingly died to redeem His people.

Earthly monarchs often seek to preserve their power at any cost.

Jesus voluntarily humbled Himself in obedience to the Father.

Human rulers wear crowns to display their authority.

Jesus was mocked with a crown of thorns.

The contrast is breathtaking.

The King possessed all authority, yet He submitted to humiliation.

He was without sin, yet He suffered at the hands of sinners.

He was the giver of life, yet He willingly entered death.

Jesus explained His mission with unmistakable clarity:

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” — Matthew 20:28 (KJV)

These words stand near the theological heart of Matthew's Gospel.

The mission of the Messiah could not be understood apart from His sacrificial death.

His miracles revealed His power.

His teachings revealed His wisdom.

His compassion revealed His heart.

His obedience revealed His righteousness.

But His death revealed the extraordinary cost of redemption.

The cross was not an unforeseen tragedy that interrupted God's plan.

It was central to the saving mission for which Jesus had come.

At Calvary, the promised King endured suffering and death.

He was mocked as a false king by those who failed to recognize His identity.

The soldiers placed a scarlet robe upon Him.

They pressed a crown of thorns upon His head.

They put a reed in His hand.

And in cruel mockery they cried:

“Hail, King of the Jews!” — Matthew 27:29 (KJV)

They intended humiliation.

Yet the title they used carried a truth far greater than they understood.

The One they mocked truly was the King.

The cross displayed the horror of human sin, but it also revealed the depth of divine love and the obedience of the Savior.

And the story did not end at the cross.

THE TOMB COULD NOT HOLD THE KING

On the third day, the grave was found empty.

The crucified Messiah had risen from the dead.

Matthew records the angel's announcement:

“He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.” — Matthew 28:6 (KJV)

These words transformed the sorrow of the disciples into the certainty of resurrection hope.

The One who had predicted His suffering and death had also foretold His resurrection.

And His word had proven true.

Death had not overcome Him.

The grave had not defeated Him.

The schemes of His enemies had not destroyed His mission.

Jesus Christ was alive.

The resurrection vindicated the claims of the Savior and demonstrated the triumph of God's redemptive purpose.

The King who had been rejected was now revealed as the risen Lord.

The King who had been crucified stood victorious over death.

The King whose disciples had scattered would gather them again and send them into the world with a message of salvation.

Matthew's Gospel reaches its magnificent conclusion with the risen Christ declaring:

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” — Matthew 28:18 (KJV)

The word translated *power* in this verse carries the sense of authority.

Christ was declaring His universal authority.

Not merely authority over one nation.

Not merely authority over one generation.

Not merely authority over one political system.

All authority.

In heaven.

And on earth.

The risen King then commanded His disciples to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to observe everything He had commanded.

His kingdom message was not to remain confined to Jerusalem.

It was to be proclaimed among the nations.

The King who came to fulfill the promises made to Israel was sending His followers to announce the blessings of salvation throughout the world.

And with that commission came a glorious promise:

“And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” — Matthew 28:20 (KJV)

The Gospel that began with Emmanuel—God with us—concludes with the enduring presence of the risen Christ.

THE QUESTION EVERY READER MUST ANSWER

The Gospel of Matthew is not merely a historical record to be examined from a distance.

It confronts every reader with a question of eternal significance.

Who is Jesus Christ to you?

Is He merely an influential teacher from the ancient world?

Is He simply a figure of religious history?

Is He someone whose words are admired but whose authority is disregarded?

Or is He truly the Messiah, the Son of the living God, the crucified and risen Savior, and the rightful Lord of your life?

The people who encountered Jesus during His earthly ministry responded in different ways.

Some followed Him with genuine faith.

Some came seeking physical healing.

Some were amazed by His miracles.

Some listened to His teaching but turned away when discipleship became costly.

Some opposed Him because His words exposed their hypocrisy.

Some plotted His death.

Others worshiped Him.

But no one could change who He was.

Human acceptance did not make Him the Messiah.

Human rejection did not remove His authority.

And the passing of centuries has not diminished His identity.

Jesus remains the Christ.

He remains the Son of God.

He remains the Savior of sinners.

He remains the risen Lord.

And He remains the King to whom every person is accountable.

The message of Matthew demands more than intellectual curiosity.

It calls for a response.

It calls us to consider the truth of Christ's claims, recognize our need for salvation, repent of sin, place our faith in Him, and follow Him as Lord.

The King is not merely seeking admiration.

He calls for faithful discipleship.

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

As we prepare to enter the first chapter of Matthew, we stand at the threshold of one of the greatest revelations ever entrusted to humanity.

Before us lies the record of the promised Messiah.

We will trace His genealogy through generations of covenant history.

We will witness the miraculous circumstances of His birth.

We will behold the wise men coming to worship Him.

We will hear the voice of John the Baptist preparing His way.

We will follow Him into the wilderness as He confronts the temptations of Satan.

We will stand upon the mountainside and listen as He announces the principles of kingdom righteousness.

We will witness His miracles and hear His parables.

We will observe His compassion toward the suffering and His righteous indignation toward hypocrisy.

We will hear His prophecies concerning Jerusalem, judgment, and the future.

We will walk with Him toward Gethsemane.

We will behold His suffering at Calvary.

We will stand before the empty tomb.

And finally, we will hear the risen King commission His disciples to carry His message to the nations.

Along the way, we will encounter truths that challenge our assumptions, confront our sins, strengthen our faith, and deepen our understanding of God's redemptive plan.

Some passages will comfort us.

Others will convict us.

Some will answer long-standing questions.

Others will call us to study more deeply.

But through every chapter and every verse, one glorious figure will remain at the center.

Jesus Christ.

The promised King.

The suffering Servant.

The risen Lord.

The eternal Son of God.

BEHOLD YOUR KING

The prophet Zechariah once declared:

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” — Zechariah 9:9 (KJV)

Those words were fulfilled in the humble entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, yet their invitation to behold the King remains profoundly relevant.

The world offers countless objects of admiration.

It celebrates wealth, influence, celebrity, military strength, and political power.

But none of these can compare with the glory of Jesus Christ.

Earthly rulers can govern nations, but they cannot forgive sin by their own authority.

They can command armies, but they cannot conquer death.

They can establish laws, but they cannot transform the human heart.

They can build kingdoms, but they cannot guarantee an everlasting reign.

Jesus Christ is different.

He forgives sin.

He gives eternal life.

He reconciles sinners to God.

He rules with divine authority.

And His kingdom will never be overthrown.

It is therefore fitting that we begin this commentary not merely with an academic introduction, but with an invitation to worshipful study.

Open the Scriptures with reverence.

Examine every verse with diligence.

Approach difficult passages with humility.

Receive the commands of Christ with obedience.

Consider His promises with faith.

And look beyond the printed words to the glorious Savior whom those words reveal.

For the greatest discovery awaiting us in the Gospel of Matthew is not simply a more detailed understanding of ancient history, prophetic chronology, or theological doctrine.

It is a clearer vision of the King Himself.

May the Holy Spirit illuminate the truth of God's Word.

May our hearts be strengthened through the testimony of Scripture.

May our understanding of Jesus Christ grow deeper with every chapter.

And may we emerge from this study with renewed faith, greater obedience, and a stronger commitment to the One who gave His life for our redemption.

The promises have been spoken.

The prophecies have pointed forward.

The appointed time has arrived.

The Messiah has come.

The King stands revealed.

And now, through the inspired words of Matthew, the story of the King and His Kingdom begins.

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” — Matthew 1:1 (KJV)

Let us now turn to the opening verse of Matthew and behold the King whom God has promised.

Dr. Paul Crawford

The King and His Kingdom

A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 1 — The Genealogy of Jesus Christ and the Birth of Immanuel

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 1 opens the New Testament.

And it begins in a way many modern readers find surprising.

It begins with a list of names.

But this is not an empty list.

It is the record of God keeping His promises across two thousand years of history.

Before Matthew tells us anything Jesus said or did, he tells us who Jesus is:

“Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.”

That one sentence connects Jesus to the two great covenant promises of the Old Testament.

God promised Abraham that through his offspring all nations would be blessed.

God promised David that one of his descendants would reign on his throne forever.

Matthew announces that both promises meet in one Person.

The genealogy moves through three great periods of Israel's history.

From Abraham to David.

From David to the exile in Babylon.

From the exile to the Messiah.

Along the way it includes patriarchs and kings, the faithful and the wicked, the famous and the forgotten.

It even includes four women whose stories involve foreigners, scandal, and suffering.

Then the chapter turns to the birth of Jesus.

Mary is found to be with child.

Joseph faces a painful decision.

An angel appears and gives him an extraordinary message:

The child is from the Holy Spirit.

His name will be Jesus.

He will save His people from their sins.

And He will be called Immanuel.

God with us.

Matthew 1 therefore stands at the meeting point of two testaments:

The promises of the Old Testament.

And:

Their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

The long centuries of waiting are over.

The promised King has come.

The central truth of Matthew 1 is:

Jesus Christ is the promised Son of David and Son of Abraham, miraculously born of a virgin, who came as God with us to save His people from their sins.

I. THE RECORD OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 1:1 — “The Son of David, the Son of Abraham”

“This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.”

Matthew begins with a title.

The phrase **“record of the genealogy”** echoes the language of Genesis.

Genesis repeatedly says:

“These are the generations of...”

Matthew is signaling that a new beginning has arrived.

The name **Jesus** means **“The LORD saves.”**

The title **Christ** means **“Anointed One.”** It is the Greek form of the Hebrew word **Messiah.**

Matthew then gives Jesus two royal and covenant titles.

Son of David — the rightful King of Israel.

Son of Abraham — the promised offspring through whom the nations will be blessed.

Cross References

Genesis 12:3

> All the families of the earth will be blessed through you.

Genesis 22:18

> All the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring, because you have obeyed My voice.

2 Samuel 7:16

> Your house and your kingdom will endure before Me forever; your throne will be established forever.

Galatians 3:16

> The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his offspring. Scripture does not say “and to offsprings,” as of many, but “and to your offspring,” referring to one, who is Christ.

Spiritual Principle

God never forgets a promise.

Centuries passed between the promise to Abraham and the birth of Jesus.

But God was faithful through every generation.

Key Truth

Jesus is not a new idea added to the Old Testament.

Jesus is the fulfillment the Old Testament was pointing toward.

II. FROM ABRAHAM TO JUDAH

Matthew 1:2 — The Fathers of Israel

“Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.”

The genealogy begins with Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation.

It moves through Isaac, the son of promise.

Then through Jacob, whom God renamed Israel.

Then it highlights Judah.

Why Judah?

Because the royal line would come through Judah.

Jacob had prophesied that the scepter would not depart from Judah.

Notice also the phrase:

“And his brothers.”

Matthew reminds us that Jesus came from within the whole family of Israel, the twelve tribes God had chosen.

Cross References

Genesis 21:12

> Through Isaac your offspring will be traced.

Genesis 49:10

> The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until He comes to whom it belongs, and the obedience of the peoples will be His.

Hebrews 7:14

> For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah.

Spiritual Principle

God works through generations, not only through moments.

The faith of one generation prepares the way for the next.

Application

What you pass on matters.

Abraham never saw Jesus born.

But his faith was part of the story that led to Christ.

Faithful believers leave a legacy through:

- Their obedience.
- Their prayers.
- Their example.
- Their teaching.
- Their trust in God's promises.

III. TAMAR — GRACE IN A BROKEN FAMILY

Matthew 1:3 — “Perez and Zerah by Tamar”

“Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram.”

This verse contains the first woman in the genealogy.

Her name is Tamar.

Ancient genealogies usually listed only men.

So when Matthew includes a woman, he does it deliberately.

Tamar's story, found in Genesis 38, is one of the most troubling in the Old Testament.

Judah failed to keep his promise to her.

She disguised herself and conceived children by Judah.

It was a story of deception, sin, and family dysfunction.

Yet God did not erase the story.

He worked through it.

Perez became an ancestor of King David and of Jesus Christ.

Cross References

Genesis 38:26

> Judah recognized them and said, “She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.”

Ruth 4:12

> May your house become like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.

Romans 5:20

> Where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more.

Spiritual Principle

God's grace is greater than our family history.

Jesus did not come from a spotless family tree.

He came into a line filled with real sinners who needed real grace.

Key Truth

The genealogy of Jesus tells us something about the purpose of Jesus.

He came for sinners.

IV. THE LINE CONTINUES THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

Matthew 1:4 — From Ram to Salmon

“Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon.”

These names are less familiar to most readers.

But they carry history with them.

Nahshon was the leader of the tribe of Judah during the wilderness years under Moses.

His sister Elisheba married Aaron, the first high priest.

These generations lived through slavery in Egypt, the Exodus, and the long journey toward the Promised Land.

Matthew does not stop to tell their stories.

But he includes their names.

Cross References

Numbers 1:7

> From Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadab.

Numbers 7:12

> The one who presented his offering on the first day was Nahshon son of Amminadab, from the tribe of Judah.

Exodus 6:23

> Aaron married Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon.

Spiritual Principle

No faithful life is wasted in God's plan.

Many names in this list are almost unknown today.

But God knew each one, and each one mattered to the story of redemption.

V. RAHAB AND RUTH

Matthew 1:5 — Outsiders Brought In

“Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse.”

Two more women appear in this verse.

Both were outsiders.

Rahab was a Canaanite woman from Jericho.

She had lived as a prostitute.

But she believed in the God of Israel, hid the Israelite spies, and was spared when Jericho fell.

Ruth was a Moabitess.

Moab was a nation with a long history of hostility toward Israel.

But Ruth declared to Naomi:

“Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.”

Boaz, the son of Rahab, became Ruth's kinsman-redeemer.

Their son Obed became the grandfather of King David.

Cross References

Joshua 2:11

> The LORD your God is God in heaven above and on earth below.

Hebrews 11:31

> By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had welcomed the spies in peace.

Ruth 1:16

> Wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.

Ruth 4:17

> They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Spiritual Principle

The family of the Messiah has always been open to those who come by faith.

A Canaanite and a Moabitess are named in the ancestry of Jesus.

That is a preview of the gospel going to all nations.

Key Truth

God does not ask where you came from before He welcomes you.

He asks whether you will trust Him.

VI. DAVID THE KING

Matthew 1:6a — “Jesse the Father of David the King”

“Jesse was the father of David the king.”

Matthew gives David a title no one else in the list receives:

“The king.”

This is the high point of the first section of the genealogy.

God had promised David an everlasting throne.

The prophets later spoke of a coming King from David's line, a shoot growing from the stump of Jesse.

Matthew wants his readers to understand:

Jesus is the heir to David's throne.

Cross References

1 Samuel 16:13

> Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on David from that day forward.

Isaiah 11:1

> Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

Jeremiah 23:5

> “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up a righteous Branch for David. He will reign wisely as King.”

Luke 1:32

> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is not only Savior; He is King.

To receive Jesus is to receive His rule over our lives.

VII. THE WIFE OF URIAH

Matthew 1:6b — David's Greatest Failure Remembered

“David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah.”

This is the fourth woman in the genealogy.

But Matthew does not use her name.

He calls her:

“The wife of Uriah.”

Her name was Bathsheba.

Matthew's wording reminds the reader of David's greatest sin.

David committed adultery with Bathsheba.

Then he arranged the death of her husband, Uriah, a loyal soldier.

Matthew could have hidden this.

Instead, he points straight at it.

Even Israel's greatest king needed forgiveness.

Yet God, in His mercy, brought Solomon from that marriage and continued the royal line.

Cross References

2 Samuel 11:27

> But the thing David had done was evil in the eyes of the LORD.

2 Samuel 12:13

> David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Nathan replied, “The LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die.”

Psalm 51:1

> Be gracious to me, God, according to Your faithful love; according to Your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion.

Spiritual Warning

Sin carries real consequences, even for those God uses greatly.

David's sin brought great sorrow into his family.

Matthew's wording keeps that warning in front of us.

Spiritual Principle

Repentance opens the door to mercy.

David's confession in Psalm 51 shows that the way back to God is honest repentance.

VIII. THE KINGS OF JUDAH

Matthew 1:7–8 — From Solomon to Uzziah

“Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa. Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah.”

The genealogy now becomes a list of kings.

Solomon built the temple, but his heart was turned away by idolatry in his later years.

Under Rehoboam, the kingdom divided.

Asa and Jehoshaphat were generally faithful kings who sought the LORD.

Joram married into the wicked house of Ahab and led Judah into sin.

Matthew moves from Joram directly to Uzziah.

Several generations are skipped here.

This was a common practice in Jewish genealogies.

The word **“father”** could mean **“ancestor.”**

Matthew's purpose was not to list every person, but to trace the royal line clearly and memorably.

Cross References

1 Kings 11:4

> When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away to follow other gods.

2 Chronicles 17:3–4

> The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the former ways of his father David. He sought the God of his father and walked by His commands.

2 Chronicles 21:6

> He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for Ahab's daughter was his wife. He did what was evil in the LORD's sight.

Spiritual Principle

A godly heritage does not guarantee a godly heart.

Each generation must choose to follow the LORD for itself.

IX. FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL KINGS

Matthew 1:9–10 — From Jotham to Josiah

“Uzziah was the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah.”

These verses show the spiritual ups and downs of Judah's history.

Ahaz was one of Judah's most wicked kings.

He even sacrificed his own son in the fire.

Yet it was to Ahaz that Isaiah gave the prophecy Matthew will quote later in this chapter:

“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son.”

Hezekiah, his son, was one of Judah's most faithful kings.

Manasseh was perhaps the most wicked of all, yet he humbled himself late in life and God restored him.

Josiah led one of the greatest revivals in Israel's history when the Book of the Law was rediscovered.

Cross References

Isaiah 7:14

> Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name Him Immanuel.

2 Kings 18:5

> Hezekiah trusted in the LORD God of Israel; not one of the kings of Judah was like him, either before him or after him.

2 Chronicles 33:12–13

> When he was in distress, he sought the favor of the LORD his God and earnestly humbled himself before the God of his ancestors. He prayed to Him, and the LORD was moved by his request.

2 Kings 23:25

> Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength.

Spiritual Principle

No one is beyond the reach of God's mercy.

If God could restore Manasseh, He can restore anyone who truly repents.

Application

Family patterns are real.

But they are not destiny.

- A faithful parent may have an unfaithful child.
- An unfaithful parent may have a faithful child.
- A broken life may be restored late.
- Revival can come in a dark generation.

- God remains sovereign through every generation.

X. THE EXILE TO BABYLON

Matthew 1:11 — “At the Time of the Exile”

“Josiah was the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.”

Matthew marks a turning point.

The exile.

Jerusalem fell.

The temple was destroyed.

The people were carried away to Babylon.

To many, it seemed as though David's throne had come to an end.

Jeconiah, also called Jehoiachin, was taken captive.

God had even declared through Jeremiah that none of Jeconiah's descendants would sit successfully on David's throne.

How then could the Messiah come through this line?

Matthew will answer that question in verse 16.

Cross References

2 Kings 24:15

> Nebuchadnezzar deported Jehoiachin to Babylon.

Jeremiah 22:30

> None of his descendants will succeed in sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah.

Jeremiah 29:11

> “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans for your well-being, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

Spiritual Principle

God's promises survive even when everything looks lost.

The exile looked like the end of David's line.

It was not.

Key Truth

Judgment was real.

But God's promise was greater than Israel's failure.

XI. AFTER THE EXILE

Matthew 1:12 — Shealtiel and Zerubbabel

“After the exile to Babylon, Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel.”

The line continued in a foreign land.

Zerubbabel became the governor of Judah after the return from exile.

He led the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.

God spoke of him through the prophet Haggai as His chosen servant and His signet ring.

The family of David was humbled.

But it had not disappeared.

Cross References

Ezra 3:8

> Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel... began the work of rebuilding the house of God.

Haggai 2:23

> “On that day,” declares the LORD of Armies, “I will take you, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, My servant... and make you like My signet ring, for I have chosen you.”

Zechariah 4:6

> Not by strength or by might, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of Armies.

Spiritual Principle

God rebuilds what sin and judgment have torn down.

Restoration is part of God's character.

XII. THE SILENT GENERATIONS

Matthew 1:13–15 — From Abihud to Jacob

“Zerubbabel was the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor. Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud. Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob.”

After Zerubbabel, none of these names appear anywhere else in the Old Testament.

They lived during the centuries between the Old and New Testaments.

No prophet spoke during much of this time.

The royal family of David was no longer royal.

By the time of Joseph, David's descendants included a working carpenter in the small town of Nazareth.

The throne seemed forgotten.

But God had not forgotten.

Cross References

Isaiah 11:1

> A shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse.

Galatians 4:4

> When the time came to completion, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.

2 Peter 3:9

> The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay.

Spiritual Principle

God's silence is not God's absence.

During four hundred years of quiet, God was preparing the world for the coming of His Son.

Application

You may be in a season where nothing seems to be happening.

But God is still at work in:

- Ordinary days.
- Quiet years.
- Unnoticed faithfulness.

- Unanswered prayers.
- Seasons of waiting.

XIII. JOSEPH, THE HUSBAND OF MARY

Matthew 1:16 — “Of Whom Jesus Was Born”

“Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ.”

For forty generations, the pattern has been the same:

“A was the father of B.”

But now the pattern changes.

Matthew does not say Joseph was the father of Jesus.

He says Joseph was:

“The husband of Mary.”

Then he says:

“Of whom Jesus was born.”

In the original Greek, the word **“whom”** is feminine.

It refers to Mary alone.

Matthew is carefully preparing his readers for the virgin birth.

Joseph was Jesus' legal father.

Through Joseph, Jesus received the legal right to David's throne.

But Jesus was not Joseph's biological son.

This also answers the problem of Jeconiah's curse.

Jesus received the legal right to the throne through Joseph, but He was not a physical descendant of Jeconiah through Joseph.

Cross References

Luke 1:34–35

> Mary asked the angel, “How can this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?”
> The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.”

Luke 3:23

> As He began His ministry, Jesus was about thirty years old and was thought to be the son of Joseph.

Romans 1:3

> Concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was a descendant of David according to the flesh.

Spiritual Principle

Every word of Scripture is chosen carefully.

A single small word in this verse protects one of the great truths of the Christian faith.

Key Truth

Jesus is the legal Son of David through Joseph and the eternal Son of God through the miracle of His birth.

XIV. THREE SETS OF FOURTEEN

Matthew 1:17 — The Structure of History

“So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations; from David until the exile to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the exile to Babylon until the Christ, fourteen generations.”

Matthew organizes the genealogy into three groups of fourteen.

This was a teaching and memory device.

It also carries meaning.

In Hebrew, letters also had number values.

The letters of the name **David** add up to fourteen.

Matthew's whole genealogy is shaped around David.

The three periods tell the story of Israel:

Abraham to David — the rise of the nation to the throne.

David to the exile — the decline and fall of the kingdom.

The exile to Christ — the long wait for the promised King.

History is not random.

It is moving toward Christ.

Cross References

Acts 17:26

> From one man He has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live.

Ephesians 1:10

> To bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth, in Him.

Daniel 2:21

> He changes the times and seasons; He removes kings and establishes kings.

Spiritual Principle

God is the Lord of history.

Empires rise and fall.

But God's purpose moves forward on schedule.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

History is His story — and every chapter points to Jesus.

XV. THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 1:18 — “Found to Be with Child from the Holy Spirit”

“The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After His mother Mary had been pledged in marriage to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew now turns from the genealogy to the birth itself.

Mary was pledged to Joseph.

A Jewish betrothal was much more binding than a modern engagement.

The couple was legally considered husband and wife, though they did not yet live together.

Breaking a betrothal required a legal divorce.

Before they came together, Mary was found to be pregnant.

Matthew states the cause plainly:

“From the Holy Spirit.”

This was not a natural event.

It was a divine miracle.

Cross References

Luke 1:31

> Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name Him Jesus.

Luke 1:37

> For nothing will be impossible with God.

Genesis 3:15

> I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike His heel.

Spiritual Principle

The coming of Christ was God's work from beginning to end.

Salvation did not begin with human effort.

It began with a divine miracle.

XVI. JOSEPH, A RIGHTEOUS MAN

Matthew 1:19 — Justice and Mercy Together

“Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, he decided to divorce her quietly.”

Joseph faced a crisis.

As far as he knew, Mary had been unfaithful.

The law gave him the right to make the matter public.

But Joseph was:

“A righteous man.”

His righteousness was shown in two ways.

He would not ignore what appeared to be sin.

But he would not humiliate Mary either.

He chose to divorce her quietly.

Joseph's response shows a beautiful balance of truth and mercy.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 22:23–24

> If there is a young woman who is a virgin engaged to a man, and another man finds her in the city and sleeps with her, take the two of them out to the gate of that city and stone them to death.

Micah 6:8

> Mankind, He has told each of you what is good and what it is the LORD requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Proverbs 10:12

> Hatred stirs up conflicts, but love covers all offenses.

Spiritual Principle

True righteousness is never cruel.

Godly people care about holiness, but they also care about people.

Application

When we believe we have been wronged, Joseph shows us a better way:

- Do not act in anger.
- Do not seek to shame others.
- Think carefully before acting.
- Show mercy where possible.
- Remain open to what God may reveal.

XVII. AN ANGEL APPEARS IN A DREAM

Matthew 1:20 — “Do Not Be Afraid”

“But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.’”

Joseph was thinking it through.

He had not acted in haste.

Then God spoke.

Notice how the angel addressed him:

“Joseph, son of David.”

Joseph was being reminded of his place in the royal line.

The child he would raise was connected to God's promise to David.

The angel told him:

“Do not be afraid.”

Joseph may have feared what people would say.

He may have feared being part of a scandal.

But God gave him the truth.

The child was from the Holy Spirit.

Cross References

Genesis 15:1

> Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be very great.

Isaiah 41:10

> Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God.

Matthew 2:13

> After they were gone, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to Joseph in a dream.

Spiritual Principle

God gives guidance to those who are seeking to do right.

Joseph was trying to act righteously, and God met him in his uncertainty.

Key Truth

Fear often fades when God's truth is revealed.

XVIII. HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS

Matthew 1:21 — The Meaning of the Name Jesus

“She will give birth to a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.”

This is one of the most important verses in the chapter.

The name **Jesus** is the Greek form of the Hebrew name **Yeshua** or **Joshua.**

It means:

“The LORD saves.”

The name was not chosen by Mary or Joseph.

It was chosen by God.

And God explained why:

“He will save His people from their sins.”

Many people in Israel expected a Messiah who would save them from Rome.

But Jesus came to deal with a deeper problem.

Not merely political oppression.

Sin.

Cross References

Luke 19:10

> For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.

Acts 4:12

> There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.

1 Timothy 1:15

> Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Psalm 130:8

> He will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

Spiritual Principle

Humanity's greatest need is not improvement, but salvation.

Jesus came not merely to teach us, inspire us, or reform us.

He came to save us.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The name of Jesus is His mission.

XIX. TO FULFILL WHAT THE LORD HAD SPOKEN

Matthew 1:22 — The First Fulfillment

“Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet.”

This is the first of many fulfillment statements in Matthew's Gospel.

Matthew wrote with a Jewish audience strongly in view.

He repeatedly shows that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament Scriptures.

Notice who Matthew says spoke the prophecy:

“The Lord through the prophet.”

The prophet was the messenger.

The Lord was the source.

Cross References

2 Peter 1:21

> No prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 5:17

> Don't think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Luke 24:44

> Everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

Spiritual Principle

God's Word always comes true.

What God speaks, God fulfills.

Key Truth

Fulfilled prophecy is one of the strongest reasons to trust the Bible.

XX. IMMANUEL — GOD WITH US

Matthew 1:23 — The Virgin Will Conceive

“See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name Him Immanuel, which is translated ‘God is with us.’”

Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14.

Isaiah first spoke these words to King Ahaz during a time of national crisis.

God offered a sign.

Matthew shows that the full and final fulfillment of that sign is Jesus.

Two great truths appear in this verse.

First, the virgin birth.

Jesus was conceived without a human father.

Second, the identity of the child.

His name is **Immanuel.**

“God is with us.”

Jesus is not merely a messenger from God.

He is God Himself who has come to be with His people.

Cross References

Isaiah 7:14

> Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name Him Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:6

> For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us... He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

John 1:14

> The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Matthew 28:20

> And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Spiritual Principle

God did not save us from a distance.

He came near.

Application

Matthew's Gospel begins with **“God with us”** and ends with Jesus saying:

“I am with you always.”

The presence of God is the great promise of the whole Gospel.

Because Jesus is Immanuel:

- You are never alone in suffering.
- You are never alone in temptation.
- You are never alone in grief.
- You are never alone in obedience.
- You are never alone in death.

XXI. JOSEPH OBEYED

Matthew 1:24 — Immediate Obedience

“When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary as his wife.”

Joseph does not say a single word in the Gospels.

But his actions speak clearly.

When God spoke, Joseph obeyed.

He did not delay.

He did not negotiate.

He took Mary as his wife.

In doing so, Joseph accepted whatever misunderstanding and gossip might follow.

He protected Mary.

He accepted responsibility for the child.

Cross References

Matthew 2:14

> So he got up, took the child and His mother during the night, and escaped to Egypt.

James 1:22

> But be doers of the word and not hearers only.

John 14:15

> If you love Me, you will keep My commands.

Spiritual Principle

Faith is shown through obedience.

Joseph's faith did not stay in his mind; it moved his feet.

Key Truth

The greatest response to God's Word is not admiration but obedience.

XXII. HE NAMED HIM JESUS

Matthew 1:25 — Joseph's Faithfulness Completed

“But he did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. And he named Him Jesus.”

Matthew stresses again that Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus.

Mary remained a virgin until Jesus was born.

Then Joseph named the child.

Naming a child was the father's right and responsibility.

By naming Him, Joseph publicly accepted Jesus as his legal son.

And that gave Jesus His legal place in the royal line of David.

The chapter ends with one word:

Jesus.

Cross References

Luke 2:7

> Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped Him tightly in cloth and laid Him in a manger.

Luke 2:21

> When the eight days were completed for His circumcision, He was named Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived.

Philippians 2:9–10

> For this reason God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow.

Spiritual Principle

Obedience honors God in private as well as in public.

Joseph's restraint and faithfulness were known to God even when no one else saw them.

XXIII. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 1

1. God Keeps His Promises

Jesus is called:

“The Son of David, the Son of Abraham.”

Promises made centuries earlier were fulfilled in Him.

Principle:

God's delays are never God's denials.

---

2. Grace Runs Through the Genealogy

Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah are all named.

Kings like Manasseh are included.

Principle:

Jesus came into a family of sinners because He came to save sinners.

---

3. The Gospel Is for All Nations

Rahab was a Canaanite.

Ruth was a Moabitess.

Principle:

From the first page of the New Testament, God shows that His salvation reaches beyond one nation.

---

4. God Is Sovereign Over History

Matthew arranges history into three sets of fourteen generations.

Principle:

Nothing in history is outside God's control, and all of it moves toward Christ.

---

5. Jesus Was Born of a Virgin

Mary was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

Principle:

The miracle of Christ's birth testifies that He is more than a man.

---

6. Jesus Came to Save

“He will save His people from their sins.”

Principle:

Jesus is not just a teacher or example; He is a Savior.

---

7. God Uses Ordinary, Obedient People

Joseph was a working man from Nazareth.

But he listened to God and obeyed.

Principle:

God's great purposes often move forward through quiet, faithful obedience.

XXIV. FOUR WOMEN IN THE GENEALOGY

Matthew includes four women before Mary.

Each one tells us something about the grace of God.

Tamar

A woman wronged by Judah, whose story involved deception and scandal.

God brought the line of the Messiah through her son Perez.

Rahab

A Canaanite prostitute who believed in the God of Israel.

God saved her and placed her in the line of David.

Ruth

A Moabitess who left her gods to follow the LORD.

God made her the great-grandmother of King David.

The Wife of Uriah

A woman caught up in the sin of a king.

God brought Solomon, the next king, from her.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

These women show us that God's grace reaches:

- The wronged.
- The outsider.
- The foreigner.

- The broken.
- The sinner.

And all of them point to Mary, through whom God did the greatest miracle of all.

XXV. WHY DOES MATTHEW BEGIN WITH A GENEALOGY?

To many modern readers, a list of names seems like a strange way to begin a book.

But to Matthew's first readers, it was the perfect beginning.

It Proves Jesus' Right to the Throne

A Jewish Messiah had to be a descendant of David.

It Connects Jesus to Abraham

Jesus is the one through whom the nations would be blessed.

It Shows God's Faithfulness

Generation after generation, God kept the line alive.

It Shows That Jesus Entered Real History

Jesus is not a legend or myth.

He was born into a real family, in a real place, at a real time.

Spiritual Principle

Christianity is rooted in history, not in imagination.

XXVI. MATTHEW 1 AND LUKE 3

Both Matthew and Luke give a genealogy of Jesus.

But they are different.

Matthew's Genealogy

- Begins with Abraham and moves forward.

- Traces the line through Solomon.
- Emphasizes Jesus as the royal King.
- Follows Joseph's legal line.

Luke's Genealogy

- Begins with Jesus and moves backward.
- Traces the line through Nathan, another son of David.
- Goes all the way back to Adam.
- Emphasizes Jesus as Savior of all humanity.

Many Bible students have understood Luke's genealogy to follow Mary's family line, while Matthew follows Joseph's legal line.

Either way, both Gospels agree on the most important truth:

Jesus is the Son of David.

Key Truth

Matthew shows Jesus as the rightful King of the Jews.

Luke shows Jesus as the Savior of the whole human race.

XXVII. WHAT MATTHEW 1 TEACHES ABOUT THE VIRGIN BIRTH

The virgin birth is not a minor detail.

It is essential to who Jesus is.

It Was Prophesied

Isaiah 7:14 foretold that the virgin would conceive.

It Was Miraculous

Mary was with child from the Holy Spirit.

It Shows Jesus Is Fully God

His conception was from God, not from a human father.

It Shows Jesus Is Fully Man

He was truly born of a woman.

It Preserves His Sinlessness

Jesus came into the world as the holy Son of God, not as one more descendant of fallen Adam needing a Savior.

Key Truth

The virgin birth is the doorway through which the eternal Son of God entered human history.

XXVIII. WHAT MATTHEW 1 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 1 presents Jesus as:

The Christ

The anointed Messiah promised in the Old Testament.

The Son of David

The rightful heir to David's eternal throne.

The Son of Abraham

The promised blessing for all nations.

The Son of God

Conceived by the Holy Spirit.

The Savior

He will save His people from their sins.

Immanuel

God with us.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The child born in Bethlehem is the King of Israel, the Savior of sinners, and God Himself come to dwell with us.

XXIX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why does Matthew call Jesus “the Son of David, the Son of Abraham” in the very first verse?

These titles connect Jesus to the two great covenant promises of the Old Testament.

God promised Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his offspring.

God promised David that his descendant would reign forever.

Matthew immediately shows that Jesus is the fulfillment of both.

Question 2

Why is it unusual that Matthew includes women in the genealogy?

Jewish genealogies usually listed only men.

Matthew deliberately includes Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah.

Their stories involve:

- Scandal.
- Foreign backgrounds.
- Sin committed by or against them.
- The surprising grace of God.

Their inclusion shows that God's grace reaches people we might not expect.

Question 3

Why does Matthew refer to Bathsheba as “the wife of Uriah”?

The wording reminds readers of David's sin of adultery and murder.

It shows that even Israel's greatest king needed God's forgiveness.

It also honors Uriah, the faithful man who was wronged.

Question 4

Why are some generations left out of the genealogy?

Jewish genealogies often skipped generations.

The word **“father”** could mean **“ancestor.”**

Matthew's goal was to show the line of descent clearly, not to list every individual.

His arrangement into three groups of fourteen also made the genealogy easier to remember.

Question 5

What is the significance of the number fourteen?

Matthew divides history into three sets of fourteen generations.

In Hebrew, the letters of the name David add up to fourteen.

This emphasizes that Jesus is the true Son of David.

It also shows that history is under God's careful direction.

Question 6

How does verse 16 point toward the virgin birth?

Throughout the genealogy, Matthew writes, **“A was the father of B.”**

But in verse 16, he does not say Joseph was the father of Jesus.

He says Joseph was **“the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born.”**

The word **“whom”** is feminine in Greek, pointing to Mary alone.

Question 7

What does Joseph's decision in verse 19 tell us about his character?

Joseph was a righteous man.

He would not ignore what he thought was sin.

But he also refused to shame Mary publicly.

His righteousness was joined with mercy and self-control.

Question 8

What does the name Jesus mean, and why is it important?

The name Jesus means **“The LORD saves.”**

The angel explained:

“He will save His people from their sins.”

Jesus' name describes His mission.

He came to rescue people from sin, not merely from political or earthly trouble.

Question 9

What does the name Immanuel teach us about Jesus?

Immanuel means **“God is with us.”**

Jesus is not only sent from God.

He is God who came to live among His people.

This is the foundation of the Christian belief that Jesus is both fully God and fully man.

Question 10

Why is the virgin birth important to the Christian faith?

The virgin birth:

- Fulfilled prophecy.
- Shows that Jesus came from God.
- Shows that He is truly human.
- Shows that His coming was a miracle of God, not human effort.
- Points to His holiness and sinless nature.

Question 11

How did Joseph respond to God's message?

Joseph obeyed immediately.

He took Mary as his wife.

He protected her and accepted responsibility for the child.

He named the child Jesus, just as the angel had commanded.

Question 12

What should Matthew 1 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 1 should cause believers to live:

- Confident that God keeps His promises.
- Grateful for grace that reaches sinners.

- Open to people from every background.
- Trusting God's control over history.
- Worshiping Jesus as Savior and King.
- Aware that God is with them.
- Ready to obey when God speaks.

XXX. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 1 asks several important questions.

Do I Believe God Keeps His Promises?

God's promises to Abraham and David waited centuries for fulfillment, but not one failed.

Do I Think My Past Is Too Broken for God?

Look at the names in Jesus' family line.

Grace is greater than any history.

Have I Received Jesus as My Savior?

He came to save His people from their sins.

Have I trusted Him to save me?

Have I Submitted to Jesus as My King?

The Son of David has the right to rule my life.

Do I Live Aware That God Is With Me?

Immanuel is not only a Christmas word.

It is a daily truth.

Am I Responding to God Like Joseph?

When God makes His will clear, do I obey promptly?

Do I Show Mercy When I Have Been Hurt?

Joseph chose not to shame Mary even when he thought he had been wronged.

Am I Faithful in the Quiet Seasons?

Many generations served God without seeing the fulfillment of the promise.

XXXI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“God Writes Straight Lines Through Crooked Generations”

The genealogy of Jesus is not a list of perfect people.

It includes liars and schemers.

It includes adulterers and idolaters.

It includes foreigners and outcasts.

It includes wicked kings and repentant kings.

It includes people no one remembers.

And yet through all of them, God moved His plan forward without failure.

Every generation added another link in the chain.

And the chain ended exactly where God said it would:

Jesus Christ.

This creates a powerful principle.

Human failure is real.

But it is never final when God is at work.

God does not need perfect people to accomplish His perfect plan.

He works through flawed people by His grace.

Principle:

Human sin cannot cancel God's promises; it only reveals how great His grace must be.

XXXII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 1 stands at the doorway of the New Testament.

For centuries, Israel had waited.

The prophets had spoken.

Then the prophets went silent.

The throne of David was empty.

The royal family was poor and forgotten.

Rome ruled the land.

Many may have wondered whether God had forgotten His promises.

But in a small town called Nazareth, a young woman was told she would bear a son.

And a carpenter named Joseph was told not to be afraid.

No crowds were watching.

No kings were paying attention.

No headlines announced what was happening.

But God was keeping every promise He had ever made.

The promise to Abraham.

The promise to David.

The promise of Isaiah.

The promise of a Savior.

Matthew 1 therefore reminds us:

Never assume God has forgotten because He is quiet.

Before the King came, there were forty-two generations of waiting.

Before the Savior was revealed, there was a young couple who simply obeyed.

Before the world saw Jesus, God was preparing every detail.

The story of salvation did not begin with a crowd.

It began with:

A faithful promise.

A miraculous conception.

An obedient man.

And a child named Jesus.

The same Jesus still saves:

Tell people that God keeps His promises.

Tell people that grace reaches sinners.

Tell people that Jesus came to save them from their sins.

Tell people that God came near.

Tell people that He is still with us.

And until He returns:

Trust His promises.

Receive His grace.

Obey His Word.

Rest in His presence.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for being a God who keeps Your promises.

Thank You that what You promised to Abraham and to David, You fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Thank You that no generation was outside Your care and no failure could stop Your plan.

Thank You for the grace that runs through the family line of Jesus.

Thank You that You welcomed Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba into Your story.

Thank You that You still welcome sinners, outsiders, and broken people who come to You by faith.

Thank You for sending Your Son into the world.

Thank You for the miracle of His birth by the Holy Spirit.

Thank You that His name is Jesus, because He saves His people from their sins.

Save us from our sins.

Rule over our lives as our King.

Thank You that He is Immanuel, God with us.

Help us live every day aware of Your presence.

When we are afraid, remind us of Your Word.

When we are uncertain, give us wisdom like You gave Joseph.

When we have been hurt, give us mercy instead of revenge.

When You make Your will clear, give us hearts that obey without delay.

When we walk through quiet seasons, help us remain faithful.

Teach us to trust You when we cannot see what You are doing.

Help us remember that You are writing a story far greater than our own.

Use our lives, our families, and our faith to point the next generation to Jesus.

May we worship Him as the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, and the Son of God.

And may we never forget the wonder of His name:

“God is with us.”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“She will give birth to a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.” — Matthew 1:21

Central Truth

Jesus Christ, the promised Son of David and Son of Abraham, was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin as Immanuel, God with us, to save His people from their sins.

Matthew 1 in One Sentence

Matthew traces the faithful hand of God through forty-two generations of real and imperfect people to the miraculous birth of Jesus, the promised King and Savior, whose name declares that He saves His people and whose title declares that God is with us.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 2 — The Visit of the Wise Men and the Escape to Egypt

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 1 told us who Jesus is.

He is the Son of David.

He is the Son of Abraham.

He is Immanuel, God with us.

Matthew Chapter 2 shows us how the world responded when He came.

Some came to worship Him.

Some wanted to destroy Him.

Some knew the Scriptures but did nothing.

Wise men from the east traveled a great distance following a star.

They came with one question:

“Where is the child who has been born King of the Jews?”

That question shook a palace.

King Herod already called himself king of the Jews.

He was not willing to share his throne with anyone.

The religious leaders knew exactly where the Messiah would be born.

But they did not go to see Him.

Foreigners from far away came to worship.

Leaders close by stayed home.

Then the chapter turns dark.

Herod plots.

Herod lies.

Herod kills.

But God protects His Son at every step.

He guides the wise men by a star.

He warns them in a dream.

He sends Joseph to Egypt.

He brings the family back at the right time.

He settles them in Nazareth.

Four times in this chapter Matthew shows that events happened to fulfill what the prophets had said.

Nothing in Matthew 2 is random.

Matthew 2 therefore shows two kinds of kings:

The true King in a humble house in Bethlehem.

And:

A false king in a palace in Jerusalem, afraid of losing his power.

The central truth of Matthew 2 is:

Jesus is the true King who deserves the worship of all nations, and no human power can stop God's plan to protect and fulfill His purpose in His Son.

I. JESUS IS BORN IN BETHLEHEM

Matthew 2:1 — Wise Men from the East

“Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea during the days of King Herod. Wise men from the east came to Jerusalem,”

Matthew gives us a place and a time.

The place was **Bethlehem of Judea.**

Bethlehem was the hometown of King David.

It was a small town only a few miles south of Jerusalem.

The time was **the days of King Herod.**

Herod the Great ruled Judea under the authority of Rome.

He was a skilled builder and a powerful ruler.

But he was also known for his cruelty and suspicion.

He even had members of his own family killed because he feared they would take his throne.

Into that world came visitors:

“Wise men from the east.”

The Greek word is **magi.**

They were likely scholars who studied the stars, possibly from Persia or Babylon.

Matthew does not tell us how many there were.

The tradition of three comes from the three gifts.

Cross References

Micah 5:2

> But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, even though you are small among the family groups of Judah, out of you will come One who will rule over Israel for Me. His beginnings go back to long ago, to the days of eternity.

Luke 2:4

> So Joseph went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he was from the family of David.

Numbers 24:17

> I see Him, but not now. I look at Him, but He is not near. A star will come out of Jacob. A ruler's scepter will rise out of Israel.

Spiritual Principle

God carries out His great plans in small places.

The King of kings was not born in Rome or Jerusalem.

He was born in little Bethlehem, just as God had said.

Key Truth

Jesus was born in real history, in a real town, under a real king.

II. THE WISE MEN SEEK THE KING

Matthew 2:2 — “We Have Come to Worship Him”

“asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born King of the Jews? We saw His star rising in the east, and we have come to worship Him.’”

The wise men did not ask whether a king had been born.

They were sure He had.

They asked only:

Where is He?

Notice the phrase:

“Born King.”

Herod had been made king by Rome.

Jesus was born King.

His kingship did not come from any human government.

Notice also why they came:

“To worship Him.”

They did not come out of curiosity.

They came to bow before Him.

Cross References

Numbers 24:17

> I see Him, but not now. I look at Him, but He is not near. A star will come out of Jacob. A ruler's scepter will rise out of Israel.

Isaiah 60:3

> Nations will come to your light, and kings will come to the bright shining of your new day.

Psalms 2:6

> “I have placed My King on Zion, My holy mountain.”

Spiritual Principle

Those who truly seek Jesus seek Him to worship Him.

The wise men traveled a long way, not for information, but for worship.

Application

True seekers of Christ are willing to:

- Leave what is familiar.
- Travel a long road.
- Ask honest questions.
- Follow the light God gives.
- Bow down when they find Him.

III. HEROD IS DISTURBED

Matthew 2:3 — A Troubled King and a Troubled City

“When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.”

The news that brought joy to the wise men brought fear to Herod.

Herod saw Jesus as a threat.

He had spent his life protecting his power.

Now strangers from far away were talking about another King.

And **all Jerusalem** was disturbed with him.

Why would the whole city be troubled?

The people knew what Herod did when he felt threatened.

When Herod was angry, everyone suffered.

Cross References

Psalms 2:2

> The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers join together against the LORD and against His Anointed One.

1 Samuel 16:14

> The Spirit of the LORD left Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

Proverbs 21:1

> A king's heart is like streams of water in the LORD's hand. He turns it in whatever direction He chooses.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is good news to those who want Him and a threat to those who want to stay in control.

The same Jesus who brings joy to the humble brings fear to the proud.

Spiritual Warning

Herod's problem was not a lack of information.

His problem was a heart that refused to give up the throne.

Like Saul before him, Herod became a troubled king who fought against God's chosen one.

IV. HEROD CALLS THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Matthew 2:4 — “Where Was the Messiah to Be Born?”

“He called together the chief priests and teachers of the law and asked them where the Messiah was supposed to be born.”

Herod gathered the experts.

The **chief priests** led the temple worship.

The **teachers of the law** were the scholars of the Scriptures.

Herod's question is revealing.

He asked where **the Messiah** was to be born.

Herod understood that the wise men were talking about the promised Christ.

He was not asking so he could worship.

He was asking so he could find his target.

Cross References

John 7:42

> Doesn't Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's family, and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?

Micah 5:2

> But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, even though you are small among the family groups of Judah, out of you will come One who will rule over Israel for Me. His beginnings go back to long ago, to the days of eternity.

Malachi 2:7

> A priest's words should protect true knowledge, and people should look to him for teaching, because he is a messenger of the LORD who commands armies.

Spiritual Principle

Knowing the Bible is not the same as following the Lord.

The priests had the right answer.

But they did not have the right response.

V. THE ANSWER FROM SCRIPTURE

Matthew 2:5 — “In Bethlehem of Judea”

“They answered, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea. For the prophet wrote:’”

The religious leaders answered quickly.

They knew the passage.

They pointed to the prophet Micah.

The answer was clear:

Bethlehem.

But notice what is missing.

Not one of them went to Bethlehem.

It was only about six miles away.

The wise men had traveled hundreds of miles.

The scholars would not walk six.

Cross References

Micah 5:2

> But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, even though you are small among the family groups of Judah, out of you will come One who will rule over Israel for Me. His beginnings go back to long ago, to the days of eternity.

John 7:42

> Doesn't Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's family, and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?

1 Samuel 16:1

> The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you keep grieving over Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse in Bethlehem, because I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to be close to the truth and still be far from Christ.

The religious leaders were near Jesus in distance and in knowledge.

But they were far from Him in heart.

Key Truth

Bethlehem was where God chose David.

Bethlehem was where God sent the Son of David.

VI. A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD

Matthew 2:6 — The Shepherd-King

“‘But you, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah. For out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.’”

Bethlehem was small.

But God gave it great honor.

It would be the birthplace of the ruler of God's people.

Notice the kind of ruler Jesus would be:

A ruler who will shepherd.

Herod ruled through fear.

Jesus would rule through care.

Herod used people.

Jesus would lay down His life for His people.

David had been a shepherd boy from Bethlehem before he became king.

Jesus is the greater Son of David, the true Shepherd-King.

Cross References

2 Samuel 5:2

> The LORD said to you, “You will be the shepherd of My people Israel, and you will be the ruler over Israel.”

Ezekiel 34:23

> I will place one shepherd over them, My servant David. He will feed them and take care of them. He will be their shepherd.

John 10:11

> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives up his life for the sheep.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus rules His people as a shepherd, not as a tyrant.

His authority is complete, but His heart is tender.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The King who has the right to command us is the Shepherd who was willing to die for us.

VII. HEROD'S SECRET MEETING

Matthew 2:7 — The Time of the Star

“Then Herod secretly called the wise men and carefully asked them when the star had appeared.”

Herod now acts in secret.

He does not want anyone to know what he is planning.

He asks carefully about the timing of the star.

Why?

Because the timing would tell him how old the child might be.

Herod was already planning murder.

Cross References

Numbers 24:17

> I see Him, but not now. I look at Him, but He is not near. A star will come out of Jacob. A ruler's scepter will rise out of Israel.

Exodus 1:10

> Come, we need a clever plan to deal with them. If we don't, they will keep growing in number.

Psalms 10:2

> In his pride, the wicked man hunts down the weak. Let him be caught in the very plans he has made.

Spiritual Warning

Secrecy is often the hiding place of sin.

Herod met in private because his plans could not stand the light.

Key Truth

Like Pharaoh before him, Herod made clever plans against God's people.

And like Pharaoh, he would fail.

VIII. HEROD'S DECEPTION

Matthew 2:8 — “So That I Too May Go and Worship Him”

“He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, ‘Go and search carefully for the child. When you find Him, report back to me, so that I too may go and worship Him.’”

Herod spoke religious words.

“So that I too may go and worship Him.”

But his heart was full of murder.

He wanted to use the wise men as spies.

He wanted them to lead him to the child.

Cross References

Psalms 55:21

> His words are smoother than butter, but war is in his heart. His words are softer than oil, but they are really swords ready to strike.

Proverbs 26:24

> A person full of hate hides it with what he says, but inside he is storing up lies.

Genesis 37:20

> “Come on, let's kill him and throw him into one of these pits. We'll say a wild animal ate him. Then we'll see what happens to his dreams!”

Spiritual Warning

Not everyone who talks about worship wants to worship.

Herod used the language of faith to hide the plans of evil.

Spiritual Principle

God sees the heart behind the words.

Herod could fool the wise men for a while.

He could not fool God.

IX. THE STAR GOES AHEAD OF THEM

Matthew 2:9 — Guided to the Child

“After hearing the king, the wise men went on their way. The star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.”

The wise men left Jerusalem.

And the star appeared again.

It went ahead of them.

It stopped over the very place where the child was.

This was no ordinary star.

God Himself was guiding them.

Just as God led Israel in the wilderness with a pillar of cloud and fire, He led the wise men to His Son.

Cross References

Exodus 13:21

> The LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud during the day to show them the way, and in a pillar of fire at night to give them light.

Job 38:32

> Can you bring out the groups of stars at their proper times, or lead the Great Bear with its cubs?

Isaiah 60:3

> Nations will come to your light, and kings will come to the bright shining of your new day.

Spiritual Principle

God guides those who sincerely seek His Son.

The wise men followed the light they had, and God gave them more light.

Key Truth

The God who made the stars can use a star to lead people to Jesus.

X. GREAT JOY

Matthew 2:10 — “Filled with Great Joy”

“When they saw the star, they were filled with great joy.”

Matthew uses strong language here.

They were not just happy.

They were filled with **great joy.**

Their long journey was almost over.

The God who had guided them had not left them.

Contrast the wise men with Herod.

Herod heard about Jesus and was disturbed.

The wise men drew near to Jesus and were filled with joy.

Cross References

Isaiah 60:5

> Then you will look and your face will shine. Your heart will pound and be full of joy, because the riches of the nations will come to you.

Psalms 97:11

> Light shines on those who do right, and joy is given to those whose hearts are honest.

Luke 2:10

> But the angel said to them, “Don't be afraid. I am bringing you good news that will bring great joy to all people.”

Spiritual Principle

Coming to Jesus brings joy.

The closer the wise men came to Christ, the greater their joy became.

XI. THE WISE MEN WORSHIP JESUS

Matthew 2:11 — Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh

“They entered the house and saw the child with Mary His mother. They bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and gave Him gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

Notice several important details.

They entered **a house.**

By this time, Jesus was no longer in the manger.

Matthew calls Him **a child**, not a newborn baby.

They saw the child **with Mary His mother.**

But they worshiped **Him.**

Not Mary.

Not Joseph.

Jesus alone received their worship.

Then they gave their gifts.

Gold — a gift fit for a king.

Frankincense — incense used in worship, a gift fit for God.

Myrrh — a spice used in burial, pointing ahead to His death.

These gifts may also have helped provide for the family's journey to Egypt.

Cross References

Psalms 72:10

> The kings of Tarshish and of the faraway coastlands will bring Him gifts. The kings of Sheba and Seba will offer Him presents.

Isaiah 60:6

> Many camels will fill your land... All the people from Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense, and they will tell the praises of the LORD.

Song of Solomon 3:6

> Who is this coming up from the desert like columns of smoke, smelling of myrrh and incense?

Spiritual Principle

True worship gives.

The wise men did not come empty-handed.

They opened their treasures.

Application

Worship is more than words.

It includes giving Jesus:

- Our hearts.
- Our time.
- Our gifts.
- Our talents.
- Our obedience.
- Our lives.

XII. WARNED IN A DREAM

Matthew 2:12 — Another Route Home

“But God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod, so they went back to their own country by another route.”

God stepped in.

He warned the wise men not to go back to Herod.

They obeyed.

They went home **by another route.**

Herod's plan to use them was ruined.

There is also a spiritual picture here.

No one who truly meets Jesus goes back the same way they came.

Cross References

Genesis 31:24

> Then God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, “Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.”

Job 33:15

> God speaks in a dream, in a vision at night, when people are in a deep sleep as they lie in their beds.

Genesis 20:3

> But God came to Abimelech in a dream at night and said to him, “You are about to die because of the woman you have taken. She is a married woman.”

Spiritual Principle

God protects His plan by guiding His people.

God used a warning to protect the wise men and to protect His Son.

Key Truth

When God gives direction, wise people change their route.

XIII. FLEE TO EGYPT

Matthew 2:13 — The Angel Warns Joseph

“After they left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. ‘Get up,’ he said. ‘Take the child and His mother and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, because Herod is going to try to kill the child.’”

For the second time, an angel speaks to Joseph in a dream.

The message is urgent.

Get up.

Take the child and His mother.

Flee to Egypt.

Stay there until I tell you.

Egypt was outside Herod's control.

It also had a large Jewish community.

Joseph was told to go without knowing how long he would stay.

He had to trust God one step at a time.

Cross References

Genesis 46:3

> God said, “I am God, the God of your father. Don't be afraid to go down to Egypt, because I will make you into a great nation there.”

Exodus 2:15

> When Pharaoh heard what had happened, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses ran away from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian.

1 Kings 11:40

> Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam ran away to Egypt, to Shishak the king of Egypt. He stayed there until Solomon died.

Spiritual Principle

God's protection sometimes comes through a hard road.

God did not remove Herod immediately.

He moved Joseph's family to safety.

Key Truth

Jesus, the Savior of the world, began His life as a refugee.

XIV. JOSEPH OBEYS AT NIGHT

Matthew 2:14 — Immediate Obedience

“That night Joseph got up, took the child and His mother, and left for Egypt.”

Joseph did not wait until morning.

He left **that night.**

Once again, Joseph does not speak.

He simply obeys.

His obedience protected the life of Jesus.

Cross References

Genesis 46:6

> They took their animals and everything they owned in Canaan, and Jacob and all his family went to Egypt.

Exodus 2:15

> When Pharaoh heard what had happened, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses ran away from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian.

Genesis 12:10

> There was a famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to stay there for a while, because the famine was very bad.

Spiritual Principle

Delayed obedience can be dangerous obedience.

Joseph's quick response kept the child safe.

Application

When God makes His will clear, faithful people:

- Do not argue.
- Do not wait for perfect conditions.
- Do not need every detail.
- Get up and go.

XV. OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON

Matthew 2:15 — Jesus Relives Israel's Story

“They stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: ‘Out of Egypt I called My Son.’”

Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1.

In Hosea, those words describe Israel coming out of Egypt in the Exodus.

God called Israel His son.

Matthew shows that Jesus, the true Son of God, now walks the same path.

Israel went down to Egypt.

Jesus went down to Egypt.

Israel came out of Egypt.

Jesus would come out of Egypt.

But where Israel failed, Jesus would be faithful.

Jesus is the true and perfect Israel.

Cross References

Hosea 11:1

> When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.

Exodus 4:22

> Then say to Pharaoh, “This is what the LORD says: Israel is My firstborn son.”

Numbers 24:8

> God brought him out of Egypt. He has strength like a wild ox.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus succeeds where we have failed.

He lived the faithful life God's people could not live.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus does not only fulfill the prophecies of Scripture; He fulfills the story of Scripture.

XVI. HEROD'S CRUELTY

Matthew 2:16 — The Killing of the Children

“When Herod realized that the wise men had deceived him, he was furious. He ordered all the boys in Bethlehem and in the surrounding area who were two years old and younger to be killed. This was based on the time he had learned from the wise men.”

This is one of the most painful verses in the Gospels.

Herod was furious.

His plan had failed.

So he struck out in rage.

He ordered the killing of every boy two years old and younger in and around Bethlehem.

Bethlehem was a small town.

The number of children killed may not have been large compared to other events in history.

But to every family, the loss was unbearable.

This was the same evil Pharaoh showed when he ordered the Hebrew baby boys to be killed in the days of Moses.

And behind both was the same enemy who has always tried to destroy God's promised Seed.

Cross References

Exodus 1:16

> "When you help the Hebrew women give birth, watch closely. If the baby is a boy, kill him. If it is a girl, let her live."

Exodus 1:22

> Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Throw every Hebrew baby boy into the Nile River, but let every girl live."

Revelation 12:4

> The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he could eat up her child the moment He was born.

Spiritual Warning

Pride and the love of power can lead to terrible evil.

Herod was willing to destroy innocent children to protect his throne.

Spiritual Principle

Evil is real, but it does not have the final word.

Herod could kill children in Bethlehem.

He could not stop the plan of God.

XVII. RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN

Matthew 2:17–18 — A Voice Heard in Ramah

"Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be comforted, because they are gone.'"

Matthew quotes Jeremiah 31:15.

Rachel was the wife of Jacob.

She died near Bethlehem and was buried there.

In Jeremiah, Rachel is pictured weeping as her descendants were carried away into exile.

Ramah was the place where captives were gathered before being taken to Babylon.

Matthew sees that same sorrow repeated in Bethlehem.

Mothers were weeping again.

Notice that Matthew does not say Herod's evil fulfilled God's will.

He says the prophecy was fulfilled.

God does not cause evil.

But God knew this grief would come, and He did not ignore it.

And the very next verse in Jeremiah gives a word of hope:

“Stop your crying... they will come back.”

Cross References

Jeremiah 31:15

> This is what the LORD says: “A voice is heard in Ramah, crying and weeping bitterly. Rachel is crying for her children. She refuses to be comforted, because her children are gone.”

Genesis 35:19

> So Rachel died and was buried beside the road to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.

Jeremiah 31:16

> This is what the LORD says: “Stop your crying and wipe away your tears, because your work will be rewarded,” says the LORD. “They will come back from the land of the enemy.”

Spiritual Principle

God sees the tears of those who grieve.

Scripture does not hide sorrow.

It names it.

And it points to the hope beyond it.

Key Truth

The Savior was born into a world of real grief, and He came to bring that grief to an end.

XVIII. HEROD DIES

Matthew 2:19 — The Angel Appears Again

“After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.”

Herod died.

The man who tried to kill the King of kings could not keep himself alive.

Herod died around 4 B.C.

History records that his death was painful and that he was hated by many.

Then God spoke to Joseph again.

For the third time, an angel appeared to him in a dream.

Cross References

Exodus 4:19

> The LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, because all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.”

Genesis 50:20

> You planned to do evil to me, but God planned it for good, to do what is happening now, to save the lives of many people.

1 Kings 11:21

> While he was in Egypt, Hadad heard that David had died and that Joab the army commander was also dead. Then Hadad said to Pharaoh, “Let me go, so I can return to my own country.”

Spiritual Principle

The enemies of God do not last, but the purposes of God do.

Herod's reign ended.

Christ's reign will never end.

XIX. RETURN TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL

Matthew 2:20 — “Those Who Wanted to Kill the Child Are Dead”

“The angel said, ‘Get up. Take the child and His mother and go back to the land of Israel, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead.’”

The angel's words echo what God said to Moses:

Go back, because the ones who wanted to kill you are dead.

Moses was rescued as a baby from a king who killed children.

Jesus was rescued as a child from a king who killed children.

Moses led God's people out of slavery.

Jesus would lead His people out of slavery to sin.

Jesus is the greater Moses.

Cross References

Exodus 4:19

> The LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, because all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.”

Exodus 2:23

> After a long time, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned because of their slavery, and they cried out. Their cry for help went up to God.

1 Kings 11:21

> While he was in Egypt, Hadad heard that David had died and that Joab the army commander was also dead. Then Hadad said to Pharaoh, “Let me go, so I can return to my own country.”

Spiritual Principle

God's timing is always right.

Joseph waited in Egypt until God said it was time to go.

Key Truth

God tells His people when to leave and when to return.

XX. JOSEPH RETURNS TO ISRAEL

Matthew 2:21 — Obedience Again

“So Joseph got up, took the child and His mother, and returned to Israel.”

The wording is almost exactly the same as verse 14.

God spoke.

Joseph got up.

Joseph obeyed.

Joseph's life shows a steady pattern of obedience.

Cross References

Exodus 4:20

> So Moses took his wife and his sons, put them on a donkey, and started back to the land of Egypt.

Genesis 46:5

> Jacob's sons put their father Jacob, their children, and their wives in the wagons Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

Hosea 11:1

> When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.

Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness is built through repeated obedience.

Joseph did not obey once.

He obeyed every time God spoke.

XXI. WARNED AGAIN — GALILEE

Matthew 2:22 — Archelaus and a New Direction

“But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Being warned in another dream, he went instead to the region of Galilee.”

Herod's kingdom was divided among his sons.

Archelaus ruled Judea.

He was known for being as cruel as his father.

Joseph was afraid.

His fear was reasonable.

And God did not scold him for it.

Instead, God gave him another warning in a dream.

This is the fourth dream of guidance Joseph received.

God directed him north to Galilee.

Cross References

Genesis 26:2

> The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, “Don't go down to Egypt. Live in the land I will show you.”

Proverbs 29:25

> Being afraid of people is a trap, but whoever trusts in the LORD will be kept safe.

Job 33:14

> God does speak, once and even twice, though people may not notice it.

Spiritual Principle

God meets our fears with His direction.

Joseph's fear did not stop him from following God.

It made him listen more carefully.

Application

When you are afraid:

- Be honest with God.
- Wait for His guidance.
- Do not let fear of people rule you.
- Trust Him to show you the way.

XXII. HE WILL BE CALLED A NAZARENE

Matthew 2:23 — Settling in Nazareth

“They settled in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what was spoken by the prophets: ‘He will be called a Nazarene.’”

Nazareth was a small, unimportant town in Galilee.

It is never mentioned in the Old Testament.

People looked down on it.

Notice that Matthew says this was spoken by **the prophets** — plural.

He is not quoting one verse.

He is summing up a theme found in several prophets.

Bible students have seen at least two connections:

First, the Hebrew word **netzer** means **“branch.”**

Isaiah said the Messiah would be a Branch from the family of Jesse.

Second, the prophets said the Messiah would be looked down on and rejected.

Being called **“a Nazarene”** meant being from a despised, unimportant place.

The King of kings grew up in a town people mocked.

Cross References

Judges 13:5

> You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy will be set apart to God as a Nazirite from birth. He will begin to save Israel from the Philistines.

Isaiah 11:1

> A new branch will grow from the stump of Jesse's family. A Branch will grow from its roots and produce fruit.

John 1:46

> “Nazareth!” Nathanael said. “Can anything good come from there?” “Come and see,” Philip answered.

Spiritual Principle

God is not limited by where someone comes from.

People asked whether anything good could come from Nazareth.

The answer was Jesus.

Key Truth

The Savior of the world was willing to be looked down on so that He could lift us up.

XXIII. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 2

1. Jesus Is the True King

Even at His birth, rulers and nations were moved by His arrival.

The wise men recognized Him as worthy of worship.

Principle:

Every heart must decide whether Jesus will be worshiped as King or resisted as a rival.

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2. God Directs Those Who Seek Him

The star guided the wise men.

Dreams directed Joseph.

God's hand was in every step.

Principle:

God has never left His people without guidance.

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3. Evil Resists God's Plan

Herod tried to destroy Jesus.

But God's protection and prophecy could not be stopped.

Principle:

No one can defeat what God has determined to do.

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4. God Fulfills His Word

Jesus' birth, escape, and upbringing fulfilled several Old Testament prophecies, including Micah 5:2, Hosea 11:1, and Jeremiah 31:15.

Principle:

God's Word can be trusted because God always keeps it.

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5. God Redeems Humble Beginnings

Though raised in the small town of Nazareth, Jesus is the Messiah and Savior of the world.

Principle:

God often does His greatest work through the places and people the world overlooks.

XXIV. THREE RESPONSES TO JESUS

Matthew 2 shows three very different responses to the news of Christ.

Herod — Hostility

Herod saw Jesus as a threat to his power.

He tried to destroy Him.

The Religious Leaders — Indifference

They knew the Scriptures.

They knew where the Messiah would be born.

But they did nothing.

The Wise Men — Worship

They traveled far.

They searched.

They rejoiced.

They bowed down.

They gave their treasures.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Every person still responds to Jesus in one of these ways:

- Fighting against Him.
- Ignoring Him.
- Worshiping Him.

There is no neutral ground.

XXV. FOUR FULFILLED PROPHECIES IN MATTHEW 2

Matthew wants his readers to see that every step of Jesus' early life was in God's plan.

Born in Bethlehem

Micah 5:2 — The ruler of Israel would come from Bethlehem.

Called Out of Egypt

Hosea 11:1 — “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

Rachel Weeping

Jeremiah 31:15 — Grief in Ramah pictured the sorrow in Bethlehem.

Called a Nazarene

The prophets — The Messiah would be the Branch and would be looked down on.

Key Truth

Jesus' life did not simply happen; it was planned and foretold by God.

XXVI. JESUS AND MOSES

Matthew draws clear connections between Jesus and Moses.

Both Were Threatened as Children

Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew boys killed.

Herod ordered the boys of Bethlehem killed.

Both Were Protected by God

Moses was hidden in a basket.

Jesus was taken to Egypt.

Both Were Told to Return

God told Moses, “Those who wanted to kill you are dead.”

The angel told Joseph, “Those who wanted to kill the child are dead.”

Both Delivered God's People

Moses led Israel out of slavery in Egypt.

Jesus leads His people out of slavery to sin.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Moses brought God's people out of Egypt; Jesus brings God's people out of sin.

XXVII. WHAT MATTHEW 2 TEACHES ABOUT GOD'S GUIDANCE

God guided His people in many ways in this chapter.

Through Creation

A star led the wise men.

Through Scripture

The prophet Micah told where the Messiah would be born.

Through Dreams

God warned the wise men and guided Joseph four times.

Through Circumstances

The death of Herod and the rule of Archelaus shaped where the family went.

Key Truth

Today, God's clearest guidance comes through His written Word.

Any guidance that contradicts Scripture is not from God.

XXVIII. WHAT MATTHEW 2 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 2 presents Jesus as:

The Born King

He did not become King; He was born King.

The One Worthy of Worship

The wise men bowed down before Him.

The Shepherd-Ruler

He shepherds God's people.

The Son of God

God called His Son out of Egypt.

The Greater Moses

He was rescued as a child to become the deliverer of His people.

The Humble Nazarene

He grew up in a despised town and was willing to be rejected.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The child the world tried to destroy is the King the whole world will one day bow before.

XXIX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Who were the wise men?

They were magi from the east.

They were likely scholars who studied the stars, possibly from Persia or Babylon.

Matthew does not tell us how many came.

The idea of three comes from the three gifts.

Question 2

Why was Herod so disturbed by the news of Jesus' birth?

Herod saw Jesus as a rival king.

He was suspicious and cruel and had already killed members of his own family to protect his throne.

He was not willing to give up his power to anyone.

Question 3

Why was all Jerusalem disturbed with Herod?

The people knew that when Herod felt threatened, he became violent.

They feared what he might do.

Question 4

What does it teach us that the religious leaders knew where the Messiah would be born but did not go?

It teaches that knowing the Bible is not the same as following Christ.

They had the right answer but not the right heart.

Bethlehem was only about six miles away, yet they did not go.

Question 5

What do the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh represent?

Many Bible teachers have seen meaning in each gift:

- Gold — a gift fit for a King.
- Frankincense — incense used in worship, pointing to His deity.
- Myrrh — a spice used in burial, pointing to His death.

The gifts may also have helped provide for the family in Egypt.

Question 6

Why does Matthew say the wise men found Jesus in a house?

By the time the wise men came, the family was no longer in the place where Jesus was born.

Jesus is called a child, not a newborn.

Herod's order to kill boys two years old and younger suggests that Jesus may have been up to two years old.

Question 7

How did God protect Jesus in this chapter?

God:

- Warned the wise men not to return to Herod.
- Warned Joseph to flee to Egypt.
- Told Joseph when it was safe to return.
- Warned Joseph not to settle in Judea.
- Led the family to Nazareth.

Question 8

What does “Out of Egypt I called My Son” mean?

In Hosea 11:1, it refers to Israel coming out of Egypt in the Exodus.

Matthew shows that Jesus, the true Son of God, repeats Israel's journey.

Where Israel failed, Jesus would be faithful.

Question 9

Why does Matthew quote Jeremiah's words about Rachel weeping?

Rachel was buried near Bethlehem.

In Jeremiah, she is pictured weeping for her children taken into exile.

Matthew sees the same grief in the mothers of Bethlehem.

The next verse in Jeremiah offers hope that God will restore what was lost.

Question 10

What connections does Matthew make between Jesus and Moses?

Both were threatened as babies by an evil king.

Both were protected by God.

Both were told to return after those who wanted to kill them had died.

Both became deliverers of God's people.

Question 11

What does it mean that Jesus would be called a Nazarene?

Nazareth was a small, looked-down-on town.

Being called a Nazarene meant being from a humble, despised place.

It also connects to Isaiah's prophecy that the Messiah would be a **Branch**, from the Hebrew word **netzer.**

Question 12

What should Matthew 2 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 2 should cause believers to live:

- Seeking Jesus with their whole hearts.
- Worshiping Him with joy and generosity.
- Moving from knowing Scripture to obeying it.
- Trusting God's protection in danger.
- Obeying God's direction quickly.
- Not letting fear of people control them.
- Valuing the humble places where God works.

XXX. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 2 asks several important questions.

Am I Seeking Jesus Like the Wise Men?

They traveled far and searched carefully.

How much effort am I willing to give to know Christ?

Is Anything in My Life Competing with Jesus for the Throne?

Herod would not give up his throne.

What am I holding onto that Jesus should rule?

Do I Know the Bible but Fail to Act on It?

The religious leaders knew the answer but stayed home.

What Am I Giving Jesus?

The wise men opened their treasures.

What treasures am I holding back?

Do I Obey God Quickly?

Joseph got up that very night.

Do I Trust God When the Road Is Hard?

Joseph's family became refugees.

God was still in control.

Do I Let Fear of People Control My Decisions?

Joseph was afraid, but he listened to God.

Do I Look Down on Humble People or Places?

Jesus grew up in Nazareth.

God often works where the world does not expect.

XXXI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Two Thrones Cannot Rule One Heart”

Herod heard that a King had been born.

He did not ask whether the news was true.

He did not ask whether he should worship.

He only asked how he could keep his throne.

Herod's problem was not that he did not know about Jesus.

His problem was that he wanted to remain king.

The wise men were different.

They also had wealth, learning, and position.

But when they found Jesus, they bowed down.

They placed their treasures at His feet.

This creates a powerful principle.

Every person has a throne in their heart.

Either Jesus sits on it, or we do.

We cannot share it.

Principle:

The question of Christmas is not only, “Who is Jesus?” but also, “Who will rule my life?”

XXXII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 2 shows the world's first response to its King.

Far away, men who studied the stars saw a sign and started a long journey.

In Jerusalem, a powerful king trembled in his palace.

In the temple, scholars opened their scrolls and gave the right answer.

In Bethlehem, a young family lived quietly in a small house.

The wise men found the child.

They bowed.

They worshiped.

They gave.

Herod lied.

Herod raged.

Herod killed.

But Herod failed.

God moved the family to Egypt.

God brought them back.

God settled them in Nazareth.

And every step fulfilled what God had said.

Matthew 2 therefore reminds us:

The powers of this world cannot stop the purposes of God.

Kings rise and fall.

Plans are made in secret.

Evil strikes with rage.

But God guides, warns, protects, and fulfills His Word.

The story of Christ's early life did not depend on human strength.

It depended on:

A faithful God.

A guiding star.

An obedient father.

And a promised King.

The same response is still needed today:

Seek Jesus.

Worship Jesus.

Give your best to Jesus.

Obey Jesus.

Trust Jesus when the road is hard.

And until He returns:

Keep seeking.

Keep worshiping.

Keep obeying.

Keep trusting.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for sending Jesus, the true King, into the world.

Thank You that He was born in Bethlehem just as You promised.

Thank You for the wise men who traveled far to worship Him.

Give us hearts that seek Jesus like they did.

Fill us with the great joy they felt when they drew near to Him.

Teach us to bow down before Him and to worship Him alone.

Help us open our treasures and give Him our very best.

Keep us from being like Herod, holding onto our own throne.

Show us anything in our lives that we have not surrendered to Christ.

Keep us from being like the religious leaders who knew the truth but did not act on it.

Make us people who hear Your Word and obey it.

Thank You for protecting Jesus from every plan of evil.

Thank You that no power on earth can stop Your purposes.

When we face danger, help us trust Your care.

When the road is hard, help us remember that You are leading us.

When we are afraid, help us listen for Your direction.

Give us the quick obedience of Joseph.

Comfort those who grieve, as You saw the tears of the mothers of Bethlehem.

Thank You that Your Son was willing to be looked down on as a Nazarene so that we could be lifted up.

Help us never to look down on humble people or humble places.

Use our lives to lead others to Jesus, just as the star led the wise men.

May every nation come to worship Him.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“They entered the house and saw the child with Mary His mother. They bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and gave Him gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” — Matthew 2:11

Central Truth

Jesus Christ is the true King who deserves the worship of all nations, and God faithfully guides, protects, and fulfills His Word so that no human power can stop His plan.

Matthew 2 in One Sentence

Wise men from the east worship the newborn King, while Herod tries to destroy Him, but God protects His Son through Egypt and back to Nazareth, fulfilling the words of the prophets at every step.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 3 — John the Baptist and the Baptism of Jesus

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 2 ended with Jesus as a child in Nazareth.

Matthew Chapter 3 moves forward about thirty years.

Jesus is now a grown man.

But before Jesus begins His public ministry, God sends a messenger.

His name is John.

John appears in the wilderness.

He dresses like the prophet Elijah.

He eats simple food from the desert.

And he preaches one powerful message:

“Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near!”

For about four hundred years, Israel had not heard the voice of a prophet.

Now the silence is broken.

Crowds come from Jerusalem, from all of Judea, and from the whole region around the Jordan.

They confess their sins.

They are baptized.

But John does not flatter anyone.

When the religious leaders come, he warns them sharply.

Being a descendant of Abraham is not enough.

Religion without a changed life is not enough.

God is looking for fruit.

Then John points away from himself.

Someone greater is coming.

John baptizes with water.

The One coming after him will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Then that One arrives.

Jesus comes to the Jordan to be baptized.

John is shocked.

“I need to be baptized by You.”

But Jesus insists, so that all righteousness will be fulfilled.

As Jesus comes up out of the water, heaven opens.

The Spirit of God comes down like a dove.

The Father speaks from heaven.

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Matthew 3 therefore stands at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

It shows us two great preparations:

The preparation of the people through repentance.

And:

The preparation of the King through His baptism and anointing.

The central truth of Matthew 3 is:

God prepares hearts through repentance and reveals Jesus as His beloved Son, anointed by the Spirit and approved by the Father to bring the kingdom of heaven.

I. JOHN THE BAPTIST APPEARS

Matthew 3:1 — Preaching in the Wilderness

“In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea.”

Matthew introduces John simply.

“John the Baptist came.”

John was the son of Zechariah the priest and his wife Elizabeth.

He was born only a few months before Jesus.

But John did not serve in the temple like his father.

He preached in **the wilderness of Judea.**

This was a dry, rocky, empty region west of the Dead Sea.

In the Bible, the wilderness is often a place of testing, preparation, and new beginnings.

Israel was formed in the wilderness.

Elijah ran to the wilderness.

Now God's new work begins in the wilderness.

Cross References

Malachi 3:1

> “Look, I am sending My messenger, and he will prepare the road ahead of Me. Then the Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to His temple.”

Luke 1:80

> The child grew up and became strong in spirit. He lived in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to the people of Israel.

1 Kings 19:4

> Elijah went a whole day's journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a bush and asked to die. “I have had enough, LORD,” he said. “Take my life.”

Spiritual Principle

God often prepares His servants in hidden places.

John spent years in the wilderness before he ever preached to the crowds.

Key Truth

God does not need the center of power to begin His work.

He can start in the wilderness.

II. THE MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE

Matthew 3:2 — “The Kingdom of Heaven Is Near”

“He said, ‘Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near!’”

John's message had two parts.

A command:

Repent.

A reason:

The kingdom of heaven is near.

To **repent** means to change your mind and turn around.

It is more than feeling sorry.

It means turning away from sin and turning toward God.

The **kingdom of heaven** is Matthew's usual phrase for the kingdom of God.

Many Jews of that time avoided saying God's name out of respect, so they often said “heaven” instead.

The kingdom of heaven is God's rule and reign.

John announced that God's King was about to appear.

Jesus Himself would later preach the same message.

Cross References

Mark 1:15

> “The time has come,” Jesus said. “The kingdom of God is near. Turn away from your sins and believe the good news!”

Daniel 2:44

> In the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. It will crush all those other kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will last forever.

Ezekiel 18:30

> Turn back! Turn away from all your sins, so that your sin will not destroy you.

Spiritual Principle

Repentance is the doorway into the kingdom.

No one can welcome the King while holding onto rebellion against Him.

Application

True repentance includes:

- Seeing sin the way God sees it.
- Feeling real sorrow for sin.
- Confessing sin honestly.
- Turning away from sin.
- Turning toward God.
- Living a changed life.

III. THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

Matthew 3:3 — “Prepare the Way of the Lord”

“This is the one the prophet Isaiah spoke about: ‘A voice calling out in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.”’”

Matthew connects John to Isaiah 40:3.

In ancient times, when a king was going to visit a place, workers went ahead of him.

They filled in holes.

They removed rocks.

They straightened crooked roads.

John's work was to prepare the road for the King.

But the road John prepared was not made of dirt and stone.

It was the road into people's hearts.

Notice also who is coming.

Isaiah wrote:

“Prepare the way of the LORD.”

In Isaiah, the one coming is God Himself.

Matthew applies this to Jesus.

Jesus is the LORD who was coming.

Cross References

Isaiah 40:3

> A voice is calling out: “Prepare the way for the LORD in the wilderness. Make a straight road in the desert for our God.”

Malachi 3:1

> “Look, I am sending My messenger, and he will prepare the road ahead of Me. Then the Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to His temple.”

Luke 3:4

> This is what was written in the book of the prophet Isaiah: “A voice is calling out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way for the Lord. Make His paths straight.’”

Spiritual Principle

A repentant heart is a prepared road for Jesus.

Sin is the rock and the crooked path that must be removed.

Key Truth

John was only a voice.

Jesus is the Lord.

IV. JOHN'S CLOTHING AND FOOD

Matthew 3:4 — Camel's Hair and Wild Honey

“John wore clothes made of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.”

John's appearance was a message in itself.

His clothing was rough and simple.

It was the same kind of clothing worn by the prophet Elijah.

His food came from the wilderness.

Locusts were permitted as food under the Law of Moses.

Wild honey was found in rocks and trees.

John did not live for comfort.

He lived for his mission.

His appearance told the people:

A prophet like Elijah has come.

God had promised through Malachi that He would send Elijah before the great day of the LORD.

Jesus later said that John was the Elijah who was to come.

Cross References

2 Kings 1:8

> They answered, “He was a man who wore clothes made of hair, with a leather belt around his waist.” The king said, “That was Elijah from Tishbe.”

Leviticus 11:22

> You may eat these kinds of insects: every kind of locust, katydid, cricket, and grasshopper.

Malachi 4:5

> Look, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.

Spiritual Principle

A simple life can make a clear message.

John was not distracted by the comforts of this world.

Application

John's lifestyle challenges us to ask:

- Am I too attached to comfort?
- Does my life support my message?
- Am I living for my mission or for my possessions?
- Could people see that God matters most to me?

V. THE CROWDS GO OUT TO JOHN

Matthew 3:5 — Jerusalem, Judea, and the Jordan

“People from Jerusalem, all of Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan went out to him.”

John did not go to the cities.

The cities came to him.

People walked out into the wilderness to hear him.

It was a long and difficult trip.

But they were hungry for a word from God.

After centuries of silence, a prophet was speaking again.

Cross References

Mark 1:5

> People from the whole area of Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. They confessed their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River.

Isaiah 40:5

> Then the glory of the LORD will be shown, and all people will see it together.

Luke 3:3

> John traveled through the whole area around the Jordan River, preaching that people should be baptized to show they had turned from their sins and wanted to be forgiven.

Spiritual Principle

When God truly speaks, hungry hearts will come to listen.

People will travel far for the truth.

Key Truth

Revival does not depend on a comfortable location.

It depends on the presence and Word of God.

VI. CONFESSION AND BAPTISM

Matthew 3:6 — In the Jordan River

“They confessed their sins and were baptized by him in the Jordan River.”

The people did two things.

They confessed their sins.

They did not hide them or excuse them.

They were baptized.

Their baptism was an outward sign of an inward change.

The Jordan River was full of meaning for Israel.

It was the river Israel crossed to enter the Promised Land.

It was the river where Naaman was healed when he humbled himself.

Now people were coming back to the Jordan to begin again with God.

Cross References

Leviticus 16:21

> Aaron will put both of his hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wrongs and sins of the people of Israel.

2 Kings 5:14

> So Naaman went down and dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times, as the man of God had told him. His skin became healthy again, like the skin of a young child, and he was clean.

Psalms 32:5

> Then I admitted my sin to You and did not hide my guilt. I said, “I will confess my sins to the LORD,” and You forgave the guilt of my sin.

Spiritual Principle

Confession opens the door to cleansing.

God does not ask us to hide our sins.

He asks us to bring them to Him.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

What we cover, God exposes; what we confess, God forgives.

VII. JOHN WARNS THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Matthew 3:7 — “You Brood of Snakes!”

“But when John saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to be baptized, he said, ‘You brood of snakes! Who warned you to escape the coming wrath?’”

Two powerful religious groups came to John.

The Pharisees were strict about keeping the law and the traditions of the elders.

The Sadducees were wealthy priests who controlled the temple and did not believe in the resurrection.

These two groups usually disagreed with each other.

But both came to John.

John did not welcome them warmly.

He called them:

“You brood of snakes!”

Snakes look harmless on the surface but carry poison.

John saw that many of them were coming for show, not because they had truly repented.

He warned them of **the coming wrath** — God's judgment against sin.

Cross References

Isaiah 59:5

> They hatch the eggs of poisonous snakes and spin spider webs. Whoever eats their eggs will die.

Luke 3:7

> John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You family of snakes! Who warned you to run away from God's anger that is coming?”

Zephaniah 1:15

> That day will be a day of anger, a day of trouble and pain, a day of ruin and destruction, a day of darkness and gloom.

Spiritual Warning

Religious activity can hide an unchanged heart.

Being baptized without repenting is only getting wet.

Spiritual Principle

God's judgment is real, and only true repentance prepares us to face it.

VIII. PRODUCE GOOD FRUIT

Matthew 3:8 — Proof of Repentance

“Prove your repentance by producing good fruit.”

John told them what real repentance looks like.

It produces fruit.

A tree is known by what grows on it.

A changed heart is known by a changed life.

In Luke's Gospel, John gave practical examples:

Share with those in need.

Do not cheat people.

Do not take what is not yours.

Be content.

Repentance is not just a moment.

It is a new direction that shows up in daily life.

Cross References

Isaiah 5:2

> He dug up the ground, cleared away the stones, and planted the best vines. He expected the vineyard to produce good grapes, but it produced only bad grapes.

Luke 3:8

> Produce fruit that shows you have truly turned from your sins. And don't start saying to yourselves, “Abraham is our father.”

Jeremiah 17:10

> I, the LORD, look deep into the heart and test the mind. I reward each person for what he has done and for the results of his actions.

Spiritual Principle

Real repentance always shows.

It cannot stay hidden.

Application

The fruit of repentance can be seen in:

- Honesty where there was lying.
- Generosity where there was greed.
- Kindness where there was cruelty.
- Purity where there was immorality.
- Humility where there was pride.
- Forgiveness where there was bitterness.

IX. ABRAHAM IS NOT ENOUGH

Matthew 3:9 — Children from Stones

“Don’t think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you, God can raise up children for Abraham from these very stones.”

Many Jews believed that being a descendant of Abraham guaranteed them a place in God's kingdom.

John destroyed that idea.

Family line does not save.

National identity does not save.

God can make children of Abraham out of rocks if He wants to.

What matters is not who your ancestors were.

What matters is whether you have the faith and obedience of Abraham.

Cross References

John 8:39

> “Abraham is our father,” they answered. Jesus said, “If you were really Abraham's children, you would do what Abraham did.”

Isaiah 51:1

> Listen to Me, you who want to do what is right and who look to the LORD. Look at the rock you were cut from, and the quarry you were dug from.

Luke 3:8

> Produce fruit that shows you have truly turned from your sins. And don't start saying to yourselves, “Abraham is our father.” I tell you, God can make children for Abraham from these stones.

Spiritual Warning

No one is saved by their family's faith.

Godly parents are a blessing, but every person must come to God personally.

Key Truth

God has no grandchildren.

He only has children.

X. THE AXE AT THE ROOT

Matthew 3:10 — Judgment Is Near

“Even now the axe is ready to chop at the root of the trees. Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

John used a strong picture.

The axe is not swinging at the branches.

It is set at **the root.**

This is not a warning of light trimming.

It is a warning of complete removal.

And it is **even now** — judgment is close.

A tree that does not produce good fruit is useless.

It is cut down and burned.

Cross References

Luke 3:9

> The axe is already lying at the roots of the trees. Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

Psalms 1:3

> He is like a tree planted by streams of water. It produces fruit at the right time, and its leaves never dry up. Whatever he does goes well.

Ezekiel 15:4

> It is thrown into the fire for fuel. The fire burns both ends, and the middle is blackened. Is it good for anything?

Spiritual Principle

God expects a fruitful life from those who belong to Him.

The person who is planted by God's Word bears fruit.

Spiritual Warning

Time to repent is not unlimited.

The axe is already at the root.

XI. THE ONE WHO IS GREATER

Matthew 3:11 — The Holy Spirit and Fire

“I baptize you with water to show repentance, but the One coming after me is greater than I am. I am not even worthy to carry His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

John now points away from himself.

He says three things about Jesus.

He is greater.

John was a great prophet.

But Jesus is far greater.

John was not worthy to carry His sandals.

Carrying someone's sandals was the job of the lowest servant.

John said he was not even worthy of that.

He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

John could only use water on the outside.

Jesus would change people from the inside by the Holy Spirit.

The **fire** speaks of two things:

The purifying work of the Spirit in believers.

And the judgment that falls on those who refuse to repent.

Cross References

Joel 2:28

> After this, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions.

Mark 1:8

> I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 4:4

> The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion. He will clean the bloodstains out of Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of burning.

Spiritual Principle

True servants of God point people to Jesus, not to themselves.

John's greatness was his humility.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The more clearly we see Jesus, the smaller we see ourselves.

XII. THE WHEAT AND THE CHAFF

Matthew 3:12 — The Final Separation

“He is ready to separate the wheat from the chaff. He will gather the wheat into His barn, but the chaff He will burn up with fire that cannot be put out.”

John uses a picture from the harvest.

After grain was cut, farmers tossed it into the air with a winnowing fork.

The heavy wheat fell back to the ground.

The light chaff blew away in the wind.

The wheat was saved.

The chaff was burned.

John says Jesus will do the same with people.

He will separate the righteous from the wicked.

The righteous will be gathered safely into His barn.

The wicked will face a fire that cannot be put out.

Cross References

Psalms 1:4

> The wicked are not like that. They are like chaff that the wind blows away.

Malachi 4:1

> “The day is coming that will burn like a furnace,” says the LORD who commands armies. “All the proud and all who do evil will be like straw. That day will set them on fire.”

Isaiah 41:15

> Look, I will make you like a new threshing board with many sharp teeth. You will crush the mountains and make the hills like chaff.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is both Savior and Judge.

Those who receive Him are gathered in.

Those who reject Him face judgment.

Key Truth

Everyone will one day be either wheat or chaff.

There is no third category.

XIII. JESUS COMES TO THE JORDAN

Matthew 3:13 — From Galilee to Be Baptized

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.”

After all of John's preaching about the coming One, the coming One arrives.

Jesus traveled from Galilee in the north down to the Jordan.

He came for one purpose:

To be baptized by John.

This is the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

He was about thirty years old.

For years He had lived quietly in Nazareth.

Now the time had come.

Cross References

Mark 1:9

> At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized Him in the Jordan River.

Luke 3:21

> When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And while He was praying, heaven opened.

John 1:29

> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Spiritual Principle

God's timing is perfect.

Jesus waited thirty years before beginning His ministry.

Key Truth

The One who came to take away sin stood in line with sinners.

XIV. JOHN TRIES TO STOP JESUS

Matthew 3:14 — “I Need to Be Baptized by You”

“But John tried to stop Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by You, and yet You come to me?’”

John was shocked.

He had been baptizing sinners who confessed their sins.

But Jesus had no sins to confess.

John knew he was the one who needed what Jesus could give.

John's reaction shows deep humility.

In the presence of Jesus, John saw his own need.

Cross References

John 1:27

> He is the One who comes after me. I am not worthy even to untie the strap of His sandal.

Luke 3:16

> John answered all of them, “I baptize you with water, but One who is more powerful than I am is coming. I am not worthy to untie the straps of His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

Isaiah 6:5

> Then I said, “How terrible for me! I am ruined, because I am a man whose lips are not clean, and I live among people whose lips are not clean. And I have seen the King, the LORD who commands armies!”

Spiritual Principle

Being near Jesus shows us our need.

Like Isaiah before him, John saw his own unworthiness in the presence of the Lord.

XV. TO FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matthew 3:15 — Jesus Insists

“Jesus replied, ‘Let it be this way for now. It is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.’ So John agreed.”

These are the first words Jesus speaks in the Gospel of Matthew.

And they are words about obedience.

Jesus did not need to repent.

So why was He baptized?

To fulfill all righteousness.

Jesus came to do everything God required.

He obeyed perfectly where we have failed.

By being baptized, Jesus also:

Identified with sinners — He stood where we stand.

Approved John's ministry — He showed that John's work was from God.

Set an example — He showed the way of obedience for His followers.

Pointed to the cross — He would one day take the place of sinners completely.

Cross References

Psalms 40:8

> I love to do what You want, my God. Your teachings are in my heart.

Isaiah 53:11

> After His suffering, He will see the light of life and be satisfied. My righteous Servant will make many people right with God, and He will carry their sins.

Hebrews 10:7

> Then I said, “Here I am. It is written about Me in the book. I have come to do what You want, God.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' perfect obedience is credited to those who trust Him.

He fulfilled all righteousness so that we could be made right with God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus was baptized, not because He was a sinner, but because He came to stand in the place of sinners.

XVI. THE HEAVENS OPENED

Matthew 3:16 — The Spirit Descends Like a Dove

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He came up out of the water. Suddenly, the heavens opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and resting on Him.”

Three remarkable things happen.

The heavens opened.

Heaven was not closed to Jesus.

The barrier between God and humanity was about to be broken.

The Spirit of God descended.

Jesus was anointed by the Spirit for His ministry.

The word **Christ** means **Anointed One.**

Here the Messiah is publicly anointed.

Like a dove.

The dove is a picture of peace, gentleness, and new beginnings.

After the flood, a dove brought Noah an olive leaf, a sign that God's judgment had passed and new life had begun.

Now the Spirit comes like a dove on the One who would bring true peace with God.

Cross References

Isaiah 11:2

> The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him — the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of guidance and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and of respect for the LORD.

Genesis 8:11

> When the dove came back to Noah in the evening, it had a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the water had gone down from the earth.

Ezekiel 1:1

> I was living with the captives by the Kebar River when the heavens opened, and I saw visions from God.

Spiritual Principle

God's work must be done in the power of God's Spirit.

Even Jesus began His ministry anointed by the Holy Spirit.

Key Truth

The Spirit rested on Jesus just as Isaiah had promised.

XVII. THE FATHER SPEAKS

Matthew 3:17 — “This Is My Beloved Son”

“And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”

God the Father spoke from heaven.

His words combine three Old Testament passages.

“My Son” — from Psalm 2, a psalm about the royal King.

“In whom I am well pleased” — from Isaiah 42, about the Servant of the LORD.

“Beloved Son” — echoing Genesis 22, where Abraham was told to offer his only, beloved son.

In one sentence, the Father declares that Jesus is:

The King.

The Servant.

The beloved Son who will be offered as a sacrifice.

Notice also when the Father said this.

Before Jesus preached a sermon.

Before He performed a miracle.

Before He went to the cross.

The Father's love and approval came first.

Cross References

Psalms 2:7

> I will announce what the LORD has decided. He said to Me, “You are My Son. Today I have become Your Father.”

Isaiah 42:1

> Here is My Servant, the One I support. He is My Chosen One, and I am very pleased with Him. I have put My Spirit on Him, and He will bring justice to the nations.

Genesis 22:2

> God said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, the son you love, and go to the land of Moriah. Offer him there as a burnt offering.”

Spiritual Principle

The Father's love for the Son is the foundation of the gospel.

Through faith in Jesus, believers are brought into that same love.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus did not work to earn the Father's love; He worked from the Father's love.

XVIII. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 3

1. Repentance Prepares the Heart

John's message was simple and clear:

Turn away from sin because God's kingdom is near.

Principle:

No one can receive the King while holding onto rebellion.

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2. True Repentance Produces Fruit

It is not about heritage or religion.

It is about a changed life that shows obedience to God.

Principle:

A changed heart will always lead to a changed life.

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3. Jesus Is Greater Than John

John baptized with water.

Jesus brings the Holy Spirit and refining fire.

Principle:

The greatest servants of God always point beyond themselves to Christ.

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4. Jesus Fulfilled All Righteousness

Though sinless, He was baptized to identify with humanity and set the example of obedience.

Principle:

Jesus obeyed perfectly so that we could be made right with God.

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5. The Trinity Revealed

At Jesus' baptism, the Son is present, the Spirit descends, and the Father speaks.

This shows God's unity in three persons.

Principle:

The one true God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, working together in our salvation.

XIX. WHO WAS JOHN THE BAPTIST?

John is one of the most important people in the New Testament.

A Miracle Child

He was born to Zechariah and Elizabeth in their old age, as an angel had promised.

A Relative of Jesus

His mother Elizabeth was a relative of Mary.

A Prophet

He was the first prophet to speak to Israel in about four hundred years.

The Promised Messenger

He fulfilled Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1.

The Elijah Who Was to Come

Jesus said John was the Elijah promised in Malachi 4:5.

A Humble Servant

He said of Jesus, “He must become greater; I must become less.”

A Faithful Martyr

He was later put to death by Herod Antipas for speaking the truth.

Key Truth

Jesus said that among those born of women, no one was greater than John the Baptist.

XX. THE TRINITY AT THE JORDAN

Matthew 3 is one of the clearest places in Scripture where all three persons of God are seen at the same time.

God the Son

Jesus stands in the water, being baptized.

God the Holy Spirit

The Spirit comes down like a dove and rests on Him.

God the Father

The Father speaks from heaven.

The word **Trinity** does not appear in the Bible.

But the truth it describes does.

There is one God.

And this one God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Each person is fully God.

Yet there are not three Gods, but one.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Our salvation is the work of the whole Trinity — planned by the Father, accomplished by the Son, and applied by the Spirit.

XXI. WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

Repentance is the first word of John's preaching.

It was also the first word of Jesus' preaching.

It is important that we understand it.

Repentance Is a Change of Mind

We begin to see sin, ourselves, and God the way God does.

Repentance Is a Change of Heart

We feel genuine sorrow for our sin, not only for its consequences.

Repentance Is a Change of Direction

We turn away from sin and turn toward God.

Repentance Is a Change of Life

We produce fruit that shows the change is real.

What Repentance Is Not

- It is not simply feeling bad.
- It is not just being afraid of punishment.
- It is not trying to earn forgiveness.
- It is not a one-time ritual without a changed life.

Key Truth

Repentance is not earning God's grace; it is turning to receive it.

XXII. WHAT MATTHEW 3 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 3 presents Jesus as:

The Lord

John prepared the way of the LORD, and Jesus came.

The Greater One

John was not worthy to carry His sandals.

The Baptizer with the Spirit

He gives the Holy Spirit to His people.

The Judge

He will separate the wheat from the chaff.

The Righteous One

He fulfilled all righteousness.

The Anointed Messiah

The Spirit came down and rested on Him.

The Beloved Son

The Father is well pleased with Him.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The One who stood in the water with sinners is the One the Father declared His beloved Son.

XXIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did John preach in the wilderness instead of in Jerusalem?

The wilderness was a place of preparation and new beginnings in Israel's history.

Isaiah had said the voice would call out in the wilderness.

It also meant people had to leave their normal lives behind to come and hear God's Word.

Question 2

What does it mean to repent?

To repent means to change your mind and turn around.

It is turning away from sin and turning toward God.

True repentance shows itself in a changed life.

Question 3

What is the kingdom of heaven?

The kingdom of heaven is God's rule and reign.

Matthew uses the word **heaven** because many Jews avoided saying God's name out of respect.

John announced that God's King had arrived and that His kingdom was near.

Question 4

Why did John dress like Elijah?

John's clothing matched the description of Elijah in 2 Kings 1:8.

God had promised in Malachi 4:5 to send Elijah before the day of the LORD.

Jesus later said that John was that promised Elijah.

Question 5

Why did John speak so harshly to the Pharisees and Sadducees?

Many of them were coming for show, not with true repentance.

They trusted in their religious position and their family line.

John warned them that God's judgment was coming and that only real repentance would prepare them.

Question 6

What does it mean to “produce good fruit”?

It means living in a way that proves repentance is real.

This includes honesty, generosity, kindness, purity, and obedience to God.

Question 7

Why was being a descendant of Abraham not enough?

Salvation does not come through family line or national identity.

Each person must turn to God personally.

God can make children of Abraham from stones, so physical descent gives no special advantage before Him.

Question 8

What is the difference between John's baptism and the baptism Jesus gives?

John baptized with water as a sign of repentance.

Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit, changing people from the inside.

The fire speaks of purifying believers and judging those who refuse to repent.

Question 9

Why did Jesus need to be baptized if He had no sin?

Jesus was baptized:

- To fulfill all righteousness.
- To identify with sinners.
- To approve John's ministry.
- To set an example of obedience.
- To begin His public ministry.
- To point ahead to His death in the place of sinners.

Question 10

What is the meaning of the Spirit descending like a dove?

It shows that Jesus was anointed by the Spirit for His ministry, as Isaiah 11:2 promised.

The dove is a picture of peace and new beginnings, reminding us of Noah's dove after the flood.

Question 11

What do the Father's words in verse 17 teach us?

The Father declared that Jesus is His beloved Son and that He is well pleased with Him.

The words echo Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 42:1, and Genesis 22:2.

They show that Jesus is the King, the Servant, and the beloved Son who would be offered as a sacrifice.

Question 12

What should Matthew 3 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 3 should cause believers to live:

- Quick to confess sin.
- Committed to true repentance.
- Producing good fruit.
- Not trusting in family or religion to save them.
- Humble like John.
- Pointing others to Jesus.
- Obedient like Jesus.
- Secure in the Father's love through Christ.

XXIV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 3 asks several important questions.

Have I Truly Repented?

Have I turned away from sin, or have I only felt sorry about it?

Is There Fruit in My Life?

Can others see that my life has been changed?

Am I Trusting in Something Other Than Christ?

Am I depending on my family, church, or good works to make me right with God?

Am I Hiding Any Sin?

The people came to John confessing their sins.

Is there something I need to confess to God?

Does My Life Point to Jesus or to Me?

John said he was not even worthy to carry Jesus' sandals.

Am I Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit?

Jesus began His ministry anointed by the Spirit.

Do I Obey Even When I Don't Fully Understand?

John did not fully understand why Jesus should be baptized, but he obeyed.

Do I Live Secure in the Father's Love?

Through faith in Christ, I am loved by the Father.

XXV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Way to the King Runs Through Repentance”

John stood in the wilderness and called out.

He did not tell the people to improve themselves a little.

He did not tell them to add more religion.

He told them to repent.

Then Jesus came.

And the first thing Matthew shows us about Jesus' ministry is that He stood in the water with repentant sinners.

The King came to the very place where people were turning from their sins.

This creates a powerful principle.

Jesus meets us at the place of repentance.

He does not wait for us at the top of a mountain of good works.

He comes down to the river where sinners confess.

Principle:

We do not clean ourselves up to come to Jesus; we come to Jesus to be made clean.

XXVI. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 3 opens with a voice in the wilderness.

For centuries, there had been no prophet.

Now there was a man in rough clothes calling the nation to repent.

Crowds came.

Sins were confessed.

People went down into the Jordan.

Religious leaders were warned.

The axe was at the root.

The winnowing fork was in the hand of the coming Judge.

Then Jesus came.

He did not arrive with an army.

He did not arrive in a royal chariot.

He came quietly from Galilee and stepped into the water.

And heaven opened.

The Spirit came down.

The Father spoke.

Matthew 3 therefore reminds us:

God prepares the way for Jesus.

And Jesus comes to those who are ready to turn to Him.

Before the miracles came repentance.

Before the ministry came baptism.

Before the work came the Father's words of love.

The story of Jesus' public ministry begins with:

A voice crying in the wilderness.

A people confessing their sins.

A Savior standing with sinners.

And a Father declaring His love.

The same call still stands:

Repent.

Produce good fruit.

Point others to Jesus.

Walk in the power of the Spirit.

Rest in the Father's love.

And until He returns:

Keep repenting.

Keep bearing fruit.

Keep pointing to Jesus.

Keep obeying.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for sending John to prepare the way for Jesus.

Thank You that You do not leave us in our sin but call us to repent.

Show us our sin the way You see it.

Give us honest hearts that confess our sins instead of hiding them.

Help us turn away from every sin and turn fully toward You.

Let our lives produce good fruit that shows our repentance is real.

Keep us from trusting in our family, our church, or our good works.

Teach us to trust in Jesus Christ alone.

Give us the humility of John the Baptist.

Help us point others to Jesus and not to ourselves.

Thank You that Jesus fulfilled all righteousness for us.

Thank You that He stood in the place of sinners.

Thank You that through Him we can be made right with You.

Fill us with Your Holy Spirit.

Purify our hearts with Your holy fire.

Keep us faithful so that we will be gathered like wheat into Your barn.

Thank You for revealing Yourself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Thank You that the Father loves the Son and is well pleased with Him.

Help us live secure in Your love through Jesus Christ.

Give us courage to speak the truth like John.

Give us obedience like Jesus.

And use us to prepare the way for others to come to You.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” — Matthew 3:17

Central Truth

God calls people to true repentance and reveals Jesus as His beloved Son, anointed by the Holy Spirit and approved by the Father, to fulfill all righteousness and bring the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 3 in One Sentence

John the Baptist prepares the way for the King by calling people to repent and bear good fruit, and then Jesus is baptized, the Spirit descends on Him, and the Father declares Him His beloved Son.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 4 — The Temptation of Jesus and the Beginning of His Ministry

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 3 ended with heaven opening.

The Spirit came down on Jesus.

The Father said:

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Matthew Chapter 4 begins with a surprising next step.

The Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness.

Not to rest.

Not to celebrate.

But to be tempted by the devil.

For forty days Jesus fasts.

Then the tempter comes with three temptations.

Each one attacks Jesus' identity as the Son of God.

Each one offers a shortcut around the Father's plan.

And each time, Jesus answers the same way:

“It is written.”

Jesus does not win by arguing.

He wins by standing on the Word of God.

Where Adam failed in a garden, Jesus stands firm in a wilderness.

Where Israel failed for forty years, Jesus stands firm for forty days.

Then the second half of the chapter begins Jesus' public ministry.

John has been put in prison.

Jesus moves to Capernaum in Galilee.

He begins to preach:

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

He calls four fishermen to follow Him.

He travels throughout Galilee teaching, preaching, and healing.

News about Him spreads everywhere.

Large crowds begin to follow Him.

Matthew 4 therefore shows two great victories:

Victory over temptation in the wilderness.

And:

Victory over darkness as the Light begins to shine in Galilee.

The central truth of Matthew 4 is:

Jesus, the faithful Son of God, defeated the devil by the Word of God and began His ministry of bringing light, calling disciples, and healing the broken.

I. LED BY THE SPIRIT INTO THE WILDERNESS

Matthew 4:1 — To Be Tempted by the Devil

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”

Notice the word **“Then.”**

Right after the Father's words of love, Jesus faced the devil's attack.

Great spiritual moments are often followed by great spiritual battles.

Notice also who led Jesus.

The Spirit.

This temptation was not an accident.

It was part of God's plan.

The devil intended to make Jesus fall.

God intended to prove Jesus faithful.

The word **devil** means **“slanderer”** or **“accuser.”**

He is a real enemy who opposes God and His people.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 8:2

> Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way through the wilderness these forty years. He did this to humble you and test you, to find out what was in your heart and whether you would obey His commands.

1 Kings 19:8

> So Elijah got up, ate, and drank. The food gave him strength, and he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

Luke 4:1

> Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, came back from the Jordan River. The Spirit led Him into the wilderness.

Spiritual Principle

Being led by the Spirit does not mean avoiding hard places.

Sometimes the Spirit leads us into the wilderness to strengthen us.

Key Truth

God tests to prove and strengthen.

The devil tempts to destroy.

The same situation can be both.

II. FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS

Matthew 4:2 — Very Hungry

“After fasting for forty days and forty nights, He was very hungry.”

Jesus went without food for forty days and forty nights.

This connects Him to two great servants of God.

Moses fasted forty days on the mountain when he received the law.

Elijah traveled forty days to the mountain of God.

It also connects Him to Israel's forty years in the wilderness.

Matthew then gives a simple, human detail:

He was very hungry.

Jesus was fully God.

But He was also fully man.

He felt real hunger.

He felt real weakness.

And the devil chose that moment to attack.

Cross References

Exodus 34:28

> Moses stayed there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating food or drinking water. He wrote the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments, on the stone tablets.

Deuteronomy 9:9

> When I went up the mountain to receive the stone tablets of the covenant, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I did not eat food or drink water.

Luke 4:2

> There the devil tempted Him for forty days. Jesus ate nothing during that time, and when it was over, He was hungry.

Spiritual Principle

Temptation often comes when we are weakest.

The enemy attacks when we are tired, hungry, lonely, or hurting.

Key Truth

Jesus understands our weakness because He experienced it Himself.

III. THE FIRST TEMPTATION

Matthew 4:3 — “Tell These Stones to Become Bread”

“The tempter came and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.’”

The devil is called **“the tempter.”**

His first words go straight to Jesus' identity:

“If You are the Son of God.”

Only days before, the Father had said, **“This is My beloved Son.”**

Now the devil tries to plant doubt.

The temptation looks harmless.

Jesus was hungry.

Bread is not sinful.

But the devil was asking Jesus to use His power for Himself, apart from the Father's will.

He was asking Jesus to meet His own needs instead of trusting His Father to provide.

This is the same pattern the devil used in the Garden of Eden.

He offered something that looked good for food.

Cross References

Genesis 3:6

> The woman saw that the tree's fruit was good to eat, nice to look at, and desirable for making a person wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Job 1:9

> Satan answered the LORD, “Does Job respect God for no reason?”

Luke 4:3

> The devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”

Spiritual Principle

The devil often tempts us to meet good needs in wrong ways.

Hunger is not sin.

Meeting it outside of God's will is.

Spiritual Warning

The enemy's first attack is often on our identity.

He wants us to doubt what God has said about us.

IV. NOT BY BREAD ALONE

Matthew 4:4 — “It Is Written”

“But Jesus replied, ‘It is written: “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’”

Jesus did not argue with the devil.

He did not prove Himself with a miracle.

He quoted Scripture.

“It is written.”

In Greek, this phrase means **“It stands written and remains written.”**

God's Word is settled.

Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3.

In that passage, Moses reminded Israel that God let them go hungry in the wilderness and then fed them with manna.

God was teaching them that life depends on more than food.

It depends on God and His Word.

Israel complained in their hunger.

Jesus trusted in His.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 8:3

> He humbled you by letting you go hungry, and then He fed you with manna. He did this to teach you that people do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

John 6:35

> “I am the bread of life,” Jesus said. “Whoever comes to Me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty.”

Luke 4:4

> Jesus answered him, “It is written: ‘People do not live on bread alone.’”

Spiritual Principle

God's Word is more necessary than daily bread.

Our bodies need food.

Our souls need God's Word.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus fought the devil with the same weapon He has given to us — the written Word of God.

V. THE PINNACLE OF THE TEMPLE

Matthew 4:5 — The Holy City

“Then the devil took Him to the holy city, Jerusalem, and set Him on the highest point of the temple.”

The second temptation takes place in a very different location.

Not in the wilderness.

But in **the holy city.**

And at **the highest point of the temple.**

This was a place of worship.

It was the center of Israel's religious life.

The devil does not only tempt in dark places.

He also tempts in holy places.

The highest point of the temple may have been a corner overlooking a deep valley.

A fall from there would have meant certain death.

Cross References

Nehemiah 11:1

> The leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem. The rest of the people threw lots to choose one family out of every ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city.

Ezekiel 8:3

> He reached out something like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and sky and brought me in visions from God to Jerusalem.

Luke 4:9

> Then the devil took Him to Jerusalem and placed Him on the highest point of the temple. He said, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here.”

Spiritual Warning

No place is too holy for temptation.

The devil can attack in church as well as in the world.

VI. THE DEVIL QUOTES SCRIPTURE

Matthew 4:6 — “For It Is Written”

“He said, ‘If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: “He will command His angels concerning You,” and “They will lift You up in their hands, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.”’”

Now the devil changes his approach.

Jesus had answered with Scripture.

So the devil quotes Scripture too.

He quotes Psalm 91.

But he twists it.

Psalm 91 is a promise of protection for those who trust God while walking in His ways.

It is not a promise to protect someone who deliberately puts himself in danger to force God to act.

Notice also what the devil leaves out.

He skips the words **“to guard you in all your ways.”**

The promise is for those walking in God's ways, not for those doing foolish stunts.

Cross References

Psalms 91:11

> For He will command His angels to protect you wherever you go.

Psalms 91:1

> Whoever lives under the protection of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

Luke 4:10

> For it is written: “He will command His angels to watch over you and protect you.”

Spiritual Warning

Scripture can be misused.

The devil knows the Bible and twists it to deceive.

Spiritual Principle

Scripture must be read in its context and alongside the rest of Scripture.

A single verse pulled out of place can be turned against God's will.

VII. DO NOT TEST THE LORD

Matthew 4:7 — “It Is Also Written”

“Jesus answered, ‘It is also written: “You shall not test the Lord your God.”’”

Jesus answered the twisted verse with another verse.

“It is also written.”

Scripture explains Scripture.

Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:16.

That verse refers to Massah, where Israel demanded water and said:

“Is the LORD with us or not?”

They tried to force God to prove Himself.

Jesus refused to do the same.

He did not need to jump from the temple to prove the Father loved Him.

He already knew.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 6:16

> Do not test the LORD your God the way you tested Him at Massah.

Exodus 17:7

> He named the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites complained there and tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD with us or not?”

Luke 4:12

> Jesus answered him, “It is said: ‘Do not test the Lord your God.’”

Spiritual Principle

Faith trusts God; it does not try to force God.

Demanding signs is not faith.

It is unbelief dressed up as faith.

Application

We test God when we:

- Take foolish risks and expect Him to rescue us.
- Demand signs before we will obey.
- Make deals with Him to prove Himself.
- Ignore wisdom and call it faith.
- Doubt His love unless He does what we want.

VIII. THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD

Matthew 4:8 — A Very High Mountain

“Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.”

The third temptation is the boldest.

The devil shows Jesus **all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.**

Wealth.

Power.

Honor.

Fame.

Everything the world values was put in front of Him.

Moses once stood on a high mountain and saw the Promised Land.

Now Jesus stood on a high mountain and saw the whole world.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 34:1

> Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the LORD showed him the whole land.

Daniel 4:17

> This is so that everyone who lives will know that the Most High God rules over the kingdoms of the world. He gives them to anyone He chooses.

Luke 4:5

> Then the devil took Him up to a high place and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Key Truth

The devil may show the kingdoms.

But God is the One who rules over them.

IX. BOW DOWN AND WORSHIP ME

Matthew 4:9 — The Devil's Real Goal

“He said, ‘All this I will give You if You will bow down and worship me.’”

Now the devil reveals what he really wants.

Worship.

From the beginning, the devil wanted to be like God.

He wanted the worship that belongs only to God.

His offer was a shortcut.

Jesus would one day rule over all the nations.

But the Father's way to that throne went through the cross.

The devil offered a crown without a cross.

Glory without suffering.

A kingdom without obedience.

Cross References

Isaiah 14:13

> You said to yourself, “I will go up to heaven. I will set my throne above God's stars. I will make myself like the Most High.”

Daniel 4:30

> The king said, “Look at this great city of Babylon! I built it by my own power to be my royal home and to show the glory of my majesty.”

Luke 4:6

> The devil said to Him, “I will give You all this power and all this glory. It has been handed over to me, and I can give it to anyone I want.”

Spiritual Warning

Every temptation is ultimately about worship.

Whatever we obey above God becomes our god.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The devil always offers a shortcut around the cross.

X. GET AWAY FROM ME, SATAN

Matthew 4:10 — Worship God Alone

“Jesus said to him, ‘Get away from Me, Satan! For it is written: “You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.”’”

Jesus commanded the devil to leave.

“Get away from Me, Satan!”

The name **Satan** means **“adversary”** or **“enemy.”**

Then Jesus quoted Scripture a third time.

Deuteronomy 6:13.

Worship belongs to God.

Service belongs to God.

Only.

There is no room for divided loyalty.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 6:13

> Respect the LORD your God. Serve Him, and make your promises using His name.

Deuteronomy 10:20

> Respect the LORD your God and serve Him. Hold on tightly to Him and make your promises in His name.

Luke 4:8

> Jesus answered him, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only Him.’”

Spiritual Principle

Some temptations must be firmly rejected, not discussed.

Jesus did not negotiate.

He commanded the enemy to leave.

Key Truth

Worship and service go together.

What we truly worship, we will serve.

XI. ANGELS CARE FOR JESUS

Matthew 4:11 — The Devil Leaves

“Then the devil left Him, and angels came and cared for Him.”

The battle was over.

The devil left.

Luke tells us he left **until another time.**

The devil would return.

But this time, Jesus had won completely.

Then angels came and cared for Him.

The devil had said angels would catch Jesus if He jumped.

Jesus refused to test God.

And in God's own time, the angels came anyway.

Cross References

1 Kings 19:5

> Then Elijah lay down under the bush and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.”

Hebrews 1:14

> Aren't all the angels spirits who serve God? They are sent to help those who will receive salvation.

Luke 4:13

> When the devil had finished every kind of temptation, he left Jesus until another time.

Spiritual Principle

God provides for those who trust Him instead of taking shortcuts.

What Jesus refused to grab, the Father gave.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Resist the devil, and he will flee; trust the Father, and He will provide.

XII. JESUS RETURNS TO GALILEE

Matthew 4:12 — John Put in Prison

“When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He returned to Galilee.”

John the Baptist had been arrested.

Herod Antipas put him in prison because John spoke against Herod's sinful marriage to his brother's wife.

The voice in the wilderness had been silenced.

But the One John pointed to was just beginning.

Jesus returned to Galilee.

He did not run from danger.

He moved into the place where God wanted His ministry to begin.

Cross References

Mark 1:14

> After John was put in prison, Jesus went to Galilee and preached the good news of God.

Luke 3:19

> But John had corrected Herod the ruler because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the other evil things Herod had done.

Mark 6:17

> Herod himself had ordered John to be arrested, chained, and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, whom Herod had married.

Spiritual Principle

When one servant's work ends, God's work continues.

John's ministry closed, and Jesus' ministry opened.

Key Truth

Prison could silence John.

It could not silence the gospel.

XIII. JESUS MOVES TO CAPERNAUM

Matthew 4:13 — By the Sea

“Leaving Nazareth, He went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali.”

Jesus left His hometown of Nazareth.

He moved to **Capernaum.**

Capernaum was a busy fishing town on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

It sat on an important trade road.

People from many nations passed through.

It became the home base of Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

Matthew mentions that it was in the area of **Zebulun and Naphtali.**

These were two of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Their land was in the far north.

Cross References

Joshua 19:32

> The sixth land assignment was given to the tribe of Naphtali, family by family.

Joshua 19:10

> The third land assignment was given to the tribe of Zebulun, family by family. Their border went as far as Sarid.

Luke 4:31

> Then Jesus went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and taught the people on the Sabbath.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus goes where the people are.

He moved to a crossroads town where many could hear the message.

XIV. FULFILLING ISAIAH

Matthew 4:14 — The Prophet's Words Come True

“This fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:”

Once again, Matthew shows that Jesus' life followed God's plan.

Even where Jesus lived was foretold.

Isaiah had spoken of the land of Zebulun and Naphtali more than seven hundred years earlier.

Cross References

Isaiah 9:1

> But there will be no more gloom for those who were in trouble. In the past, God brought shame on the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. But in the future, He will bring honor to the road by the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, and Galilee of the nations.

Isaiah 8:23

> But there will be no more gloom for those who were in trouble. In the past, God brought shame on the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. But in the future, He will bring honor to Galilee of the nations. (In Hebrew Bibles this verse is numbered Isaiah 8:23. In English Bibles it is Isaiah 9:1.)

Luke 4:21

> Then Jesus said to them, “Today this Scripture has come true while you were listening.”

Key Truth

God's Word is precise.

It tells not only who the Messiah would be, but even where He would shine.

XV. GALILEE OF THE GENTILES

Matthew 4:15 — The Way of the Sea

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, along the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—”

Galilee had a troubled history.

Zebulun and Naphtali were among the first areas conquered by the Assyrians.

Many Israelites were carried away.

Many foreigners settled there.

It became known as **“Galilee of the Gentiles.”**

People in Jerusalem looked down on Galilee as a mixed and less religious area.

But this is exactly where Jesus chose to begin.

His ministry to Galilee was a preview of His mission to all nations.

Cross References

1 Kings 9:11

> King Solomon gave Hiram, king of Tyre, twenty towns in the land of Galilee.

Joshua 20:7

> So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee, in the hill country of Naphtali, as a city of safety.

Isaiah 42:6

> “I, the LORD, have called You to do what is right. I will hold Your hand and protect You. I will make You a covenant for the people and a light for the nations.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus begins in the places others overlook.

The land people looked down on was the first to see the Light.

XVI. A GREAT LIGHT HAS DAWNED

Matthew 4:16 — Light in the Darkness

“the people living in darkness have seen a great light, and on those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned.”

Isaiah described the people of Galilee as living in:

Darkness.

The land of the shadow of death.

Darkness is a picture of sin, ignorance, sorrow, and separation from God.

The shadow of death is a picture of hopelessness.

But Isaiah promised something wonderful:

A great light.

That light is Jesus.

He does not wait for people to find their way out of the darkness.

He comes into the darkness and shines.

Cross References

Isaiah 9:2

> The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light. A light has shined on those who live in a land of deep darkness.

Luke 1:79

> He will shine on those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death. He will guide our feet onto the path of peace.

Isaiah 60:2

> Darkness now covers the earth, and deep darkness covers the nations. But the LORD will rise over you, and His glory will be seen on you.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the Light the world needs.

No darkness is too deep for His light to reach.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Light did not wait for the darkness to clear; the Light came into the darkness.

XVII. JESUS BEGINS TO PREACH

Matthew 4:17 — “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven Is Near”

“From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’”

“From that time.”

This marks the beginning of Jesus' public preaching.

His message was the same message John had preached.

Repent.

The kingdom of heaven is near.

But there was a difference.

John said the King was coming.

Jesus is the King who has come.

The kingdom was near because the King was standing in front of them.

Cross References

Mark 1:15

> “The time has come,” Jesus said. “The kingdom of God is near. Turn away from your sins and believe the good news!”

Isaiah 55:7

> Let wicked people leave their evil ways, and let evil people stop thinking evil thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and He will show them mercy. Let them turn to our God, because He will freely forgive them.

Ezekiel 18:31

> Get rid of all the sins you have done, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why should you die, people of Israel?

Spiritual Principle

The message of the kingdom always begins with repentance.

Jesus did not change the call; He fulfilled it.

Key Truth

The kingdom of heaven is near because the King of heaven has come.

XVIII. JESUS SEES TWO FISHERMEN

Matthew 4:18 — Simon Peter and Andrew

“As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers—Simon, called Peter, and Andrew his brother. They were throwing a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.”

Jesus was walking by the sea.

He saw two brothers at work.

Simon, who would be called **Peter.**

And **Andrew.**

John's Gospel tells us that Andrew had already met Jesus and had brought Peter to Him.

Now Jesus came to call them to follow Him full-time.

They were ordinary working men.

They were not scholars or priests.

They were fishermen doing their daily job.

Cross References

Mark 1:16

> As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the lake. They were fishermen.

Luke 5:3

> Jesus got into one of the boats, the one that belonged to Simon, and asked him to push off a little from shore. Then He sat down and taught the people from the boat.

John 1:41

> The first thing Andrew did was find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls ordinary people in the middle of ordinary life.

He found His first disciples at work.

XIX. FISHERS OF PEOPLE

Matthew 4:19 — “Follow Me”

“Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of people.’”

Jesus' call had two parts.

A command:

“Follow Me.”

A promise:

“I will make you fishers of people.”

In those days, students chose their rabbi.

But Jesus chose His disciples.

He did not say, “Follow My teaching.”

He said, **“Follow Me.”**

Discipleship is first about a relationship with Jesus.

Then Jesus promised to change their work.

They had spent their lives catching fish.

Now they would spend their lives bringing people to God.

And notice who would do the making:

“I will make you.”

Jesus would train them and shape them.

Cross References

Jeremiah 16:16

> “Look, I am going to send for many fishermen,” says the LORD, “and they will catch them.”

Mark 1:17

> “Come, follow Me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of people.”

Ezekiel 47:10

> Fishermen will stand along the shore. There will be places to spread their nets, and there will be many kinds of fish, like the fish of the Great Sea.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus always leads to reaching others.

A true disciple becomes a fisher of people.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Our part is to follow; His part is to make us into what He wants us to be.

XX. IMMEDIATE OBEDIENCE

Matthew 4:20 — They Left Their Nets

“Immediately, they left their nets and followed Him.”

Peter and Andrew did not delay.

Immediately.

They left their nets.

Their nets were their business.

Their income.

Their security.

They left them behind to follow Jesus.

Cross References

1 Kings 19:20

> Elisha left his oxen and ran after Elijah. He said, “Please let me kiss my father and mother goodbye, and then I will follow you.”

Mark 1:18

> Right away they left their nets and followed Him.

Luke 5:11

> They brought their boats to shore, left everything, and followed Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus means leaving something behind.

We cannot hold onto everything and follow Him fully.

Application

Following Jesus may mean leaving:

- Old habits.
- Sinful relationships.
- Personal plans.
- Worldly security.
- The need for control.
- Anything that keeps us from Him.

XXI. JAMES AND JOHN

Matthew 4:21 — Mending Their Nets

“Going farther, He saw two other brothers—James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, repairing their nets. Jesus called them,”

Jesus called a second pair of brothers.

James and **John**, the sons of Zebedee.

They were partners with Peter and Andrew in the fishing business.

They were in the boat with their father, repairing their nets.

Later, Peter, James, and John would become Jesus' closest disciples.

They would see things the others did not see.

John would write a Gospel, three letters, and the book of Revelation.

James would become the first of the twelve apostles to die for his faith.

Cross References

Mark 1:19

> Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in their boat repairing their nets.

Luke 5:10

> James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were Simon's partners, and they were amazed too. Jesus said to Simon, “Don't be afraid. From now on you will be catching people.”

Genesis 12:1

> The LORD said to Abram, “Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's family. Go to the land I will show you.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls people from every kind of background, but He calls each one personally.

Like Abram before them, they were called to leave and go where God would lead.

XXII. THEY LEFT THEIR FATHER

Matthew 4:22 — Leaving the Boat and Their Father

“and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him.”

Peter and Andrew left their nets.

James and John left even more.

They left the boat.

They left their father.

This does not mean they stopped loving their father.

Mark tells us Zebedee had hired servants with him, so he was not left alone.

But it does mean Jesus came first.

Their loyalty to Christ was greater than their loyalty to family or business.

Cross References

Mark 1:20

> Right away Jesus called them. They left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers and followed Him.

Luke 9:59

> Jesus said to another man, “Follow Me.” But the man said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”

Deuteronomy 33:9

> He said about his father and mother, “I do not think about them.” He did not recognize his brothers or claim his own children. He did this because he obeyed Your word and kept Your covenant.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus must come first, even before the people we love most.

Loving Jesus most teaches us to love others best.

Key Truth

There is no such thing as following Jesus halfway.

XXIII. TEACHING, PREACHING, AND HEALING

Matthew 4:23 — Throughout All Galilee

“Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.”

This verse is a summary of Jesus' ministry.

It has three parts.

Teaching — explaining God's Word in the synagogues.

Preaching — announcing the good news of the kingdom.

Healing — showing the power and compassion of the kingdom.

Jesus did not only tell people about God's kingdom.

He showed them what it looks like.

And notice the word **every.**

He healed **every** disease and **every** sickness.

No illness was too hard for Him.

Cross References

Mark 1:39

> So Jesus traveled all over Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Isaiah 61:1

> The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on Me, because the LORD has chosen Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to heal those with broken hearts and to announce freedom to the captives.

Luke 4:44

> And He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Spiritual Principle

The gospel is both words and works.

Jesus spoke the truth and showed God's love.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus taught the mind, preached to the heart, and healed the body.

XXIV. NEWS SPREADS THROUGHOUT SYRIA

Matthew 4:24 — He Healed Them All

“News about Him spread throughout Syria. People brought to Him all who were sick with various diseases and suffering—those troubled by evil spirits, those who were paralyzed, and those with seizures—and He healed them all.”

The news about Jesus went beyond Galilee.

It spread throughout **Syria**, the Roman province to the north.

People brought every kind of need.

Sickness.

Pain.

Evil spirits.

Paralysis.

Seizures.

Some problems were physical.

Some were spiritual.

Jesus had power over all of them.

And He healed them all.

Cross References

Isaiah 53:4

> Surely He took our sicknesses and carried our pain.

Mark 3:10

> He had healed many people, so all who were sick kept pushing forward to touch Him.

2 Kings 5:1

> Naaman was the commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man and highly respected. He was a brave soldier, but he had a skin disease.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus has authority over sickness and over evil spirits.

There is no power greater than His.

Key Truth

Like Naaman the Syrian long before, people from outside Israel found healing through the God of Israel.

XXV. LARGE CROWDS FOLLOW HIM

Matthew 4:25 — From Every Region

“Large crowds followed Him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan River.”

People came from everywhere.

Galilee — the north.

The Decapolis — ten cities east of the Sea of Galilee with many Gentiles.

Jerusalem and Judea — the south.

Beyond the Jordan — the east.

Jews and Gentiles.

City people and country people.

They all came to Jesus.

This sets the stage for the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5.

Cross References

Mark 3:8

> People came from Jerusalem, Idumea, the land beyond the Jordan River, and the area around Tyre and Sidon. A huge crowd came to Him when they heard about all He was doing.

Isaiah 49:6

> I will also make You a light for the nations, so that My salvation will reach the ends of the earth.

Luke 6:18

> They came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases. Those who were troubled by evil spirits were healed too.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus draws people from every place and background.

His light shines for the whole world.

XXVI. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 4

1. God's Word Is Our Weapon

Jesus resisted every temptation by quoting Scripture.

He showed us how to fight spiritual battles.

Principle:

We cannot use a weapon we have not picked up — we must know God's Word to fight with it.

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2. Do Not Test God

Trust Him instead of demanding proof or signs.

Principle:

Faith rests on what God has said, not on what we demand He prove.

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3. Worship Belongs Only to God

Satan's greatest desire is misplaced worship.

Jesus showed the way of faithfulness.

Principle:

Whatever we bow to, we will serve — so bow to God alone.

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4. Jesus Is the Light

His coming fulfills prophecy, bringing light to people in darkness.

Principle:

No darkness is beyond the reach of Christ's light.

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5. The Call to Discipleship Is Immediate

Peter, Andrew, James, and John left everything to follow Jesus.

This shows the cost and urgency of obedience.

Principle:

When Jesus calls, the right time to follow is now.

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6. The Kingdom Is for the Broken

Jesus healed sickness, freed the oppressed, and welcomed the needy.

This reveals God's compassion.

Principle:

Jesus does not turn away the hurting; He draws them to Himself.

XXVII. THREE TEMPTATIONS, THREE ANSWERS

The First Temptation — The Desire of the Body

The Temptation: Turn stones into bread.

The Lie: Meet your own needs your own way.

Jesus' Answer: Deuteronomy 8:3 — People live by every word from God.

The Second Temptation — The Desire for Proof

The Temptation: Throw Yourself down from the temple.

The Lie: Make God prove His love.

Jesus' Answer: Deuteronomy 6:16 — Do not test the Lord your God.

The Third Temptation — The Desire for Power

The Temptation: Bow down and receive the kingdoms.

The Lie: Take the crown without the cross.

Jesus' Answer: Deuteronomy 6:13 — Worship and serve God only.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

All three of Jesus' answers came from the book of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy was written to Israel at the end of their forty years in the wilderness.

Jesus answered the devil with the very lessons Israel failed to learn.

XXVIII. JESUS, ADAM, AND ISRAEL

Matthew 4 shows that Jesus succeeded where others failed.

Adam Was Tempted in a Garden

He had everything he needed.

He still fell.

Israel Was Tested in the Wilderness

For forty years they complained, tested God, and worshiped idols.

Jesus Was Tempted in the Wilderness

For forty days He was hungry and alone.

He did not fall.

Key Truth

Jesus is the faithful Son who obeyed where Adam and Israel disobeyed.

Spiritual Principle

Because Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin, He is able to help us when we are tempted.

XXIX. HOW TO RESIST TEMPTATION

Jesus' victory gives us a pattern to follow.

Know Your Identity

The devil said, “If You are the Son of God.”

Jesus knew who He was.

Believers must remember who they are in Christ.

Know the Word

Jesus answered every temptation with Scripture.

We must read, study, and memorize God's Word.

Use the Word Correctly

The devil twisted Scripture.

Jesus used all of Scripture rightly.

Refuse Shortcuts

Every temptation offered a shortcut around God's plan.

Keep Worship Pure

Every temptation is ultimately about who we will worship.

Resist Firmly

Jesus said, “Get away from Me, Satan!”

Some temptations must be rejected immediately.

Key Truth

The best defense against temptation is a heart filled with God's Word and set on God alone.

XXX. WHAT MATTHEW 4 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 4 presents Jesus as:

The Faithful Son

He trusted His Father in the wilderness.

The Victor Over Satan

He defeated every temptation.

The Living Word

He lived by every word from God.

The Great Light

He shines in the darkness.

The Preacher of the Kingdom

He called people to repent.

The Caller of Disciples

He said, “Follow Me.”

The Healer

He healed every disease and sickness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who defeated the devil in the wilderness is the same Jesus who calls us, heals us, and leads us out of darkness into His light.

XXXI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the Spirit lead Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted?

God allowed the temptation to prove that Jesus was the faithful Son.

Jesus succeeded where Adam and Israel failed.

His victory also shows that He understands our temptations and can help us.

Question 2

What is the significance of the forty days and forty nights?

It connects Jesus to Moses, who fasted forty days on the mountain.

It connects Him to Elijah, who traveled forty days to the mountain of God.

It also connects Him to Israel's forty years in the wilderness.

Question 3

Why was it wrong for Jesus to turn stones into bread?

Bread itself was not sinful.

But the devil was tempting Jesus to use His power for Himself, apart from His Father's will.

It was a temptation to stop trusting the Father to provide.

Question 4

Why did Jesus answer every temptation with Scripture?

God's Word is the truth that defeats the devil's lies.

Jesus showed us how to fight temptation.

He did not use special power that we do not have.

He used the written Word that God has given to all of us.

Question 5

How did the devil misuse Scripture?

He quoted Psalm 91 but took it out of context.

The psalm promises protection for those who trust God and walk in His ways.

It does not promise protection for those who deliberately put themselves in danger to force God to act.

Question 6

What does it mean to test God?

Testing God means trying to force Him to prove Himself.

Israel did this at Massah when they asked, “Is the LORD with us or not?”

True faith trusts God without demanding signs.

Question 7

What was the devil really after in the third temptation?

He wanted worship.

From the beginning, he wanted to take the place of God.

He offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world without the cross.

Question 8

Why did Jesus move to Capernaum?

Capernaum was a busy town on an important trade road by the Sea of Galilee.

It became the home base for His ministry.

His move also fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy about Zebulun and Naphtali.

Question 9

Why was Galilee called “Galilee of the Gentiles”?

After the Assyrians conquered the area, many foreigners settled there.

It had a mixed population of Jews and Gentiles.

Jesus' ministry there was a preview of the gospel going to all nations.

Question 10

What does it mean to be “fishers of people”?

It means bringing people to God the way a fisherman brings in fish.

Jesus promised to make His disciples into people who would reach others with the gospel.

Question 11

What did the first disciples leave to follow Jesus?

Peter and Andrew left their nets.

James and John left their boat and their father.

They left their business, income, and security because Jesus came first.

Question 12

What should Matthew 4 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 4 should cause believers to live:

- Filled with God's Word.
- Ready to resist temptation.
- Trusting God without testing Him.
- Worshiping God alone.
- Shining Christ's light in dark places.
- Following Jesus immediately.
- Reaching others as fishers of people.
- Caring for the sick and hurting.

XXXII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 4 asks several important questions.

Do I Know God's Word Well Enough to Fight Temptation?

Jesus answered every attack with Scripture.

Where Am I Most Likely to Be Tempted?

The devil attacked Jesus when He was hungry and alone.

Am I Trying to Meet My Needs Outside of God's Will?

Good desires can be met in wrong ways.

Am I Testing God or Trusting Him?

Do I demand signs before I obey?

What Is Competing for My Worship?

Money, power, comfort, approval, or anything else can take God's place.

Am I Taking Shortcuts Around God's Plan?

The devil offered a crown without a cross.

Have I Truly Left My Nets?

Is there anything I am holding onto that keeps me from following Jesus fully?

Am I a Fisher of People?

Who am I helping to come to Jesus?

Do I Care About the Hurting the Way Jesus Does?

Jesus healed the sick and welcomed the needy.

XXXIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Victory in Private Comes Before Ministry in Public”

Before Jesus preached a single sermon, He won a battle in the wilderness.

No crowds saw it.

No disciples were there.

No one applauded.

It was just Jesus, His Father's Word, and the enemy.

Only after that private victory did Jesus begin His public ministry.

Then came the preaching.

Then came the disciples.

Then came the crowds.

Then came the healings.

This creates a powerful principle.

The battles we win when no one is watching prepare us for the work God gives us in front of others.

What happens in the wilderness shapes what happens in Galilee.

Principle:

Faithfulness in the hidden place prepares us for fruitfulness in the public place.

XXXIV. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 4 begins in a lonely wilderness and ends with crowds from every direction.

At the beginning, Jesus is alone and hungry.

At the end, He is surrounded by people seeking His help.

In between, two great things happen.

Jesus defeats the devil.

And Jesus begins to shine as the Light of the world.

The devil offered bread.

Jesus chose God's Word.

The devil offered a dramatic show.

Jesus chose trust.

The devil offered the kingdoms of the world.

Jesus chose to worship God alone.

Then Jesus walked into Galilee, a land of darkness, and the Light began to shine.

He called fishermen.

They left their nets.

He preached the kingdom.

He healed the sick.

He freed the oppressed.

Matthew 4 therefore reminds us:

The devil is real, but he is not stronger than Christ.

Temptation is real, but God's Word is stronger.

Darkness is real, but the Light has come.

Before the crowds came the wilderness.

Before the miracles came the victory.

Before the disciples could fish for people, they had to follow Jesus.

The story of Jesus' ministry begins with:

A Son who would not bow.

A Word that would not fail.

A Light that would not stay hidden.

And a call that would not wait.

The same call still stands:

Stand on God's Word.

Worship God alone.

Walk in the Light.

Follow Jesus now.

Fish for people.

And until He returns:

Keep standing.

Keep worshiping.

Keep following.

Keep fishing.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Jesus, Your faithful Son.

Thank You that He was tempted in every way, yet He never sinned.

Thank You that He won the victory where we have failed.

When we are tempted, help us remember that Jesus understands.

When we are weak, hungry, tired, or alone, keep us from falling.

Fill our hearts and minds with Your Word.

Teach us to read it, study it, remember it, and obey it.

When the enemy lies to us, help us answer, “It is written.”

Keep us from twisting Your Word to serve ourselves.

Teach us to trust You instead of testing You.

Keep us from demanding signs before we obey.

Guard our hearts from anything that would take Your place.

Help us worship You alone and serve You only.

Keep us from taking shortcuts around the path You have chosen for us.

Thank You that Jesus is the great Light who shines in the darkness.

Let His light shine in every dark place in our lives.

Use us to carry His light to others.

Lord Jesus, we hear You say, “Follow Me.”

Help us leave our nets behind.

Help us follow You right away, not later.

Make us fishers of people.

Give us compassion for the sick, the hurting, and the oppressed.

Let our lives show the good news of Your kingdom in both word and action.

Draw people from every place and background to Yourself.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of people.’” — Matthew 4:19

Central Truth

Jesus, the faithful Son of God, defeated the devil by the Word of God and began His ministry by bringing light to those in darkness, calling disciples to follow Him, and healing the broken.

Matthew 4 in One Sentence

Jesus defeats the devil in the wilderness by standing on God's Word, then begins His ministry in Galilee by preaching repentance, calling fishermen to follow Him, and healing every sickness as the Light that has dawned on those in darkness.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 5 — The Sermon on the Mount: The Way of the Kingdom

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 4 ended with large crowds following Jesus.

They came from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

Many had seen His miracles.

Many had been healed.

Now Jesus sits down to teach.

Matthew Chapters 5, 6, and 7 record what is called **the Sermon on the Mount.**

It is the longest single teaching of Jesus in the Gospels.

It is often called the greatest sermon ever preached.

Matthew Chapter 5 is the first part of that sermon.

It begins with the **Beatitudes**, eight blessings that turn the world's values upside down.

The world says, **“Blessed are the strong.”**

Jesus says, **“Blessed are the poor in spirit.”**

The world says, **“Blessed are the happy.”**

Jesus says, **“Blessed are those who mourn.”**

Then Jesus tells His followers who they are:

“You are the salt of the earth.”

“You are the light of the world.”

Then He explains His relationship to the Old Testament law.

He did not come to destroy it.

He came to fulfill it.

Then Jesus gives six teachings that begin:

“You have heard it said... But I tell you.”

He speaks about anger, lust, divorce, oaths, revenge, and love for enemies.

In each one, Jesus goes beneath outward actions to the heart.

Murder begins with anger.

Adultery begins with lust.

Love must reach even our enemies.

The chapter ends with a staggering command:

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Matthew 5 therefore shows us two great truths:

What the citizens of God's kingdom are like.

And:

How far God's standard of righteousness really reaches.

The central truth of Matthew 5 is:

Jesus reveals the character of His kingdom, calling His followers to a righteousness of the heart that reflects the holiness and love of their Father in heaven.

I. JESUS GOES UP ON THE MOUNTAIN

Matthew 5:1 — He Sat Down

“When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a mountain and sat down. His disciples came to Him,”

Jesus saw the crowds.

Then He went up on a mountain.

This reminds us of Moses.

Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive God's law.

Now Jesus goes up a mountain to explain the true meaning of God's law.

But there is a difference.

Moses went up to receive God's Word.

Jesus goes up to give it.

Jesus **sat down.**

In those days, teachers sat when they taught with authority.

His **disciples** came to Him.

The sermon was spoken mainly to His followers, though the crowds were also listening.

Cross References

Exodus 19:3

> Moses went up the mountain to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you must say to the family of Jacob and tell the people of Israel.”

Exodus 24:12

> The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and stay there. I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commands I have written to teach the people.”

Luke 6:20

> Jesus looked at His followers and said, “Blessed are you who are poor, because the kingdom of God belongs to you.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the greater Moses.

He does not simply deliver God's law; He speaks with God's own authority.

Key Truth

The Sermon on the Mount is not a list of rules for earning salvation.

It is a description of life in God's kingdom for those who follow Jesus.

II. JESUS BEGINS TO TEACH

Matthew 5:2 — “He Began to Teach Them”

“and He began to teach them, saying:”

This short verse is important.

Matthew says Jesus **began to teach.**

Literally, the text says **“He opened His mouth.”**

This was a way of saying something serious and important was about to be spoken.

Jesus was not giving casual advice.

He was teaching the way of God's kingdom.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 5:1

> Moses called all Israel together and said, “Listen, Israel, to the rules and laws I am telling you today. Learn them and be careful to obey them.”

Psalms 78:1

> My people, listen to my teaching. Pay attention to what I say.

Isaiah 2:3

> Many people will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD. He will teach us His ways so that we can walk in His paths.”

Spiritual Principle

When Jesus speaks, His people should listen carefully.

His words are not suggestions; they are the words of the King.

III. THE POOR IN SPIRIT

Matthew 5:3 — The Kingdom Belongs to Them

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.”

The word **blessed** means more than happy.

It means to be truly well off in God's eyes.

It describes a person who has God's approval and favor.

The first blessing is for **the poor in spirit.**

This does not mean people with weak faith or low energy.

It means people who know they are spiritually bankrupt.

They know they have nothing to offer God.

They come to Him with empty hands.

This is where the kingdom begins.

No one enters God's kingdom by being spiritually rich.

We enter by admitting we are spiritually poor.

Cross References

Isaiah 66:2

> This is the kind of person I care about: someone who is humble, sorry for sin, and who trembles at My word.

Luke 6:20

> Jesus looked at His followers and said, “Blessed are you who are poor, because the kingdom of God belongs to you.”

Psalms 34:18

> The LORD is close to those whose hearts are broken. He saves those whose spirits have been crushed.

Spiritual Principle

The door to the kingdom is humility.

God fills only those who know they are empty.

Key Truth

Pride says, **“I deserve God's blessing.”**

Poverty of spirit says, **“I need God's mercy.”**

IV. THOSE WHO MOURN

Matthew 5:4 — They Will Be Comforted

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

This seems like a contradiction.

How can someone who mourns be blessed?

Jesus is speaking first about mourning over sin.

The person who is poor in spirit sees his sin.

Then he grieves over it.

This also includes grieving over the brokenness of the world and the suffering sin has caused.

Those who mourn this way have a promise:

They will be comforted.

God Himself is the Comforter.

Cross References

Isaiah 61:2

> He has sent Me to announce the year of the LORD's favor and the day our God will punish His enemies, and to comfort all who are sad.

Luke 6:21

> Blessed are you who are crying now, because you will laugh.

Psalms 126:5

> Those who plant seeds with tears will gather the harvest with shouts of joy.

Spiritual Principle

Godly sorrow leads to God's comfort.

The tears of repentance become the doorway to joy.

Application

Mourning in the way Jesus describes includes:

- Grieving over our own sin.
- Grieving over the sin of the world.
- Grieving over the suffering sin causes.
- Bringing our sorrow honestly to God.
- Trusting Him to comfort us.

V. THE MEEK

Matthew 5:5 — They Will Inherit the Earth

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”

Meekness is often misunderstood.

It does not mean weakness.

It means strength under control.

The word was used for a powerful horse that had been trained to obey.

A meek person does not demand his own way.

He does not fight for his own rights.

He trusts God to defend him.

Moses was called the most humble man on earth.

Yet he stood before Pharaoh and led a nation.

Jesus Himself said, **“I am gentle and humble in heart.”**

The world says the aggressive will take the earth.

Jesus says the meek will **inherit** it.

They will receive it as a gift from God.

Cross References

Psalms 37:11

> But humble people will receive the land and will enjoy great peace.

Numbers 12:3

> Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the earth.

Isaiah 29:19

> Humble people will be filled with joy in the LORD, and poor people will celebrate because of the Holy One of Israel.

Spiritual Principle

Meekness is not weakness; it is strength surrendered to God.

Key Truth

The meek do not grab; they receive.

VI. HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matthew 5:6 — They Will Be Filled

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

Hunger and thirst are strong desires.

They are not mild interests.

They are needs that must be met.

In Bible times, people often knew real hunger and real thirst.

Jesus says His followers have a deep desire for **righteousness.**

They want to be right with God.

They want to live rightly before God.

They want to see what is right done in the world.

And God promises:

They will be filled.

Cross References

Isaiah 55:1

> Come, everyone who is thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, buy food and eat!

Psalms 42:1

> As a deer longs for streams of water, so I long for You, God.

Luke 6:21

> Blessed are you who are hungry now, because you will be filled.

Spiritual Principle

God satisfies those who truly long for Him.

Application

Ask yourself honestly:

- What do I hunger for most?
- What do I spend my energy chasing?
- Do I long to be more like Christ?
- Do I want God more than comfort?

VII. THE MERCIFUL

Matthew 5:7 — They Will Be Shown Mercy

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”

Mercy is compassion in action.

It is kindness shown to those who do not deserve it.

It includes forgiving those who wrong us and helping those who are suffering.

Those who have received God's mercy will show mercy to others.

A person who refuses to show mercy shows that he has not understood the mercy of God.

Cross References

Psalms 18:25

> To those who are faithful, You show that You are faithful. To those who are innocent, You show that You are innocent.

Proverbs 11:17

> A kind person helps himself, but a cruel person brings trouble on himself.

James 2:13

> Anyone who does not show mercy will be judged without mercy. But mercy wins over judgment.

Spiritual Principle

Mercy received becomes mercy given.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The way we treat others shows how well we understand the way God has treated us.

VIII. THE PURE IN HEART

Matthew 5:8 — They Will See God

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

In the Bible, the **heart** is the center of a person.

It includes the mind, the will, and the emotions.

To be **pure in heart** means to have a heart that is clean and undivided.

It means having single-minded devotion to God.

It means being the same on the inside as you appear on the outside.

The Pharisees focused on outward cleanness.

Jesus focuses on the heart.

The promise is the greatest of all:

They will see God.

Cross References

Psalms 24:4

> The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not worship idols or make false promises.

Psalms 51:10

> Create a pure heart in me, God, and make my spirit faithful again.

1 John 3:2

> Dear friends, we are now children of God. What we will be has not yet been shown. But we know that when Christ appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him as He really is.

Spiritual Principle

God looks at the heart, not only at outward actions.

Key Truth

A pure heart is not something we make ourselves.

It is something we ask God to create in us.

IX. THE PEACEMAKERS

Matthew 5:9 — Called Children of God

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

Jesus does not say, **“Blessed are the peace-lovers.”**

He says, **“Blessed are the peacemakers.”**

Peacemakers do more than avoid conflict.

They work to bring peace.

They help people be reconciled to God.

They help people be reconciled to each other.

God is the great Peacemaker.

He made peace with sinners through Jesus Christ.

When we make peace, we act like our Father.

That is why peacemakers are called **children of God.**

Cross References

Psalms 34:14

> Turn away from evil and do good. Look for peace and work hard to get it.

Isaiah 52:7

> How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, who announces peace.

Romans 12:18

> Do everything you can to live in peace with everyone.

Spiritual Principle

Children of God resemble their Father.

The God of peace makes His children peacemakers.

X. PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matthew 5:10 — The Kingdom Belongs to Them

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for doing what is right, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.”

This blessing may be the most surprising.

Jesus says that people who live this way will be **persecuted.**

A humble, merciful, pure, peace-making person will often be opposed by a proud and sinful world.

But notice why they are persecuted:

For doing what is right.

Not for being foolish.

Not for being unkind.

Not for causing trouble.

Notice also that this blessing ends the same way as the first:

“The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.”

The Beatitudes begin and end with the kingdom.

Cross References

1 Peter 3:14

> But even if you suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Don't be afraid of what they fear, and don't be troubled.

2 Timothy 3:12

> Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Psalms 34:19

> A person who does what is right may have many troubles, but the LORD will save him from all of them.

Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness to God will bring opposition from the world.

Spiritual Warning

We must make sure that if we suffer, it is for righteousness and not for our own wrongdoing.

XI. INSULTED BECAUSE OF JESUS

Matthew 5:11 — “Because of Me”

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”

Jesus now speaks directly to His disciples.

“Blessed are you.”

He describes three kinds of mistreatment.

Insults.

Persecution.

False accusations.

And He gives the reason:

“Because of Me.”

Jesus expected His followers to be identified with Him.

When people reject Jesus, they will often reject those who follow Him.

Cross References

1 Peter 4:14

> If people insult you because you follow Christ, you are blessed, because the glorious Spirit of God is resting on you.

Luke 6:22

> Blessed are you when people hate you, push you away, insult you, and say you are evil because you follow the Son of Man.

Isaiah 51:7

> Listen to Me, you who know what is right, you who have My teaching in your hearts. Don't be afraid of people's insults, and don't be upset when they make fun of you.

Spiritual Principle

To share in Christ's name is to share in Christ's rejection.

Key Truth

The world's insults cannot cancel God's blessing.

XII. REJOICE AND BE GLAD

Matthew 5:12 — Great Reward in Heaven

“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great. In the same way, they persecuted the prophets before you.”

Jesus does not tell His followers to merely survive persecution.

He tells them to **rejoice.**

Why?

First, because their reward in heaven is great.

Second, because they are in good company.

The prophets were treated the same way.

Being persecuted for God places a believer in the same line as Elijah, Jeremiah, and all the faithful servants of God.

Cross References

Luke 6:23

> Be happy on that day and jump for joy, because you have a great reward in heaven. Their ancestors treated the prophets the same way.

James 5:10

> Brothers and sisters, follow the example of the prophets who spoke for the Lord. They suffered many hard things, but they were patient.

2 Chronicles 36:16

> But they made fun of God's messengers, hated His words, and laughed at His prophets. Finally, the LORD became so angry with His people that nothing could stop it.

Spiritual Principle

Present suffering is small compared to future reward.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Heaven's reward turns earth's insults into reasons for joy.

XIII. THE SALT OF THE EARTH

Matthew 5:13 — If Salt Loses Its Flavor

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its flavor, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

Jesus does not say, **“Try to become salt.”**

He says, **“You are the salt of the earth.”**

In Bible times, salt was very valuable.

It had several important uses.

Salt preserves.

Before refrigerators, salt kept meat from rotting.

Christians help hold back the moral decay of the world.

Salt gives flavor.

Christians bring goodness and the taste of God's kingdom into the world.

Salt creates thirst.

A Christian's life should make others thirsty for God.

But Jesus gives a warning.

Salt in those days was often mixed with other minerals.

If the true salt washed out, what was left looked like salt but was useless.

A Christian who loses his distinct difference from the world loses his usefulness.

Cross References

Mark 9:50

> Salt is good. But if it loses its salty taste, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves and live in peace with each other.

Luke 14:35

> It is not good for the soil or even for the manure pile. People just throw it away.

Leviticus 2:13

> Put salt on all your grain offerings. Do not leave out the salt of the covenant with your God.

Spiritual Principle

Christians are meant to make a difference by being different.

Spiritual Warning

A believer who becomes just like the world loses his influence on the world.

XIV. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Matthew 5:14 — A City on a Hill

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Again, Jesus says **“You are.”**

Jesus called Himself **the light of the world.**

Now He gives that same title to His followers.

Jesus is the true source of light.

His followers reflect His light, like the moon reflects the sun.

Then Jesus uses a picture.

A city built on a hill.

At night, the lights of a city on a hill can be seen for miles.

It cannot be hidden.

In the same way, a true Christian life will be seen.

Cross References

Isaiah 42:6

> “I, the LORD, have called You to do what is right. I will hold Your hand and protect You. I will make You a covenant for the people and a light for the nations.”

John 8:12

> Jesus spoke to the people again and said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have the light that gives life.”

Isaiah 2:2

> In the last days, the mountain where the LORD's temple stands will be raised above all other mountains, and people from all nations will come to it.

Spiritual Principle

Light is meant to be seen.

A faith that is never visible is not the faith Jesus describes.

Key Truth

We do not create the light.

We carry the light of Christ.

XV. A LAMP ON A STAND

Matthew 5:15 — Light for Everyone in the House

“People do not light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.”

Houses in Jesus' day were small, often with one main room.

A single oil lamp could light the whole house.

No one would light a lamp and then cover it with a basket.

That would make no sense.

The purpose of a lamp is to give light.

In the same way, God did not put His light in His people so they would hide it.

Cross References

Mark 4:21

> Jesus said to them, “Do you bring a lamp into the house to hide it under a bowl or under a bed? No, you put it on a stand.”

Luke 8:16

> No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand so that people who come in can see the light.

Luke 11:33

> No one lights a lamp and hides it or puts it under a basket. Instead, he puts it on a stand so that those who come in can see.

Spiritual Principle

God's light in us is meant to bless others.

Application

We hide our light when we:

- Are ashamed to be known as Christians.
- Stay silent when we should speak.
- Live inconsistent lives.
- Blend in with the world to avoid trouble.
- Keep our faith only at church.

XVI. LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Matthew 5:16 — Glory to the Father

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

Jesus explains how our light shines.

Through good works.

Our good works are not done to earn salvation.

They are the result of salvation.

And notice the goal:

So they may give glory to your Father in heaven.

The purpose of good works is not to make people praise us.

It is to make people praise God.

Cross References

Isaiah 60:1

> Get up and shine, because your light has come, and the glory of the LORD is shining on you.

1 Peter 2:12

> Live such good lives among people who don't know God that, even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your good works and give glory to God on the day He comes.

Philippians 2:15

> Then you will be innocent and pure, children of God without fault, living among crooked and evil people. You will shine among them like stars in the sky.

Spiritual Principle

Good works point people to God, not to ourselves.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Shine in such a way that people see the Light, not the lamp.

XVII. CHRIST FULFILLS THE LAW

Matthew 5:17 — Not to Abolish but to Fulfill

“Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

Some people may have thought Jesus was throwing out the Old Testament.

Jesus corrects that idea.

The Law and the Prophets was a way of saying the whole Old Testament.

Jesus did not come to destroy it.

He came to **fulfill** it.

How did Jesus fulfill the Law?

He fulfilled its prophecies — He is the One the Old Testament promised.

He fulfilled its commands — He obeyed the law perfectly.

He fulfilled its sacrifices — He became the final sacrifice for sin.

He fulfilled its meaning — He revealed what the law was truly about.

Cross References

Romans 10:4

> Christ is the goal the law was pointing to, so that everyone who believes can be made right with God.

Isaiah 42:21

> Because He is righteous, the LORD was pleased to make His teaching great and glorious.

Luke 24:44

> Jesus said to them, “Everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms had to come true.”

Spiritual Principle

The whole Bible points to Jesus.

The Old Testament prepares for Him, and the New Testament reveals Him.

Key Truth

Jesus is not against God's law.

He is the fulfillment of God's law.

XVIII. NOT THE SMALLEST LETTER

Matthew 5:18 — God's Word Will Not Fail

“Truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not even the smallest letter or stroke of a pen will disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”

Jesus begins with **“Truly I tell you.”**

This phrase signals a solemn and important statement.

The smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet is the letter **yod**, which looks like a small comma.

A stroke of a pen refers to tiny marks that tell one Hebrew letter from another.

Jesus is saying that every detail of God's Word matters.

Nothing God has said will fail.

Everything will be accomplished.

Cross References

Luke 16:17

> It would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for the smallest part of a letter in the law to be dropped.

Psalms 119:89

> LORD, Your word lasts forever. It stands firm in heaven.

Isaiah 40:8

> The grass dries up and the flowers fall, but the word of our God lasts forever.

Spiritual Principle

God's Word is completely trustworthy, down to the smallest detail.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If Jesus trusted every letter of Scripture, His followers can trust it too.

XIX. LEAST AND GREAT IN THE KINGDOM

Matthew 5:19 — Practicing and Teaching

“Anyone who breaks even the least of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever practices and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus warns against treating any of God's commands as unimportant.

Some people divided the commands into big ones and small ones.

They thought the small ones did not matter much.

Jesus says that attitude makes a person **least** in the kingdom.

Greatness in the kingdom comes from doing two things together.

Practicing God's Word.

Teaching God's Word.

Notice the order.

Practice comes first.

We must live it before we teach it.

Cross References

James 2:10

> Whoever keeps the whole law but fails to obey even one command is guilty of breaking all of it.

Deuteronomy 4:2

> Do not add anything to what I command you, and do not take anything away from it. Obey the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

Psalms 119:6

> Then I will not be ashamed when I think about all Your commands.

Spiritual Principle

Obedience to God is not selective.

Spiritual Warning

Teachers carry a special responsibility, because their example shapes others.

XX. A GREATER RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matthew 5:20 — Greater Than the Pharisees

“For I tell you, unless your righteousness is greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

This statement would have shocked the crowd.

The scribes and Pharisees were seen as the most religious people in Israel.

They tithed even their spices.

They fasted twice a week.

They prayed in public.

How could anyone's righteousness be greater than theirs?

Their righteousness was mostly outward.

It focused on actions people could see.

Jesus requires a righteousness of the heart.

And the only way to have that righteousness is to receive it from God through faith in Christ.

Then God changes the heart so that a person begins to live righteously from the inside out.

Cross References

Romans 3:20

> No one will be made right with God by obeying the law. The law only shows us our sin.

Philippians 3:9

> I want to be found in Him, not having my own righteousness that comes from obeying the law, but the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is based on faith.

Isaiah 64:6

> All of us have become like something unclean. Even all our good works are like filthy rags.

Spiritual Principle

No one can enter God's kingdom on their own goodness.

Key Truth

The righteousness God requires is the righteousness God gives in Christ.

XXI. YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID — MURDER

Matthew 5:21 — Do Not Murder

“You have heard that it was said long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’”

Now Jesus begins six teachings that follow a pattern:

“You have heard it said... But I tell you.”

Jesus is not correcting the Old Testament.

He is correcting the way people had come to understand it.

Many people thought that as long as they had not killed anyone, they had kept this command.

The sixth commandment says, **“Do not murder.”**

Human life is sacred because people are made in the image of God.

Cross References

Exodus 20:13

> Do not murder.

Genesis 9:6

> Whoever takes a human life will have his own life taken by another person, because God made people in His own image.

Deuteronomy 5:17

> Do not murder.

Spiritual Principle

Every human life has value because every person bears God's image.

XXII. ANGER AND CONTEMPT

Matthew 5:22 — “But I Tell You”

“But I tell you, anyone who is angry with his brother without cause will be subject to judgment. Whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca’ (a term of contempt), will be answerable to the council. Whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”

“But I tell you.”

Jesus speaks with His own authority.

He goes beneath the act of murder to its root.

Anger.

Not every kind of anger is sinful.

Jesus Himself was angry at sin.

But anger **without cause**, anger that holds a grudge, and anger that wants to hurt others is sin.

Jesus mentions two kinds of insults.

“Raca” was an Aramaic word of contempt meaning something like **“empty-headed”** or **“worthless.”**

“You fool!” was an insult that attacked a person's character.

Anger, contempt, and insults are the seeds of murder.

They kill a person's dignity with words.

Cross References

1 John 3:15

> Everyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer. And you know that no murderer has eternal life living in him.

Leviticus 19:17

> Do not hate your brother in your heart. Correct your neighbor openly so that you will not be guilty because of him.

Proverbs 14:29

> A patient person has great understanding, but a person with a quick temper shows how foolish he is.

Spiritual Principle

Sin begins in the heart long before it shows up in our actions.

Spiritual Warning

Words can wound like weapons.

God takes our words seriously.

XXIII. AT THE ALTAR

Matthew 5:23 — Remembering a Broken Relationship

“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and remember your brother has something against you,”

Jesus now gives a practical example.

A man is at the temple.

He is about to offer a sacrifice to God.

Then he remembers that someone has something against him.

Notice that Jesus does not say, **“If you have something against your brother.”**

He says, **“If your brother has something against you.”**

It is not only about forgiving others.

It is also about making things right when we have wronged others.

Cross References

Leviticus 1:3

> If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he must offer a male animal that has nothing wrong with it. He must bring it to the entrance of the meeting tent so that the LORD will accept it.

Mark 11:25

> When you are praying, if you are angry with someone, forgive him. Then your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins.

Proverbs 21:3

> Doing what is right and fair pleases the LORD more than offering sacrifices.

Spiritual Principle

Our relationship with God cannot be separated from our relationships with others.

XXIV. FIRST BE RECONCILED

Matthew 5:24 — Then Offer Your Gift

“leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift.”

Jesus says something surprising.

Leave the gift.

Go make it right.

Then come back.

Worship matters.

But God does not want worship from someone who refuses to make peace.

Reconciliation comes before ritual.

Cross References

1 Samuel 15:22

> Obeying is better than offering sacrifices. Listening to the LORD is better than offering the fat of rams.

Hosea 6:6

> I want your faithful love more than your sacrifices. I want you to know Me more than I want your burnt offerings.

Ephesians 4:26

> When you are angry, do not sin. Do not stay angry all day.

Spiritual Principle

God values a right heart more than religious activity.

Application

If someone has something against you:

- Do not wait for them to come to you.
- Go to them.
- Admit your part honestly.
- Ask for forgiveness.
- Seek peace.
- Then return to worship with a clear conscience.

XXV. SETTLE MATTERS QUICKLY

Matthew 5:25 — On the Way to Court

“Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison.”

Jesus gives a second example.

Two people are on their way to court.

Jesus says to settle the matter **quickly** while there is still time.

Once the judge decides, it will be too late.

This is practical wisdom for everyday life.

But it also has a deeper meaning.

Every person is on the way to stand before God, the final Judge.

Now is the time to be made right with Him.

Cross References

Luke 12:58

> When you are going to court with your opponent, try hard to settle with him on the way. If you don't, he may drag you to the judge, the judge may hand you over to the officer, and the officer may throw you into prison.

Proverbs 25:8

> Don't be in a hurry to go to court. What will you do later if your neighbor proves you wrong?

Proverbs 6:5

> Free yourself like a deer running from a hunter, like a bird escaping from a trap.

Spiritual Principle

Delay makes conflict worse.

Spiritual Warning

There is a day when the time to settle with God will be over.

XXVI. THE LAST PENNY

Matthew 5:26 — Paying the Full Debt

“Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.”

In those days, a person who could not pay a debt could be put in prison.

He would stay there until the debt was fully paid.

The last penny refers to the smallest coin.

Every bit of the debt had to be paid.

This is a serious warning.

Unresolved conflict has a cost.

And before God, unforgiven sin is a debt no one can pay.

That is why we need Jesus, who paid our debt in full.

Cross References

Luke 12:59

> I tell you, you will not get out of there until you have paid every last cent.

Proverbs 22:7

> Rich people rule over poor people, and the person who borrows becomes a servant to the one who lends.

2 Kings 4:1

> A woman whose husband had been one of the prophets cried out to Elisha, “My husband is dead. Now the man he owed money to is coming to take my two sons as his slaves.”

Spiritual Principle

Sin creates a debt we cannot pay.

Key Truth

Jesus paid the last penny of our debt on the cross.

XXVII. YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID — ADULTERY

Matthew 5:27 — Do Not Commit Adultery

“You have heard it said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’”

Jesus turns to the seventh commandment.

God created marriage.

He designed sexual intimacy to be shared only between a husband and wife.

Adultery breaks that covenant.

In the Old Testament, adultery was so serious that it carried the death penalty.

Cross References

Exodus 20:14

> Do not commit adultery.

Deuteronomy 5:18

> Do not commit adultery.

Leviticus 20:10

> If a man commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, both the man and the woman must be put to death.

Spiritual Principle

God takes marriage and faithfulness very seriously.

XXVIII. LUST IN THE HEART

Matthew 5:28 — Adultery in the Heart

“But I tell you, anyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Again, Jesus goes to the root.

Adultery does not begin with the act.

It begins with the look.

It begins with lust in the heart.

Jesus is not talking about noticing that someone is attractive.

He is talking about looking with the purpose of desiring what God has forbidden.

David's sin with Bathsheba began when he saw her from the roof and kept looking.

Cross References

Job 31:1

> I made a promise with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman.

Proverbs 6:25

> Don't let your heart desire her beauty, and don't let her capture you with her eyes.

2 Samuel 11:2

> One evening David got up from his bed and walked on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. She was very beautiful.

Spiritual Principle

What we allow our eyes to dwell on, our hearts will begin to desire.

Application

Guarding against lust includes:

- Making a covenant with your eyes like Job.
- Being careful what you watch and read.
- Avoiding situations that lead to temptation.
- Being accountable to other believers.
- Filling your mind with God's Word.
- Quickly confessing sinful thoughts to God.

XXIX. IF YOUR EYE CAUSES YOU TO SIN

Matthew 5:29 — Tear It Out

“If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”

Jesus uses strong language.

He is not commanding people to literally harm their bodies.

A blind man can still have lust in his heart.

Jesus is using an exaggerated picture to show how seriously we must deal with sin.

The **right eye** was considered the most valuable.

Jesus is saying:

Remove whatever leads you into sin, even if it is precious to you.

Sin is so dangerous that it is worth any sacrifice to avoid it.

Cross References

Mark 9:47

> If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell.

Numbers 15:39

> You will look at these tassels and remember all the LORD's commands and obey them. Then you will not follow the desires of your hearts and eyes that lead you to be unfaithful.

Proverbs 4:25

> Keep your eyes looking straight ahead, and keep your focus on what is in front of you.

Spiritual Principle

We must take radical action against sin.

Key Truth

Hell is real, and sin is serious enough to lead there.

XXX. IF YOUR HAND CAUSES YOU TO SIN

Matthew 5:30 — Cut It Off

“If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”

The eye represents what we look at.

The hand represents what we do.

Jesus repeats the same strong warning.

Whatever leads us into sin must be removed.

This may mean ending a relationship.

It may mean giving up a habit.

It may mean leaving a place or a job.

It may mean getting rid of something we own.

Cross References

Mark 9:43

> If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better to enter life with one hand than to have two hands and go to hell, where the fire never goes out.

Job 31:7

> If I have turned away from the right path, if my heart has followed what my eyes wanted, or if my hands have been made dirty by sin.

Colossians 3:5

> So put to death whatever belongs to your sinful nature: sexual sin, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is the same as worshiping idols.

Spiritual Principle

Nothing is worth keeping if it costs us our soul.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not manage sin; get rid of it.

XXXI. YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID — DIVORCE

Matthew 5:31 — A Certificate of Divorce

“It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’”

In Jesus' day, divorce had become very easy.

Some teachers said a man could divorce his wife for almost any reason.

They pointed to Deuteronomy 24.

But that passage did not command divorce.

It regulated divorce to protect the woman.

The certificate gave her legal proof that she was free and could remarry.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 24:1

> Suppose a man marries a woman, but later he finds something shameful about her and is not pleased with her. He may write her divorce papers, give them to her, and send her away from his house.

Deuteronomy 24:3

> Then suppose her second husband also turns against her, writes her divorce papers, gives them to her, and sends her away from his house.

Mark 10:4

> They said, “Moses allowed a man to write divorce papers and send his wife away.”

Spiritual Principle

God's permission because of human sin is not the same as God's approval.

XXXII. MARRIAGE IS SACRED

Matthew 5:32 — Except for Sexual Immorality

“But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”

Jesus raises the standard.

Marriage is not to be ended easily.

Jesus gives one exception here:

Sexual immorality.

Unfaithfulness breaks the marriage covenant.

But even then, divorce is permitted, not commanded.

Forgiveness and restoration are always better when possible.

Jesus was protecting marriage.

He was also protecting women, who were often treated unfairly and left without support.

This is a sensitive subject.

Many people have experienced the pain of divorce.

God's grace is available to all who have been hurt by it or who have failed in it.

Cross References

Mark 10:11

> Jesus answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of adultery against her.”

Malachi 2:16

> “I hate divorce,” says the LORD, the God of Israel.

1 Corinthians 7:10

> To those who are married I give this command, and it is not just from me but from the Lord: A wife should not leave her husband.

Spiritual Principle

Marriage is a covenant before God and should be protected.

Key Truth

God's standard for marriage is high, but His grace for the broken is deep.

XXXIII. YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID — OATHS

Matthew 5:33 — Keep Your Vows

“You have also heard it said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oaths, but keep your vows to the Lord.’”

An **oath** was a solemn promise, often made by calling on God as a witness.

The Old Testament taught that oaths made to the Lord must be kept.

But in Jesus' time, people had found ways around this.

They said some oaths were binding and others were not.

It depended on what they swore by.

They used oaths to look honest while keeping a way out.

Cross References

Numbers 30:2

> When a man makes a promise to the LORD or swears an oath to do something, he must not break his word. He must do everything he said he would do.

Leviticus 19:12

> Do not make a false promise using My name. If you do, you will dishonor the name of your God.

Deuteronomy 23:21

> When you make a promise to the LORD your God, do not be slow to keep it. The LORD your God will surely expect it from you.

Spiritual Principle

God expects His people to keep their word.

XXXIV. DO NOT SWEAR AT ALL

Matthew 5:34 — Heaven Is God's Throne

“But I tell you, do not swear at all—neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne;”

Jesus cuts through all the games.

Do not swear at all.

People thought swearing by heaven instead of by God's name made the oath less serious.

But Jesus says heaven is **God's throne.**

You cannot swear by heaven without involving God.

Jesus is not mainly forbidding a person from taking an oath in a court of law.

He is forbidding the use of oaths to manipulate or deceive.

Cross References

Isaiah 66:1

> This is what the LORD says: “Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.”

James 5:12

> Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear by heaven, by earth, or by anything else. Let your “yes” mean yes and your “no” mean no, so that you will not be judged.

Psalms 11:4

> The LORD is in His holy temple. The LORD sits on His throne in heaven.

Spiritual Principle

Everything belongs to God, so every promise is made before God.

XXXV. THE EARTH AND JERUSALEM

Matthew 5:35 — The City of the Great King

“nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.”

Jesus continues.

The earth is God's **footstool.**

Jerusalem is **the city of the great King.**

There is no place you can point to that does not belong to God.

Every oath, no matter what it is made by, involves God.

Cross References

Isaiah 66:1

> This is what the LORD says: “Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.”

Psalms 48:2

> Mount Zion is high and beautiful. It brings joy to the whole earth. It is the city of the great King.

Psalms 99:5

> Praise the LORD our God, and worship at His footstool. He is holy.

Key Truth

There is no corner of creation where God is not King.

XXXVI. NOT BY YOUR OWN HEAD

Matthew 5:36 — One Hair White or Black

“And do not swear by your own head, because you cannot make even one hair white or black.”

Some people swore by their own heads.

They thought this was an oath that did not involve God.

But Jesus points out that we do not even control our own hair.

We cannot make one hair white or black.

Our lives are in God's hands, not ours.

Cross References

James 5:12

> Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear by heaven, by earth, or by anything else. Let your “yes” mean yes and your “no” mean no, so that you will not be judged.

1 Samuel 14:45

> As surely as the LORD lives, not one hair from his head will fall to the ground.

Luke 21:18

But not one hair on your head will be lost.

Spiritual Principle

We are not in control of our own lives; God is.

XXXVII. LET YOUR YES BE YES

Matthew 5:37 — Simple Honesty

“Simply let your ‘Yes’ mean yes and your ‘No’ mean no. Anything more than this comes from evil.”

Jesus gives a simple standard.

Say what you mean.

Mean what you say.

A follower of Jesus should be so honest that he does not need to swear an oath to be believed.

The need for oaths exists because people lie.

When we feel the need to add, **“I swear,”** it suggests our normal words cannot be trusted.

Cross References

James 5:12

> Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear by heaven, by earth, or by anything else. Let your “yes” mean yes and your “no” mean no, so that you will not be judged.

2 Corinthians 1:18

> As surely as God is faithful, what we tell you is not both “yes” and “no.”

Ecclesiastes 5:5

> It is better not to make a promise than to make one and not keep it.

Spiritual Principle

A Christian's word should be as good as an oath.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Integrity means you do not need to swear, because you never lie.

XXXVIII. YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID — AN EYE FOR AN EYE

Matthew 5:38 — Limited Justice

“You have heard it said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’”

This law appears three times in the Old Testament.

It was given to judges and courts.

Its purpose was to make sure punishment was fair.

It limited revenge.

The punishment could not be greater than the crime.

But people had turned this court rule into a personal right to get even.

Cross References

Exodus 21:24

> Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Leviticus 24:20

> Broken bone for broken bone, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. Whatever injury a person causes another, the same must be done to him.

Deuteronomy 19:21

> Do not feel sorry for him. Take a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, and a foot for a foot.

Spiritual Principle

God's law was designed to bring justice, not to give permission for revenge.

XXXIX. TURN THE OTHER CHEEK

Matthew 5:39 — Do Not Resist an Evil Person

“But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other also.”

Jesus teaches a different way.

Do not take revenge.

A slap on the **right cheek** by a right-handed person would be a backhanded slap.

In that culture, it was an insult more than an injury.

Jesus is saying:

Do not insult back.

Do not strike back.

Do not get even.

This does not mean Christians can never protect the weak or that governments should not punish crime.

It means that in personal insults, we do not seek revenge.

Jesus Himself lived this out when He was struck and spit on before His crucifixion.

Cross References

Lamentations 3:30

> Let him turn his cheek to the one who hits him and accept the insults.

Isaiah 50:6

> I let them beat My back. I let them pull out My beard. I did not hide My face when they insulted Me and spit on Me.

Luke 6:29

> If someone slaps you on one cheek, let him slap the other cheek too.

Spiritual Principle

Love refuses to take revenge.

Key Truth

Turning the other cheek is not weakness.

It takes great strength to refuse to strike back.

XL. GIVE YOUR COAT AS WELL

Matthew 5:40 — When Someone Sues You

“If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, give them your coat as well.”

In those days, a person's **shirt** was the inner garment.

The **coat** was the outer garment.

Poor people often had only one coat.

They used it as a blanket at night.

The law said a coat taken as a pledge had to be returned before sunset.

Jesus says to be willing to give even what the law would let you keep.

Do not fight for your rights at the cost of your witness.

Cross References

Luke 6:29

> If someone takes your coat, do not stop him from taking your shirt too.

Exodus 22:26

> If you take your neighbor's coat as a promise that he will pay you back, give it back to him before the sun goes down.

1 Corinthians 6:7

> The fact that you have lawsuits against each other means you have already failed. Why not just accept being wronged? Why not just let yourselves be cheated?

Spiritual Principle

Generosity is more important than winning.

XLI. GO THE SECOND MILE

Matthew 5:41 — Forced to Go One Mile

“If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.”

Roman soldiers had the legal right to force a civilian to carry their equipment for one mile.

Jewish people hated this.

It reminded them that they were under foreign rule.

Simon of Cyrene was forced in this way to carry Jesus' cross.

Jesus says:

When forced to go one mile, go two.

Do more than what is required.

Turn forced service into willing service.

This is where the phrase **“going the extra mile”** comes from.

Cross References

Mark 15:21

> A man named Simon from Cyrene was passing by on his way in from the country. The soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross.

Lamentations 3:27

> It is good for a person to carry a heavy load while he is young.

1 Peter 2:23

> When people insulted Him, He did not insult them back. When He suffered, He did not threaten. He trusted Himself to God, who judges fairly.

Spiritual Principle

Love does more than it has to.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The first mile is duty; the second mile is love.

XLII. GIVE TO THE ONE WHO ASKS

Matthew 5:42 — Do Not Turn Away

“Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”

Jesus calls His followers to a generous spirit.

God has been generous to us.

We should be generous to others.

This does not mean we must give everything to anyone for any reason.

Wisdom is still needed.

Giving money to someone who will use it to harm themselves is not love.

But our basic attitude should be open-handed, not tight-fisted.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 15:8

> Be generous and lend him whatever he needs.

Luke 6:30

> Give to everyone who asks you, and if someone takes what belongs to you, do not ask for it back.

Proverbs 21:26

> Some people are always wanting more, but a righteous person gives without holding back.

Spiritual Principle

God's generosity to us should make us generous to others.

Application

A generous heart:

- Notices people in need.
- Gives cheerfully.
- Lends without demanding.
- Shares what God has given.
- Gives with wisdom and love.

XLIII. YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID — HATE YOUR ENEMY

Matthew 5:43 — Love Your Neighbor

“You have heard it said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’”

The command **“Love your neighbor”** comes from Leviticus 19:18.

But the words **“hate your enemy”** are not found in the Old Testament.

People had added them.

They had decided that **“neighbor”** meant only fellow Israelites or people they liked.

So they believed they were free to hate everyone else.

Some passages, like Psalm 139, express hatred for God's enemies.

But those passages were about rejecting evil, not about personal revenge.

Cross References

Leviticus 19:18

> Do not try to get even or hold a grudge against anyone among your people. Love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Psalms 139:22

> I hate them completely. They are my enemies.

Deuteronomy 23:6

> As long as you live, do not try to make peace with them or help them do well.

Spiritual Principle

People often add to God's Word to excuse their own sin.

XLIV. LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Matthew 5:44 — Pray for Those Who Persecute You

“But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

This may be the hardest command Jesus ever gave.

Love your enemies.

The word for love here is **agape.**

It is not a feeling of liking someone.

It is a choice to seek their good.

Pray for those who persecute you.

It is very hard to keep hating someone you are honestly praying for.

Jesus did exactly this on the cross.

He prayed, **“Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing.”**

Cross References

Luke 6:27

> But I tell you who are listening: Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you.

Exodus 23:4

> If you see your enemy's ox or donkey wandering away, take it back to him.

Proverbs 25:21

> If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat. If he is thirsty, give him water to drink.

Spiritual Principle

Love for enemies is the clearest proof of God's love in us.

Key Truth

Anyone can love a friend.

Only God's grace can make us love an enemy.

XLV. CHILDREN OF YOUR FATHER

Matthew 5:45 — Sun and Rain on All

“By doing this, you will be children of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

Jesus gives the reason for loving our enemies.

It makes us like our Father.

God is kind even to those who reject Him.

He gives sunshine to the wicked.

He gives rain to the unrighteous.

Bible teachers call this **common grace**, God's goodness to all people.

When we love our enemies, we show the family resemblance.

Cross References

Luke 6:35

> But love your enemies. Do good to them and lend to them without expecting anything back. Then you will have a great reward, and you will be children of the Most High, because He is kind even to ungrateful and evil people.

Job 25:3

> Can anyone count His armies? Is there anyone His light does not shine on?

Psalms 145:9

> The LORD is good to everyone. He shows mercy to everything He has made.

Spiritual Principle

God's children show His character to the world.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When we love like the Father, people see the Father in us.

XLVI. EVEN TAX COLLECTORS DO THAT

Matthew 5:46 — What Reward?

“If you love only those who love you, what reward will you get? Even tax collectors do that.”

Tax collectors were among the most hated people in Israel.

They worked for Rome.

They often cheated their own people.

They were considered traitors.

Yet even they loved their own friends and families.

Jesus says loving those who love us is nothing special.

Everyone does that.

Jesus expects more from His followers.

Cross References

Luke 6:32

> If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them.

Luke 6:34

> If you lend only to people you expect to pay you back, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners lend to sinners and expect to get the same amount back.

Luke 5:27

> After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth. Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.”

Spiritual Principle

Christian love must go beyond ordinary human love.

Key Truth

Jesus called a tax collector to follow Him.

His love reaches the very people others despise.

XLVII. MORE THAN OTHERS

Matthew 5:47 — Greeting Only Your Brothers

“If you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Even unbelievers do that.”

In that culture, a greeting was a sign of respect and goodwill.

People often greeted only those in their own group.

Jesus asks a searching question:

“What are you doing more than others?”

Christians are called to do more.

To be kind to strangers.

To welcome outsiders.

To show warmth to people who are different from us.

Cross References

Luke 6:33

> If you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners do that.

3 John 1:5

> Dear friend, you are being faithful in all you do for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you.

Romans 12:13

> Share with God's people who are in need. Welcome strangers into your home.

Spiritual Principle

Kingdom love crosses the lines that people draw.

Application

Ask yourself:

- Who do I avoid?
- Who do I ignore?
- Who do I treat coldly?
- Who is different from me that I could welcome?
- Where can I show kindness that is unexpected?

XLVIII. BE PERFECT AS YOUR FATHER IS PERFECT

Matthew 5:48 — The Highest Standard

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

This verse sums up the whole chapter.

The standard is not the Pharisees.

The standard is not other people.

The standard is God Himself.

The word **perfect** means **complete**, **mature**, or **whole.**

In this context, Jesus is especially speaking about love.

God's love is complete.

It reaches everyone, even His enemies.

Our love should be complete too.

No one reaches this standard perfectly in this life.

That is why we need the forgiveness of Christ.

But it is still the direction of our lives.

God is making His children more and more like Himself.

Cross References

Leviticus 19:2

> Speak to all the people of Israel and tell them: Be holy, because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

Leviticus 11:44

> I am the LORD your God. Make yourselves holy and be holy, because I am holy.

Luke 6:36

> Show mercy, just as your Father shows mercy.

Spiritual Principle

God's standard is His own character.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The impossible standard of God drives us to the cross for forgiveness and to the Spirit for power.

XLIX. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 5

1. Blessed Are the Humble

True happiness and reward come from God's kingdom, not earthly power or wealth.

Principle:

God's blessing rests on those who know they need Him.

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2. Christ's Followers Are Salt and Light

We preserve truth and shine God's love in a dark world.

Principle:

Believers make a difference in the world by being different from the world.

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3. Jesus Fulfills the Law

He raises the standard, focusing on the heart, not just outward actions.

Principle:

God cares not only about what we do, but about why we do it.

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4. Anger and Lust Are Deadly Roots

Sin begins in the heart long before it reaches actions.

Principle:

Deal with sin at the root, before it bears fruit.

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5. Radical Faithfulness

It is better to sacrifice what leads to sin than to lose your soul.

Principle:

Nothing is too precious to give up if it is leading you away from God.

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6. True Love Goes Further

Forgive, give, and love even enemies, reflecting the character of God.

Principle:

Kingdom love does not ask, “What do they deserve?” but, “What would my Father do?”

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7. The Call to Perfection

We are to aim for maturity and holiness, reflecting our Father's nature.

Principle:

God's children are called to grow up to look like their Father.

L. THE BEATITUDES AS A STAIRWAY

Many Bible teachers have noticed that the Beatitudes build on one another.

Poor in Spirit

We see our need.

Mourning

We grieve over our sin.

Meekness

We surrender to God.

Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

We long for what only God can give.

Mercy

We show others the mercy we have received.

Purity of Heart

We are made clean and single-minded toward God.

Peacemaking

We bring God's peace to others.

Persecution

The world opposes the life God has created in us.

Key Truth

The Beatitudes are not eight different kinds of people; they are eight marks of every true follower of Jesus.

LI. THE SIX “BUT I TELL YOU” TEACHINGS

Jesus gave six teachings that go beyond outward rules to the heart.

Murder

Outward: Do not kill.

Heart: Do not hold anger or contempt.

Adultery

Outward: Do not commit adultery.

Heart: Do not look with lust.

Divorce

Outward: Give a certificate of divorce.

Heart: Honor the lifelong covenant of marriage.

Oaths

Outward: Keep your vows.

Heart: Be honest in every word.

Revenge

Outward: An eye for an eye.

Heart: Do not take revenge; go the second mile.

Love

Outward: Love your neighbor.

Heart: Love even your enemies.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The law tells us what not to do; Jesus shows us who we must become.

LII. WHAT MATTHEW 5 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 5 presents Jesus as:

The Greater Moses

He goes up the mountain and teaches God's law.

The Authoritative Teacher

He says, **“But I tell you.”**

The Fulfillment of Scripture

He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets.

The Light of the World

His followers reflect His light.

The One Worth Suffering For

Blessed are those persecuted **“because of Me.”**

The Perfect Example

He lived out every word of this sermon.

Key Truth

Jesus did not only preach the Sermon on the Mount; He lived it perfectly, and He died for those who have failed to live it.

LIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What does the word “blessed” mean in the Beatitudes?

It means more than happy.

It describes a person who has God's favor and approval.

It is a deep well-being that comes from God, not from circumstances.

Question 2

What does it mean to be “poor in spirit”?

It means knowing that you are spiritually bankrupt before God.

It is admitting that you have nothing to offer Him and that you need His mercy.

This is the first step into the kingdom.

Question 3

Is meekness the same as weakness?

No.

Meekness is strength under control.

Moses was called the most humble man on earth, yet he led a nation.

A meek person trusts God instead of fighting for his own way.

Question 4

What does it mean that Christians are salt and light?

Like salt, Christians help preserve the world from moral decay and bring goodness into it.

Like light, Christians show the way to God through their good works.

Both must remain distinct from the world to be useful.

Question 5

How did Jesus fulfill the Law?

He fulfilled its prophecies.

He obeyed its commands perfectly.

He became the final sacrifice it pointed to.

He revealed its true meaning.

Question 6

How can anyone's righteousness be greater than that of the Pharisees?

The Pharisees had an outward righteousness.

God requires a righteousness of the heart.

That righteousness comes as a gift through faith in Christ, and God then changes the heart to live it out.

Question 7

What does Jesus teach about anger?

Jesus teaches that sinful anger is the root of murder.

Anger without cause, contempt, and insults are serious in God's eyes.

We should make peace quickly and not let anger take root.

Question 8

What does Jesus mean about tearing out an eye or cutting off a hand?

He is not commanding people to literally harm their bodies.

He is using strong language to show how seriously we must deal with sin.

We must remove whatever leads us into sin.

Question 9

Why did Jesus say not to swear oaths?

People were using oaths to look honest while finding ways to get out of their promises.

Jesus taught that every word is spoken before God.

A Christian should be so honest that a simple yes or no is enough.

Question 10

What does “turn the other cheek” mean?

It means not taking personal revenge when insulted or wronged.

It does not mean that justice is unimportant.

It means we trust God with justice and respond to evil with love.

Question 11

Why should we love our enemies?

Because God shows kindness even to those who reject Him.

When we love our enemies, we show that we are children of our Father.

Jesus Himself prayed for those who crucified Him.

Question 12

What does Jesus mean by “Be perfect”?

The word means complete, mature, or whole.

God's love is complete, reaching even His enemies.

Our love should be complete too.

No one reaches this perfectly in this life, which is why we need Christ's forgiveness and the Spirit's power.

Question 13

What should Matthew 5 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 5 should cause believers to live:

- Humble before God.
- Sorrowful over sin.
- Hungry for righteousness.
- Merciful to others.
- Pure in heart.
- Working for peace.
- Shining as salt and light.
- Dealing with sin at the root.
- Honest in every word.
- Loving even enemies.

LIV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 5 asks several important questions.

Do I See My Spiritual Need?

Or do I think I am good enough on my own?

Do I Grieve Over My Sin?

Or have I become comfortable with it?

What Do I Hunger For Most?

Is righteousness at the top of my list?

Am I Salt and Light Where I Live?

Can people see the difference Christ makes in me?

Is There Anyone I Need to Be Reconciled With?

Is there someone who has something against me?

Am I Guarding My Eyes and My Heart?

What am I allowing my eyes to dwell on?

Is There Something I Need to Remove from My Life?

What is my “right eye” or “right hand”?

Can People Trust My Word?

Does my “yes” mean yes?

How Do I Respond When I Am Wronged?

Do I seek revenge or show grace?

Who Is My Enemy, and Am I Praying for Them?

LV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Jesus Goes Deeper Than the Rules”

The religious leaders of Jesus' day were experts at rules.

They knew what not to do.

They avoided murder.

They avoided adultery.

They kept their oaths when it suited them.

But Jesus went deeper.

He went past the hand to the heart.

Past the act to the attitude.

Past the outward action to the inward desire.

He showed that a person can keep the rules and still be far from God.

This creates a powerful principle.

God is not satisfied with behavior that looks good.

He wants a heart that is good.

And only He can create that kind of heart.

Principle:

Rules can change our behavior, but only Christ can change our heart.

LVI. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 5 begins on a mountain.

Crowds gather.

Disciples come close.

Jesus sits down and begins to speak.

And His words turn the world upside down.

The world blesses the proud.

Jesus blesses the humble.

The world blesses those who laugh.

Jesus blesses those who mourn.

The world blesses the powerful.

Jesus blesses the meek.

The world says to get even.

Jesus says to turn the other cheek.

The world says to love your friends and hate your enemies.

Jesus says to love your enemies and pray for those who hurt you.

Then He gives a standard no one can reach on their own:

“Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Matthew 5 therefore reminds us:

We cannot live the Sermon on the Mount by our own strength.

It shows us how far we fall short.

It drives us to Jesus for forgiveness.

And then it shows us the life Jesus will build in us by His Spirit.

The kingdom does not begin with the strong.

It begins with:

The poor in spirit.

The broken.

The hungry.

And those who know they need a Savior.

The same call still stands:

Be humble.

Be merciful.

Be pure.

Be peacemakers.

Be salt.

Be light.

Love your enemies.

And until He returns:

Keep shining.

Keep loving.

Keep growing.

Keep looking like your Father.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the words of Jesus on the mountain.

Thank You that Your kingdom belongs to the poor in spirit.

Show us our need for You every day.

Keep us from the pride that thinks we are good enough on our own.

Give us hearts that mourn over our sin.

Comfort us with Your mercy and forgiveness.

Make us meek, strong in You, but surrendered to Your will.

Give us a deep hunger and thirst for righteousness, and fill us.

Teach us to show mercy, because You have shown us mercy.

Create pure hearts in us.

Make us peacemakers who reflect Your character.

When we are insulted or mistreated for following Jesus, help us rejoice.

Make us salt that has not lost its flavor.

Make us light that is not hidden.

Let our good works point others to You.

Lord, You see our hearts.

Forgive us for anger we have held onto.

Forgive us for words that have wounded others.

Show us anyone we need to make things right with, and give us courage to go.

Guard our eyes and our minds from lust.

Give us strength to remove whatever leads us into sin.

Protect our marriages and our homes.

Make us people of honest words, whose yes means yes and whose no means no.

When we are wronged, keep us from revenge.

Teach us to go the second mile.

Make us generous to those in need.

Help us love our enemies and pray for those who hurt us.

Make us more like You every day.

Thank You that Jesus lived this perfectly when we could not.

Thank You that He died for every way we have failed.

Fill us with Your Spirit so that we can live the life Your kingdom describes.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” — Matthew 5:16

Central Truth

Jesus reveals the character of His kingdom, calling His followers to a righteousness of the heart that shines as salt and light and reflects the holiness and love of their Father in heaven.

Matthew 5 in One Sentence

On the mountain, Jesus blesses the humble, calls His followers salt and light, fulfills the Law, and goes beyond outward rules to the heart, teaching His people to love even their enemies and to be complete as their heavenly Father is complete.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 6 — Giving, Prayer, and Trusting God

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 6 continues the Sermon on the Mount.

In Matthew 5, Jesus showed that God's kingdom reaches the heart.

Anger, lust, dishonesty, and hatred begin inside a person.

In Matthew 6, Jesus turns to the way we practice our faith.

He speaks about three spiritual practices that every Jewish person knew well:

Giving.

Praying.

Fasting.

These are good things.

But Jesus warns that even good things can be done for the wrong reason.

Some people did them to be seen.

They wanted the praise of others.

Jesus says they already have their reward.

God's people are to do these things for an audience of One.

“Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

In the middle of this teaching, Jesus gives His followers a pattern for prayer.

We call it **the Lord's Prayer.**

It is one of the most loved passages in the whole Bible.

Then Jesus moves from religious practice to everyday life.

He speaks about money.

About possessions.

About where our heart is.

“You cannot serve both God and money.”

Finally, He speaks to one of the most common struggles of every person:

Worry.

Look at the birds.

Look at the flowers.

Your Father knows what you need.

“Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.”

Matthew 6 therefore teaches two great truths:

Live your faith for God's eyes, not for people's praise.

And:

Trust your Father completely instead of trusting money or worrying about tomorrow.

The central truth of Matthew 6 is:

True followers of Jesus live before their heavenly Father with sincere hearts, treasuring Him above all else and trusting Him to provide everything they need.

I. NOT TO BE SEEN BY OTHERS

Matthew 6:1 — Be Careful

“Be careful not to do your good deeds in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.”

Jesus begins with a warning.

“Be careful.”

This is a danger even for sincere believers.

Notice what Jesus does not say.

He does not say, **“Never do good deeds where others can see.”**

In Matthew 5:16, He told us to let our light shine so people would see our good works.

The difference is the **motive.**

In Matthew 5, the goal is that people glorify God.

In Matthew 6, the warning is against doing good so that people glorify us.

The question is not, **“Who can see me?”**

The question is, **“Who am I doing this for?”**

Cross References

Matthew 23:5

> They do everything so that people will see them. They make the little scripture boxes on their foreheads and arms extra wide, and they make the tassels on their robes extra long.

Ephesians 6:6

> Don't obey only when someone is watching, just to please people. Obey like servants of Christ, doing what God wants with all your heart.

Colossians 3:23

> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as if you were working for the Lord and not for people.

Spiritual Principle

God cares about why we do what we do.

The same action can please God or offend Him depending on the motive.

Key Truth

Good deeds done for applause are paid in full by the applause.

II. GIVING TO THE NEEDY

Matthew 6:2 — No Trumpets

“When you give to the needy, don’t announce it with trumpets like the hypocrites do in the synagogues and streets so they may be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have already received their reward.”

Notice that Jesus says **“when you give,”** not **“if you give.”**

Giving to the poor was expected of every follower of God.

But some people made a show of it.

They wanted others to notice.

“Announce it with trumpets” is a picture of calling attention to yourself.

Jesus calls these people **hypocrites.**

The word originally meant **an actor on a stage** who wore a mask.

They were performing for an audience.

And they got what they wanted.

People praised them.

“They have already received their reward.”

The phrase was used in business for a bill **paid in full.**

There is nothing more coming from God.

Cross References

Proverbs 19:17

> Whoever is kind to poor people is lending to the LORD, and the LORD will pay him back.

2 Corinthians 9:7

> Each person should give what he has decided in his heart to give. He should not give unwillingly or because he feels forced, because God loves a person who gives cheerfully.

Luke 14:13

> When you have a big meal, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

Spiritual Warning

Religion can become a performance.

When we act for an audience, we lose the reward of God.

Spiritual Principle

Giving is an act of worship, not a way to build our reputation.

III. DO IT QUIETLY

Matthew 6:3 — The Left Hand and the Right Hand

“But when you give, do it quietly. Don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,”

Jesus uses a memorable picture.

Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

In other words, give so quietly that you hardly notice it yourself.

Do not keep a record to admire.

Do not remind yourself how generous you are.

Just give and move on.

Cross References

Proverbs 21:14

> A gift given in secret calms anger, and a present given quietly calms great rage.

Job 31:16

> If I have refused to help poor people or let widows grow tired of waiting for help...

Matthew 25:40

> The King will answer, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least important of My brothers and sisters, you did for Me.”

Spiritual Principle

Humble giving forgets itself.

Application

Ways to give humbly include:

- Giving without telling anyone.
- Not expecting thanks.
- Not using gifts to gain influence.
- Giving to those who cannot pay you back.
- Remembering you are serving Christ Himself.

IV. YOUR FATHER SEES IN SECRET

Matthew 6:4 — He Will Reward You

“so that your giving is in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Here is the wonderful promise.

No one else may see.

But **your Father** sees.

And He **will reward you.**

God notices what others overlook.

Not one act of quiet kindness is forgotten by Him.

Notice the word **Father.**

Jesus uses it again and again in this chapter.

We are not giving to impress a distant master.

We are giving to please a loving Father.

Cross References

Hebrews 11:6

> Without faith it is impossible to please God. Anyone who comes to God must believe that He is real and that He rewards those who truly look for Him.

Jeremiah 17:10

> I, the LORD, look deep into the heart and test the mind. I reward each person for what he has done and for the results of his actions.

1 Samuel 16:7

> People look at the outside of a person, but the LORD looks at the heart.

Spiritual Principle

God sees what no one else sees.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Live for the eyes of the Father, and you will never be disappointed by the eyes of people.

V. NOT LIKE THE HYPOCRITES

Matthew 6:5 — Praying to Be Seen

“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to stand and pray in synagogues and on street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward.”

Jesus turns to prayer.

Again He says **“when,”** not **“if.”**

Prayer is expected of God's people.

At set times each day, devout Jews would stop and pray.

Some made sure they were in a public place when the time came.

They wanted people to see how spiritual they were.

Their prayers were not really to God.

They were to the people watching.

Cross References

Luke 18:11

> The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed, “God, I thank You that I am not like other people — robbers, cheaters, people who commit adultery — or even like this tax collector.”

Luke 20:47

> They take the houses of widows and then say long prayers to look good. They will be punished even more.

Isaiah 29:13

> These people come near Me with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to pray without talking to God at all.

Key Truth

Prayer is not a performance for people.

It is a conversation with the Father.

VI. GO INTO YOUR ROOM

Matthew 6:6 — Pray to Your Father in Secret

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Jesus gives a different picture.

Go into your room.

The word refers to an inner storeroom, often the only private room in a house.

Close the door.

Shut out distractions.

Shut out the desire to be seen.

Pray to your Father.

This is personal.

This is real.

Jesus is not forbidding public prayer.

He prayed publicly Himself, and the early church prayed together.

But a person's private prayer life shows what their public prayers are really worth.

Cross References

2 Kings 4:33

> Elisha went in, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD.

Daniel 6:10

> Daniel went home to his upstairs room, where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed and gave thanks to his God, just as he had always done.

Isaiah 26:20

> Go, my people, into your rooms and shut the doors behind you. Hide for a little while until God's anger has passed.

Spiritual Principle

The secret place is the strongest place.

What happens with God in private gives power to life in public.

Application

A healthy private prayer life includes:

- A regular time.
- A quiet place.
- Fewer distractions.
- Honest words.
- Listening as well as speaking.
- Trusting that the Father hears.

VII. DO NOT BABBLE

Matthew 6:7 — Many Words

“When you pray, don’t babble on like the pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.”

The pagans prayed to false gods.

They repeated words and phrases over and over.

They thought that if they said enough words, their gods would finally listen.

The prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel shouted from morning until noon.

But no one answered.

Jesus is not saying long prayers are wrong.

He prayed all night at times.

He is saying that prayer is not a magic formula.

God is not moved by the number of our words.

He is moved by a sincere heart.

Cross References

1 Kings 18:26

> They called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, shouting, “Baal, answer us!” But there was no sound, and no one answered.

Ecclesiastes 5:2

> Don't be quick to speak, and don't be in a hurry to say something to God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so say only a few words.

Isaiah 1:15

> When you lift up your hands to pray, I will look away. Even if you pray many prayers, I will not listen, because your hands are covered with blood.

Spiritual Principle

God listens to the heart, not to the word count.

VIII. YOUR FATHER KNOWS

Matthew 6:8 — Before You Ask

“Don’t be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”

This is the great difference.

Pagans prayed to gods they had to convince.

Christians pray to a Father who already knows.

If God already knows what we need, why pray?

We do not pray to give God information.

We pray to grow in relationship with Him.

We pray to express our trust.

We pray because He invites us.

And God has chosen to work through the prayers of His people.

Cross References

Psalm 139:4

> Before I say a word, LORD, You already know everything I am going to say.

Isaiah 65:24

> Before they call to Me, I will answer. While they are still speaking, I will hear them.

Philippians 4:19

> My God will give you everything you need from His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer is not convincing God; it is trusting God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

We do not pray to inform the Father but to draw near to Him.

IX. OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

Matthew 6:9 — Holy Is Your Name

“Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, holy is Your name.”

Now Jesus gives a model prayer.

He says, **“Pray like this.”**

It is a pattern to follow, not only words to repeat.

The prayer begins with God, not with our needs.

“Our Father.”

The word **our** reminds us that we pray as part of God's family.

The word **Father** shows a close and loving relationship.

“In heaven.”

He is near as a Father, but He is also above us in majesty.

“Holy is Your name.”

God's name stands for who He is.

To pray this is to ask that God be honored, respected, and treated as holy in our lives and in the world.

Cross References

Luke 11:2

> Jesus said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, may Your name be kept holy. May Your kingdom come.”

Isaiah 6:3

> Holy, holy, holy is the LORD who commands armies. The whole earth is full of His glory.

Ezekiel 36:23

> I will show how holy My great name is — the name you have dishonored among the nations.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer begins with worship before it moves to requests.

Key Truth

The God of heaven invites us to call Him **Father.**

X. YOUR KINGDOM COME

Matthew 6:10 — Your Will Be Done

“May Your kingdom come, and Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

The second request is for God's kingdom.

“May Your kingdom come.”

We ask God to rule in hearts today.

We ask for the gospel to spread.

And we ask for the day when Jesus returns and His kingdom fills the earth.

“Your will be done.”

In heaven, God's will is done perfectly, immediately, and joyfully.

We pray that it will be done that way on earth too.

This includes in our own lives.

To pray this honestly, we must be willing to set aside our own will.

Jesus prayed this way in the Garden of Gethsemane:

“Not My will, but Yours be done.”

Cross References

Luke 11:2

> Jesus said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, may Your name be kept holy. May Your kingdom come.”

Luke 22:42

> “Father, if You are willing, take this cup of suffering away from Me. But do what You want, not what I want.”

Revelation 11:15

> The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will rule forever and ever.

Spiritual Principle

True prayer surrenders our will to God's will.

Application

Praying “Your will be done” means:

- Wanting what God wants.
- Accepting His answers.
- Obeying what He has already said.
- Trusting Him when His will is hard.
- Living as a citizen of His kingdom now.

XI. DAILY BREAD

Matthew 6:11 — Give Us Today

“Give us today our daily bread.”

Now the prayer turns to our needs.

It begins with the most basic need of all:

Bread.

God cares about our physical needs.

No need is too small to bring to Him.

Notice the words **today** and **daily.**

We ask for what we need for this day.

This reminds us of the manna in the wilderness.

God gave Israel enough for each day.

They had to trust Him again every morning.

Cross References

Luke 11:3

> Give us the food we need each day.

Exodus 16:4

> The LORD said to Moses, “I am going to make bread rain down from the sky for you. Each day the people must go out and gather enough for that day.”

Proverbs 30:8

> Don't make me either poor or rich. Just give me enough food for each day.

Spiritual Principle

Daily dependence builds daily trust.

Key Truth

Even the person with a full pantry is still depending on God for every meal.

XII. FORGIVE US

Matthew 6:12 — As We Forgive

“Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.”

We need bread for our bodies.

We need forgiveness for our souls.

Every person needs to pray this prayer.

No one is without sin.

But notice the second part:

“As we forgive those who sin against us.”

This is a serious request.

We are asking God to forgive us in the same way we forgive others.

We do not earn God's forgiveness by forgiving others.

But a person who has truly received God's forgiveness will forgive others.

Refusing to forgive shows that we have not understood how much we have been forgiven.

Cross References

Luke 11:4

> Forgive us our sins, because we also forgive everyone who has done wrong to us. And do not lead us into temptation.

Matthew 18:35

> This is how My Father in heaven will treat you if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.

Mark 11:25

> When you are praying, if you are angry with someone, forgive him. Then your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins.

Spiritual Principle

Forgiven people forgive.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

We never forgive more than we have been forgiven.

XIII. DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Matthew 6:13 — Yours Is the Kingdom

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

The final request asks for protection.

“Lead us not into temptation.”

God does not tempt anyone to sin.

This is a prayer for God to guide us away from situations where we would fall.

It is an honest admission that we are weak.

“Deliver us from evil.”

This can also be translated **“from the evil one.”**

We need God's protection from the devil and from every kind of evil.

Then the prayer ends with praise.

“Yours is the kingdom.”

“Yours is the power.”

“Yours is the glory.”

“Forever.”

This closing line is not found in the oldest manuscripts of Matthew.

But it was used by the early church in worship, and it echoes the praise of David in 1 Chronicles 29:11.

The prayer begins with God and ends with God.

Cross References

Luke 11:4

> Forgive us our sins, because we also forgive everyone who has done wrong to us. And do not lead us into temptation.

1 Corinthians 10:13

> The only temptations you have faced are the same ones all people face. But God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted more than you can stand. When you are tempted, He will also give you a way out so that you will be able to endure it.

2 Timothy 4:18

> The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. Glory belongs to Him forever and ever. Amen.

Spiritual Principle

We need God's help every day to stand against temptation.

Key Truth

Every prayer should end where it began — with God's glory.

XIV. FORGIVE OTHERS

Matthew 6:14 — Your Father Will Forgive You

“For if you forgive others when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”

After the prayer, Jesus comes back to one request.

Forgiveness.

Of all the parts of the prayer, this is the one He explains further.

That shows how important it is.

Forgiving others does not mean pretending the wrong did not happen.

It does not always mean trust is restored right away.

It means letting go of the right to get even.

It means giving the debt to God.

Cross References

Mark 11:25

> When you are praying, if you are angry with someone, forgive him. Then your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins.

Ephesians 4:32

> Be kind and loving to each other. Forgive each other just as God forgave you in Christ.

Colossians 3:13

> Be patient with each other, and forgive anyone who has done something wrong to you. Forgive each other because the Lord forgave you.

Spiritual Principle

Forgiveness flows to us and through us.

XV. IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE

Matthew 6:15 — A Serious Warning

“But if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

Jesus gives the other side.

This is one of the most serious warnings in Scripture.

A heart that refuses to forgive is a heart that has closed itself to God's forgiveness.

Jesus later told the story of a servant who was forgiven a huge debt but refused to forgive a small one.

His master was angry and threw him into prison.

Unforgiveness is like holding a door shut.

The same door that keeps others out also keeps God's mercy from coming in.

Cross References

Matthew 18:35

> This is how My Father in heaven will treat you if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.

James 2:13

> Anyone who does not show mercy will be judged without mercy. But mercy wins over judgment.

Proverbs 21:13

> Whoever refuses to listen when poor people cry out will also cry out and not be answered.

Spiritual Warning

Unforgiveness is not a small sin.

It shows a heart that has not been changed by grace.

Application

If you are struggling to forgive:

- Remember how much God has forgiven you.
- Tell God honestly about your hurt.
- Choose to release the debt, even before your feelings change.
- Pray for the person who hurt you.
- Ask God to heal your heart.
- Keep choosing forgiveness when the memory returns.

XVI. FASTING

Matthew 6:16 — Not with a Gloomy Face

“When you fast, don’t look gloomy like the hypocrites who put on a sad face so people will know they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have their reward.”

Fasting means going without food for a time in order to focus on God.

It is often joined with prayer, repentance, or seeking God's direction.

Again Jesus says **“when,”** not **“if.”**

Some people made their fasting obvious.

They did not wash.

They looked tired and sad.

They wanted others to notice how much they were suffering for God.

Jesus says they have their reward.

Cross References

Isaiah 58:5

> Is this the kind of fast I want? A day when people only make themselves look sad, bow their heads like a weed, and lie on rough cloth and ashes?

2 Samuel 12:20

> Then David got up from the ground, washed himself, put on lotion, and changed his clothes. He went into the LORD's house and worshiped. Then he went home and asked for food, and he ate.

Joel 2:13

> Tear your hearts, not your clothes. Come back to the LORD your God, because He is kind and full of mercy. He does not become angry quickly, and He has great love.

Spiritual Principle

God wants a broken heart, not a sad face.

XVII. WASH YOUR FACE

Matthew 6:17 — Look Normal

“But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,”

Putting oil on the head was a normal part of grooming in that culture.

It was what people did on ordinary days and happy days.

Jesus says to look normal.

Do not draw attention to yourself.

Let your fasting be between you and God.

Cross References

2 Samuel 12:20

> Then David got up from the ground, washed himself, put on lotion, and changed his clothes. He went into the LORD's house and worshiped. Then he went home and asked for food, and he ate.

Ruth 3:3

> Wash yourself, put on perfume, and dress in your best clothes.

Ecclesiastes 9:8

> Always wear clean clothes, and keep oil on your head.

Spiritual Principle

Real devotion does not need to be advertised.

XVIII. ONLY YOUR FATHER KNOWS

Matthew 6:18 — Seen in Secret

“so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

For the third time, Jesus repeats the same promise.

Your Father sees in secret.

Your Father will reward you.

Giving.

Praying.

Fasting.

All three are to be done for God's eyes.

Nothing is hidden from Him.

Cross References

Job 34:21

> God watches the way people live. He sees every step they take.

Psalm 139:2

> You know when I sit down and when I get up. You know my thoughts before I think them.

Jeremiah 23:24

> “Can anyone hide in a secret place where I cannot see him?” says the LORD. “Don't I fill heaven and earth?”

Spiritual Principle

God's attention is the only audience that matters.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The secret life with God is the true measure of the spiritual life.

XIX. TREASURES ON EARTH

Matthew 6:19 — Moths, Rust, and Thieves

“Do not store up treasures on earth, where moths eat them, rust destroys them, and thieves break in and steal.”

Jesus now turns from religious practice to money and possessions.

In Bible times, wealth was often stored in three ways.

Fine clothing — which moths could eat.

Grain and metal — which rust and decay could destroy.

Gold and silver — which thieves could steal.

Everything stored on earth is temporary.

It can be lost.

It will be left behind.

Jesus is not saying that owning things is sinful.

He is warning against making earthly things our treasure.

Cross References

James 5:2

> Your riches have rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes.

Luke 12:33

> Sell your possessions and give to poor people. Get purses for yourselves that will not wear out — a treasure in heaven that will never run out, where no thief can come near and no moth can destroy.

Job 13:28

> A person wears away like something rotten, like clothing eaten by moths.

Spiritual Warning

Everything we hold on earth, we will one day let go.

XX. TREASURES IN HEAVEN

Matthew 6:20 — A Treasure That Lasts

“Instead, store up treasures in heaven, where moths and rust do not destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal.”

Jesus does not tell us to stop storing treasure.

He tells us to store it in the right place.

Heaven.

Treasure in heaven cannot be lost.

How do we store up treasure in heaven?

By using what God gives us for His purposes.

By giving to those in need.

By supporting the work of the gospel.

By investing our time, money, and lives in people and things that last forever.

Cross References

Luke 12:33

> Sell your possessions and give to poor people. Get purses for yourselves that will not wear out — a treasure in heaven that will never run out, where no thief can come near and no moth can destroy.

1 Timothy 6:19

> In this way they will save up a treasure for themselves as a strong foundation for the future, so that they can take hold of the life that is truly life.

Luke 18:22

> Jesus said to him, “There is still one thing you need to do. Sell everything you have and give the money to poor people, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow Me.”

Spiritual Principle

What we give to God, we never lose.

Key Truth

You cannot take it with you, but you can send it on ahead.

XXI. WHERE YOUR HEART IS

Matthew 6:21 — Treasure and Heart

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

This is one of the most searching statements Jesus ever made.

Our hearts follow our treasure.

Whatever we value most will capture our thoughts, our time, and our love.

If our treasure is on earth, our hearts will be tied to earth.

If our treasure is in heaven, our hearts will be set on heaven.

How we use our money shows what we truly love.

Cross References

Luke 12:34

> Where your treasure is, that is where your heart will be too.

Job 31:24

> If I have trusted in my gold or said to pure gold, “You are my security”...

Colossians 3:2

> Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.

Spiritual Principle

Our spending reveals our heart.

Application

To see where your treasure is, ask:

- What do I think about most?
- What do I spend my money on?
- What would I be most afraid to lose?
- What do I talk about most?
- What do I spend my free time on?
- Where does my giving go?

XXII. THE EYE IS THE LAMP

Matthew 6:22 — Full of Light

“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light.”

Jesus uses another picture.

The **eye** lets light into the body.

A healthy eye lets a person see clearly.

In this passage, the eye stands for what we focus on and desire.

The word for **healthy** can also mean **single** or **generous.**

A healthy eye is focused on God and is generous toward others.

When our focus is right, our whole life is filled with light.

Cross References

Luke 11:34

> Your eye is a lamp for your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body is full of light. But when your eyes are bad, your whole body is full of darkness.

Proverbs 20:27

> The LORD uses a person's spirit like a lamp to search every hidden part of him.

2 Corinthians 4:6

> God once said, “Let light shine out of the darkness.” This is the same God who made His light shine in our hearts by letting us know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Christ.

Spiritual Principle

What we focus on shapes who we become.

XXIII. FULL OF DARKNESS

Matthew 6:23 — How Great That Darkness

“But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”

An **unhealthy** eye was a common Jewish expression for a greedy or stingy person.

When our focus is on money and things, our whole life becomes dark.

Then Jesus gives a frightening warning.

If the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

The worst darkness is the darkness a person mistakes for light.

It is the person who thinks he sees clearly, but has been blinded by greed.

Cross References

Luke 11:35

> So be careful that the light in you is not really darkness.

1 John 1:5

> God is light, and there is no darkness in Him at all.

Isaiah 5:20

> How terrible it will be for people who call evil good and good evil, who think darkness is light and light is darkness.

Spiritual Warning

Greed blinds people to their own spiritual condition.

Key Truth

The most dangerous darkness is the darkness we call light.

XXIV. TWO MASTERS

Matthew 6:24 — God or Money

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate one and love the other, or you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

A **master** was someone who owned a slave.

A slave belonged completely to one master.

He could not belong fully to two.

Jesus says God and money both want to be master.

And they are going in opposite directions.

Money says, **“Keep it.”**

God says, **“Give it.”**

Money says, **“Trust me.”**

God says, **“Trust Me.”**

You cannot follow both.

Notice that Jesus treats money almost like a rival god.

For many people, it is.

Cross References

Luke 16:13

> No servant can serve two masters. He will hate one and love the other, or he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Joshua 24:15

> Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve. But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.

1 Kings 18:21

> Elijah came to the people and said, “How long will you go back and forth between two choices? If the LORD is God, follow Him. But if Baal is God, follow him.”

Spiritual Principle

God will not share His throne.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Money makes a good servant but a terrible master.

XXV. DO NOT WORRY

Matthew 6:25 — Life Is More Than Food

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life—what you will eat or drink—or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothes?”

Notice the word **“Therefore.”**

Jesus connects worry to what He just said about money.

A person who serves money will worry.

A person who serves God can trust.

Jesus says, **“Do not worry.”**

Worry is not the same as planning.

Wise people plan.

Worry is anxious fear about the future that leaves God out.

Then Jesus asks a question.

“Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothes?”

If God gave us life, the greater gift, will He not also give us food and clothing, the smaller gifts?

Cross References

Luke 12:22

> Then Jesus said to His followers, “So I tell you, don't worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear.”

Philippians 4:6

> Don't worry about anything. Instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for what He has done.

Psalm 55:22

> Give your worries to the LORD, and He will take care of you. He will never let good people fall.

Spiritual Principle

Worry forgets the goodness of God.

Key Truth

The God who gave you life will not forget to care for it.

XXVI. LOOK AT THE BIRDS

Matthew 6:26 — Your Father Feeds Them

“Look at the birds of the air. They don’t plant or harvest or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you much more valuable than they are?”

Jesus tells His listeners to look at something they could see every day.

The birds.

They do not plant crops.

They do not harvest.

They do not have barns.

Yet God feeds them.

This does not mean birds are lazy.

They work hard to find food.

But they do not worry.

They live each day trusting what God provides.

Then Jesus asks:

“Aren't you much more valuable than they are?”

Notice that God is the birds' Creator.

But He is your **Father.**

Cross References

Luke 12:24

> Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest, and they don't have storerooms or barns. Yet God feeds them. And you are worth much more than birds.

Job 38:41

> Who gives food to the ravens when their babies cry out to God and wander around with nothing to eat?

Psalm 147:9

> He gives food to the animals and to the young birds that call out.

Spiritual Principle

If God cares for birds, He will care for His children.

XXVII. WORRY ADDS NOTHING

Matthew 6:27 — A Single Hour

“Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

Jesus gives a simple, practical argument.

Worry does not help.

It cannot add one hour to your life.

In fact, worry can take away from our health and our peace.

Worry does not empty tomorrow of its troubles.

It empties today of its strength.

Cross References

Luke 12:25

> Can any of you add a single hour to your life by worrying about it?

Psalm 39:5

> You have given me only a short life. My whole life is like nothing to You. Every person's life is only a breath.

James 4:14

> You don't even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are like a mist that appears for a little while and then disappears.

Spiritual Principle

Worry is useless, but trust is powerful.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Worry changes nothing except the worrier.

XXVIII. LOOK AT THE LILIES

Matthew 6:28 — How They Grow

“And why worry about clothes? Look at the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don’t work or spin,”

Jesus turns from food to clothing.

He points to **the lilies of the field.**

These were the wildflowers that covered the hills of Galilee in spring.

They do not work.

They do not spin thread to make clothes.

They simply grow.

God takes care of them.

Cross References

Luke 12:27

> Look at how the lilies grow. They don't work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you that even Solomon, with all his riches, was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers.

Isaiah 40:6

> All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers in the field.

Psalm 103:15

> A person's life is like grass. He grows like a flower in the field.

Spiritual Principle

God's care is seen all around us in creation.

XXIX. MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN SOLOMON

Matthew 6:29 — All His Glory

“yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was dressed like one of these.”

Solomon was the richest king in Israel's history.

His robes were the finest in the world.

Kings and queens traveled to see his glory.

Yet Jesus says a simple wildflower was dressed more beautifully than Solomon.

Human wealth cannot match the beauty God creates.

Cross References

1 Kings 10:23

> King Solomon became richer and wiser than all the other kings on the earth.

Luke 12:27

> Look at how the lilies grow. They don't work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you that even Solomon, with all his riches, was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers.

1 Kings 3:13

> I will also give you what you did not ask for — riches and honor — so that no other king will be as great as you for as long as you live.

Spiritual Principle

What God provides is better than what human wealth can buy.

XXX. YOU OF LITTLE FAITH

Matthew 6:30 — Will He Not Much More Clothe You?

“If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you—you of little faith?”

The wildflowers bloom for a short time.

Then they dry up.

In those days, dry grass was used as fuel for ovens.

Yet God clothes them with beauty.

If God takes such care of something that lasts only a few days, how much more will He care for His children, who will live forever?

Jesus then gently corrects His disciples:

“You of little faith.”

Worry is a sign of small faith.

Not no faith, but faith that has not grown big enough to trust God with everything.

Cross References

Luke 12:28

> If God dresses the grass in the field like that — grass that is alive today and thrown into the fire tomorrow — then He will dress you even better. You have so little faith!

Psalm 90:5

> You sweep people away like a flood. They are like a dream. In the morning they are like new grass.

Isaiah 40:7

> Grass dries up and flowers fall when the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely people are like grass.

Spiritual Principle

Worry grows where faith is small.

Key Truth

The cure for worry is not trying harder.

It is trusting God more.

XXXI. WHAT SHALL WE EAT?

Matthew 6:31 — Do Not Worry

“So don’t worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’”

Jesus repeats His command.

Don't worry.

Notice the questions worry asks.

What shall we eat?

What shall we drink?

What shall we wear?

Worry is always asking **“What if?”** and **“What will happen?”**

It speaks as though there is no Father in heaven.

Cross References

Luke 12:29

> Don't always think about what you will eat or what you will drink. Don't worry about it.

Psalm 37:25

> I was young, and now I am old. But I have never seen good people left alone with no help or their children begging for food.

1 Peter 5:7

Give all your worries to Him, because He cares about you.

Spiritual Principle

Worry talks as though God is absent; faith talks as though God is present.

XXXII. YOUR FATHER KNOWS YOU NEED THEM

Matthew 6:32 — The Pagans Run After These Things

“The pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows you need them.”

The pagans were people who did not know the true God.

They spent their lives chasing food, drink, and clothing.

Of course they worried.

They had no Father in heaven to trust.

But God's children are different.

Your heavenly Father knows you need them.

God is not unaware.

He is not unconcerned.

He knows.

Cross References

Luke 12:30

> All the people in the world are trying to get these things, but your Father knows you need them.

Psalm 34:10

> Even young lions may get weak and hungry, but those who look to the LORD will have every good thing.

Matthew 7:11

> Even though you are evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. So your Father in heaven will even more surely give good things to those who ask Him.

Spiritual Principle

God's children should not live like people who have no Father.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The difference between worry and peace is knowing who your Father is.

XXXIII. SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM

Matthew 6:33 — All These Things Will Be Given

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

This is the key verse of the chapter.

Jesus tells us what to do instead of worrying.

Seek first.

Not last.

Not only when everything else is done.

First.

Seek **His kingdom** — God's rule in your life and in the world.

Seek **His righteousness** — right living that pleases God.

When we put God first, He takes care of the rest.

All these things — food, drink, clothing — **will be given to you as well.**

Solomon asked for wisdom instead of riches.

God gave him wisdom, and riches too.

Cross References

Luke 12:31

> Instead, look for God's kingdom, and these other things will be given to you too.

Psalm 37:4

> Find your joy in the LORD, and He will give you what your heart desires.

2 Chronicles 1:11

> God said to Solomon, “You did not ask for riches, wealth, or honor... Instead, you asked for wisdom and knowledge so that you could lead My people.”

Spiritual Principle

When God is first, everything else falls into its proper place.

Application

Seeking God's kingdom first means:

- Starting each day with God.
- Making decisions based on His Word.
- Giving God the first part of your money.
- Putting worship before entertainment.
- Obeying God even when it costs you.
- Trusting Him with what you cannot control.

XXXIV. DO NOT WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW

Matthew 6:34 — Each Day Has Enough Trouble

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Jesus ends with practical wisdom.

Live one day at a time.

Tomorrow will have its own problems.

But it will also have God's grace for those problems.

God gives grace for today's troubles today.

He does not give us tomorrow's grace today.

When Israel tried to save manna for the next day, it spoiled.

God wanted them to trust Him each morning.

Cross References

Proverbs 27:1

> Don't brag about tomorrow, because you don't know what might happen on that day.

Exodus 16:19

> Moses said to them, “Do not save any of it until morning.”

Psalm 118:24

> This is the day the LORD has made. Let us be happy and celebrate today.

Spiritual Principle

God gives grace one day at a time.

Key Truth

Do not carry tomorrow's burden with today's strength.

XXXV. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 6

1. Give in Secret

God values humility over human praise.

Principle:

What is done for God alone is never wasted.

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2. Pray Sincerely

Prayer is about relationship, not performance or repetition.

Principle:

The Father wants our hearts more than our words.

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3. Forgiveness Is Required

God's forgiveness flows through us as we forgive others.

Principle:

A forgiven heart becomes a forgiving heart.

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4. Fasting Is Personal

True fasting is before God, not for display.

Principle:

Real devotion seeks God's attention, not people's attention.

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5. Treasure in Heaven

What we value most reveals where our heart truly is.

Principle:

Invest in what will last forever.

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6. You Can't Serve Two Masters

God demands full devotion.

Money and possessions must not rule us.

Principle:

Whatever we serve becomes our master.

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7. Trust God Daily

Worry accomplishes nothing.

God provides for His children when they seek His kingdom first.

Principle:

Put God first, and trust Him with the rest.

XXXVI. THE LORD'S PRAYER — A PATTERN FOR PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer gives us a pattern for every kind of prayer.

God's Glory Comes First

“Our Father in heaven, holy is Your name.”

We begin with worship.

God's Kingdom Comes Next

“May Your kingdom come.”

We pray for His rule to spread.

God's Will Is Our Desire

“Your will be done.”

We surrender our plans to His.

Our Daily Needs

“Give us today our daily bread.”

We depend on Him for provision.

Our Spiritual Needs

“Forgive us our sins.”

We confess and receive mercy.

Our Relationships

“As we forgive those who sin against us.”

We release others.

Our Protection

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

We ask for strength and safety.

Our Praise

“Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.”

We end in worship.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Lord's Prayer teaches us to put God first, depend on Him daily, and live at peace with others.

XXXVII. THREE PRACTICES FOR AN AUDIENCE OF ONE

Jesus gave the same pattern for giving, praying, and fasting.

The Wrong Way

Do it to be seen by people.

The Wrong Reward

People's praise — and nothing more.

The Right Way

Do it in secret before God.

The Right Reward

The Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Key Truth

The question is not whether people see us, but whom we are living for.

XXXVIII. FIVE REASONS NOT TO WORRY

Jesus gives several reasons why His followers should not worry.

Life Is a Greater Gift

God gave us life; He will provide what we need to live it.

God Feeds the Birds

We are worth more to Him than they are.

Worry Accomplishes Nothing

It cannot add a single hour to our lives.

God Clothes the Flowers

He will clothe His children even more.

Our Father Knows

He knows what we need before we ask.

Spiritual Principle

Worry is believing that God will not take care of us; faith is believing that He will.

XXXIX. WHAT MATTHEW 6 TEACHES ABOUT GOD

Matthew 6 presents God as:

Our Father

Jesus calls Him **Father** again and again in this chapter.

The God Who Sees

He sees what is done in secret.

The God Who Rewards

He rewards sincere giving, prayer, and fasting.

The God Who Knows

He knows our needs before we ask.

The Holy God

His name is to be honored as holy.

The King

His kingdom is to come and His will to be done.

The Provider

He feeds the birds and clothes the flowers.

The Forgiver

He forgives our sins.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The God who rules heaven is the Father who cares for His children on earth.

XL. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Does Matthew 6:1 contradict Matthew 5:16?

No.

In Matthew 5:16, Jesus says to let our light shine so that people will glorify God.

In Matthew 6:1, He warns against doing good deeds so that people will glorify us.

The difference is the motive.

Question 2

What is a hypocrite?

The word originally meant an actor who wore a mask on stage.

A hypocrite is someone who performs religion for an audience.

He looks spiritual on the outside but is not sincere on the inside.

Question 3

What does it mean that the hypocrites “have their reward”?

It means they have been paid in full.

They wanted people's praise, and they got it.

There is no further reward coming from God.

Question 4

Is it wrong to pray in public?

No.

Jesus prayed in public, and the early church prayed together.

Jesus is warning against praying in order to be seen.

Our private prayer life shows whether our public prayers are sincere.

Question 5

If God already knows what we need, why should we pray?

We do not pray to give God information.

We pray to grow in our relationship with Him, to express our trust, and to align our hearts with His will.

God has also chosen to work through the prayers of His people.

Question 6

What is the main pattern of the Lord's Prayer?

It begins with God — His name, His kingdom, and His will.

Then it moves to our needs — daily bread, forgiveness, and protection.

It ends with praise to God.

Question 7

Do we earn God's forgiveness by forgiving others?

No.

Forgiveness is a gift of God's grace.

But a person who has truly received God's forgiveness will forgive others.

Refusing to forgive shows a heart that has not truly understood God's mercy.

Question 8

What is fasting, and should Christians fast today?

Fasting is going without food for a time in order to focus on God.

Jesus said **“when you fast,”** which shows He expected His followers to fast.

It should be done humbly before God, not to impress others.

Question 9

How can we store up treasures in heaven?

By using what God gives us for His purposes.

By giving to those in need.

By supporting the work of the gospel.

By investing our lives in people and things that last forever.

Question 10

Why can't a person serve both God and money?

Because both demand complete loyalty, and they lead in opposite directions.

Money says to keep and trust it.

God says to give and trust Him.

Whatever we serve becomes our master.

Question 11

Is it wrong to plan for the future?

No.

Scripture praises wise planning.

Jesus warns against worry — anxious fear about the future that leaves God out.

We plan with wisdom, but we trust God with the outcome.

Question 12

What does it mean to “seek first His kingdom”?

It means making God's rule and God's righteousness the top priority in every area of life.

When God is first, He promises to provide for our needs.

Question 13

What should Matthew 6 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 6 should cause believers to live:

- Giving quietly and generously.
- Praying sincerely and regularly.
- Forgiving freely.
- Fasting humbly.
- Storing up treasure in heaven.
- Serving God, not money.
- Trusting God instead of worrying.
- Seeking God's kingdom first.
- Living one day at a time.

XLI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 6 asks several important questions.

Who Am I Really Living For?

Do I want the praise of people or the approval of God?

What Would My Faith Look Like If No One Ever Saw It?

Do I Have a Secret Place of Prayer?

When was the last time I truly shut the door and met with my Father?

Am I Praying from the Heart or Just Saying Words?

Is There Anyone I Have Not Forgiven?

Where Is My Treasure?

What does my spending say about my heart?

Is Money Becoming My Master?

What Am I Worried About Right Now?

Have I given it to my Father?

Am I Seeking God's Kingdom First?

What would need to change for God to truly be first?

Am I Living Today, or Carrying Tomorrow?

XLII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Live for an Audience of One”

The hypocrites gave, prayed, and fasted.

Their actions looked good.

But they were always looking around to see who was watching.

They were living for the crowd.

And the crowd paid them with praise.

Jesus taught a different way.

Close the door.

Give quietly.

Wash your face.

Do it for your Father.

Then Jesus went further.

Do not store up treasure for the eyes of people.

Do not serve money.

Do not worry about tomorrow.

Your Father sees.

Your Father knows.

Your Father provides.

This creates a powerful principle.

When we live for God's eyes alone, we are set free.

Free from needing people's praise.

Free from the grip of money.

Free from the weight of worry.

Principle:

When the Father is our only audience, His approval is our only reward, and His care is our only security.

XLIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 6 takes us behind closed doors.

It asks what our faith looks like when no one is watching.

It asks why we give.

It asks why we pray.

It asks why we fast.

Then it opens our wallets.

Where is our treasure?

Who is our master?

Then it looks into our hearts.

What are we worried about?

What are we chasing?

And through it all, Jesus keeps pointing to one Person:

Your Father.

Your Father sees in secret.

Your Father knows what you need.

Your Father forgives.

Your Father feeds the birds.

Your Father clothes the flowers.

Your Father will provide.

Matthew 6 therefore reminds us:

We do not need the applause of people when we have the approval of God.

We do not need to cling to money when we have a Father in heaven.

We do not need to worry about tomorrow when God holds tomorrow.

The life Jesus describes is not built on:

Performance.

Possessions.

Or anxiety.

It is built on:

A Father who sees.

A Father who provides.

A Father who can be trusted.

The same call still stands:

Give in secret.

Pray from the heart.

Forgive freely.

Store treasure in heaven.

Serve God alone.

Seek His kingdom first.

And until He returns:

Keep seeking.

Keep praying.

Keep giving.

Keep trusting.

Closing Prayer

Our Father in heaven,

Holy is Your name.

Thank You that we can call You Father.

Thank You that You see what is done in secret.

Forgive us for the times we have wanted the praise of people more than Your approval.

Teach us to give quietly and generously.

Teach us to pray sincerely, from our hearts.

Keep us from empty words and religious performance.

Thank You that You know what we need before we ask.

May Your kingdom come in our lives, our homes, our churches, and our world.

May Your will be done in us, as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Help us trust You one day at a time.

Forgive us our sins.

Show us anyone we need to forgive, and give us the grace to let go.

Lead us away from temptation.

Deliver us from evil and from the evil one.

Teach us to store up treasure in heaven.

Loosen our grip on the things of this world.

Keep money from becoming our master.

Make us generous like You.

Lord, You see the worries we carry.

We give them to You now.

Thank You that You feed the birds and clothe the flowers.

Thank You that we are worth more to You than they are.

Grow our faith so that worry will have less room in our hearts.

Help us seek Your kingdom and Your righteousness first in everything.

Give us peace for today, and help us leave tomorrow in Your hands.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” — Matthew 6:33

Central Truth

True followers of Jesus live before their heavenly Father with sincere hearts, treasuring Him above all else and trusting Him to provide everything they need.

Matthew 6 in One Sentence

Jesus teaches His followers to give, pray, and fast for their Father's eyes alone, to store up treasure in heaven instead of serving money, and to trust their Father instead of worrying by seeking His kingdom first.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 7 — Judgment, Prayer, and Building on the Rock

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 7 is the final part of the Sermon on the Mount.

In Matthew 5, Jesus described the heart of a kingdom citizen.

In Matthew 6, He taught us to live for our Father's eyes and to trust Him instead of worrying.

Now, in Matthew 7, Jesus brings the sermon to a powerful close.

He begins with how we treat others.

“Do not judge others, or you too will be judged.”

Before we try to fix someone else's small fault, we must deal honestly with our own large one.

Then Jesus speaks about prayer.

“Ask... seek... knock.”

Our Father in heaven is generous.

He gives good things to His children.

Then Jesus gives the famous **Golden Rule**:

“Do to others what you would want them to do to you.”

Then the sermon turns serious.

Jesus describes two gates and two roads.

One is wide and leads to destruction.

One is narrow and leads to life.

He warns about false prophets who look like sheep but are wolves inside.

He warns about people who call Him **“Lord, Lord”** but do not obey Him.

And He ends with a picture every listener could understand.

Two builders.

Two houses.

Two foundations.

One storm.

The house on the rock stands.

The house on the sand falls with a great crash.

When Jesus finished, the crowds were amazed.

He spoke with an authority no one had ever heard before.

Matthew 7 therefore calls us to a decision:

Will we only hear the words of Jesus?

Or:

Will we build our lives on them?

The central truth of Matthew 7 is:

Those who truly belong to Jesus show it by humble hearts, trusting prayer, loving actions, and lives built on obedience to His words.

I. DO NOT JUDGE

Matthew 7:1 — Or You Too Will Be Judged

“Do not judge others, or you too will be judged.”

This is one of the most quoted verses in the Bible.

It is also one of the most misunderstood.

Jesus is not saying we should never make judgments.

In this same chapter, He tells us to recognize false prophets by their fruit.

He tells us not to give what is holy to dogs.

That requires discernment.

What Jesus forbids is a **judgmental spirit.**

It is the habit of looking down on others.

Of being harsh, critical, and quick to condemn.

Of acting as though we are the final judge.

Only God is the final Judge.

Cross References

Luke 6:37

> Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Romans 2:1

> So when you judge others, you have no excuse. When you judge them, you are really judging yourself guilty, because you do the same things they do.

James 4:12

> There is only one Lawgiver and Judge. He is the only One who can save and destroy. So who are you to judge your neighbor?

Spiritual Principle

Discernment is wise; condemnation is God's business.

Key Truth

Jesus does not forbid us to tell right from wrong.

He forbids us to put ourselves in God's place.

II. THE SAME MEASURE

Matthew 7:2 — Measured Back to You

“For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”

In the marketplace, grain was measured out with a measuring container.

A generous seller filled it to the top.

A stingy seller gave as little as possible.

Jesus says the measure we use for others is the measure that will be used for us.

If we are harsh, we will be judged harshly.

If we are merciful, we will receive mercy.

Cross References

Luke 6:38

> Give, and it will be given to you. You will receive a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. The measure you use to give will be the measure used to give back to you.

Mark 4:24

> Pay attention to what you hear. The measure you use for others will be used for you, and even more will be added.

Romans 14:10

> Why do you judge your brother? Why do you look down on him? We will all stand before God to be judged.

Spiritual Principle

The standard we use for others is the standard we invite for ourselves.

III. THE SPECK AND THE BEAM

Matthew 7:3 — Paying No Attention to Your Own Fault

“Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye but pay no attention to the beam in your own eye?”

Jesus uses a picture that is almost funny.

A man notices a tiny **speck** of sawdust in his brother's eye.

But he has a huge **beam** of wood sticking out of his own eye.

Jesus grew up as a carpenter.

He knew about sawdust and beams.

The point is clear.

We are quick to see small faults in others.

We are slow to see big faults in ourselves.

Cross References

Luke 6:41

> Why do you notice the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye, but you don't notice the beam in your own eye?

Romans 2:21

> You teach others, so why don't you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but do you steal?

Galatians 6:1

> Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should gently help that person get back on the right path. But be careful, so that you are not tempted too.

Spiritual Principle

Self-examination must come before correcting others.

Key Truth

The faults we notice most quickly in others are often the ones we struggle with ourselves.

IV. LET ME TAKE THE SPECK OUT

Matthew 7:4 — With a Beam in Your Own Eye

“How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is a beam in your own eye?”

Picture the scene.

A man with a beam in his eye leans close to help his brother.

He cannot see clearly.

He is more likely to hurt his brother than help him.

That is what happens when we try to correct others without dealing with our own sin.

We cannot see clearly.

We are often harsh instead of gentle.

And we become hypocrites.

Cross References

Luke 6:42

> How can you say to your brother, “Let me take the speck out of your eye,” when you can't see the beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

John 8:7

> When they kept asking Him, Jesus stood up and said, “Let any one of you who has never sinned be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Galatians 6:3

> If anyone thinks he is important when he is really nothing, he is only fooling himself.

Spiritual Principle

Pride blinds us to our own sin.

V. FIRST TAKE THE BEAM OUT

Matthew 7:5 — Then You Will See Clearly

“You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

Jesus uses strong words.

“You hypocrite!”

A hypocrite pretends to be holy while ignoring his own sin.

But notice that Jesus does not say, **“Never help your brother.”**

He says, **“First.”**

First deal with your own sin.

Then you will see clearly to help your brother.

Correcting others is not forbidden.

But it must be done by someone who has first humbled himself before God.

Cross References

Luke 6:42

> How can you say to your brother, “Let me take the speck out of your eye,” when you can't see the beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Proverbs 18:17

> The first person to tell his side of a story seems right, until someone else comes and asks him questions.

Psalm 51:3

> I know what I have done wrong, and I can't stop thinking about my sin.

Spiritual Principle

Humility gives clear vision.

Application

Before correcting someone else:

- Examine your own heart.
- Confess your own sin to God.
- Make sure your motive is love, not pride.
- Listen before you speak.
- Be gentle.
- Remember that you need grace too.

VI. PEARLS BEFORE PIGS

Matthew 7:6 — Do Not Give What Is Holy to Dogs

“Do not give what is holy to dogs or throw your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them underfoot and turn to tear you apart.”

This verse balances the first five.

Jesus has warned against being judgmental.

Now He warns against being foolish.

In those days, **dogs** were not pets.

They were wild animals that roamed the streets.

Pigs were unclean animals to the Jews.

Neither could appreciate something holy or valuable.

A pig does not know the value of a pearl.

It would trample it, then turn and attack the person who gave it.

Jesus is teaching that some people will reject and mock the truth of God again and again.

We should not keep forcing holy things on those who are hostile toward them.

This requires discernment.

Cross References

Proverbs 9:8

> Don't correct someone who makes fun of wisdom, or he will hate you. But correct a wise person, and he will love you.

2 Peter 2:22

> What they did is like the saying: “A dog goes back to what it threw up,” and “A pig that has been washed goes back to roll in the mud.”

Acts 13:46

> Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly: “We had to tell God's message to you first. But since you reject it and decide you are not worthy of eternal life, we will now go to the Gentiles.”

Spiritual Principle

Love is not foolish; it uses wisdom in sharing the truth.

Key Truth

Do not be judgmental, but do not be naive.

VII. ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

Matthew 7:7 — It Will Be Given

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.”

Jesus now turns to prayer.

He gives three commands and three promises.

Ask — and it will be given.

Seek — and you will find.

Knock — and the door will be opened.

Each word is stronger than the one before.

Asking uses the voice.

Seeking involves effort.

Knocking shows persistence.

In Greek, these words mean **keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking.**

Jesus is calling us to persistent prayer.

Cross References

Luke 11:9

> So I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.

James 1:5

> If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He is generous to everyone and will not find fault with you for asking, and He will give it to you.

Jeremiah 29:12

> Then you will call to Me. You will come to Me and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

Spiritual Principle

God invites persistent prayer.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking — the Father has not stopped listening.

VIII. EVERYONE WHO ASKS RECEIVES

Matthew 7:8 — A Promise for All

“For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

Jesus repeats the promise.

And He says **everyone.**

This promise is for every child of God.

Not only for pastors.

Not only for the very spiritual.

For everyone who comes to the Father.

This does not mean God gives us everything we want.

A good Father gives what is good, not everything we ask for.

Sometimes His answer is yes.

Sometimes it is no.

Sometimes it is wait.

But He always hears, and He always answers in love.

Cross References

Luke 11:10

> Everyone who asks will receive. Everyone who searches will find. And everyone who knocks will have the door opened.

John 16:24

> Until now you have not asked for anything in My name. Ask, and you will receive, so that your joy will be complete.

1 John 5:14

> This is the confidence we have when we come to God: if we ask for anything that agrees with what He wants, He hears us.

Spiritual Principle

God answers prayer according to His wisdom and love.

Key Truth

No sincere prayer goes unheard.

IX. BREAD OR A STONE?

Matthew 7:9 — A Father's Love

“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone?”

Jesus asks a simple question.

What father would give his son a stone when he asks for bread?

Small round loaves of bread in that region could look like stones.

But no loving father would trick his hungry child.

Even imperfect human parents know how to care for their children.

Cross References

Luke 11:11

> Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?

Isaiah 49:15

> Can a mother forget the baby she is nursing? Can she feel no love for the child she gave birth to? Even if she could forget, I will never forget you!

Psalm 145:16

> You open Your hand and satisfy the needs of every living thing.

Spiritual Principle

God's love is even greater than the best human parent's love.

X. A FISH OR A SNAKE?

Matthew 7:10 — Good Gifts, Not Harmful Ones

“Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?”

Bread and fish were the everyday food of Galilee.

A snake could look a little like certain fish.

But no father would give his child something dangerous when he asked for food.

God does not give harmful gifts to His children.

When we ask for good things, He does not trick us.

Cross References

Luke 11:12

> Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?

James 1:17

> Every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Father who made the lights in the sky. He does not change like moving shadows.

Psalm 84:11

> The LORD God is like a sun and a shield. The LORD gives kindness and honor. He does not hold back any good thing from those who live right.

Spiritual Principle

God never gives His children anything evil.

XI. HOW MUCH MORE

Matthew 7:11 — Your Father in Heaven

“If you, being sinful, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

Jesus makes the comparison clear.

Human parents are **sinful.**

Yet they still give good gifts to their children.

How much more will our perfect Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?

Luke's Gospel says God gives **the Holy Spirit** to those who ask.

That is the greatest gift of all.

God has already given us His own Son.

He will not hold back what we truly need.

Cross References

Luke 11:13

> Even though you are evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. So your Father in heaven will even more surely give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

Romans 8:32

> God did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for all of us. So He will surely also give us everything else along with Him.

Malachi 3:10

> Bring the full tenth into the storehouse... Test Me in this, says the LORD who commands armies. See if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour out more blessings than you have room for.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer rests on the goodness of the Father.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If God gave us His Son, we can trust Him with everything else.

XII. THE GOLDEN RULE

Matthew 7:12 — Do to Others

“So in everything, do to others what you would want them to do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

This is known as **the Golden Rule.**

Other teachers before Jesus had said something like it, but in the negative:

“Do not do to others what you would not want done to you.”

Jesus said it in the positive.

Do to others.

It is not enough to avoid hurting people.

We must actively do good to them.

Think about how you would want to be treated.

Then treat others that way.

Jesus says this **sums up the Law and the Prophets.**

The whole Old Testament teaching about how to treat others is summed up in love.

Cross References

Luke 6:31

> Treat others the way you want them to treat you.

Leviticus 19:18

> Do not try to get even or hold a grudge against anyone among your people. Love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Romans 13:10

> Love never hurts a neighbor. So loving is the same as obeying all of the law.

Spiritual Principle

Love does not wait to be treated well; it takes the first step.

Application

Living the Golden Rule means:

- Speaking to others the way you want to be spoken to.
- Being patient as you want others to be patient with you.
- Forgiving as you want to be forgiven.
- Helping as you would want to be helped.
- Being honest as you want others to be honest with you.

XIII. THE WIDE GATE

Matthew 7:13 — The Road to Destruction

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.”

Now Jesus calls for a decision.

There are two gates.

There are two roads.

The **wide gate** is easy to enter.

The **broad road** is easy to travel.

It allows any belief and any way of living.

It does not require repentance.

It does not ask a person to change.

And **many** are on it.

But it leads to **destruction.**

Popular does not mean right.

Cross References

Luke 13:24

> Work hard to enter through the narrow door. Many people will try to enter, but they will not be able to.

Deuteronomy 30:19

> Today I have given you a choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Choose life, so that you and your children will live.

Proverbs 14:12

> There is a way that seems right to a person, but in the end it leads to death.

Spiritual Warning

The easy road is not always the right road.

Key Truth

The crowd is not a safe guide to eternity.

XIV. THE NARROW GATE

Matthew 7:14 — The Road That Leads to Life

“But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

The **narrow gate** is the way of Jesus.

It is narrow because there is only one way in.

Jesus said, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”**

The road is narrow because it calls for faith, repentance, and obedience.

It means leaving behind sin and self.

But it leads to **life.**

Jesus says **only a few find it.**

This is not because God is unwilling.

It is because many do not want to give up the broad road.

Cross References

Luke 13:24

> Work hard to enter through the narrow door. Many people will try to enter, but they will not be able to.

Jeremiah 21:8

> This is what the LORD says: Look, I am giving you a choice between the way that leads to life and the way that leads to death.

Psalm 1:6

> The LORD watches over the way of good people, but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

Spiritual Principle

The narrow way is hard, but it leads to life.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The gate is narrow, but it is open — and Jesus Himself is the door.

XV. BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS

Matthew 7:15 — Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

“Beware of false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”

On the narrow road, there will be dangers.

One of the greatest is **false prophets.**

These are people who claim to speak for God but do not.

Jesus says they come **in sheep's clothing.**

They look harmless.

They look like believers.

They use the right words.

But inside, they are **ravenous wolves.**

They want to use and destroy the flock for their own gain.

Cross References

Acts 20:29

> I know that after I leave, cruel wolves will come in among you. They will try to destroy the flock.

Jeremiah 23:16

> This is what the LORD who commands armies says: “Don't listen to what those prophets are telling you. They are filling you with false hopes. They are speaking visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.”

2 Peter 2:1

> There were false prophets among God's people in the past, and there will be false teachers among you too. They will secretly bring in teachings that destroy people.

Spiritual Warning

Not everyone who sounds spiritual is from God.

Key Truth

False teachers rarely look false.

That is what makes them dangerous.

XVI. KNOWN BY THEIR FRUIT

Matthew 7:16 — Grapes and Thornbushes

“You will recognize them by their fruit. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?”

How can we tell a false prophet?

By their fruit.

Fruit includes:

What they teach.

How they live.

What their teaching produces in others.

Thornbushes do not produce grapes.

Thistles do not produce figs.

What grows on a plant shows what kind of plant it is.

In the same way, a person's life and teaching will show what is inside.

Cross References

Luke 6:44

> Every tree is known by its own fruit. People don't gather figs from thornbushes or grapes from bushes full of thorns.

James 3:12

> Can a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and a salty spring cannot produce fresh water either.

Isaiah 5:2

> He dug up the ground, cleared away the stones, and planted the best vines. He expected the vineyard to produce good grapes, but it produced only bad grapes.

Spiritual Principle

Time and fruit will reveal what words can hide.

XVII. GOOD TREES AND BAD TREES

Matthew 7:17 — Good Fruit and Bad Fruit

“In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.”

Jesus states a simple rule of nature.

Good trees produce good fruit.

Bad trees produce bad fruit.

The fruit shows the nature of the tree.

Paul describes the good fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in a believer's life.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Cross References

Luke 6:43

> A good tree does not produce bad fruit, and a bad tree does not produce good fruit.

Galatians 5:22

> But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Jeremiah 17:8

> He will be like a tree planted near water that sends its roots to the stream. Its leaves stay green, and it never stops producing fruit.

Spiritual Principle

What we are on the inside will show up on the outside.

XVIII. A GOOD TREE CANNOT BEAR BAD FRUIT

Matthew 7:18 — The Nature of the Tree

“A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.”

Jesus goes further.

A good tree **cannot** bear bad fruit.

A bad tree **cannot** bear good fruit.

This does not mean a Christian never sins.

It means the overall direction and pattern of a person's life reveals their true nature.

A false teacher may look good for a while.

But over time, the bad fruit will appear.

Cross References

Luke 6:43

> A good tree does not produce bad fruit, and a bad tree does not produce good fruit.

Matthew 12:33

> If you want good fruit, you must make the tree good. If your tree is bad, its fruit will be bad. A tree is known by the kind of fruit it produces.

James 3:11

> Can fresh water and salty water flow from the same spring?

Spiritual Principle

God changes the tree, and then the fruit changes.

Key Truth

We do not become good trees by producing good fruit.

We produce good fruit because God has made us new.

XIX. CUT DOWN AND THROWN INTO THE FIRE

Matthew 7:19 — The End of Bad Trees

“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

These are almost the same words John the Baptist preached in Matthew 3:10.

Jesus confirms John's warning.

Judgment is coming.

Trees without good fruit will be cut down.

False prophets will not escape.

Fruitless lives will face God's judgment.

Cross References

Matthew 3:10

> Even now the axe is ready to chop at the root of the trees. Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

Luke 3:9

> The axe is already lying at the roots of the trees. Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

John 15:6

> If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up. Those branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

Spiritual Warning

A fruitless life is a serious warning sign.

Spiritual Principle

Fruit comes from staying connected to Jesus.

XX. YOU WILL RECOGNIZE THEM

Matthew 7:20 — By Their Fruit

“So then, you will recognize them by their fruit.”

Jesus repeats verse 16.

Repetition shows importance.

We must not be fooled by appearance, popularity, or impressive words.

We must look at the fruit.

Does their teaching agree with God's Word?

Does their life show godly character?

Does their ministry lead people to Jesus?

Cross References

1 John 3:10

> This is how you can tell who are God's children and who are the devil's children: Anyone who does not do what is right is not from God. And anyone who does not love his brother or sister is not from God.

Titus 1:16

> They say they know God, but the way they live shows they don't really know Him.

3 John 1:11

> Dear friend, don't follow what is evil. Follow what is good. Whoever does good belongs to God. Whoever does evil has never seen God.

Spiritual Principle

Words can be faked; fruit cannot be faked for long.

Application

When testing a teacher, ask:

- Does he teach what the Bible actually says?
- Does he point people to Jesus or to himself?
- Is his life marked by holiness?
- Is he humble or proud?
- Is he honest about money?
- What fruit is seen in those who follow him?

XXI. LORD, LORD

Matthew 7:21 — Doing the Will of the Father

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of My Father in heaven.”

Now Jesus turns from false prophets to false disciples.

These are people who call Jesus **“Lord.”**

They say it twice, **“Lord, Lord,”** showing strong feeling.

But saying the right words is not enough.

Only those who **do the will of the Father** will enter the kingdom.

Notice that Jesus calls God **“My Father.”**

And notice that Jesus is the One who decides who enters the kingdom.

This is a clear claim that Jesus is the final Judge.

Cross References

Luke 6:46

> Why do you call Me, “Lord, Lord,” but do not do what I say?

James 2:14

> My brothers and sisters, what good is it if someone says he has faith but does nothing to show it? Can that kind of faith save him?

Romans 2:13

> It is not the people who hear the law who are right with God. It is the people who obey the law who will be made right.

Spiritual Principle

Saving faith always leads to obedience.

Key Truth

We are not saved by our works.

But true faith always works.

XXII. DID WE NOT PROPHESY?

Matthew 7:22 — Many Will Say on That Day

“Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons, and in Your name do many miracles?’”

“That day” is the Day of Judgment.

Jesus says **many** will come to Him with impressive religious records.

They prophesied.

They drove out demons.

They did many miracles.

And they did it all **“in Your name.”**

These were not people who ignored Jesus.

They were busy in religious activity.

But religious activity is not the same as a relationship with Jesus.

Cross References

Luke 13:26

> Then you will say, “We ate and drank with You, and You taught in our streets.”

Jeremiah 14:14

> The LORD said to me, “The prophets are telling lies in My name. I did not send them or give them orders or speak to them.”

1 Corinthians 13:2

> I may have the gift of prophecy. I may understand all secrets and know everything. I may have so much faith that I can move mountains. But if I don't have love, I am nothing.

Spiritual Warning

Spiritual gifts and religious success do not prove salvation.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

It is possible to work for Jesus without ever knowing Jesus.

XXIII. I NEVER KNEW YOU

Matthew 7:23 — Depart from Me

“Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

These may be the most frightening words in the Bible.

“I never knew you.”

Jesus does not say, **“I knew you once, but you fell away.”**

He says, **“I never knew you.”**

There was never a true relationship.

To be **known** by God in the Bible means to have a personal, saving relationship with Him.

Then Jesus calls them **“workers of lawlessness.”**

For all their religious activity, they did not do the will of the Father.

They lived by their own rules.

Cross References

Luke 13:27

> But He will say, “I tell you, I don't know you or where you come from. Get away from Me, all of you who do evil!”

Psalm 6:8

> Get away from me, all of you who do evil, because the LORD has heard me crying.

2 Timothy 2:19

> But God's strong foundation stands firm. These words are written on it: “The Lord knows those who belong to Him,” and “Everyone who says he belongs to the Lord must stop doing wrong.”

Spiritual Principle

What matters most is not that we know about Jesus, but that Jesus knows us.

Key Truth

Salvation is not a résumé of religious works.

It is a relationship with Jesus Christ.

XXIV. THE WISE BUILDER

Matthew 7:24 — Built on the Rock

“Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

Jesus ends the sermon with a story.

It is about two builders.

The first is **wise.**

He **hears** the words of Jesus.

And he **puts them into practice.**

He builds his house **on the rock.**

In Israel, many valleys were dry in summer.

The sandy ground looked like a good place to build.

But a wise builder dug down to solid rock.

It took more work.

It took more time.

But it would last.

Notice that Jesus says **“these words of Mine.”**

He puts His own words in the place of God's Word.

Cross References

Luke 6:48

> He is like a man building a house who dug deep and laid the foundation on rock. When the flood came, the water rushed against that house, but it could not shake it, because it was built well.

1 Corinthians 3:11

> No one can lay any other foundation than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Psalm 18:2

> The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my rescuer. My God is my rock, where I am safe.

Spiritual Principle

Wisdom is not just hearing God's Word; it is doing it.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is the Rock, and obedience to His words is building on Him.

XXV. THE HOUSE THAT STOOD

Matthew 7:25 — The Storm Came

“The rain came down, the floods rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because its foundation was on the rock.”

The storm came.

Notice that Jesus does not say **“if”** the storm comes.

Storms come to every life.

Rain from above.

Floods from below.

Winds from every side.

These are pictures of trials, suffering, temptation, loss, and finally the judgment of God.

The wise man's house was hit by the same storm as everyone else.

But it **did not fall.**

Why?

Because its foundation was on the rock.

Cross References

Isaiah 28:16

> This is what the Lord GOD says: “Look, I am laying a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a valuable cornerstone, a firm foundation. Whoever trusts in it will never be shaken.”

Psalm 46:2

> So we will not be afraid, even if the earth shakes and the mountains fall into the sea.

Luke 6:48

> He is like a man building a house who dug deep and laid the foundation on rock. When the flood came, the water rushed against that house, but it could not shake it, because it was built well.

Spiritual Principle

Faith built on Christ does not keep the storm away; it keeps you standing in the storm.

Key Truth

The storm does not build the foundation.

It reveals it.

XXVI. THE FOOLISH BUILDER

Matthew 7:26 — Built on Sand

“But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.”

The second builder is **foolish.**

Notice something important.

He also **hears** the words of Jesus.

He was in the same crowd.

He heard the same sermon.

The difference is not what he heard.

The difference is what he did.

He **did not put them into practice.**

He built **on sand.**

It was quicker.

It was easier.

From the outside, his house may have looked just as good as the wise man's house.

The difference was hidden below the surface.

Cross References

Luke 6:49

> But the one who hears My words and does not obey them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the flood came, the house fell right away and was completely destroyed.

Ezekiel 13:11

> Tell those who cover the weak wall with whitewash that it will fall. Heavy rain will come, I will send hailstones, and a strong wind will tear it down.

Job 4:19

> How much more will He blame people who live in houses made of clay, whose foundations are in the dust.

Spiritual Warning

Hearing without obeying is self-deception.

XXVII. A GREAT CRASH

Matthew 7:27 — The House That Fell

“The rain came down, the floods rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

The same storm came.

The same rain.

The same floods.

The same winds.

But this time, the house **fell.**

And it fell **with a great crash.**

Jesus ends the Sermon on the Mount not with a gentle word but with a warning.

It is possible to hear the greatest sermon ever preached and still be lost.

Cross References

Luke 6:49

> But the one who hears My words and does not obey them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the flood came, the house fell right away and was completely destroyed.

Proverbs 14:11

> The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of good people will do well.

Ezekiel 13:14

> I will tear down the wall you covered with whitewash. I will knock it to the ground so that its foundation can be seen.

Spiritual Principle

Every life will be tested, and only what is built on Christ will stand.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Two houses can look the same on a sunny day; only the storm shows the difference.

XXVIII. THE CROWDS WERE AMAZED

Matthew 7:28 — At His Teaching

“When Jesus finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at His teaching,”

The sermon was over.

The people were **amazed.**

The word means they were astonished, almost overwhelmed.

They had never heard anything like this.

This phrase, **“When Jesus finished saying these things,”** appears five times in Matthew.

Each time, it marks the end of one of Jesus' five major teaching sections.

Cross References

Mark 1:22

> The people were amazed at His teaching, because He taught them like someone who had authority, not like the teachers of the law.

Luke 4:32

> They were amazed at His teaching, because His words had authority.

John 7:46

> The guards answered, “No one ever spoke the way this man speaks!”

Spiritual Principle

The words of Jesus still amaze those who truly listen.

XXIX. HE TAUGHT WITH AUTHORITY

Matthew 7:29 — Not Like the Teachers of the Law

“because He taught with authority, not like their teachers of the law.”

Why were the people amazed?

Because Jesus taught **with authority.**

The teachers of the law usually quoted other rabbis.

They would say, **“Rabbi so-and-so said this.”**

Jesus did not quote anyone else.

He said, **“But I tell you.”**

He spoke as the One who gave the law.

He spoke as the One who will judge all people.

He spoke as God.

Cross References

Mark 1:27

> The people were all amazed and asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits, and they obey Him.”

Luke 4:36

> All the people were amazed and said to each other, “What kind of message is this? With authority and power He gives orders to evil spirits, and they come out!”

Titus 2:15

> Teach these things. Encourage and correct people with full authority. Don't let anyone look down on you.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus does not offer opinions; He speaks with the authority of God.

Key Truth

Because Jesus speaks with authority, His words demand a response.

XXX. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 7

1. Judge Yourself Before Others

Hypocrisy blinds us.

Humility clears our vision.

Principle:

Deal with your own beam before you point out another's speck.

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2. Persistent Prayer Is Rewarded

Ask, seek, and knock, for God is a generous Father.

Principle:

Keep praying, because your Father loves to give good gifts.

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3. The Golden Rule

Treat others the way you want to be treated.

This sums up God's law.

Principle:

Love takes the first step.

---

4. Few Choose the Narrow Way

The path to life is hard and requires true faith and obedience.

Principle:

Do not follow the crowd; follow Christ.

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5. Fruit Reveals Character

True prophets and true believers are known by their actions, not just their words.

Principle:

What is inside will always show up on the outside.

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6. Empty Religion Is Dangerous

Saying “Lord, Lord” without obedience leads to rejection.

Principle:

Knowing about Jesus is not the same as being known by Jesus.

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7. Obedience Is the Foundation

Building on Jesus' words is the only way to stand firm when storms come.

Principle:

Hearing is the beginning; doing is the foundation.

XXXI. THE TWOS OF MATTHEW 7

Jesus ends the Sermon on the Mount with a series of contrasts.

Each one calls for a choice.

Two Gates

The narrow gate and the wide gate.

Two Roads

The road to life and the road to destruction.

Two Groups

The few and the many.

Two Kinds of Trees

Good trees and bad trees.

Two Kinds of Fruit

Good fruit and bad fruit.

Two Kinds of Disciples

Those who say “Lord, Lord” and those who do the Father's will.

Two Builders

The wise and the foolish.

Two Foundations

Rock and sand.

Two Outcomes

A house that stands and a house that falls.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

There is no third road — every person is on one path or the other.

XXXII. JUDGING RIGHTLY AND WRONGLY

Matthew 7 teaches us both what not to do and what we must do.

Wrong Judging

- Condemning others as though we were God.
- Being harsh and critical.
- Ignoring our own sin.
- Looking down on others.
- Judging motives we cannot see.

Right Discernment

- Examining ourselves first.
- Gently helping others who are caught in sin.
- Recognizing false teachers by their fruit.
- Using wisdom in sharing the truth.
- Comparing everything to God's Word.

Key Truth

Jesus calls us to be humble about ourselves and wise about others.

XXXIII. WHAT MATTHEW 7 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 7 presents Jesus as:

The Wise Teacher

He teaches us how to treat others.

The Revealer of the Father

He shows us a generous Father who gives good gifts.

The Narrow Gate

He is the only way to life.

The Judge

He will say, **“I never knew you,”** or welcome us into His kingdom.

The Rock

He is the only foundation that will stand.

The One with Authority

He speaks as God Himself.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who taught on the mountain is the Judge who will stand at the end of history — and the Rock on which every safe life is built.

XXXIV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Does “Do not judge” mean Christians should never call anything wrong?

No.

Jesus Himself tells us to recognize false prophets by their fruit and to use wisdom with holy things.

He is forbidding a harsh, condemning, hypocritical spirit.

Only God is the final Judge.

Question 2

What is the point of the speck and the beam?

We are quick to see small faults in others and slow to see big faults in ourselves.

Jesus calls us to deal with our own sin first.

Then we will see clearly to help others with humility and gentleness.

Question 3

What does it mean not to throw pearls before pigs?

It means using wisdom when sharing holy truth.

Some people repeatedly mock and reject God's Word.

We should not keep forcing holy things on those who are hostile and only want to attack them.

Question 4

What do the words “ask, seek, knock” teach about prayer?

They teach persistence.

The Greek words mean to keep on asking, keep on seeking, and keep on knocking.

God invites us to keep coming to Him.

Question 5

Does God give us everything we ask for?

No.

A good father gives what is good, not everything a child asks for.

God always hears, and He answers according to His wisdom and love.

Question 6

What is the Golden Rule, and why is it important?

It is to treat others the way we want to be treated.

Jesus said it sums up the Law and the Prophets.

It calls us to actively do good, not just to avoid doing harm.

Question 7

What are the narrow gate and the wide gate?

The wide gate is easy and popular but leads to destruction.

The narrow gate is the way of Jesus.

It requires faith, repentance, and obedience, and it leads to life.

Question 8

How can we recognize false prophets?

By their fruit.

We should look at what they teach, how they live, and what their teaching produces in others.

Their message must agree with God's Word.

Question 9

What does Jesus mean by “I never knew you”?

It means there was never a true saving relationship.

These people did religious things, but they did not truly belong to Jesus.

To be known by God means to have a personal relationship with Him.

Question 10

Are we saved by doing the will of the Father?

We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, not by our works.

But true saving faith always produces obedience.

A person who never obeys shows that their faith is not real.

Question 11

What is the difference between the wise and foolish builders?

Both heard the words of Jesus.

The wise builder put them into practice.

The foolish builder did not.

The storm revealed the difference.

Question 12

Why were the crowds amazed at the teaching of Jesus?

Because He taught with authority.

The teachers of the law quoted other rabbis.

Jesus said, **“But I tell you,”** speaking with the authority of God Himself.

Question 13

What should Matthew 7 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 7 should cause believers to live:

- Examining themselves before judging others.
- Correcting others with humility and gentleness.

- Praying with persistence and confidence.
- Treating others the way they want to be treated.
- Choosing the narrow way over the popular way.
- Testing teachers by God's Word.
- Bearing good fruit.
- Obeying Jesus, not only hearing Him.
- Building their lives on Christ the Rock.

XXXV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 7 asks several important questions.

Am I Quick to Judge Others?

Do I see their faults more clearly than my own?

What Beam Is in My Own Eye?

Is there sin I am ignoring while pointing out others' sin?

Am I Persistent in Prayer?

Or do I give up too quickly?

Do I Trust That My Father Is Good?

Do I believe He wants to give good gifts to me?

Am I Living the Golden Rule?

How would I want to be treated by the people around me today?

Which Road Am I On?

Am I following Jesus, or following the crowd?

What Fruit Is My Life Producing?

Would others see the fruit of the Spirit in me?

Am I Testing What I Hear?

Do I compare teachers and messages to God's Word?

Do I Really Know Jesus, or Only Know About Him?

Am I Building on the Rock?

Am I doing what Jesus says, or only hearing it?

XXXVI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Hearing Is Not Enough”

The Sermon on the Mount ends with two men.

Both were in the crowd.

Both heard Jesus.

Both built a house.

Both faced the same storm.

The only difference was obedience.

One man heard and did.

The other man heard and did nothing.

The same is true for the people who said, **“Lord, Lord.”**

They had the right words.

They had impressive works.

But they did not do the will of the Father.

This creates a powerful principle.

It is possible to admire Jesus, quote Jesus, and work for Jesus, and still not obey Jesus.

And on the day of the storm, only obedience built on Christ will stand.

Principle:

Do not measure your faith by what you know about Jesus, but by whether you do what Jesus says.

XXXVII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 7 ends the greatest sermon ever preached.

For three chapters, Jesus has spoken.

He has blessed the humble.

He has called His followers salt and light.

He has gone deeper than the law to the heart.

He has taught us to pray.

He has warned us about money and worry.

He has told us not to judge and to treat others as we want to be treated.

Now He brings everything to a single point.

What will you do with My words?

You can hear them and walk away.

You can admire them and do nothing.

You can say, **“Lord, Lord,”** and keep living your own way.

Or you can build your life on them.

Matthew 7 therefore reminds us:

A storm is coming to every life.

Trials will come.

Temptation will come.

Death will come.

Judgment will come.

And on that day, only one foundation will hold.

The difference between standing and falling is not:

How much we heard.

How religious we looked.

Or how many works we did.

It is:

Whether we built on the Rock.

The same call still stands:

Examine your own heart.

Keep asking, seeking, and knocking.

Treat others as you want to be treated.

Enter through the narrow gate.

Bear good fruit.

Do the will of the Father.

Build your life on the words of Jesus.

And until He returns:

Keep building.

Keep obeying.

Keep standing.

Keep trusting the Rock.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the words of Jesus.

Thank You that He speaks with Your authority.

Forgive us for the times we have judged others harshly.

Forgive us for seeing the speck in someone else's eye while ignoring the beam in our own.

Show us our own sin.

Give us humble hearts.

When we need to help others, make us gentle and wise.

Thank You that You are a generous Father.

Teach us to keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking.

Thank You that You give good gifts to Your children.

Thank You most of all for giving us Your Son.

Help us treat others the way we want to be treated.

Make us people who take the first step in love.

Lord Jesus, You are the narrow gate.

Keep us from the wide road, even when many are walking on it.

Give us courage to follow You when it is hard and unpopular.

Protect us from false teachers.

Give us discernment to test everything by Your Word.

Produce good fruit in our lives by Your Holy Spirit.

Keep us from empty religion.

Do not let us be people who say, “Lord, Lord,” but do not obey.

Let us truly know You, and be known by You.

Help us not only to hear Your words but to do them.

Build our lives on You, our Rock.

When the storms come, keep us standing.

And on the final day, may we hear You welcome us into Your kingdom.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” — Matthew 7:24

Central Truth

Those who truly belong to Jesus show it by humble hearts, trusting prayer, loving actions, and lives built on obedience to His words.

Matthew 7 in One Sentence

Jesus ends the Sermon on the Mount by warning against hypocritical judgment, inviting persistent prayer to a generous Father, calling His followers to the narrow way and to good fruit, and teaching that only those who hear and obey His words are building on the rock that will stand.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 8 — Miracles of Healing and Authority

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapters 5 through 7 recorded the Sermon on the Mount.

At the end of that sermon, the crowds were amazed.

Jesus taught with authority.

Now, in Matthew Chapter 8, Jesus comes down from the mountain.

And He shows that His authority is not only in His words.

It is also in His works.

In the sermon, Jesus spoke with authority.

In the miracles, Jesus acts with authority.

Matthew 8 and 9 contain ten miracles.

Matthew 8 records several of them.

Jesus touches a man with leprosy, and he is made clean.

Jesus speaks a word from a distance, and a Roman soldier's servant is healed.

Jesus touches the hand of Peter's mother-in-law, and her fever leaves.

Jesus drives out demons with a word and heals all who are sick.

Then Jesus speaks about the cost of following Him.

Following Jesus is not easy or comfortable.

Then Jesus gets into a boat.

A furious storm comes up.

The disciples are terrified.

But Jesus rebukes the wind and the waves, and they become completely calm.

Finally, Jesus meets two violent men controlled by demons.

The demons recognize Him as the Son of God.

With one word, Jesus sets the men free.

Matthew 8 shows that Jesus has authority over:

Disease.

Distance.

Nature.

Demons.

But it also shows two very different responses.

A Gentile soldier shows great faith.

A whole town begs Jesus to leave.

Matthew 8 therefore asks every reader the same question the disciples asked in the boat:

“What kind of man is this?”

The central truth of Matthew 8 is:

Jesus has complete authority over sickness, nature, and the spiritual world, and He uses that power with compassion for those who come to Him in faith.

I. JESUS COMES DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN

Matthew 8:1 — Large Crowds Followed Him

“When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him.”

Jesus had finished the Sermon on the Mount.

Now He came down.

Like Moses coming down from Mount Sinai, Jesus came down to the people.

Large crowds followed Him.

They had heard His words.

Now they would see His works.

Jesus did not stay on the mountain.

He went to where the hurting people were.

Cross References

Mark 3:7

> Jesus went away with His followers to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed Him.

Luke 6:17

> Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of His followers was there, and many people came from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon.

Exodus 34:29

> When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two stone tablets in his hands, he did not know that his face was shining because he had been talking with the LORD.

Spiritual Principle

Truth heard on the mountain must be lived in the valley.

Key Truth

Jesus' teaching and His miracles go together.

His words show who He is, and His works prove it.

II. A MAN WITH LEPROSY

Matthew 8:2 — “If You Are Willing”

“A man with leprosy came and bowed before Him, saying, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.’”

In the Bible, **leprosy** included a number of serious skin diseases.

It was one of the most feared conditions of the ancient world.

A person with leprosy was considered unclean.

He had to live outside the town, away from family and friends.

He had to wear torn clothes and call out, **“Unclean! Unclean!”**

No one would touch him.

Yet this man came to Jesus.

He **bowed** before Him.

He called Him **“Lord.”**

And he said something remarkable:

“If You are willing, You can make me clean.”

He did not doubt Jesus' power.

He only wondered about Jesus' willingness.

Cross References

Mark 1:40

> A man with a skin disease came to Jesus. He got on his knees and begged Him, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.”

Luke 5:12

> A man covered with a skin disease saw Jesus. He bowed with his face to the ground and begged Him, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

Leviticus 13:45

> A person with a skin disease must wear torn clothes and let his hair hang loose. He must cover the lower part of his face and call out, “Unclean! Unclean!”

Spiritual Principle

Humble faith trusts both the power and the will of God.

Key Truth

No one is too unclean to come to Jesus.

III. “I AM WILLING”

Matthew 8:3 — Jesus Touched Him

“Jesus reached out His hand, touched him, and said, ‘I am willing. Be clean!’ Immediately, the man was healed of leprosy.”

Jesus could have healed this man with only a word.

But He did something no one else would do.

He touched him.

This man may not have felt a human touch in years.

Under the law, touching a leper made a person unclean.

But when Jesus touched the leper, Jesus did not become unclean.

The leper became clean.

Then Jesus answered the man's question.

“I am willing.”

And the healing was **immediate.**

Cross References

Mark 1:41

> Jesus felt deep compassion for him. He reached out His hand, touched the man, and said, “I am willing. Be clean!”

Luke 5:13

> Jesus reached out His hand and touched him. He said, “I am willing. Be clean!” Right away the skin disease left him.

2 Kings 5:14

> So Naaman went down and dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times, as the man of God had told him. His skin became healthy again, like the skin of a young child, and he was clean.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' holiness is stronger than our uncleanness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is not only able to make us clean — He is willing.

IV. SHOW YOURSELF TO THE PRIEST

Matthew 8:4 — As a Testimony

“Jesus told him, ‘See that you don’t tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift Moses commanded as a testimony to them.’”

Jesus gave the man two instructions.

Do not tell anyone.

Jesus did not want crowds coming only to see miracles.

He also knew that too much excitement could get in the way of His mission.

Go to the priest.

The Law of Moses required a healed leper to be examined by a priest.

The priest would declare him clean, and the man would offer sacrifices.

Then he could return to his family and community.

Jesus honored the law.

And the healed man would be a **testimony** to the priests that God was at work.

Cross References

Mark 1:44

> “Don't tell anyone about this. Go show yourself to the priest, and offer the sacrifices Moses commanded for people who are made clean. This will prove to them what has happened.”

Luke 5:14

> Jesus ordered him, “Don't tell anyone. Go show yourself to the priest, and offer a gift for your cleansing, as Moses commanded. This will prove to them what has happened.”

Leviticus 14:2

> These are the instructions for a person who had a skin disease on the day he is made clean: He must be brought to the priest.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus restores not only the body, but also the person's place in the community.

V. A CENTURION COMES TO JESUS

Matthew 8:5 — Pleading in Capernaum

“When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading,”

Jesus returned to Capernaum, His home base.

A **centurion** came to Him.

A centurion was a Roman army officer in charge of about one hundred soldiers.

He was a Gentile.

He was part of the foreign army that ruled over Israel.

Many Jews would have hated him.

But this man came to Jesus **pleading.**

Luke tells us he loved the Jewish people and had even built their synagogue.

Cross References

Luke 7:2

> A Roman officer had a servant who was very important to him. The servant was so sick he was about to die.

Luke 7:3

> When the officer heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to Him. He asked them to have Jesus come and heal his servant.

John 4:46

> There was a royal official in Capernaum whose son was sick.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus welcomes anyone who comes to Him in humble need.

VI. MY SERVANT IS PARALYZED

Matthew 8:6 — In Terrible Pain

“Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed and in terrible pain.”

The centurion did not come for himself.

He came for his **servant.**

In that culture, servants were often treated as property.

Many masters would not have cared about a sick servant.

But this centurion cared deeply.

His servant was **paralyzed** and **in terrible pain.**

Notice also how he speaks to Jesus.

“Lord.”

A powerful Roman officer called a Jewish teacher **“Lord.”**

Cross References

John 4:47

> When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to Him and begged Him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

Psalm 30:2

> LORD my God, I cried out to You for help, and You healed me.

Mark 2:3

> Some people came to Him, bringing a paralyzed man carried by four of them.

Spiritual Principle

Love for others brings us to Jesus on their behalf.

Application

Like the centurion, we can come to Jesus for:

- Family members.
- Friends.
- Coworkers.
- Neighbors.
- People who cannot come for themselves.

VII. “I WILL COME AND HEAL HIM”

Matthew 8:7 — Jesus Responds

“Jesus said, ‘I will come and heal him.’”

Jesus answered immediately.

“I will come.”

Jesus was willing to go into the home of a Gentile.

Many Jewish teachers would not enter a Gentile's house.

They believed it would make them unclean.

But Jesus was not limited by these barriers.

He was ready to go wherever He was needed.

Cross References

Luke 7:6

> So Jesus went with them. When He was getting close to the house, the officer sent friends to say to Him, “Lord, don't trouble Yourself, because I am not worthy to have You come into my house.”

Psalm 107:20

> He sent out His word and healed them. He saved them from the grave.

John 4:50

> Jesus told him, “Go home. Your son will live.” The man believed what Jesus said and left.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is willing to come into any home that welcomes Him.

VIII. “I AM NOT WORTHY”

Matthew 8:8 — Just Say the Word

“The centurion replied, ‘Lord, I am not worthy to have You come under my roof. Just say the word, and my servant will be healed.’”

The centurion's answer shows two great qualities.

Humility.

“I am not worthy.”

This was a powerful man.

Others probably called him worthy.

But he knew he was not worthy of Jesus.

Faith.

“Just say the word.”

He believed Jesus did not need to be present.

He did not need to touch the servant.

Jesus' word alone was enough.

Cross References

Luke 7:7

> That is why I did not think I was worthy to come to You myself. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

Genesis 32:10

> I am not worthy of all the kindness and faithfulness You have shown to me, Your servant.

Luke 15:19

> I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired workers.

Spiritual Principle

Great faith often grows in humble hearts.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The person who knows he is unworthy is the person ready to trust Jesus completely.

IX. A MAN UNDER AUTHORITY

Matthew 8:9 — Go, Come, Do This

“For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

The centurion explained his faith using his own experience.

He understood **authority.**

He was under the authority of his commanders.

And he had soldiers under his authority.

When he gave an order, it was obeyed.

He did not have to be there in person.

His word was enough.

He recognized that Jesus had that same kind of authority, but over sickness.

If Jesus gave the order, the sickness would have to obey.

Cross References

Luke 7:8

> I am a man under the authority of others, and I have soldiers under me. I tell one soldier, “Go,” and he goes. I tell another, “Come,” and he comes. I tell my servant, “Do this,” and he does it.

Romans 13:1

> Everyone must obey the people who rule over them. All authority comes from God, and those who have authority have been given it by God.

John 19:11

> Jesus answered, “You would have no authority over Me at all if it had not been given to you from above.”

Spiritual Principle

Faith understands that Jesus' word carries all authority.

X. GREAT FAITH

Matthew 8:10 — Jesus Was Amazed

“When Jesus heard this, He was amazed and said to those following Him, ‘Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.’”

Only twice in the Gospels are we told that Jesus was **amazed.**

Once He was amazed at the unbelief of His hometown.

Here He is amazed at the faith of a Gentile.

Jesus turned to the crowd following Him.

These were mostly Jewish people.

They had the Scriptures.

They had the promises.

They had the temple.

Yet Jesus said He had not found such great faith in all of Israel.

This Roman soldier understood more about Jesus than many religious people did.

Cross References

Luke 7:9

> When Jesus heard this, He was amazed. He turned to the crowd following Him and said, “I tell you, I have not found faith this great even in Israel.”

Mark 6:6

> He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Hebrews 11:6

> Without faith it is impossible to please God. Anyone who comes to God must believe that He is real and that He rewards those who truly look for Him.

Spiritual Principle

Faith pleases Jesus.

Key Truth

Great faith is not measured by religious background but by trust in Jesus' word.

XI. FROM THE EAST AND THE WEST

Matthew 8:11 — At the Table with Abraham

“I tell you, many will come from the east and west and will sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus used this moment to teach something important.

The centurion was a Gentile.

And he would not be the last.

Many would come **from the east and west.**

This means people from all nations.

They would **sit** at the great feast in God's kingdom.

And they would sit with **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, the fathers of Israel.

God's kingdom would include people from every nation who trust in Christ.

Cross References

Luke 13:29

> People will come from the east, west, north, and south and will sit down at the feast in the kingdom of God.

Isaiah 49:12

> Look, people will come from far away — some from the north, some from the west, and some from the land of Sinim.

Malachi 1:11

> “From where the sun rises to where it sets, My name will be great among the nations,” says the LORD who commands armies.

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom is for people from every nation who come by faith.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The table of God's kingdom is long enough for the whole world.

XII. THROWN INTO OUTER DARKNESS

Matthew 8:12 — Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth

“But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Now Jesus gives a serious warning.

The subjects of the kingdom refers to many in Israel who expected to be in the kingdom because they were Abraham's descendants.

But they rejected Jesus.

And so they would be **thrown into outer darkness.**

The great feast of the kingdom is pictured as a bright, joyful banquet.

Outside is darkness.

Weeping shows sorrow.

Gnashing of teeth shows anger and regret.

This is one of Jesus' descriptions of hell.

Cross References

Matthew 25:30

> Throw this useless servant outside into the darkness, where people will cry and grind their teeth with pain.

Luke 13:28

> You will cry and grind your teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves are thrown out.

Romans 11:20

> They were broken off because they did not believe, and you stand only because you believe. Do not be proud, but be afraid.

Spiritual Warning

Religious privilege does not guarantee a place in God's kingdom.

Key Truth

Being near the truth is not the same as believing it.

XIII. AS YOU HAVE BELIEVED

Matthew 8:13 — Healed at That Very Moment

“Then Jesus said to the centurion, ‘Go. It will be done just as you believed.’ And the servant was healed at that very moment.”

Jesus gave the word the centurion asked for.

“Go.”

“It will be done just as you believed.”

And the servant was healed **at that very moment.**

Jesus never went to the house.

He never saw the servant.

He never touched him.

He simply spoke, and it was done.

Distance is no problem for Jesus.

Cross References

Luke 7:10

> The men who had been sent went back to the house and found the servant well again.

Mark 7:29

> Then Jesus told her, “Because you gave this answer, you may go. The demon has left your daughter.”

John 4:53

> The father realized this was the exact time Jesus had told him, “Your son will live.” So he and everyone in his house believed.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' word is powerful even when He seems far away.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus does not need to be in the room to change what is happening in the room.

XIV. PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW

Matthew 8:14 — Lying in Bed with a Fever

“When Jesus entered Peter’s house, He saw Peter’s mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever.”

Jesus now goes into Peter's house in Capernaum.

This verse tells us that Peter was married.

Paul later mentions that Peter took his wife with him on his travels.

Peter's mother-in-law was sick with a **fever.**

Luke, the doctor, says it was a **high** fever.

In those days, a fever could be very dangerous.

Notice that **Jesus saw her.**

He noticed the need.

Cross References

Mark 1:30

> Simon's mother-in-law was lying in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her right away.

Luke 4:38

> Simon's mother-in-law was sick with a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her.

1 Corinthians 9:5

> Don't we have the right to bring a believing wife with us when we travel, as the other apostles, the Lord's brothers, and Peter do?

Spiritual Principle

Jesus notices the needs in our homes.

XV. SHE GOT UP AND SERVED

Matthew 8:15 — The Fever Left Her

“He touched her hand, and the fever left her. She got up and began to serve them.”

Again, Jesus healed with a **touch.**

The fever **left her.**

Usually, a person recovering from a fever is weak for days.

But this healing was complete.

She **got up** immediately.

And she **began to serve them.**

Her first response to being healed was service.

Cross References

Mark 1:31

> So He went to her, took her by the hand, and helped her get up. The fever left her, and she began to serve them.

Luke 4:39

> He stood over her and ordered the fever to leave, and it left her. Right away she got up and began to serve them.

John 12:2

> They gave a dinner there for Jesus. Martha served the food.

Spiritual Principle

Those Jesus touches are raised up to serve.

Key Truth

The best way to thank Jesus is to serve Him and others.

XVI. THAT EVENING

Matthew 8:16 — He Healed All Who Were Sick

“That evening, many who were demon-possessed were brought to Him. He drove out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.”

Mark tells us this was the Sabbath.

When the Sabbath ended at sunset, people were free to carry their sick to Jesus.

Many came.

Some were **demon-possessed.**

Jesus drove out the spirits **with a word.**

No long rituals.

No special formulas.

Just His word.

And He **healed all who were sick.**

Not some.

All.

Cross References

Mark 1:34

> Jesus healed many who had all kinds of diseases, and He forced many demons to leave.

Luke 4:40

> When the sun was going down, the people brought to Jesus everyone who was sick with different diseases. He put His hands on each one and healed them.

Acts 10:38

> God gave Jesus of Nazareth the Holy Spirit and power. Jesus went everywhere doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' power over evil is complete.

XVII. HE TOOK OUR SICKNESSES

Matthew 8:17 — Fulfilling Isaiah

“This fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took our sicknesses and carried our diseases.’”

Matthew quotes Isaiah 53:4.

Isaiah 53 describes the suffering Servant of the LORD.

It is one of the clearest prophecies of Jesus' death on the cross.

Matthew shows that Jesus' healing ministry was part of this prophecy.

Jesus came to deal with the whole problem of sin.

That includes the sickness, suffering, and death that came into the world because of sin.

His healings were a preview of what His cross would accomplish.

One day, because of the cross, God's people will have bodies that never get sick again.

Cross References

Isaiah 53:4

> Surely He took our sicknesses and carried our pain.

1 Peter 2:24

> Christ carried our sins in His body on the cross, so that we would stop living for sin and start living for what is right. By His wounds you have been healed.

Isaiah 53:5

> But He was wounded because of our wrongs. He was crushed because of our sins. He was punished so that we could have peace, and by His wounds we are healed.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus carries the weight of human suffering.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Every healing Jesus performed pointed to the cross, where He would carry our greatest sickness — sin.

XVIII. CROSSING TO THE OTHER SIDE

Matthew 8:18 — Leaving the Crowds

“When Jesus saw the large crowds around Him, He gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake.”

The crowds were growing larger.

But Jesus did not stay to enjoy His popularity.

He **gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake.**

The other side of the Sea of Galilee was mostly Gentile territory.

Jesus was moving toward people in need who had not yet heard Him.

He also needed time away from the crowds.

Cross References

Mark 4:35

> That evening Jesus said to His followers, “Let's go across to the other side of the lake.”

Luke 8:22

> One day Jesus and His followers got into a boat. He said to them, “Let's go across the lake.” So they started across.

Mark 5:1

> They went across the lake to the area of the Gerasenes.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is not driven by crowds but by His Father's purpose.

XIX. “I WILL FOLLOW YOU WHEREVER YOU GO”

Matthew 8:19 — A Teacher of the Law

“A teacher of the law came to Him and said, ‘Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.’”

A **teacher of the law** came to Jesus.

This was a scribe, an expert in the Scriptures.

Most scribes opposed Jesus.

But this one wanted to follow Him.

He made a bold promise.

“I will follow You wherever You go.”

His words sounded good.

But Jesus knew his heart.

He knew this man did not understand what following Jesus would cost.

Cross References

Luke 9:57

> As they were walking along the road, someone said to Jesus, “I will follow You wherever You go.”

Luke 9:61

> Another man said, “I will follow You, Lord, but first let me go and say goodbye to my family.”

Ruth 1:16

> But Ruth said, “Don't ask me to leave you. Wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.”

Spiritual Principle

Quick promises must be tested by real commitment.

XX. NO PLACE TO LAY HIS HEAD

Matthew 8:20 — The Son of Man

“Jesus replied, ‘Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.’”

Jesus told the man the truth.

Even animals have homes.

Foxes have dens.

Birds have nests.

But Jesus had no home of His own.

Following Him meant giving up comfort and security.

This is the first time Jesus calls Himself **“the Son of Man”** in Matthew.

It was His favorite title for Himself.

It comes from Daniel 7, where the Son of Man receives an everlasting kingdom.

The King of glory lived like a homeless traveler.

Cross References

Luke 9:58

> Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to rest His head.”

John 1:11

> He came to His own people, but His own people did not accept Him.

2 Corinthians 8:9

> You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was rich, but for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you could become rich.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus may cost us comfort.

Key Truth

Jesus does not hide the cost of following Him.

XXI. LET ME FIRST BURY MY FATHER

Matthew 8:21 — Another Disciple

“Another disciple said to Him, ‘Lord, first let me go and bury my father.’”

A second man spoke.

He was already called a **disciple.**

He wanted to follow Jesus.

But he wanted to do something **first.**

“Let me go and bury my father.”

This sounds very reasonable.

Burying one's parents was an important duty in Jewish life.

But many Bible teachers believe the father may not have died yet.

The man may have been saying, **“Let me wait until my father dies and I receive my inheritance. Then I will follow You.”**

Either way, he wanted to put something else ahead of Jesus.

Cross References

Luke 9:59

> Jesus said to another man, “Follow Me.” But the man said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”

1 Kings 19:20

> Elisha left his oxen and ran after Elijah. He said, “Please let me kiss my father and mother goodbye, and then I will follow you.”

Genesis 50:5

> My father made me promise him, saying, “I am about to die. Bury me in the tomb I prepared for myself in the land of Canaan.” So please let me go and bury my father. Then I will come back.

Spiritual Warning

The word “first” can reveal what we truly put first.

XXII. LET THE DEAD BURY THEIR OWN DEAD

Matthew 8:22 — Follow Me

“But Jesus told him, ‘Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.’”

Jesus' answer sounds harsh.

But He was making a powerful point.

“Let the dead bury their own dead.”

Let those who are spiritually dead take care of earthly matters.

Following Jesus must come first.

Jesus was not against honoring parents.

He taught people to honor their father and mother.

But nothing, not even family, can come before following Him.

Luke adds that Jesus told the man to go and preach the kingdom of God.

Cross References

Luke 9:60

> But Jesus said to him, “Let the people who are dead bury their own dead. You must go and tell about the kingdom of God.”

Luke 9:62

> Jesus said, “Anyone who starts to plow a field and keeps looking back is not fit for the kingdom of God.”

Philippians 3:13

> I forget what is behind me and reach toward what is ahead.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus cannot wait for a more convenient time.

Application

Common reasons people delay following Jesus:

- “Let me first finish school.”
- “Let me first get my career started.”
- “Let me first have some fun.”
- “Let me first take care of my family.”
- “Let me first get my life in order.”

Jesus still says, **“Follow Me.”**

XXIII. INTO THE BOAT

Matthew 8:23 — His Disciples Followed Him

“Then He got into the boat, and His disciples followed Him.”

After speaking about the cost of following Him, Jesus got into the boat.

And **His disciples followed Him.**

This is a picture of what following Jesus means.

They went where He went.

They got into the boat because He did.

And they were about to learn that following Jesus does not mean avoiding storms.

Cross References

Mark 4:36

> Leaving the crowd behind, the followers took Jesus with them in the boat He was already in. Other boats were with Him too.

Luke 8:22

> One day Jesus and His followers got into a boat. He said to them, “Let's go across the lake.” So they started across.

Jonah 1:3

> But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He found a ship going there, paid for the trip, and went aboard.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus sometimes leads us straight into a storm.

Key Truth

Jonah was in a storm because he ran from God.

The disciples were in a storm because they followed Jesus.

XXIV. A FURIOUS STORM

Matthew 8:24 — But Jesus Was Asleep

“Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was asleep.”

The Sea of Galilee lies about seven hundred feet below sea level.

It is surrounded by hills and mountains.

Cold winds can rush down suddenly and create violent storms.

This storm was **furious.**

The Greek word is the word used for an **earthquake.**

The **waves swept over the boat.**

Several of the disciples were experienced fishermen.

They knew this storm was deadly.

But Jesus was asleep.

This shows His true humanity.

He was exhausted after a long day of ministry.

It also shows His perfect peace and trust in His Father.

Cross References

Mark 4:37

> A very strong wind came up on the lake. The waves were coming over the sides of the boat, and it was almost full of water.

Luke 8:23

> While they were sailing, Jesus fell asleep. A very strong wind came down on the lake. The boat began to fill with water, and they were in danger.

Jonah 1:5

> The sailors were afraid... But Jonah had gone down into the lowest part of the ship, lain down, and fallen into a deep sleep.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is at peace even when we are in a panic.

XXV. LORD, SAVE US!

Matthew 8:25 — We Are Going to Drown!

“The disciples went and woke Him, saying, ‘Lord, save us! We are going to drown!’”

The disciples were terrified.

They woke Jesus.

Their prayer was short and desperate.

“Lord, save us!”

It is one of the shortest prayers in the Bible.

But it was the right prayer.

They went to the right Person.

Even in their fear, they knew Jesus was their only hope.

Cross References

Mark 4:38

> Jesus was in the back of the boat, sleeping on a cushion. His followers woke Him and said, “Teacher, don't You care that we are going to drown?”

Luke 8:24

> The followers went to Him and woke Him, saying, “Master! Master! We are going to drown!” Jesus got up and gave a command to the wind and the waves. They stopped, and everything was calm.

Psalm 107:28

> Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress.

Spiritual Principle

When we do not know what else to do, we can cry out to Jesus.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A short prayer to the right Person is better than a long prayer to no one.

XXVI. COMPLETELY CALM

Matthew 8:26 — He Rebuked the Winds and the Waves

“He replied, ‘Why are you afraid, you of little faith?’ Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it became completely calm.”

Notice the order.

Jesus spoke to the disciples **first.**

Then He spoke to the storm.

“Why are you afraid, you of little faith?”

They had some faith.

They called on Jesus.

But their faith was small.

They thought they would die even though Jesus was in the boat.

Then Jesus **rebuked** the winds and the waves.

The word means to command sharply.

And **it became completely calm.**

Normally, even after the wind stops, the waves continue for a long time.

But this calm was immediate and complete.

Cross References

Mark 4:39

> Jesus stood up and gave a command to the wind. He said to the water, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind stopped, and the lake became completely calm.

Luke 8:25

> He said to His followers, “Where is your faith?” They were afraid and amazed and said to each other, “Who is this? He commands even the wind and the water, and they obey Him!”

Psalm 107:29

> He made the storm quiet, and the waves of the sea became calm.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calms the storm in our hearts before He calms the storm around us.

Key Truth

The storm was no match for the One who made the sea.

XXVII. WHAT KIND OF MAN IS THIS?

Matthew 8:27 — Even the Winds and the Sea Obey Him

“The men were amazed and asked, ‘What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea obey Him!’”

The disciples were **amazed.**

They had been afraid of the storm.

Now they were in awe of Jesus.

Their question is one of the most important questions in the Bible.

“What kind of man is this?”

In the Old Testament, only God rules the sea.

Only God commands the wind.

The disciples were beginning to understand that Jesus was more than a teacher.

More than a prophet.

More than a miracle worker.

He was doing what only God can do.

Cross References

Mark 4:41

> The followers were very afraid and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!”

Psalm 89:9

> You rule over the raging sea. When its waves rise up, You calm them.

Job 38:11

> I said to the sea, “You may come this far, but no farther. Your proud waves must stop here.”

Spiritual Principle

The answer to “What kind of man is this?” is the most important answer we will ever give.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The One who sleeps in the storm is the One who rules the storm.

XXVIII. TWO DEMON-POSSESSED MEN

Matthew 8:28 — Coming Out of the Tombs

“When Jesus arrived on the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met Him, coming out of the tombs. They were so violent that no one could pass that way.”

Jesus calmed the storm on the sea.

Now He faced a storm in human lives.

The **region of the Gadarenes** was on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee.

It was a Gentile area.

Two men met Jesus.

They were **demon-possessed.**

They lived among **the tombs.**

Tombs were considered unclean places.

These men were so **violent** that no one could travel that road.

Mark and Luke focus on one of the men, probably the more well-known of the two.

Matthew tells us there were two.

Cross References

Mark 5:3

> This man lived in the burial caves, and no one could keep him tied up, not even with a chain.

Luke 8:27

> When Jesus got out of the boat, a man from the town who had demons in him came to Him. For a long time he had not worn clothes or lived in a house. He lived in the burial caves.

Isaiah 65:4

> They sit among the graves and spend their nights in secret places. They eat the meat of pigs.

Spiritual Principle

No one is too far gone for Jesus.

Key Truth

Satan's goal is to destroy people.

Jesus' goal is to restore them.

XXIX. SON OF GOD

Matthew 8:29 — “Have You Come to Torture Us?”

“They shouted, ‘What do You want with us, Son of God? Have You come here to torture us before the appointed time?’”

The demons knew exactly who Jesus was.

They called Him **“Son of God.”**

The disciples were still asking, **“What kind of man is this?”**

But the demons already knew.

They also knew their future.

They asked if Jesus had come to torture them **“before the appointed time.”**

They knew a day of judgment was coming.

They knew they would be punished.

They were afraid of Jesus.

Cross References

Mark 5:7

> He shouted in a loud voice, “What do You want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You in God's name, don't torture me!”

Luke 8:28

> When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down in front of Him. He shouted, “What do You want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, don't torture me!”

James 2:19

> You believe there is one God. Good! But even the demons believe that, and they shake with fear.

Spiritual Warning

Knowing who Jesus is does not save a person; even demons know.

Spiritual Principle

The powers of darkness tremble before Jesus.

XXX. A HERD OF PIGS

Matthew 8:30 — Feeding Some Distance Away

“A large herd of pigs was feeding some distance away.”

Pigs were unclean animals under the Law of Moses.

Jews did not eat them or raise them.

But this was a Gentile region.

Mark tells us there were about two thousand pigs.

This was a large and valuable herd.

Cross References

Mark 5:11

> A large herd of pigs was feeding on a hill nearby.

Luke 8:32

> A large herd of pigs was feeding on the hill. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and He allowed them to do this.

Leviticus 11:7

> The pig... is unclean for you.

Key Truth

This detail sets the stage for what would show the people's real values.

XXXI. SEND US INTO THE PIGS

Matthew 8:31 — The Demons Begged

“The demons begged Jesus, ‘If You drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs.’”

The demons knew they had to leave.

They did not question whether Jesus could drive them out.

They only begged Him for where they would go.

Luke tells us they begged Him not to send them into the bottomless pit.

The demons had to ask Jesus' permission.

They could do nothing without it.

Cross References

Mark 5:12

> The demons begged Jesus, “Send us into the pigs. Let us go into them.”

Luke 8:31

The demons begged Jesus not to send them into the bottomless pit.

Job 1:12

> The LORD said to Satan, “All right, everything Job has is in your power. But do not touch Job himself.”

Spiritual Principle

Satan and his demons are under God's authority.

Key Truth

The enemy is powerful, but he is on a leash held by God.

XXXII. “GO!”

Matthew 8:32 — The Herd Rushed into the Sea

“He said to them, ‘Go!’ So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down a steep bank into the sea and drowned in the water.”

Jesus spoke one word.

“Go!”

That was all it took.

The demons came out of the men.

They went into the pigs.

And the whole herd rushed down a steep bank into the sea and drowned.

This shows how destructive demons are.

What they did to the pigs, they wanted to do to the men.

The men were set free.

The pigs were destroyed.

This also gave clear, visible proof that the demons had truly left.

Cross References

Mark 5:13

> Jesus allowed them to do this. The evil spirits left the man and went into the pigs. Then the herd of about two thousand pigs rushed down the hill into the lake and drowned.

Luke 8:33

> The demons came out of the man and went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the hill into the lake and drowned.

Exodus 14:28

> The water came back and covered the chariots and horsemen. The whole army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea was covered. Not one of them survived.

Spiritual Principle

One word from Jesus is stronger than a legion of demons.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus values one human soul more than a whole herd of pigs.

XXXIII. THE TOWN HEARS THE NEWS

Matthew 8:33 — The Herdsmen Ran

“Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town, and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.”

The men who were tending the pigs ran to town.

They reported everything.

The pigs had drowned.

And the two violent men had been set free.

Luke tells us the people came out and found one of the men sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind.

Cross References

Mark 5:14

> The men who took care of the pigs ran away and told about this in the town and the countryside. People went out to see what had happened.

Luke 8:34

> When the men who took care of the pigs saw what had happened, they ran away and told about it in the town and the countryside.

Luke 8:35

> People went out to see what had happened. They came to Jesus and found the man the demons had left. He was sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and thinking clearly. And the people were afraid.

Spiritual Principle

A changed life is powerful evidence of Jesus' power.

XXXIV. THEY BEGGED HIM TO LEAVE

Matthew 8:34 — Rejecting Jesus

“Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. When they saw Him, they begged Him to leave their region.”

This is one of the saddest verses in the Gospels.

The whole town came out.

They saw Jesus.

They saw the men who had been set free.

And they **begged Him to leave.**

Why?

They were afraid.

And they cared more about their pigs than about the two men.

They cared more about their business than about the Savior.

They preferred their comfort to Jesus' power.

And Jesus left.

He does not force Himself on people who do not want Him.

Cross References

Mark 5:17

> Then the people began to beg Jesus to leave their area.

Luke 8:37

> All the people of the Gerasene area asked Jesus to leave, because they were very afraid. So Jesus got into the boat and went back.

Luke 5:8

> When Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus' knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord. I am a sinful man!”

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to see Jesus' power and still ask Him to leave.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus will not stay where He is not wanted.

Key Truth

Peter said, **“Go away from me,”** but then he followed Jesus.

The townspeople said, **“Leave,”** and they let Him go.

XXXV. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 8

1. Jesus Has Authority Over Disease

With a touch or a word, He heals every sickness.

Principle:

No sickness is beyond the reach of Jesus.

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2. Faith Pleases God

The centurion's faith shows that trusting Jesus' word is greater than relying on signs.

Principle:

Faith takes Jesus at His word.

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3. Jesus Carries Our Burdens

He fulfills prophecy by taking on our sicknesses and weaknesses.

Principle:

Jesus does not stand at a distance from our pain; He carries it.

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4. Following Jesus Has a Cost

True discipleship requires sacrifice and full commitment.

Principle:

Jesus must come first, not later.

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5. Jesus Rules Creation

Even storms and seas obey His command.

Principle:

The Creator is in the boat with His people.

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6. Jesus Has Power Over Demons

Spiritual forces fear Him and cannot resist His authority.

Principle:

The enemy trembles at the name of Jesus.

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7. Not All Will Welcome Him

Some, like the townspeople, would rather keep their comfort than embrace His power.

Principle:

Jesus' power always calls for a response — welcome Him or send Him away.

XXXVI. FOUR AREAS OF JESUS' AUTHORITY

Matthew 8 shows that Jesus has authority over every area of life.

Authority Over Disease

He healed leprosy, paralysis, and fever.

Authority Over Distance

He healed the centurion's servant without going to the house.

Authority Over Nature

He calmed the wind and the waves.

Authority Over Demons

He drove out evil spirits with a single word.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

There is no area of life where Jesus is not Lord.

XXXVII. THREE WAYS JESUS HEALED

Jesus did not heal in only one way.

By His Touch

He touched the leper and Peter's mother-in-law.

By His Word

He spoke from a distance for the centurion's servant.

By His Command

He rebuked the storm and ordered the demons out.

Key Truth

The method changed, but the power was always the same — the power of Jesus Himself.

XXXVIII. FAITH AND FEAR IN MATTHEW 8

Matthew 8 shows a contrast between faith and fear.

The Leper's Faith

He believed Jesus could make him clean.

The Centurion's Great Faith

He believed Jesus' word alone was enough.

The Disciples' Little Faith

They called out to Jesus but were still afraid.

The Demons' Fear

They knew who Jesus was and trembled.

The Townspeople's Fear

They saw Jesus' power and asked Him to leave.

Spiritual Principle

Faith runs toward Jesus; fear without faith runs away from Him.

XXXIX. WHAT MATTHEW 8 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 8 presents Jesus as:

The Compassionate Healer

He touched the untouchable.

The Lord of All Nations

He welcomed a Gentile's faith.

The Suffering Servant

He took our sicknesses and carried our diseases.

The Son of Man

He had no place to lay His head.

The Lord of Creation

The winds and the sea obey Him.

The Son of God

Even the demons recognized Him.

The Deliverer

He sets captives free.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who touched the leper, calmed the storm, and freed the captives is the same Jesus who comes to us today.

XL. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why was it so remarkable that Jesus touched the man with leprosy?

People with leprosy were considered unclean.

No one would touch them.

Touching a leper made a person unclean under the law.

But when Jesus touched him, the leper became clean instead.

Question 2

Why did Jesus tell the healed leper not to tell anyone?

Jesus did not want people to follow Him only for miracles.

Too much excitement could also hinder His ministry.

He wanted the man to go to the priest as the law required, as a testimony.

Question 3

What made the centurion's faith so great?

He was humble, saying he was not worthy.

He believed Jesus did not need to come to his house.

He understood that Jesus' word carried authority over sickness.

Question 4

What did Jesus mean when He said many would come from the east and west?

He meant that people from all nations would be part of God's kingdom.

Gentiles who trust in Jesus will sit at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Question 5

Who are “the subjects of the kingdom” who will be thrown out?

They are those who expected to be in God's kingdom because of their religious background but rejected Jesus.

Religious privilege does not save.

Only faith in Christ does.

Question 6

What did Peter's mother-in-law do after she was healed?

She got up and began to serve.

Her healing was complete and immediate.

Her response to Jesus' touch was service.

Question 7

How does Matthew 8:17 connect Jesus' healings to Isaiah 53?

Isaiah 53 describes the suffering Servant who would carry our sicknesses and sins.

Jesus' healings showed that He came to deal with all the effects of sin.

They pointed ahead to the cross, where He would carry our sin.

Question 8

What did Jesus teach the teacher of the law who wanted to follow Him?

Jesus told him that following Him would cost comfort and security.

Even foxes and birds have homes, but Jesus had no place to lay His head.

Question 9

What did Jesus mean by “Let the dead bury their own dead”?

He meant that following Him must come first.

Those who are spiritually dead can take care of earthly matters.

Nothing should be allowed to delay following Jesus.

Question 10

Why was Jesus asleep during the storm?

He was truly human and was tired from ministry.

He was also at perfect peace, trusting His Father completely.

Question 11

What does the calming of the storm teach about Jesus?

It shows that He has authority over nature.

In the Old Testament, only God rules the wind and the sea.

Jesus did what only God can do.

Question 12

Why did the townspeople ask Jesus to leave?

They were afraid of His power.

They also seemed to value their pigs and their way of life more than the men who were set free.

They chose their comfort over Christ.

Question 13

What should Matthew 8 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 8 should cause believers to live:

- Confident that Jesus is willing to help.
- Humble like the centurion.
- Trusting Jesus' word even without signs.
- Serving others after Jesus touches them.
- Counting the cost of following Him.
- Calling on Jesus in every storm.
- Trusting His authority over every power.
- Welcoming Jesus instead of sending Him away.

XLI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 8 asks several important questions.

Do I Believe Jesus Is Willing to Help Me?

The leper knew Jesus could. Do I believe Jesus wants to?

Do I Feel Too Unclean to Come to Jesus?

Jesus touched the untouchable.

Do I Trust Jesus' Word, Even When I Cannot See Him Working?

Who Am I Bringing to Jesus?

The centurion came for his servant.

How Have I Responded to Jesus' Touch?

Am I serving Him and others?

What Is My “Let Me First”?

What am I putting ahead of following Jesus?

What Storm Am I Facing Right Now?

Have I cried out, **“Lord, save me”**?

Is My Faith Big or Little?

Do I panic even though Jesus is in the boat?

Is There Anything I Value More Than Jesus?

Like the townspeople and their pigs.

Have I Welcomed Jesus, or Asked Him to Leave?

XLII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Jesus Is in the Boat”

The disciples did everything right.

They followed Jesus.

They got into the boat because He did.

And then the storm came.

The waves crashed over the boat.

They were sure they would drown.

And Jesus was asleep.

But He was there.

He was in the boat.

The storm was real.

The danger was real.

But Jesus was more real than both.

And with one word, the storm was gone.

This creates a powerful principle.

Following Jesus does not mean we will never face storms.

It means we will never face them alone.

The question is not whether the storm will come.

The question is who is in the boat with us.

Principle:

When Jesus is in the boat, the storm cannot have the final word.

XLIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 8 shows Jesus coming down from the mountain and walking into human need.

A man covered with disease bows before Him.

Jesus touches him.

A Roman officer pleads for his servant.

Jesus speaks, and the servant is healed.

A woman lies sick with fever.

Jesus takes her hand, and she rises to serve.

The sick and the oppressed are brought to Him.

He heals them all.

Then the storm comes.

The disciples panic.

Jesus speaks, and the sea becomes calm.

Then two violent men run out from the tombs.

Jesus speaks one word, and they are free.

In every scene, the same truth shines:

Jesus has authority.

Over disease.

Over distance.

Over nature.

Over demons.

And in every scene, He uses that authority with compassion.

Matthew 8 therefore reminds us:

No one is too unclean for Jesus to touch.

No one is too far away for His word to reach.

No storm is too strong for Him to calm.

No bondage is too deep for Him to break.

But it also reminds us:

Following Jesus has a cost.

And it is possible to see His power and still send Him away.

The chapter asks the same question the disciples asked:

“What kind of man is this?”

The answer is:

The Healer.

The Lord of creation.

The Son of God.

The One worth following, whatever it costs.

The same call still stands:

Come to Him in faith.

Trust His word.

Serve Him gladly.

Follow Him first.

Call on Him in the storm.

Welcome Him into every part of your life.

And until He returns:

Keep trusting.

Keep following.

Keep calling on Him.

Keep welcoming Him.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Jesus, who came down from the mountain to meet us in our need.

Thank You that He touched the untouchable and made the unclean clean.

Lord Jesus, we come to You like the man with leprosy.

We know You are able.

Thank You that You are also willing.

Make us clean.

Give us the humble faith of the centurion.

Help us trust Your word even when we cannot see You working.

Teach us to bring others to You in prayer.

Thank You that You took our sicknesses and carried our diseases.

Thank You that You carried our sins to the cross.

When You touch our lives, raise us up to serve You and others.

Show us anything we are putting ahead of You.

Help us count the cost and follow You first.

Keep us from saying, “Let me first,” when You say, “Follow Me.”

When storms come, remind us that You are in the boat.

When we are afraid, grow our little faith into great faith.

Teach us to cry out, “Lord, save us,” and to trust You to answer.

Thank You that even the winds and the sea obey You.

Thank You that the powers of darkness tremble before You.

Set free those who are bound by the enemy.

Keep us from loving our comfort, our possessions, or our way of life more than You.

We do not want to ask You to leave.

We want You to stay.

Come into every part of our lives, and be our Lord.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“The men were amazed and asked, ‘What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea obey Him!’” — Matthew 8:27

Central Truth

Jesus has complete authority over sickness, nature, and the spiritual world, and He uses that power with compassion for those who come to Him in faith.

Matthew 8 in One Sentence

Coming down from the mountain, Jesus heals a leper, a centurion's servant, and Peter's mother-in-law, teaches the cost of following Him, calms a furious storm, and frees two men from demons, showing that He has authority over all things, though not everyone welcomes Him.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 9 — Forgiveness, Mercy, and the Lord of the Harvest

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 8 showed that Jesus has authority over sickness, nature, and demons.

Matthew Chapter 9 goes even deeper.

It shows that Jesus has authority over the greatest problem of all:

Sin.

The chapter opens with a paralyzed man carried by his friends.

Everyone expects Jesus to heal his body.

Instead, Jesus says something shocking:

“Your sins are forgiven.”

The religious leaders are offended.

Only God can forgive sins.

So Jesus heals the man's body to prove He has the authority to heal his soul.

Then Jesus does something just as shocking.

He calls a tax collector named Matthew to follow Him.

Tax collectors were hated.

They were seen as traitors and cheaters.

But Jesus goes to Matthew's house and eats with tax collectors and sinners.

When the Pharisees complain, Jesus answers:

“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”

Then the miracles continue.

A synagogue leader's daughter has died.

On the way to his house, a woman who has suffered for twelve years touches Jesus' cloak and is healed.

Then Jesus takes the dead girl by the hand, and she gets up.

Two blind men cry out, **“Son of David, have mercy on us!”**

Jesus opens their eyes.

A man who cannot speak is set free from a demon, and he speaks.

The crowds are amazed.

But the Pharisees accuse Jesus of working by the power of the devil.

The chapter ends with Jesus looking at the crowds.

He sees people who are harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

And His heart is filled with compassion.

He tells His disciples:

“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.”

Matthew 9 therefore shows us two great things about Jesus:

His authority to forgive and restore.

And:

His compassion for people who are lost.

The central truth of Matthew 9 is:

Jesus has authority to forgive sins and power over sickness and death, and His heart of mercy calls sinners to Himself and sends His followers into the harvest.

I. JESUS RETURNS TO HIS OWN TOWN

Matthew 9:1 — Back to Capernaum

“Jesus got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own town.”

At the end of Matthew 8, the people of the Gadarenes begged Jesus to leave.

So Jesus got into a boat and left.

He returned to **His own town.**

This was not Nazareth, where He grew up.

It was Capernaum, where He had made His home for His ministry in Galilee.

One town sent Him away.

Another town would see His power again.

Cross References

Mark 2:1

> A few days later Jesus came back to Capernaum, and people heard that He was at home.

Luke 5:17

> One day Jesus was teaching. Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal people.

Matthew 4:13

> Jesus left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum, a town by the lake, in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali.

Spiritual Principle

When one door closes, Jesus continues His work in another place.

II. YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN

Matthew 9:2 — When Jesus Saw Their Faith

“Some men brought to Him a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the man, ‘Take courage, son. Your sins are forgiven.’”

A paralyzed man could not come to Jesus on his own.

So **some men brought him.**

Mark and Luke tell us the house was so crowded they had to open the roof and lower him down.

Notice what Jesus saw:

Their faith.

Faith can be seen.

It shows itself in action.

These friends would not give up until their friend was in front of Jesus.

Then Jesus spoke tenderly.

“Take courage, son.”

But His next words surprised everyone.

“Your sins are forgiven.”

The man came for healing.

Jesus began with forgiveness.

Jesus knew that the man's deepest need was not his legs.

It was his soul.

Cross References

Mark 2:5

> When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

Luke 5:20

> When Jesus saw their faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

Psalm 103:3

> He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.

Spiritual Principle

Our greatest need is not physical healing but forgiveness.

Application

Like these friends, we can bring people to Jesus by:

- Praying for them.
- Inviting them.
- Helping them.
- Refusing to give up on them.
- Carrying them when they cannot come on their own.

III. “THIS MAN IS BLASPHEMING!”

Matthew 9:3 — The Teachers of the Law

“At this, some of the teachers of the law thought to themselves, ‘This man is blaspheming!’”

The teachers of the law were offended.

They did not say it out loud.

They **thought** it.

“This man is blaspheming!”

To **blaspheme** means to insult God or to claim to be God.

They were right about one thing.

Only God can forgive sins.

When someone sins against you, you can forgive what was done to you.

But only God can forgive sin against God.

So when Jesus said, **“Your sins are forgiven,”** He was speaking as only God can speak.

Their conclusion was wrong.

Jesus was not blaspheming.

He was God.

Cross References

Mark 2:7

> “Why does this man say things like that? He is insulting God! No one can forgive sins except God alone.”

Luke 5:21

> The teachers of the law and the Pharisees began thinking, “Who is this man who is insulting God? Only God can forgive sins.”

John 10:33

> The Jews answered, “We are not stoning You for any good work, but because You insult God. You are only a man, but You claim to be God.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' authority to forgive sin is proof of His divine identity.

Key Truth

If Jesus is not God, His words were blasphemy.

If He is God, His words were grace.

IV. JESUS KNEW THEIR THOUGHTS

Matthew 9:4 — Evil in Your Hearts

“Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, ‘Why do you think evil in your hearts?’”

The teachers had not spoken a word.

But Jesus **knew their thoughts.**

This is another sign that Jesus is God.

Only God can see into the human heart.

Jesus called their thoughts **evil.**

They were not simply confused.

They were rejecting the Son of God and accusing Him of sin.

Cross References

Mark 2:8

> Right away Jesus knew in His spirit what they were thinking. He said to them, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?”

Luke 5:22

> Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?”

Luke 6:8

> But Jesus knew what they were thinking.

Spiritual Principle

Nothing in our hearts is hidden from Jesus.

V. WHICH IS EASIER?

Matthew 9:5 — Forgiven or Get Up?

“Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?”

Jesus asked a clever question.

Which is easier to **say**?

It is easier to say, **“Your sins are forgiven.”**

No one can see whether sins are forgiven.

No one can prove it false.

But if someone says, **“Get up and walk,”** everyone will know immediately whether it is true.

So Jesus was about to do the harder thing to **say**, in order to prove the harder thing to **do.**

Cross References

Mark 2:9

> Which is easier to say to this paralyzed man: “Your sins are forgiven,” or “Get up, pick up your mat, and walk”?

Luke 5:23

> Which is easier to say: “Your sins are forgiven,” or “Get up and walk”?

John 5:8

> Jesus said to him, “Get up, pick up your mat, and walk.”

Spiritual Principle

What Jesus does that we can see proves what He does that we cannot see.

VI. AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS

Matthew 9:6 — Get Up and Go Home

“But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralyzed man—“Get up, take your bed, and go home.”

Jesus gave the reason for the miracle.

“So that you may know.”

The healing was a sign.

It proved that **the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.**

Notice the words **on earth.**

God forgives sin from heaven.

But now the Son of Man was forgiving sin on earth, face to face.

Then Jesus turned to the man.

“Get up.”

“Take your bed.”

“Go home.”

The man who was carried in would walk out.

Cross References

Mark 2:11

> “I tell you, get up, take your mat, and go home.”

Luke 5:24

> “But I will prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat, and go home.”

Acts 9:34

> Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed.” Right away Aeneas got up.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus has authority both to forgive the soul and to heal the body.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The miracle on the outside proved the miracle on the inside.

VII. THE MAN GOT UP

Matthew 9:7 — He Went Home

“The man got up and went home.”

This short verse says everything.

The man got up.

He obeyed immediately.

He did not need help.

His legs were strong.

He went home.

He was forgiven.

He was healed.

He was free.

The teachers of the law could argue about Jesus' words.

But they could not argue with a walking man.

Cross References

Mark 2:12

> The man got up, picked up his mat right away, and walked out while everyone was watching. They were all amazed and praised God. They said, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Luke 5:25

> Right away the man stood up in front of them, picked up his mat, and went home praising God.

John 5:9

> Right away the man was healed. He picked up his mat and began to walk.

Spiritual Principle

Obedience to Jesus' word brings His power into our lives.

VIII. THE CROWDS PRAISED GOD

Matthew 9:8 — Filled with Awe

“When the crowds saw this, they were filled with awe and praised God, who had given such authority to men.”

The crowds responded in two ways.

They were filled with awe.

They knew they had seen something holy.

They praised God.

They gave glory to the right Person.

They did not yet fully understand that Jesus Himself is God.

But they knew God was at work through Him.

Cross References

Luke 5:26

> Everyone was amazed and began to praise God. They were filled with fear and said, “Today we have seen amazing things!”

Luke 7:16

> All the people were filled with fear and began praising God. They said, “A great prophet has come to us!” and “God has come to help His people!”

Psalm 66:5

> Come and see what God has done. He does amazing things for people.

Spiritual Principle

The right response to Jesus' power is worship.

IX. THE CALLING OF MATTHEW

Matthew 9:9 — “Follow Me”

“As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. ‘Follow Me,’ He told him. Matthew got up and followed Him.”

This is the author of this Gospel writing about himself.

Matthew was a tax collector.

Mark and Luke also call him **Levi.**

Tax collectors worked for Rome.

They collected taxes from their own people.

Many of them cheated and took more than they should.

They were considered traitors and sinners.

They were not welcome in the synagogue.

Matthew was **sitting at the tax collector's booth.**

He was doing the very thing that made him hated.

And Jesus said to him:

“Follow Me.”

Matthew **got up and followed Him.**

Peter and Andrew could go back to fishing if they wanted.

But once Matthew left his tax booth, he could never go back.

He left everything.

Cross References

Mark 2:14

> As Jesus was walking along, He saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth. Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.” And Levi got up and followed Him.

Luke 5:27

> After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth. Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.”

Luke 19:5

> When Jesus came to that place, He looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down! I must stay at your house today.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls people others have written off.

Key Truth

The man who once collected money for Rome would one day write the Gospel that tells the world about the King.

X. DINNER WITH SINNERS

Matthew 9:10 — At Matthew's House

“While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Him and His disciples.”

Matthew did not keep Jesus to himself.

He threw a dinner at his house.

And he invited his friends.

Many tax collectors and sinners came.

These were the only friends Matthew had.

Respectable people would not spend time with him.

In that culture, eating with someone was a sign of friendship and acceptance.

Jesus sat down and ate with them.

Cross References

Mark 2:15

> Later, Jesus was eating at Levi's house. Many tax collectors and sinners were eating with Jesus and His followers. There were many of these people who followed Him.

Luke 5:29

> Then Levi gave a big dinner for Jesus at his house. Many tax collectors and other people were eating with them.

Luke 15:1

> Many tax collectors and sinners were coming to listen to Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

People who meet Jesus want their friends to meet Him too.

Application

Like Matthew, you can:

- Open your home.
- Invite your friends.
- Bring people together around Jesus.
- Share what He has done for you.
- Reach people others avoid.

XI. WHY DOES YOUR TEACHER EAT WITH SINNERS?

Matthew 9:11 — The Pharisees Complain

“When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, ‘Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’”

The **Pharisees** were watching.

They did not go to Jesus directly.

They asked His disciples.

“Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

The Pharisees believed holy people should stay away from sinners.

They thought being near sinners would make them unclean.

They could not understand why a teacher of God would sit with such people.

Cross References

Mark 2:16

> When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw Him eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked His followers, “Why does He eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

Luke 5:30

> But the Pharisees and their teachers of the law complained to His followers, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

Luke 15:2

> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to complain, “This man welcomes sinners and even eats with them.”

Spiritual Warning

Religious pride keeps sinners at a distance; grace draws them near.

XII. THE DOCTOR AND THE SICK

Matthew 9:12 — Not the Healthy

“On hearing this, Jesus said, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.’”

Jesus heard the question.

And He answered with a simple picture.

A doctor goes to the sick.

No one complains when a doctor spends time with sick people.

That is what doctors are for.

Jesus is the Great Physician.

He came for people who know they are sick with sin.

There is also a hidden warning here.

The Pharisees thought they were **healthy.**

But they were sick too.

They just did not know it.

Cross References

Mark 2:17

> When Jesus heard this, He said to them, “Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. I did not come to call good people, but sinners.”

Luke 5:31

> Jesus answered them, “Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do.”

Jeremiah 8:22

> Is there no medicine in Gilead? Is there no doctor there? Then why are the wounds of my people not healed?

Spiritual Principle

Only those who know they are sick will come to the Doctor.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is not ashamed to be seen with sinners, because sinners are the reason He came.

XIII. MERCY, NOT SACRIFICE

Matthew 9:13 — I Came to Call Sinners

“Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Jesus told the Pharisees to **“Go and learn.”**

This was a bold thing to say to experts in the Scriptures.

It was as if He said, **“You know your Bible, but you have not understood it.”**

He quoted Hosea 6:6.

“I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”

God commanded sacrifices in the Old Testament.

But sacrifices without mercy were empty.

God wanted hearts that showed love and compassion.

The Pharisees were careful about religious rules.

But they had no mercy for sinners.

Then Jesus explained His mission.

“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Cross References

Hosea 6:6

> I want your faithful love more than your sacrifices. I want you to know Me more than I want your burnt offerings.

Luke 5:32

I have not come to call good people, but sinners, to change their hearts and lives.

1 Timothy 1:15

Here is a true saying that everyone should accept completely: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the worst of them.

Spiritual Principle

God values mercy over religious ritual.

Key Truth

The only people Jesus cannot help are those who think they do not need Him.

XIV. A QUESTION ABOUT FASTING

Matthew 9:14 — John's Disciples Ask

“Then John’s disciples came and asked Him, ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?’”

Now a different group came with a question.

John's disciples.

These were followers of John the Baptist.

John was in prison.

His disciples were likely fasting and mourning.

The Pharisees fasted twice a week.

But Jesus' disciples were eating and celebrating.

To John's disciples, this seemed strange.

Cross References

Mark 2:18

John's followers and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came to Jesus and asked, “Why do John's followers and the Pharisees' followers fast, but Your followers do not?”

Luke 5:33

They said to Jesus, “John's followers often fast and pray, and so do the followers of the Pharisees. But Your followers eat and drink all the time.”

Luke 18:12

> I fast twice a week, and I give a tenth of everything I get.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual practices are good, but they must fit God's purpose for the moment.

XV. THE BRIDEGROOM IS HERE

Matthew 9:15 — The Guests Do Not Mourn

“Jesus answered, ‘How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while He is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away, and then they will fast.’”

Jesus answered with a picture of a wedding.

Jewish weddings were joyful celebrations that could last a whole week.

During that time, no one fasted.

It would be out of place to mourn at a wedding.

Jesus called Himself **the bridegroom.**

In the Old Testament, God is pictured as the husband of His people.

Now Jesus takes that role.

While He was with His disciples, it was a time of joy.

But Jesus also gave a hint of what was coming.

“The bridegroom will be taken away.”

This points to His death.

Then His disciples would fast.

Cross References

Mark 2:20

> But the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

Luke 5:35

> But the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

John 3:29

> The bride belongs only to the groom. The friend who helps the groom waits and listens for him. He is very happy when he hears the groom's voice. That is the same joy I have, and my joy is now complete.

Spiritual Principle

The presence of Jesus brings joy.

Key Truth

This is the first time in Matthew that Jesus hints at His death.

XVI. NEW CLOTH ON AN OLD GARMENT

Matthew 9:16 — The Tear Gets Worse

“No one patches an old garment with unshrunk cloth, because the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse.”

Jesus gave another picture.

New cloth that has not been washed will shrink.

If you sew it onto an old garment, the first time it is washed, the new patch will shrink and pull away.

The tear will be worse than before.

Jesus was saying that He did not come just to patch up the old religious system.

He came to bring something completely new.

Cross References

Mark 2:21

> No one sews a patch of new cloth on an old coat. If he does, the patch will shrink and pull away from the coat, and the hole will become worse.

Luke 5:36

> Jesus told them this story: “No one tears a piece of cloth from a new coat to cover a hole in an old coat. If he does, he ruins the new coat, and the patch will not match the old coat.”

Isaiah 64:6

> All of us have become like something unclean. Even all our good works are like filthy rags.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus does not patch up old lives; He makes them new.

XVII. NEW WINE IN NEW WINESKINS

Matthew 9:17 — Both Are Preserved

“Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will spill out, and the skins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”

In Bible times, wine was stored in containers made from animal skins.

New skins could stretch.

Old skins were dry and stiff.

New wine was still fermenting.

It gave off gas and expanded.

If you put new wine into an old skin, the old skin would burst.

Both the wine and the skin would be lost.

Jesus brings **new wine** — the life of His kingdom.

It cannot be contained in the old, stiff forms of man-made religion.

It needs **new wineskins** — new hearts and a new way of life.

Cross References

Mark 2:22

> No one pours new wine into old leather bags. If he does, the new wine will break the bags, and the wine will be lost along with the bags. New wine should be put into new leather bags.

Luke 5:38

> New wine must be put into new leather bags.

Job 32:19

> Inside I am like bottled-up wine. I am like new wine bags ready to burst.

Spiritual Principle

The new life Jesus gives requires a new heart to hold it.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus did not come to improve religion; He came to give new life.

XVIII. A SYNAGOGUE LEADER'S DAUGHTER

Matthew 9:18 — “My Daughter Has Just Died”

“While Jesus was speaking, a synagogue leader came and knelt before Him, saying, ‘My daughter has just died. But come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live.’”

While Jesus was still speaking, a man came.

He was a **synagogue leader.**

Mark and Luke tell us his name was **Jairus.**

He was an important man in the community.

Many religious leaders opposed Jesus.

But this man **knelt before Him.**

His daughter had just died.

Mark and Luke tell us that when he first came, she was dying, and then word came that she had died.

Matthew gives a shorter account.

But the man's faith was clear.

“Come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live.”

He believed Jesus could do what no doctor could do.

Cross References

Mark 5:23

> He begged Jesus, saying, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put Your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.”

Luke 8:41

> A man named Jairus came to Jesus. He was a leader of the synagogue. He fell at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house.

2 Kings 4:32

> When Elisha came into the house, the boy was lying dead on his bed.

Spiritual Principle

Desperate need can lead to great faith.

Key Truth

Grief brought a proud man to his knees before Jesus.

XIX. JESUS WENT WITH HIM

Matthew 9:19 — The Disciples Followed

“Jesus got up and went with him, and so did His disciples.”

Jesus did not delay.

He **got up and went with him.**

Jesus was willing to go to the house of a grieving father.

His disciples went too.

They were about to see something they had never seen before.

Cross References

Mark 5:24

> So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed Jesus and pushed close around Him.

Luke 8:42

> Jairus had only one daughter. She was about twelve years old, and she was dying. As Jesus went, the crowds pushed close around Him.

1 Kings 17:19

> Elijah said to her, “Give me your son.” He took the boy from her, carried him upstairs to the room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus goes with us into our places of grief.

XX. A WOMAN TOUCHES HIS CLOAK

Matthew 9:20 — Twelve Years of Suffering

“Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind Him and touched the edge of His cloak.”

On the way, there was an interruption.

A woman had been **bleeding for twelve years.**

The girl Jesus was going to see was about twelve years old.

This woman had suffered for as long as that girl had been alive.

Under the Law of Moses, her condition made her ceremonially unclean.

Anyone she touched would become unclean.

She could not worship at the temple.

She was likely alone, ashamed, and poor.

Mark tells us she had spent everything on doctors and only got worse.

She **came up behind Him.**

She did not want to be noticed.

And she **touched the edge of His cloak.**

This was probably the tassel that Jewish men wore on the corners of their garments as a reminder of God's commands.

Cross References

Mark 5:27

> She had heard about Jesus. So she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His coat.

Luke 8:44

> She came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of His coat, and right away her bleeding stopped.

Leviticus 15:25

> If a woman has bleeding for many days... she will be unclean for as long as the bleeding continues.

Spiritual Principle

No one is too ashamed or too unclean to reach out to Jesus.

XXI. “IF I ONLY TOUCH HIS GARMENT”

Matthew 9:21 — Her Quiet Faith

“She said to herself, ‘If I only touch His garment, I will be healed.’”

She did not say this out loud.

She **said it to herself.**

Her faith was quiet.

It was hidden.

But it was real.

She believed that even a touch of Jesus' clothing would heal her.

Her faith may have been mixed with some misunderstanding.

But she was reaching toward the right Person.

And Jesus honored her faith.

Cross References

Mark 5:28

> She thought, “If I can just touch His clothes, I will be healed.”

Luke 8:47

> When the woman saw that she could not hide, she came forward, shaking with fear, and fell down before Jesus. In front of everyone, she told why she had touched Him and how she had been healed right away.

2 Kings 13:21

> Some people were burying a man... They threw the body into Elisha's grave. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came back to life and stood up.

Spiritual Principle

Even small, imperfect faith in Jesus can receive His power.

Key Truth

It is not the strength of our faith that heals.

It is the strength of the One we put our faith in.

XXII. “TAKE COURAGE, DAUGHTER”

Matthew 9:22 — Your Faith Has Made You Well

“Jesus turned, saw her, and said, ‘Take courage, daughter. Your faith has made you well.’ And the woman was healed at that very moment.”

The woman tried to stay hidden.

But **Jesus turned** and **saw her.**

He did not let her slip away unnoticed.

He wanted her to receive more than physical healing.

He spoke to her personally.

“Take courage, daughter.”

This is a tender word of family love.

For twelve years, people had kept their distance from her.

Now Jesus calls her a member of God's family.

“Your faith has made you well.”

The word **well** can also mean **saved.**

She was healed in body.

And she was restored in her whole life.

Cross References

Mark 5:34

> Jesus said to her, “Dear woman, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. You are healed of your sickness.”

Luke 8:48

> Jesus said to her, “Dear woman, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”

Mark 10:52

> Jesus said, “Go. Your faith has healed you.” Right away the man could see again, and he followed Jesus on the road.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus heals not only our bodies but our shame.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The woman reached for the edge of His cloak; Jesus gave her the center of His attention.

XXIII. THE NOISY CROWD

Matthew 9:23 — The Flute Players

“When Jesus entered the synagogue leader’s house and saw the noisy crowd and the flute players,”

Jesus arrived at the house.

The mourning had already begun.

In Jewish custom, families hired professional mourners and flute players at a death.

Even the poorest family was expected to hire at least two flute players and one wailing woman.

The house was filled with noise, weeping, and sad music.

Cross References

Mark 5:38

> They came to the house of the synagogue leader, and Jesus saw many people crying loudly. There was a lot of confusion.

Luke 8:52

> Everyone was crying and feeling sad because the girl was dead. But Jesus said, “Stop crying. She is not dead, only asleep.”

Jeremiah 9:17

> This is what the LORD who commands armies says: “Think about what is happening! Call for the women who are paid to cry at funerals. Send for those who are best at it.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus walks into the noise of our grief.

XXIV. “NOT DEAD BUT ASLEEP”

Matthew 9:24 — They Laughed at Him

“He said, ‘Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep.’ But they laughed at Him.”

Jesus told the mourners to leave.

“The girl is not dead but asleep.”

The girl really was dead.

But Jesus was speaking of death as something temporary.

For Jesus, raising someone from death was as easy as waking someone from sleep.

The mourners **laughed at Him.**

Their tears turned instantly into mocking laughter.

They knew she was dead.

They did not know who was standing in front of them.

Cross References

Mark 5:39

> Jesus went into the house and said to them, “Why are you crying and making so much noise? The child is not dead, only asleep.”

Luke 8:53

> The people laughed at Jesus, because they knew the girl was dead.

John 11:11

> After Jesus said this, He added, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him.”

Spiritual Principle

For those who belong to Jesus, death is like sleep.

Key Truth

The world may laugh at the promise of resurrection.

But Jesus has the last word over death.

XXV. THE GIRL GOT UP

Matthew 9:25 — He Took Her by the Hand

“After the crowd had been put outside, He went in, took the girl by the hand, and she got up.”

Jesus had the mocking crowd **put outside.**

Mark tells us He took only the girl's parents and three disciples: Peter, James, and John.

Then Jesus **took the girl by the hand.**

Under the law, touching a dead body made a person unclean.

But once again, Jesus' touch did not make Him unclean.

It brought life.

And she got up.

Cross References

Mark 5:41

> Taking the child by the hand, Jesus said to her, “Talitha koum!” This means, “Little girl, I tell you, get up!”

Luke 8:54

> But Jesus took her by the hand and called to her, “Child, get up!”

1 Kings 17:22

> The LORD answered Elijah's prayer. The boy's life came back into him, and he lived.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus has power over death.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Death is no match for the One who holds the keys to life.

XXVI. THE NEWS SPREAD

Matthew 9:26 — Throughout That Region

“News of this spread throughout that region.”

A dead girl was alive.

Her family knew it.

Her neighbors knew it.

The mourners who laughed knew it.

Soon the whole region knew it.

Something this great could not be kept quiet.

Cross References

Mark 5:43

> Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell people about this. Then He told them to give the girl something to eat.

Luke 8:56

> The girl's parents were amazed, but Jesus told them not to tell anyone what had happened.

Mark 1:28

> And the news about Jesus spread quickly everywhere in the area of Galilee.

Spiritual Principle

What Jesus does cannot stay hidden for long.

XXVII. TWO BLIND MEN

Matthew 9:27 — “Son of David, Have Mercy on Us!”

“As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, calling out, ‘Son of David, have mercy on us!’”

Two blind men **followed** Jesus.

They could not see Him.

But they knew where He was.

They kept calling out.

“Son of David, have mercy on us!”

Son of David was a title for the Messiah.

These blind men could not see with their eyes.

But they saw who Jesus was more clearly than many who had perfect eyesight.

They asked for **mercy.**

They did not demand.

They did not claim to deserve anything.

They simply cried out for mercy.

Cross References

Mark 10:47

> When he heard that Jesus from Nazareth was passing by, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Luke 18:38

> The blind man shouted, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Matthew 20:30

> Two blind men were sitting by the road. When they heard Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

Spiritual Principle

The cry for mercy is a prayer Jesus loves to answer.

Key Truth

Sometimes the blind see Jesus more clearly than those who can see.

XXVIII. “DO YOU BELIEVE?”

Matthew 9:28 — “Yes, Lord”

“When He had gone indoors, the blind men came to Him, and He asked them, ‘Do you believe that I am able to do this?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ they replied.”

Jesus did not stop on the road.

He went **indoors.**

The blind men followed Him all the way inside.

They would not give up.

Then Jesus asked them a question.

“Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

Jesus wanted their faith to be clear.

Not faith in a general idea.

Faith in Him.

“Yes, Lord.”

Their answer was simple and direct.

Cross References

Mark 10:51

> Jesus asked him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” The blind man answered, “Teacher, I want to see.”

Matthew 20:32

> Jesus stopped and called to them. He asked, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

Mark 9:23

> Jesus said to the father, “You said, ‘If You can!’ All things are possible for the one who believes.”

Spiritual Principle

Persistence and faith go together.

Application

Jesus still asks each of us:

- Do you believe I am able?
- Do you believe I can forgive you?
- Do you believe I can change you?
- Do you believe I can help you?
- Do you believe I can do what I have promised?

XXIX. ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH

Matthew 9:29 — He Touched Their Eyes

“Then He touched their eyes and said, ‘According to your faith let it be done to you.’”

Jesus **touched their eyes.**

Again, His touch brought healing.

Then He spoke.

“According to your faith let it be done to you.”

Their faith did not create the power.

Their faith received the power.

They believed Jesus was able.

And He did what they believed He could do.

Cross References

Matthew 20:34

> Jesus felt sorry for the men and touched their eyes. Right away they could see, and they followed Him.

Luke 18:42

> Jesus said to him, “You can see again. Your faith has healed you.”

Isaiah 42:7

> You will open the eyes of the blind. You will free prisoners from their prisons and bring out those who sit in darkness.

Spiritual Principle

Faith is the hand that receives what Jesus offers.

XXX. THEIR EYES WERE OPENED

Matthew 9:30 — A Stern Warning

“Their eyes were opened. Jesus warned them sternly, ‘See that no one knows about this.’”

Their eyes were opened.

For the first time, they could see.

The first face they saw was the face of Jesus.

Isaiah had promised that when God came to save His people, the eyes of the blind would be opened.

Jesus was fulfilling that promise.

Then Jesus **warned them sternly** not to tell anyone.

He did not want crowds coming to Him only for miracles.

He also knew that people had wrong ideas about the Messiah.

Many expected a political king.

Jesus wanted to reveal Himself in His own way and in His own time.

Cross References

Mark 7:36

> Jesus told the people not to tell anyone. But the more He told them not to, the more they told about it.

Isaiah 35:5

> Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will hear.

John 9:7

> Jesus said to him, “Go and wash in the pool of Siloam.” So the man went, washed, and came back seeing.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus fulfills the promises of God in His own way and in His own time.

XXXI. THEY SPREAD THE NEWS

Matthew 9:31 — All Over That Region

“But they went out and spread the news about Him all over that region.”

The men disobeyed.

They told everyone.

We can understand their excitement.

But they did not do what Jesus said.

Their disobedience may have made Jesus' work harder.

Mark tells us that after another healed man spread the news, Jesus could no longer enter towns openly.

Even good intentions do not replace obedience.

Cross References

Mark 1:45

> But the man left and began telling everyone. He spread the news about what happened, so Jesus could no longer enter a town openly.

Luke 5:15

> But the news about Jesus spread even more. Many people came to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses.

Psalm 107:22

> Let them offer sacrifices to thank Him and tell about what He has done with joyful songs.

Spiritual Principle

Obedience is better than enthusiasm without obedience.

XXXII. A MAN WHO COULD NOT SPEAK

Matthew 9:32 — Brought to Jesus

“While they were leaving, a man who was mute and demon-possessed was brought to Jesus.”

As the two men who had been blind were leaving, another man was **brought to Jesus.**

This man was **mute.**

He could not speak.

And his condition was caused by a **demon.**

Not every sickness is caused by demons.

The Bible makes a clear difference between sickness and demon possession.

But in this case, the man's silence was the work of an evil spirit.

Cross References

Matthew 12:22

> Then some people brought to Jesus a man who had a demon in him. The man was blind and could not talk. Jesus healed him, so the man could talk and see.

Luke 11:14

> Jesus was forcing out a demon that made a man unable to talk. When the demon came out, the man was able to speak, and the people were amazed.

Mark 9:17

> A man from the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought my son to You. He has an evil spirit in him that keeps him from talking.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is able to free those bound by the enemy.

XXXIII. NOTHING LIKE THIS HAS EVER BEEN SEEN

Matthew 9:33 — The Mute Man Spoke

“When the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, ‘Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.’”

Jesus drove out the demon.

And **the man spoke.**

The crowds were **amazed.**

“Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”

Think about all they had seen in this chapter.

A paralyzed man walked.

A woman was healed after twelve years.

A dead girl was raised.

Two blind men saw.

A mute man spoke.

Israel had seen great things in its history.

But never anything like Jesus.

Cross References

Mark 7:37

> The people were completely amazed and said, “Jesus does everything well. He even makes deaf people hear and people who can't talk able to speak.”

Matthew 12:23

> All the people were amazed and said, “Could this man be the Son of David?”

Isaiah 35:6

> Crippled people will jump like deer, and those who cannot talk will shout with joy.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus does what no one else has ever done.

Key Truth

The signs Isaiah promised were happening right in front of them.

XXXIV. THE PRINCE OF DEMONS

Matthew 9:34 — The Pharisees' Accusation

“But the Pharisees said, ‘It is by the prince of demons that He drives out demons.’”

The crowd was amazed.

But the **Pharisees** were not.

They could not deny that the miracles were real.

So they gave them an evil explanation.

“It is by the prince of demons that He drives out demons.”

They said Jesus was working with Satan.

This is one of the most serious accusations in the Bible.

They saw the work of God's Spirit and called it the work of the devil.

In Matthew 12, Jesus will answer this accusation and give a strong warning.

Cross References

Matthew 12:24

> When the Pharisees heard this, they said, “This man uses the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, to force demons out of people.”

Mark 3:22

> The teachers of the law who came from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul in Him! He uses the power of the ruler of demons to force demons out of people.”

Luke 11:15

> But some of them said, “Jesus uses the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, to force demons out of people.”

Spiritual Warning

A hardened heart can see God's work and still reject it.

Key Truth

Miracles alone do not change hearts.

Some people will refuse to believe no matter what they see.

XXXV. JESUS WENT THROUGH ALL THE TOWNS

Matthew 9:35 — Teaching, Preaching, Healing

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness.”

This verse is almost the same as Matthew 4:23.

Matthew uses these two verses like bookends.

Between them are the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5–7 and the miracles in chapters 8–9.

Jesus' ministry had three parts.

Teaching — explaining God's Word.

Preaching — announcing the good news of the kingdom.

Healing — showing God's power and compassion.

And He went to **all** the towns and villages.

Not only to the big cities.

To the small places too.

Cross References

Mark 6:6

> Then Jesus went around to the other villages in that area and taught.

Matthew 4:23

> Jesus went everywhere in Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, telling the good news about the kingdom, and healing all the people's diseases and sicknesses.

Luke 8:1

> After this, Jesus traveled through towns and villages, telling the good news about the kingdom of God. The twelve apostles were with Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' ministry reached every place and met every need.

XXXVI. SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD

Matthew 9:36 — He Had Compassion on Them

“When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

This is one of the most beautiful verses in Matthew.

Jesus saw the crowds.

Some leaders see crowds as an audience.

Some see crowds as a problem.

Jesus saw people.

And **He had compassion on them.**

The word means a deep feeling from the inside.

His heart was moved.

He saw that they were:

Harassed — troubled, worn out, beaten down.

Helpless — thrown down, with no strength to get up.

Like sheep without a shepherd — lost, unprotected, and confused.

Their religious leaders were not caring for them.

They needed a true Shepherd.

Cross References

Mark 6:34

> When Jesus got out of the boat, He saw a large crowd. He felt sorry for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.

Numbers 27:17

> ...so that the LORD's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.

Ezekiel 34:5

> The sheep were scattered because there was no shepherd. They became food for every wild animal.

Spiritual Principle

Compassion sees people the way Jesus sees them.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus did not look at the crowds and see a number; He looked and saw sheep who needed a Shepherd.

XXXVII. THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL

Matthew 9:37 — The Workers Are Few

“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.’”

Jesus turned to His disciples.

He changed the picture from sheep to a harvest.

The harvest is plentiful.

There were many people ready to receive the good news.

The field was full.

But the workers are few.

There were not enough people to bring in the harvest.

In farming, a harvest must be gathered at the right time.

If it is not gathered, it will be lost.

Cross References

Luke 10:2

> He said to them, “There are a great many people to harvest, but there are only a few workers. So pray to God, who owns the harvest, that He will send more workers to help gather His harvest.”

John 4:35

> You say, “Four more months to wait before we gather the grain.” But I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields. They are ready for harvesting now.

Joel 3:13

> Swing the sickle, because the harvest is ready.

Spiritual Principle

The problem is never the harvest; it is the shortage of workers.

Key Truth

There are more people ready to hear about Jesus than there are people willing to tell them.

XXXVIII. PRAY FOR WORKERS

Matthew 9:38 — The Lord of the Harvest

“Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.”

What did Jesus tell His disciples to do about the shortage?

He did not first tell them to make a plan.

He told them to **pray.**

Ask the Lord of the harvest.

God is the **Lord of the harvest.**

The harvest belongs to Him.

The workers belong to Him.

He is the One who sends.

Notice what happens next.

In Matthew 10, the very disciples who were told to pray for workers are sent out as workers.

Often, the people who pray for workers become the answer to their own prayers.

Cross References

Luke 10:2

> He said to them, “There are a great many people to harvest, but there are only a few workers. So pray to God, who owns the harvest, that He will send more workers to help gather His harvest.”

Acts 13:2

> While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart Barnabas and Saul for Me to do a special work I have chosen them for.”

2 Thessalonians 3:1

> And now, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the Lord's message will spread quickly and be honored, just as it was with you.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer comes before mission.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Be careful when you pray for workers — God may send you.

XXXIX. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 9

1. Jesus Has Authority to Forgive Sins

Healing the paralyzed man proves His divine power.

Principle:

Only God can forgive sins, and Jesus forgives sins.

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2. Jesus Calls the Unlikely

Matthew the tax collector shows that God's grace extends to the rejected.

Principle:

No one is too far gone for Jesus to call.

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3. Mercy Over Sacrifice

God desires love and compassion, not empty rituals.

Principle:

Religion without mercy misses the heart of God.

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4. Faith Brings Healing

Both the bleeding woman and the blind men received healing through faith.

Principle:

Faith reaches out, and Jesus responds.

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5. Jesus Conquers Death

Raising the girl shows His power even over the grave.

Principle:

For those who belong to Jesus, death is not the end.

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6. Compassion Fuels Mission

Jesus saw the crowds as lost sheep and called His followers to pray for workers in the harvest.

Principle:

When we see people the way Jesus sees them, we will join His mission.

XL. THE MIRACLES OF MATTHEW 9

Matthew 9 records several miracles, each showing a different side of Jesus' power.

The Paralyzed Man

Authority over sin and sickness.

The Bleeding Woman

Power over long-term suffering and shame.

The Synagogue Leader's Daughter

Power over death.

The Two Blind Men

Power to open eyes.

The Mute Man

Power over demons and the power to restore speech.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

From sin to sickness to shame to death, there is nothing Jesus cannot overcome.

XLI. JESUS AND SINNERS

Matthew 9 shows how Jesus treats people others rejected.

The Paralyzed Man

Jesus called him **“son.”**

Matthew the Tax Collector

Jesus called him to follow.

Tax Collectors and Sinners

Jesus ate with them.

The Bleeding Woman

Jesus called her **“daughter.”**

The Crowds

Jesus had compassion on them.

Key Truth

The people the world pushes away, Jesus draws near.

XLII. THE OLD AND THE NEW

Jesus' teaching about cloth and wineskins shows that He brings something new.

The Old

- Man-made rules.
- Religious rituals without mercy.
- Fasting to look holy.
- Keeping sinners at a distance.

The New

- A living relationship with Jesus.
- Mercy and compassion.
- Joy in the presence of the Bridegroom.
- Welcoming sinners to repentance.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus does not patch up the old; He makes all things new.

XLIII. WHAT MATTHEW 9 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 9 presents Jesus as:

The Forgiver of Sins

He has authority on earth to forgive sins.

The Knower of Hearts

He knows our thoughts.

The Great Physician

He came for the sick.

The Bridegroom

His presence brings joy.

The Giver of New Life

He brings new wine.

The Lord Over Death

He raised the girl to life.

The Son of David

The promised Messiah.

The Compassionate Shepherd

He sees the lost and is moved.

The Lord of the Harvest

He sends workers into His field.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The One who forgives sin, heals the sick, and raises the dead is the same One who looks at the lost with compassion and sends us to reach them.

XLIV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did Jesus forgive the paralyzed man's sins before healing him?

Because the man's greatest need was forgiveness.

His body needed healing, but his soul needed it more.

Jesus also used the healing to prove that He had authority to forgive sins.

Question 2

Why did the teachers of the law think Jesus was blaspheming?

They knew that only God can forgive sins.

When Jesus forgave sins, He was acting as God.

They were right that only God can forgive, but wrong to reject Jesus, because He is God.

Question 3

Why were tax collectors hated?

They worked for Rome and collected taxes from their own people.

Many cheated and took more than they should.

They were seen as traitors and sinners.

Question 4

What did Matthew give up to follow Jesus?

He left his tax booth, his income, and his way of life.

Unlike the fishermen, he could not easily go back.

He left everything to follow Jesus.

Question 5

What did Jesus mean by “I desire mercy, not sacrifice”?

He was quoting Hosea 6:6.

God wants hearts of love and compassion more than religious rituals.

The Pharisees kept rules but had no mercy for sinners.

Question 6

Why didn't Jesus' disciples fast while He was with them?

Jesus is the Bridegroom.

While He was with them, it was a time of joy, like a wedding.

He said they would fast after He was taken away.

Question 7

What do the pictures of new cloth and new wine teach?

Jesus did not come to patch up old religion.

He came to bring something completely new.

New life requires a new heart to hold it.

Question 8

What was special about the woman who touched Jesus' cloak?

She had suffered for twelve years and was considered unclean.

She reached out in quiet faith.

Jesus healed her, noticed her, and called her **“daughter.”**

Question 9

Why did Jesus say the girl was asleep?

She was truly dead, but for Jesus, death is temporary.

Raising her was as easy for Him as waking someone from sleep.

Question 10

What does the title “Son of David” mean?

It is a title for the Messiah, the promised King from David's family.

The blind men recognized Jesus as the Messiah even though they could not see.

Question 11

Why did the Pharisees say Jesus drove out demons by the prince of demons?

They could not deny the miracles.

So they gave them an evil explanation.

This showed how hard their hearts had become.

Question 12

What did Jesus see when He looked at the crowds?

He saw people who were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

He had compassion on them.

Question 13

What did Jesus tell His disciples to do about the harvest?

He told them to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers.

In the next chapter, He sends them out as workers.

Question 14

What should Matthew 9 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 9 should cause believers to live:

- Grateful for the forgiveness of sins.
- Bringing others to Jesus.
- Welcoming people others reject.
- Showing mercy rather than religious pride.
- Rejoicing in the presence of Jesus.
- Reaching out in faith.
- Trusting Jesus even in death.
- Seeing people with compassion.
- Praying for workers and being willing to go.

XLV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 9 asks several important questions.

Have My Sins Been Forgiven?

That is my greatest need.

Who Am I Carrying to Jesus?

Who are the friends I am bringing to Him in prayer?

Do I Avoid People Jesus Would Welcome?

Who are the “tax collectors and sinners” in my world?

Do I Know That I Am Sick and Need the Doctor?

Or do I think I am healthy?

Am I Showing Mercy or Only Following Rules?

Am I Trying to Patch My Old Life, or Have I Received New Life?

Is There Something I Have Suffered with for a Long Time?

Have I reached out to Jesus?

Do I Believe Jesus Is Able?

Do I See People with the Compassion of Jesus?

Am I Praying for Workers, and Am I Willing to Be One?

XLVI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Jesus Came for the Sick”

The Pharisees could not understand it.

Why would a holy teacher sit at a table with tax collectors?

Why would He let an unclean woman touch Him?

Why would He touch the eyes of blind beggars?

Why would He forgive a paralyzed man before he had done anything to deserve it?

Jesus gave the answer in one sentence:

“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”

Jesus did not come for people who think they are good enough.

He came for people who know they are not.

He came for the paralyzed.

For the sinners.

For the ashamed.

For the grieving.

For the blind.

For the oppressed.

This creates a powerful principle.

The first step toward Jesus is admitting that we need Him.

The proud stay away.

The broken come close.

Principle:

Jesus never turns away a sinner who comes to Him; He only passes by those who think they do not need Him.

XLVII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 9 is full of people in need.

A man who cannot walk.

A man who is despised.

A father whose daughter has died.

A woman who has suffered for twelve years.

Two men who cannot see.

A man who cannot speak.

Crowds who are worn out and lost.

And in every scene, Jesus meets the need.

He forgives.

He calls.

He heals.

He restores.

He raises the dead.

He opens eyes.

He sets captives free.

But the chapter also shows people who refuse Him.

Teachers who call Him a blasphemer.

Pharisees who complain about His friends.

Mourners who laugh at Him.

Religious leaders who say His power comes from the devil.

Matthew 9 therefore reminds us:

Jesus has all authority.

And Jesus has a heart full of compassion.

He has the power to help.

And He has the desire to help.

Then the chapter ends by turning to us.

The harvest is ready.

The crowds are lost.

The workers are few.

The story of Matthew 9 does not end with:

A miracle.

A crowd.

Or an argument.

It ends with:

A Savior full of compassion.

A world full of need.

And a call to pray and go.

The same call still stands:

Come to Jesus for forgiveness.

Bring others to Him.

Show mercy.

Reach out in faith.

See people the way Jesus sees them.

Pray for workers.

Be willing to go.

And until He returns:

Keep praying.

Keep reaching out.

Keep showing mercy.

Keep working in the harvest.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Jesus, who has authority on earth to forgive sins.

Thank You that our greatest need has been met in Him.

Lord Jesus, thank You for saying to sinners like us, “Your sins are forgiven.”

Give us faith like the friends who carried the paralyzed man.

Help us bring the people we love to You.

Thank You for calling Matthew from his tax booth.

Thank You that You call people the world rejects.

Keep us from the pride of the Pharisees.

Teach us to show mercy instead of looking down on others.

Help us see that we are sick and need You, the Great Physician.

Thank You that You are the Bridegroom, and that Your presence brings joy.

Do not let us try to patch up our old lives.

Make us new.

Give us new hearts to hold the new life You give.

Thank You for noticing the woman who reached out in quiet faith.

Thank You that no one is too ashamed or too unclean to come to You.

Thank You that You have power over death.

When we grieve, remind us that for those who belong to You, death is like sleep.

Son of David, have mercy on us.

Open our eyes to see You clearly.

Set free those who are bound by the enemy.

Give us Your compassion for the crowds.

Help us see people as sheep who need a Shepherd.

Lord of the harvest, send out workers into Your harvest field.

And if You choose to send us, make us willing to go.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” — Matthew 9:36

Central Truth

Jesus has authority to forgive sins and power over sickness and death, and His heart of mercy calls sinners to Himself and sends His followers into the harvest.

Matthew 9 in One Sentence

Jesus forgives and heals a paralyzed man, calls a tax collector and eats with sinners, teaches that He brings new life, heals a suffering woman, raises a dead girl, opens blind eyes, frees a mute man, and, filled with compassion for the lost, calls His followers to pray for workers in the harvest.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 10 — The Mission of the Twelve

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 9 ended with Jesus looking at the crowds with compassion.

They were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus told His disciples:

“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.”

He told them to pray for workers.

Now, in Matthew Chapter 10, Jesus sends out the very men who prayed.

The disciples become the answer to their own prayer.

This chapter is the second of five great teaching sections in Matthew.

It is often called **the Mission Discourse.**

Jesus calls twelve men.

He gives them authority.

He tells them where to go and what to say.

He tells them to travel light and trust God to provide.

Then He gives them a sober warning.

“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves.”

They will be arrested.

They will be beaten.

They will be hated.

Even their own families may turn against them.

But Jesus also gives them great encouragement.

The Spirit of the Father will speak through them.

Not one sparrow falls without the Father's care.

Every hair on their heads is numbered.

They do not need to be afraid.

Then Jesus speaks about the cost of following Him.

Loyalty to Him must come before family.

Every disciple must take up a cross.

And whoever loses his life for Jesus will find it.

The chapter ends with a promise.

Even a cup of cold water given to one of His followers will not go unrewarded.

Matthew 10 therefore shows us two great truths:

Jesus sends His people into the world with His authority.

And:

Following Jesus will cost everything, but it is worth everything.

The central truth of Matthew 10 is:

Jesus sends His followers into a hostile world with His authority and message, calling them to fearless, costly loyalty and promising His care and reward to all who are faithful.

I. JESUS GIVES AUTHORITY TO THE TWELVE

Matthew 10:1 — Authority to Heal and Deliver

“Jesus called His twelve disciples to Him and gave them authority to drive out unclean spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.”

Jesus **called** His twelve disciples.

Before He sent them out, He called them to Himself.

Being with Jesus comes before going for Jesus.

Then He **gave them authority.**

They did not have this power on their own.

It came from Jesus.

He gave them authority to do the same things He had been doing:

Drive out unclean spirits.

Heal every disease and sickness.

The number **twelve** was important.

Israel had twelve tribes.

Jesus was forming a new people of God, built on twelve apostles.

Cross References

Mark 6:7

> Jesus called the twelve followers together and began to send them out two by two. He gave them authority over evil spirits.

Luke 9:1

> Jesus called the twelve apostles together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to heal diseases.

Luke 10:1

> After this, the Lord chose seventy-two others and sent them out two by two ahead of Him to every town and place where He planned to go.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus never sends His people out without first equipping them.

Key Truth

The authority belongs to Jesus.

His servants only carry it.

II. THE NAMES OF THE APOSTLES

Matthew 10:2 — Peter, Andrew, James, and John

“These are the names of the twelve apostles: First, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother; James son of Zebedee and John his brother;”

This is the only place in Matthew where they are called **apostles.**

The word **apostle** means **“one who is sent.”**

A disciple is a learner.

An apostle is a messenger sent with authority.

The list begins with **Simon Peter.**

Matthew says **“First.”**

Peter was not more important in God's eyes.

But he was often the leader and spokesman of the group.

Then come **Andrew**, Peter's brother.

James and **John**, the sons of Zebedee.

These four fishermen were the first called.

Cross References

Mark 3:16

> These are the twelve He chose: Simon, whom Jesus named Peter...

Luke 6:14

> Simon, whom He named Peter, and his brother Andrew; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew...

John 1:40

> Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two men who heard John speak and then followed Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

God knows His servants by name.

III. PHILIP, BARTHOLOMEW, THOMAS, AND MATTHEW

Matthew 10:3 — An Unlikely Group

“Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus;”

Philip was from Bethsaida, the same town as Peter and Andrew.

Bartholomew is probably the same man John's Gospel calls **Nathanael.**

Thomas is often remembered for doubting, but he also showed great courage and later made one of the greatest confessions: **“My Lord and my God!”**

Matthew humbly calls himself **“the tax collector.”**

He did not hide his past.

He wanted readers to know the grace that had called him.

James son of Alphaeus is sometimes called **James the Less**, perhaps because he was younger or shorter.

Thaddaeus is also called **Judas son of James** in Luke.

We know very little about some of these men.

But Jesus chose each one.

Cross References

Mark 3:18

> Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot...

John 1:45

> Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the One Moses wrote about in the law, and the prophets also wrote about Him. He is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

Matthew 9:9

> As Jesus was leaving, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax booth. Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.” So Matthew got up and followed Him.

Spiritual Principle

God uses ordinary people, including some the world would forget.

Key Truth

Matthew never forgot where he came from.

That is why he never forgot the grace of Jesus.

IV. SIMON THE ZEALOT AND JUDAS ISCARIOT

Matthew 10:4 — The One Who Would Betray Him

“Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, the one who would betray Him.”

Simon the Zealot had probably belonged to the Zealots.

They were Jewish patriots who wanted to overthrow Rome by force.

Think about this.

Jesus chose **Matthew**, who worked for Rome.

And **Simon**, who wanted to fight Rome.

In any other group, they would have been enemies.

In Jesus, they became brothers.

The list ends with **Judas Iscariot.**

He is always listed last.

And he is always marked as **the one who would betray Him.**

Judas walked with Jesus for three years.

He saw the miracles.

He heard the teaching.

He was sent out with the others.

Yet his heart was never truly given to Jesus.

Cross References

Luke 6:15

> Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot...

Acts 1:13

> They went into the upstairs room where they were staying: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

John 13:2

> The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus can unite people who would otherwise be enemies.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to be close to Jesus outwardly and far from Him inwardly.

V. NOT TO THE GENTILES OR SAMARITANS

Matthew 10:5 — Instructions for the Mission

“Jesus sent out these twelve with the following instructions: ‘Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans.’”

Now Jesus gives specific instructions.

For this mission, they were not to go to the **Gentiles** or the **Samaritans.**

Why?

Jesus was not against the Gentiles.

He had just healed a Roman centurion's servant.

But God's plan had an order.

The good news would go first to Israel.

Later, after His resurrection, Jesus would send His followers to all nations.

This mission was limited.

The Great Commission would be worldwide.

Cross References

Matthew 15:24

> Jesus answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the people of Israel.”

John 4:9

> The Samaritan woman said to Him, “You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. How can You ask me for a drink?” Jews did not have anything to do with Samaritans.

Acts 1:8

> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Spiritual Principle

God works according to His own plan and timing.

Key Truth

What began with Israel would one day reach the whole world.

VI. THE LOST SHEEP OF ISRAEL

Matthew 10:6 — Go to Israel First

“Go instead to the lost sheep of Israel.”

Jesus called Israel **lost sheep.**

This connects back to Matthew 9:36.

The crowds were like sheep without a shepherd.

They were religious.

They had the law.

They had the temple.

But they were **lost.**

Their leaders had failed them.

They needed to hear about the true Shepherd.

Cross References

Matthew 15:24

> Jesus answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the people of Israel.”

Jeremiah 50:6

> My people have been like lost sheep. Their shepherds led them the wrong way and made them wander on the mountains.

Ezekiel 34:5

> The sheep were scattered because there was no shepherd. They became food for every wild animal.

Spiritual Principle

Religious people can still be lost.

VII. PROCLAIM THE KINGDOM

Matthew 10:7 — The Message

“As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’”

Notice the words **“as you go.”**

Preaching was not only for special places.

It was part of their journey.

And their message was the same message John the Baptist preached.

The same message Jesus preached.

“The kingdom of heaven has come near.”

The King had arrived.

God's rule was breaking into the world.

It was time to repent and believe.

Cross References

Matthew 3:2

> He said, “Change your hearts and lives, because the kingdom of heaven is near!”

Matthew 4:17

> From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Change your hearts and lives, because the kingdom of heaven is near.”

Luke 10:9

> Heal the sick who are there, and tell them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.”

Spiritual Principle

The message does not change; only the messengers do.

VIII. FREELY YOU HAVE RECEIVED

Matthew 10:8 — Freely Give

“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.”

Jesus told them to do what He had been doing.

Heal the sick.

Cleanse the lepers.

Raise the dead.

Drive out demons.

Their message would be backed by power.

Then Jesus gave an important principle.

“Freely you have received; freely give.”

They did not pay for this power.

It was a gift.

So they must not charge people for it.

Ministry is not a business for personal profit.

Grace received must become grace given.

Cross References

Luke 9:2

> He sent them out to tell about the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

Acts 3:6

> But Peter said, “I don't have any silver or gold, but I do have something else I can give you. In the name of Jesus Christ from Nazareth, stand up and walk!”

2 Kings 5:16

> Elisha answered, “As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept anything.” Naaman kept asking him to take a gift, but Elisha refused.

Spiritual Principle

What God has given us freely, we must share freely.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Grace that is received but never given has not been fully understood.

IX. NO GOLD, SILVER, OR COPPER

Matthew 10:9 — Do Not Take Money

“Do not take gold, silver, or copper with you.”

Jesus told them not to bring money.

Not gold.

Not silver.

Not even small copper coins.

Men often carried their money in the folds of their belts.

Jesus said to leave it behind.

They were to depend completely on God.

Cross References

Mark 6:8

> He told them, “Take nothing for your trip except a walking stick. Take no bread, no bag, and no money in your belts.”

Luke 9:3

> He said to them, “Take nothing for your trip — no walking stick, no bag, no bread, no money, and not even an extra shirt.”

Luke 10:4

> Don't carry a money bag, a traveling bag, or extra sandals.

Spiritual Principle

God's workers must learn to depend on God's provision.

X. THE WORKER DESERVES HIS FOOD

Matthew 10:10 — Travel Light

“Do not take a traveling bag, an extra shirt, sandals, or a staff, for the worker deserves his food.”

Jesus told them to travel light.

No **traveling bag** for collecting supplies.

No **extra shirt.**

No extra **sandals** or **staff.**

Mark says they could take the one walking stick they had.

The point is that they should not pack extra supplies.

They were not going on a long, comfortable trip.

They were going on an urgent mission.

Then Jesus gave the reason:

“The worker deserves his food.”

The people who received their message would provide for them.

God would care for His workers through His people.

Cross References

Luke 10:7

> Stay in that house. Eat and drink what they give you, because a worker deserves to be paid.

1 Timothy 5:18

> The Scripture says, “Do not tie up the mouth of the ox while it is working in the grain,” and “A worker deserves to be paid.”

1 Corinthians 9:14

> In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the good news should get their living from this work.

Spiritual Principle

Those who serve God's people should be supported by God's people.

Application

Traveling light today can mean:

- Not being weighed down by possessions.
- Trusting God for what you need.
- Keeping your focus on the mission.
- Being ready to go when God calls.
- Supporting those who serve in the gospel.

XI. FIND A WORTHY HOUSE

Matthew 10:11 — Stay Until You Leave

“Whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy there and stay at their house until you leave.”

When they entered a town, they were to look for a **worthy** person.

This meant someone who was open to God and willing to welcome them.

Then they were to **stay** at that house.

They were not to move around looking for better food or a more comfortable home.

Contentment was part of their witness.

Cross References

Luke 9:4

> When you enter a house, stay there until it is time to leave that town.

Luke 10:7

> Stay in that house. Eat and drink what they give you, because a worker deserves to be paid. Don't move from house to house.

Acts 16:15

> Lydia and everyone in her house were baptized. Then she invited us, saying, “If you think I am a true believer in the Lord, come and stay in my house.” And she convinced us to stay.

Spiritual Principle

God's servants should be content with what He provides.

XII. GIVE YOUR GREETING

Matthew 10:12 — Entering the Home

“As you enter the home, give it your greeting.”

The usual Jewish greeting was **“Shalom,”** which means **“peace.”**

But for the apostles, it was more than politeness.

It was a blessing.

They were bringing the peace of God's kingdom into that home.

Cross References

Luke 10:5

> When you enter a house, first say, “Peace be on this house.”

1 Peter 5:14

> Greet each other with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

3 John 1:14

> I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. Peace to you.

Spiritual Principle

Followers of Jesus bring peace wherever they go.

XIII. LET YOUR PEACE REST ON IT

Matthew 10:13 — Or Return to You

“If the household is worthy, let your peace rest on it; if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.”

If the household welcomed them, God's peace would **rest on it.**

If the household rejected them, the peace would **return** to the apostles.

The blessing would not be wasted.

It would come back to them.

The people who rejected the message would lose the blessing.

Cross References

Luke 10:6

> If a person who loves peace is there, your blessing of peace will stay with him. If not, your blessing will come back to you.

Isaiah 52:7

> How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, who announces peace.

John 14:27

> I leave you peace. My peace I give you. I do not give it to you the way the world does. So don't let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

Spiritual Principle

God's peace is offered to all but received only by those who welcome it.

XIV. SHAKE THE DUST OFF YOUR FEET

Matthew 10:14 — When You Are Rejected

“If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet.”

Not everyone would welcome them.

Some would refuse to listen.

Jesus told them what to do.

Leave.

Shake the dust off your feet.

When Jews came back from Gentile lands, they sometimes shook the dust off their feet.

It was a sign that they wanted no part of what was unclean.

For the apostles, it was a solemn sign.

It meant, **“We have done our part. The responsibility is now yours.”**

Cross References

Mark 6:11

> If any town refuses to welcome you or listen to you, leave it and shake its dust off your feet. This will be a warning to them.

Luke 9:5

> If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet as you leave that town. This will be a warning against them.

Acts 13:51

> So Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet against them and went to the city of Iconium.

Spiritual Principle

We are responsible to share the message, not to force people to accept it.

XV. MORE BEARABLE FOR SODOM

Matthew 10:15 — The Day of Judgment

“Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.”

Sodom and Gomorrah were famous for their wickedness.

God destroyed them with fire from heaven.

Yet Jesus says it will be **more bearable** for them on the day of judgment than for a town that rejects His message.

Why?

Because greater light brings greater responsibility.

Sodom never heard the Son of God's message.

These towns did.

To reject the King when He comes is more serious than any other sin.

Cross References

Luke 10:12

> I tell you, on the Judgment Day it will be better for the people of Sodom than for the people of that town.

Genesis 19:24

> Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah from the LORD out of the sky.

Matthew 11:24

> But I tell you, it will be better for the land of Sodom on the Judgment Day than for you.

Spiritual Warning

The more truth we hear, the more responsible we are.

Key Truth

There are degrees of judgment, and rejecting Christ is the most serious of all.

XVI. SHEEP AMONG WOLVES

Matthew 10:16 — Wise and Harmless

“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”

Jesus did not hide the danger.

Sheep among wolves.

Sheep are defenseless.

Wolves are dangerous.

The disciples would be sent into a hostile world.

So Jesus told them how to live.

Wise as serpents.

In the Bible, the serpent is known for being clever and careful.

Be smart.

Be alert.

Do not walk into danger foolishly.

Harmless as doves.

Doves are gentle and innocent.

Be pure.

Be honest.

Do not use evil methods.

Wisdom without innocence becomes trickery.

Innocence without wisdom becomes foolishness.

Jesus wants both.

Cross References

Luke 10:3

> Go now. I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

Genesis 3:1

> Now the snake was more clever than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.

Romans 16:19

> I want you to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil.

Spiritual Principle

God's people must be both shrewd and pure.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Be smart enough to see evil coming and pure enough to never take part in it.

XVII. COUNCILS AND SYNAGOGUES

Matthew 10:17 — Be on Your Guard

“Be on your guard, for you will be handed over to councils and flogged in synagogues.”

Jesus said, **“Be on your guard.”**

Persecution would come from religious leaders.

Councils were local Jewish courts.

Synagogues could carry out punishment by whipping.

The book of Acts records that the apostles were beaten for preaching about Jesus.

Paul says he was whipped five times by the Jews.

Cross References

Mark 13:9

> You must be careful. People will arrest you and take you to court and beat you in their synagogues. You will be forced to stand before governors and kings because of Me, to tell them about Me.

Acts 5:40

> They called the apostles in, beat them, and told them not to speak in the name of Jesus again. Then they let them go.

2 Corinthians 11:24

> Five times the Jews gave me thirty-nine lashes with a whip.

Spiritual Principle

Persecution sometimes comes from religious people.

XVIII. BEFORE GOVERNORS AND KINGS

Matthew 10:18 — A Testimony

“You will be brought before governors and kings because of Me, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.”

Persecution would also come from government leaders.

Governors were Roman officials.

Kings included rulers like Herod.

But Jesus showed them the purpose.

“As a testimony.”

Their trials would become opportunities.

They would stand before people who would never come to church.

And they would tell them about Jesus.

Paul did exactly this before governors like Felix and Festus and before King Agrippa.

Cross References

Acts 25:23

> The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great show... Then Festus ordered the soldiers to bring Paul in.

Acts 9:15

> But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. He will tell about Me to Gentiles, to kings, and to the people of Israel.”

Mark 13:10

> But before these things happen, the good news must be told to all nations.

Spiritual Principle

God turns persecution into opportunity.

Key Truth

The courtroom can become a pulpit.

XIX. DO NOT WORRY ABOUT WHAT TO SAY

Matthew 10:19 — It Will Be Given to You

“But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say,”

Standing before powerful rulers would be frightening.

These were ordinary men.

Many were fishermen.

They were not trained speakers.

But Jesus told them not to worry.

“You will be given what to say.”

God would give them the words they needed at the moment they needed them.

This is not a promise that preachers do not need to prepare sermons.

It is a promise for believers who are put on trial for their faith.

Cross References

Luke 12:11

> When you are brought into the synagogues before the leaders and other powerful people, don't worry about how to defend yourself or what to say.

Mark 13:11

> When you are arrested and put on trial, don't worry ahead of time about what you should say. Say whatever is given to you at that time, because it is not really you speaking. It is the Holy Spirit.

Exodus 4:12

> Now go! I will help you speak, and I will teach you what to say.

Spiritual Principle

God gives the right words at the right time to those who stand for Him.

XX. THE SPIRIT OF YOUR FATHER

Matthew 10:20 — Speaking Through You

“for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”

This is a wonderful promise.

The Spirit of your Father would speak through them.

They would not stand alone.

God Himself would be their defense.

Notice the words **“your Father.”**

Even in a courtroom, even under arrest, they were still children of a loving Father.

Cross References

Acts 4:8

> Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said to them...

Luke 21:15

> I will give you words and wisdom that none of your enemies will be able to stand against or argue with.

2 Samuel 23:2

> The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me. His word was on my tongue.

Spiritual Principle

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to speak boldly for Christ.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When you stand for Jesus, you never stand alone.

XXI. FAMILY BETRAYAL

Matthew 10:21 — Brother Against Brother

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise against parents and have them put to death.”

This is one of the most painful warnings Jesus gave.

Persecution would not only come from councils and kings.

It would come from **family.**

Brothers.

Fathers.

Children.

Throughout history, many believers have been rejected, reported, and even killed by their own families because they followed Jesus.

This still happens in many parts of the world today.

Cross References

Mark 13:12

> Brothers will turn against their own brothers and hand them over to be killed. Fathers will do the same to their children. Children will turn against their parents and have them killed.

Micah 7:6

> A son will not respect his father. A daughter will turn against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A person's enemies will be the people in his own family.

Luke 21:16

> Even your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends will turn against you, and they will kill some of you.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus may cost the closest relationships.

Application

If you face rejection from family because of your faith:

- Keep loving them.
- Keep praying for them.
- Do not return evil for evil.
- Live in a way that honors Christ.
- Remember that you have a family in God's church.
- Trust God with what you cannot change.

XXII. HATED BY EVERYONE

Matthew 10:22 — Endure to the End

“You will be hated by everyone because of My name, but the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

“Hated by everyone.”

Not because they were bad people.

Because of My name.

The world hated Jesus.

So it would hate those who carry His name.

But Jesus gave a promise.

“The one who endures to the end will be saved.”

Endurance does not earn salvation.

Endurance is the evidence of salvation.

True faith keeps going.

It does not quit when life gets hard.

Cross References

Mark 13:13

> All people will hate you because you follow Me. But those who keep their faith until the end will be saved.

John 15:18

> If the world hates you, remember that it hated Me first.

Daniel 12:12

> Blessed is the one who waits and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

Spiritual Principle

Faith that is real will last.

Key Truth

It is not how you start, but how you finish.

XXIII. FLEE TO ANOTHER TOWN

Matthew 10:23 — Before the Son of Man Comes

“When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”

Jesus gave practical advice.

When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another.

They did not need to stay and die needlessly.

Running from persecution is not always cowardice.

It can be a way to keep spreading the message.

In Acts, persecution scattered believers, and everywhere they went, they preached.

Then Jesus said something hard to understand.

“You will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”

Bible teachers have understood this in different ways.

Some see it as a reference to Jesus' resurrection and His coming in power.

Some see it as the judgment on Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Some see it as His second coming, meaning the mission to Israel will continue until He returns.

What is clear is that the mission would not be finished quickly.

The work would continue until Jesus comes.

Cross References

Acts 8:1

> On that day the church in Jerusalem began to be persecuted, and all the believers except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Acts 14:6

> When Paul and Barnabas learned about this, they ran away to Lystra and Derbe, cities in Lycaonia, and the area around them.

Matthew 24:34

> I tell you the truth, the people living now will not die before all these things happen.

Spiritual Principle

Persecution can scatter the church, but it cannot stop the gospel.

XXIV. THE STUDENT AND THE TEACHER

Matthew 10:24 — Not Above the Master

“The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master.”

Jesus now explains why persecution will come.

A student is not greater than his teacher.

A servant is not greater than his master.

If the world mistreated Jesus, His followers should expect the same.

We should not be surprised when we are treated the way our Master was treated.

Cross References

Luke 6:40

> A student is not better than his teacher. But when he has been fully trained, he will be like his teacher.

John 13:16

> I tell you the truth, a servant is not greater than his master. A messenger is not greater than the one who sent him.

John 15:20

> Remember what I told you: “A servant is not greater than his master.” If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.

Spiritual Principle

Followers of Jesus share in His rejection.

XXV. CALLED BEELZEBUL

Matthew 10:25 — Like Their Teacher

“It is enough for students to be like their teacher, and servants like their master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of His household!”

The goal of a student is to become **like the teacher.**

For the disciples, that would include being treated like Jesus.

Beelzebul was a name for Satan.

It means something like **“lord of the house”** or **“lord of the flies.”**

In Matthew 9:34, the Pharisees said Jesus drove out demons by the prince of demons.

They called Jesus the devil's servant.

If they called the Master of the house **Beelzebul**, they would call His servants even worse names.

Cross References

Matthew 12:24

> When the Pharisees heard this, they said, “This man uses the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, to force demons out of people.”

Mark 3:22

> The teachers of the law who came from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul in Him! He uses the power of the ruler of demons to force demons out of people.”

Matthew 9:34

> But the Pharisees said, “He uses the power of the ruler of demons to force demons out.”

Spiritual Principle

Being insulted for Christ is a sign that we are becoming like Christ.

Key Truth

The goal of every disciple is to become like the Master, even in suffering.

XXVI. NOTHING HIDDEN

Matthew 10:26 — Do Not Be Afraid

“So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing concealed that will not be made known.”

Three times in this passage Jesus says, **“Do not be afraid.”**

This is the first.

Why should they not fear?

Because the truth will come out.

Their enemies might lie about them.

They might be falsely accused.

But one day, God will reveal everything.

The truth about Jesus will be known.

The truth about His followers will be known.

The truth about their enemies will be known.

Cross References

Luke 12:2

> Everything that is hidden will be shown, and everything that is secret will be made known.

Mark 4:22

> Everything that is hidden will be made known, and every secret thing will be brought out into the open.

1 Corinthians 4:5

> So don't judge anything before the right time. Wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light the things that are hidden in darkness, and He will show the secret purposes of people's hearts.

Spiritual Principle

God will one day reveal the whole truth.

XXVII. SPEAK IN THE LIGHT

Matthew 10:27 — Proclaim from the Housetops

“What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the housetops.”

Jesus often taught His disciples privately.

Now they were to share that teaching publicly.

Speak in the light.

Proclaim from the housetops.

In Bible times, houses had flat roofs.

Important announcements were often shouted from rooftops so everyone could hear.

The disciples were not to keep the message secret.

They were to share it boldly.

Cross References

Luke 12:3

> What you have said in the dark will be heard in the light. What you have whispered in a closed room will be shouted from the housetops.

Luke 8:17

> Everything that is hidden will become clear, and every secret thing will be made known.

Habakkuk 2:2

> Write down the vision. Write it clearly on tablets so that a messenger can run with it.

Spiritual Principle

The truth Jesus gives us in private is meant to be shared in public.

XXVIII. FEAR THE RIGHT ONE

Matthew 10:28 — Body and Soul

“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Instead, fear the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

This is the second **“Do not fear.”**

People can kill the body.

But they cannot touch the soul.

Their power has a limit.

God's power has no limit.

He alone can **destroy both soul and body in hell.**

This kind of fear is not terror.

It is deep reverence and respect for God.

When we fear God rightly, we do not need to fear people.

Cross References

Luke 12:4

> I tell you, My friends, don't be afraid of people who can kill the body but after that can do nothing more to hurt you.

Isaiah 51:12

> I, I am the One who comforts you. Why are you afraid of people, who die? Why are you afraid of people who are only like grass?

James 4:12

> There is only one Lawgiver and Judge. He is the only One who can save and destroy. So who are you to judge your neighbor?

Spiritual Principle

The fear of God frees us from the fear of people.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Fear God, and you will fear nothing else.

XXIX. TWO SPARROWS

Matthew 10:29 — Not One Falls

“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s care.”

Sparrows were the cheapest birds sold in the market.

Poor people bought them for food.

Two of them cost only one small coin.

Luke says five could be bought for two coins, so the fifth was thrown in for free.

Yet not one sparrow **falls to the ground** without the Father knowing and caring.

If God watches over sparrows, He certainly watches over His children.

Cross References

Luke 12:6

> Five sparrows are sold for only two pennies, but God does not forget any of them.

Psalm 84:3

> Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow has a nest for herself, near Your altars, LORD who commands armies.

Psalm 50:11

> I know every bird on the mountains, and every animal in the field is Mine.

Spiritual Principle

Nothing happens outside the Father's care.

XXX. EVERY HAIR NUMBERED

Matthew 10:30 — God Knows the Details

“Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”

Most people do not know how many hairs are on their head.

But God does.

He knows every detail of our lives.

Nothing about us is too small for His attention.

This does not mean believers will never suffer.

Jesus has just said they will be persecuted and some will die.

But it means nothing will happen to them that their Father does not know about and hold in His hands.

Cross References

Luke 12:7

> God even knows how many hairs are on your head. So don't be afraid. You are worth much more than many sparrows.

Luke 21:18

> But not one hair on your head will be lost.

1 Samuel 14:45

> As surely as the LORD lives, not one hair from his head will fall to the ground.

Spiritual Principle

God's care for us reaches every detail of our lives.

XXXI. WORTH MORE THAN SPARROWS

Matthew 10:31 — Do Not Be Afraid

“So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

This is the third **“Do not be afraid.”**

Jesus draws the conclusion.

If God cares for sparrows, and He does, then He cares far more for you.

You are worth more than many sparrows.

People are made in God's image.

Believers are His children.

God values you more than you can imagine.

Cross References

Luke 12:24

> Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest, and they don't have storerooms or barns. Yet God feeds them. And you are worth much more than birds.

Psalm 8:5

> You made people a little lower than the angels, and You crowned them with glory and honor.

Matthew 6:26

> Look at the birds in the air. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, but your Father in heaven feeds them. And you are worth much more than they are.

Spiritual Principle

Knowing our value to God takes away our fear.

Key Truth

The God who counts sparrows and hairs has not lost track of you.

XXXII. ACKNOWLEDGE ME

Matthew 10:32 — Before My Father

“Whoever acknowledges Me before others, I will acknowledge before My Father in heaven.”

To **acknowledge** Jesus means to openly say that you belong to Him.

It means not being ashamed of Him.

Jesus gives a wonderful promise.

If we acknowledge Him before people on earth, He will acknowledge us before His Father in heaven.

Imagine Jesus standing before the Father and saying, **“This one belongs to Me.”**

Cross References

Luke 12:8

> I tell you, if anyone says in front of others that he believes in Me, the Son of Man will say before the angels of God that this person belongs to Him.

Romans 10:9

> If you say with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Revelation 3:5

I will never erase his name from the book of life. I will say that he belongs to Me before My Father and before His angels.

Spiritual Principle

Those who stand with Jesus on earth, Jesus will stand with in heaven.

XXXIII. DENY ME

Matthew 10:33 — Denied Before the Father

“But whoever denies Me before others, I will also deny before My Father in heaven.”

Now Jesus gives the other side.

To **deny** Jesus means to refuse to be identified with Him.

It means to turn away from Him to protect yourself.

This is a serious warning.

Jesus is speaking about a settled, final rejection.

Peter denied Jesus three times in a moment of fear.

But he repented and was restored.

There is forgiveness for those who fail and return.

But there is no hope for those who finally and completely reject Him.

Cross References

Luke 12:9

> But if anyone says in front of others that he does not know Me, he will be rejected before the angels of God.

2 Timothy 2:12

> If we keep going, we will also rule with Him. If we refuse to accept Him, He will refuse to accept us.

Mark 8:38

> If people are ashamed of Me and My teaching in this sinful and unfaithful generation, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

Spiritual Warning

Being ashamed of Jesus has eternal consequences.

Key Truth

Peter's story shows that a moment of failure can be forgiven when we turn back to Jesus.

XXXIV. NOT PEACE BUT A SWORD

Matthew 10:34 — Jesus Divides

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

This sounds surprising.

Isn't Jesus the Prince of Peace?

Yes.

He brings peace with God.

He brings peace to the heart.

But His coming also brings **division.**

The **sword** here is not a weapon for fighting.

It is a picture of division.

When people meet Jesus, they must decide.

Some will follow Him.

Some will reject Him.

And that decision can divide even the closest relationships.

Cross References

Luke 12:51

> Do you think I came to give peace to the earth? No, I tell you, I came to divide it.

Ephesians 6:17

> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Hebrews 4:12

> God's word is alive and working. It is sharper than the sharpest sword. It cuts all the way into us, where the soul and the spirit are joined.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus brings peace to those who receive Him and division between those who receive Him and those who reject Him.

XXXV. A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER

Matthew 10:35 — Divided Families

“For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

Jesus quotes Micah 7:6.

In Micah's day, this described a time of great wickedness when families were torn apart.

Jesus says His coming will have a similar effect.

Not because He wants families to fight.

But because when one person follows Jesus and another rejects Him, they are going in different directions.

Cross References

Micah 7:6

> A son will not respect his father. A daughter will turn against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A person's enemies will be the people in his own family.

Luke 12:53

> A father and son will be divided. A mother and daughter will be divided. A mother-in-law and daughter-in-law will be divided.

Luke 12:52

> From now on, a family of five will be divided, three against two, and two against three.

Spiritual Principle

Faith in Jesus can divide even close families.

XXXVI. ENEMIES IN THE HOUSEHOLD

Matthew 10:36 — Members of Their Own Family

“A person’s enemies will be members of their own household.”

This is one of the hardest parts of following Jesus.

The opposition may not come from strangers.

It may come from the people who live in the same house.

This is a sad but honest warning.

Jesus Himself experienced this.

At one point, His own brothers did not believe in Him.

Cross References

Micah 7:6

> A son will not respect his father. A daughter will turn against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A person's enemies will be the people in his own family.

Job 19:13

> He has made my brothers turn away from me. My friends have become complete strangers.

Psalm 41:9

> Even my close friend, someone I trusted, who ate my bread, has turned against me.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus understands the pain of rejection by those closest to us.

XXXVII. LOVING JESUS MORE

Matthew 10:37 — Worthy of Me

“Anyone who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. Anyone who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”

Jesus makes a claim that only God could make.

He must be loved **more** than parents.

He must be loved **more** than children.

No mere teacher could ask for this.

Only God deserves first place in our hearts.

Jesus is not telling us to stop loving our families.

He commanded us to honor our parents.

He is telling us that our love for Him must be so great that, by comparison, every other love comes second.

When Jesus is first, we actually love our families better.

Cross References

Luke 14:26

> If anyone comes to Me but loves his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters — or even his own life — more than Me, he cannot be My follower.

Deuteronomy 33:9

> He said about his father and mother, “I do not think about them.” He did not recognize his brothers or claim his own children. He did this because he obeyed Your word and kept Your covenant.

Luke 9:59

> Jesus said to another man, “Follow Me.” But the man said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus must have first place, even above family.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When Jesus is first, every other love is put in its proper place.

XXXVIII. TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

Matthew 10:38 — Follow Me

“Whoever does not take up their cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.”

This is the first time in Matthew that Jesus mentions **the cross.**

His listeners knew exactly what a cross meant.

The Romans crucified criminals.

A man carrying a cross was walking to his death.

He had no plans for tomorrow.

To **take up your cross** means to be willing to die to yourself.

To give up your own will.

To accept suffering and shame for Jesus' sake.

It is not just carrying a hard burden.

It is surrendering your whole life to Christ.

Cross References

Matthew 16:24

> Then Jesus said to His followers, “If anyone wants to follow Me, he must say no to himself, pick up his cross, and follow Me.”

Luke 14:27

> Whoever is not willing to carry his cross and follow Me cannot be My follower.

Mark 8:34

> Then Jesus called the crowd and His followers to Him and said, “If anyone wants to follow Me, he must say no to himself, pick up his cross, and follow Me.”

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus means dying to self.

Application

Taking up your cross today can mean:

- Saying no to sinful desires.
- Obeying God when it costs you.
- Accepting rejection for your faith.
- Putting others' needs before your own.
- Surrendering your plans to God's will.
- Being willing to suffer for Christ.

XXXIX. LOSE YOUR LIFE TO FIND IT

Matthew 10:39 — The Great Exchange

“Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for My sake will find it.”

This is one of the great paradoxes of the Christian life.

The person who tries to hold on to his life for himself will lose it.

He may gain comfort, success, and safety.

But in the end, he will lose what matters most.

The person who gives up his life **for Jesus' sake** will find it.

He will find real life now.

And he will find eternal life forever.

Notice the words **“for My sake.”**

This is not about losing your life for any cause.

It is about losing it for Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 16:25

> Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever gives up his life for Me will find it.

John 12:25

> Whoever loves his life will lose it. But whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Luke 17:33

> Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it. But whoever gives up his life will save it.

Spiritual Principle

The life we give to Jesus is the only life we truly keep.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You cannot out-give Jesus; whatever you lose for Him, He gives back far greater.

XL. WHOEVER WELCOMES YOU WELCOMES ME

Matthew 10:40 — Welcoming the One Who Sent Me

“Anyone who welcomes you welcomes Me, and anyone who welcomes Me welcomes the One who sent Me.”

Now Jesus turns to those who receive His messengers.

The apostles were sent by Jesus.

Jesus was sent by the Father.

So when someone welcomes a messenger of Jesus, they are welcoming Jesus.

And when they welcome Jesus, they are welcoming God Himself.

This shows how closely Jesus identifies with His people.

Cross References

John 13:20

> I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send also accepts Me. And whoever accepts Me also accepts the One who sent Me.

Luke 10:16

> Whoever listens to you listens to Me. Whoever refuses to accept you refuses to accept Me. And whoever refuses to accept Me refuses to accept the One who sent Me.

Galatians 4:14

> You welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus Himself.

Spiritual Principle

How we treat God's servants is how we treat God.

XLI. A PROPHET'S REWARD

Matthew 10:41 — A Righteous Person's Reward

“Whoever welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward.”

Not everyone is called to be a prophet or a traveling preacher.

But everyone can share in their reward.

How?

By welcoming and supporting them.

The widow of Zarephath fed Elijah.

The woman of Shunem made a room for Elisha.

Both received great blessings from God.

Those who support God's work share in God's reward.

Cross References

1 Kings 17:9

> Go to Zarephath in Sidon and live there. I have commanded a widow there to take care of you.

2 Kings 4:8

> One day Elisha went to Shunem. A wealthy woman lived there, and she begged him to stay and eat. So whenever Elisha passed by, he stopped there to eat.

1 Corinthians 3:8

> The one who plants and the one who waters have the same purpose. And each will be rewarded for his own work.

Spiritual Principle

Those who support God's servants share in God's reward.

Key Truth

Not everyone goes, but everyone can help those who go.

XLII. A CUP OF COLD WATER

Matthew 10:42 — Not One Reward Lost

“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is My disciple, truly I tell you, that person will not lose their reward.”

Jesus ends the chapter with a tender promise.

Even the smallest kindness matters.

A cup of cold water.

In the hot, dry land of Israel, cold water was a precious gift.

But it was also something almost anyone could give.

Jesus calls His followers **“little ones.”**

They were not powerful or important in the world's eyes.

But anyone who helps them **because they are His disciples** will be rewarded.

God does not forget the smallest act of love done for Jesus' sake.

Cross References

Mark 9:41

> I tell you the truth, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will truly get his reward.

Matthew 25:40

> The King will answer, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least important of My brothers and sisters, you did for Me.”

Hebrews 6:10

> God is fair. He will not forget the work you did and the love you showed for Him by helping His people, and you are still helping them.

Spiritual Principle

No act of kindness done for Jesus is too small to be rewarded.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Heaven keeps a record of every cup of water given in Jesus' name.

XLIII. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 10

1. Jesus Equips His Disciples

He gives them authority to heal, deliver, and proclaim the kingdom.

Principle:

Jesus never sends us without first equipping us.

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2. The Mission Is Urgent

They are called to go simply, depending on God's provision.

Principle:

Travel light and trust God for what you need.

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3. Persecution Is Certain

Following Christ means facing opposition, betrayal, and hatred.

Principle:

If they persecuted the Master, they will persecute His servants.

---

4. Endurance Is Required

Salvation is promised to those who remain faithful until the end.

Principle:

Real faith keeps going.

---

5. Fear God, Not Man

Human threats may harm the body, but only God rules over the soul.

Principle:

The fear of God sets us free from the fear of people.

---

6. Discipleship Is Costly

It requires total loyalty, even above family and self.

Principle:

Jesus must come first, or He does not truly come at all.

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7. God Rewards the Smallest Act of Kindness

Even giving a cup of water in Christ's name has eternal value.

Principle:

Nothing done for Jesus is ever wasted.

XLIV. THE TWELVE APOSTLES

Jesus chose a surprising group of men.

Simon Peter

A fisherman, bold and quick to speak, who became a leader of the early church.

Andrew

Peter's brother, who brought others to Jesus.

James

Son of Zebedee, the first apostle to die for his faith.

John

Brother of James, who wrote a Gospel, three letters, and Revelation.

Philip

From Bethsaida, who brought Nathanael to Jesus.

Bartholomew

Probably the same man as Nathanael.

Thomas

Who doubted, then confessed, “My Lord and my God!”

Matthew

The tax collector who wrote this Gospel.

James son of Alphaeus

Little is known about him.

Thaddaeus

Also called Judas son of James.

Simon the Zealot

Who once wanted to overthrow Rome.

Judas Iscariot

Who betrayed Jesus.

Key Truth

Jesus chose fishermen, a tax collector, a political rebel, and ordinary men, and through them He changed the world.

XLV. THREE TIMES “DO NOT BE AFRAID”

Jesus gave three reasons not to fear in verses 26–31.

The Truth Will Come Out (Verse 26)

Nothing hidden will stay hidden.

God will reveal the truth.

People's Power Is Limited (Verse 28)

They can kill the body, but not the soul.

Only God has final authority.

You Are Valuable to God (Verse 31)

God cares for sparrows and counts your hairs.

You are worth more than many sparrows.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God's truth, God's power, and God's care are the cure for fear.

XLVI. THE COST AND THE REWARD

Matthew 10 is honest about both the cost and the reward of following Jesus.

The Cost

- Leaving comfort behind.
- Facing rejection.
- Being arrested and beaten.
- Being hated because of Jesus.
- Division in families.
- Taking up a cross.
- Losing your life.

The Reward

- The Spirit speaking through you.
- The Father's care for every detail.
- Being acknowledged by Jesus before the Father.
- Finding true life.
- Salvation for those who endure.
- Reward for even the smallest kindness.

Key Truth

The cost of following Jesus is high, but the reward is far greater.

XLVII. WHAT MATTHEW 10 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 10 presents Jesus as:

The One with All Authority

He gives authority to His followers.

The Sender

He sends His apostles into the harvest.

The Master and Teacher

His servants will be treated as He was treated.

The One Who Acknowledges

He will speak for His people before the Father.

The One Who Divides

People must choose for or against Him.

The One Who Deserves First Place

He must be loved above all others.

The One Who Was Sent by the Father

To welcome Him is to welcome God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who sends us out is the Jesus who goes with us, speaks for us, and rewards us.

XLVIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What is the difference between a disciple and an apostle?

A disciple is a learner or follower.

An apostle is one who is sent with authority as a messenger.

The Twelve were both disciples and apostles.

Question 2

Why did Jesus choose twelve apostles?

The number twelve reflects the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jesus was forming a new people of God built around Himself.

Question 3

Why did Jesus tell the apostles not to go to the Gentiles or Samaritans at first?

God's plan was for the good news to go first to Israel.

After His resurrection, Jesus sent His followers to all nations.

This first mission was limited in time and place.

Question 4

What does “Freely you have received; freely give” mean?

The apostles received their power and the message as a free gift.

They were not to charge for it.

What God gives freely, we should share freely.

Question 5

Why did Jesus tell them to travel without money or extra supplies?

To teach them to depend on God.

To keep them focused on the urgent mission.

And to let God provide for them through the people who welcomed them.

Question 6

What did shaking the dust off their feet mean?

It was a solemn sign that they had done their part.

The responsibility for rejecting the message now belonged to those who refused it.

Question 7

Why would it be more bearable for Sodom than for a town that rejected the apostles?

Because greater light brings greater responsibility.

Those who reject the message of the King are more accountable than those who never heard it.

Question 8

What does it mean to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves?

It means being smart and alert to danger, while staying pure and honest.

We need both wisdom and innocence.

Question 9

What does Jesus promise to those who are put on trial for Him?

He promises that the Spirit of the Father will give them the words to say.

They will not stand alone.

Question 10

Why should Christians fear God and not people?

People can only harm the body.

God has authority over both body and soul forever.

When we fear God rightly, we are set free from the fear of people.

Question 11

What do the sparrows and the numbered hairs teach us?

God cares about the smallest details of His creation.

If He cares for sparrows, He cares far more for His children.

Question 12

What does Jesus mean by bringing a sword instead of peace?

The sword is a picture of division.

When people must decide about Jesus, some follow Him and some reject Him.

This can divide even families.

Question 13

What does it mean to take up your cross?

It means being willing to die to yourself.

It means surrendering your own will and accepting suffering for Jesus' sake.

Question 14

What does Jesus promise to those who help His followers?

They will share in the reward.

Even a cup of cold water given to a disciple will not go unrewarded.

Question 15

What should Matthew 10 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 10 should cause believers to live:

- Ready to be sent by Jesus.
- Sharing freely what they have received.
- Depending on God's provision.
- Wise and pure in a hostile world.
- Bold in speaking about Jesus.
- Fearing God instead of people.
- Confident in the Father's care.
- Putting Jesus above every other love.
- Willing to take up their cross.
- Supporting those who serve in the gospel.

XLIX. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 10 asks several important questions.

Am I Spending Time with Jesus Before Trying to Work for Jesus?

Am I Willing to Be Sent?

Am I Sharing Freely What God Has Given Me?

What Am I Carrying That Is Slowing Me Down?

Am I Living Wisely and Purely in a Hostile World?

Am I Afraid of What People Think of Me?

Do I Believe God Cares About the Details of My Life?

Am I Ashamed of Jesus in Any Area of My Life?

Is Anyone or Anything More Important to Me Than Jesus?

Have I Taken Up My Cross?

How Can I Support Those Who Serve in the Gospel?

L. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Sparrow and the Sword”

In Matthew 10, Jesus speaks about two very different things.

A **sword.**

And a **sparrow.**

The sword shows the cost of following Him.

It means division, rejection, persecution, and even death.

Jesus does not hide it.

He does not make discipleship sound easy.

The sparrow shows the care of the Father.

Not one sparrow falls without Him.

Every hair is counted.

You are worth more than many sparrows.

This creates a powerful principle.

Following Jesus means living between the sword and the sparrow.

The world may turn against us.

But the Father never will.

The cost is real.

But the care is greater.

Principle:

The same Jesus who warns us of the sword reminds us of the sparrow — the cost is high, but the Father's care is higher.

LI. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 10 begins with a prayer answered.

Jesus told His disciples to pray for workers.

Now He sends them.

Twelve ordinary men.

Fishermen.

A tax collector.

A political rebel.

Men we know a lot about.

Men we know almost nothing about.

And one who would betray Him.

Jesus gave them His authority.

He gave them His message.

He told them to go with almost nothing.

He told them the truth.

They would be sheep among wolves.

They would be arrested.

They would be beaten.

They would be hated.

Their own families might turn against them.

But He also told them:

Do not be afraid.

The Spirit will speak through you.

Your Father sees every sparrow.

Every hair on your head is counted.

I will acknowledge you before My Father.

Matthew 10 therefore reminds us:

Following Jesus is costly.

But it is worth it.

Every disciple must take up a cross.

Every disciple must put Jesus first.

Every disciple will face opposition.

But no disciple is ever forgotten.

The mission of Jesus did not begin with:

Powerful leaders.

Large resources.

Or a safe road.

It began with:

Ordinary people.

Given His authority.

Sent into a dangerous world.

And held in the Father's hand.

The same call still stands:

Go.

Proclaim the kingdom.

Give freely.

Trust God's provision.

Do not be afraid.

Acknowledge Jesus before others.

Take up your cross.

Welcome His servants.

Give a cup of cold water in His name.

And until He returns:

Keep going.

Keep enduring.

Keep confessing Him.

Keep trusting the Father's care.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for answering the prayer for workers.

Thank You that Jesus calls ordinary people and sends them out with His authority.

Lord Jesus, call us to Yourself before You send us out.

Help us spend time with You so that we can serve You well.

Thank You for all that we have freely received.

Teach us to give freely to others.

Help us travel light and trust You to provide.

Make us wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

When we face rejection, help us respond with grace.

When we are mocked or opposed because of Your name, give us courage.

Remind us that we will never stand alone.

Thank You that Your Spirit gives us the words we need.

Strengthen believers around the world who are suffering for Your name.

Comfort those who have been rejected by their own families.

Help us endure to the end.

Free us from the fear of people.

Teach us to fear You and trust You.

Thank You that not one sparrow falls without You.

Thank You that every hair on our heads is counted.

Thank You that we are worth more than many sparrows.

Give us courage to acknowledge You before others.

Forgive us for the times we have been ashamed of You.

Take first place in our hearts, above every other love.

Help us take up our cross and follow You.

Teach us that the life we give to You is the only life we truly keep.

Help us welcome and support those who serve You.

And let us never think any kindness done in Your name is too small.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for My sake will find it.” — Matthew 10:39

Central Truth

Jesus sends His followers into a hostile world with His authority and message, calling them to fearless, costly loyalty and promising His care and reward to all who are faithful.

Matthew 10 in One Sentence

Jesus gives authority to His twelve apostles and sends them to the lost sheep of Israel, warning them of persecution, calling them to fear God rather than people, to love Him above all, and to take up their cross, while promising the Father's care and a reward for even the smallest kindness done in His name.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 11 — John's Question, Unrepentant Cities, and the Invitation of Jesus

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 10 ended with Jesus sending out His twelve apostles.

Matthew Chapter 11 begins with Jesus continuing His own ministry in the towns of Galilee.

But the chapter quickly turns to a surprising question.

John the Baptist is in prison.

This is the same John who baptized Jesus.

The same John who saw the Spirit come down like a dove.

The same John who heard the Father's voice from heaven.

Now, sitting in a dark prison cell, John sends a question to Jesus:

“Are You the one who is to come, or should we look for another?”

Even great believers can struggle with doubt.

Jesus does not scold John.

He points to the evidence.

The blind see.

The lame walk.

The dead are raised.

The poor hear the good news.

Then Jesus honors John before the crowd.

John was more than a prophet.

He was the messenger promised in Scripture.

He was the Elijah who was to come.

But then Jesus turns to the people of His generation.

They rejected John because he was too strict.

They rejected Jesus because He was too friendly with sinners.

Nothing pleased them.

Then Jesus gives a solemn warning to the towns where He had done most of His miracles.

They had seen the most.

But they had not repented.

Their judgment would be worse than that of Tyre, Sidon, and even Sodom.

Then the chapter turns again.

Jesus prays to His Father.

And He gives one of the most beautiful invitations in the whole Bible:

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 11 therefore moves from doubt, to rejection, to judgment, to grace.

It shows two kinds of people:

The proud, who refuse to come.

And:

The humble and weary, who come and find rest.

The central truth of Matthew 11 is:

Jesus is the promised One whose works prove who He is, and though many reject Him, He invites all who are weary to come to Him and find rest for their souls.

I. JESUS CONTINUES HIS MINISTRY

Matthew 11:1 — Teaching and Preaching in Galilee

“After Jesus finished instructing His twelve disciples, He went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee.”

This verse marks the end of Jesus' second major teaching section in Matthew.

“After Jesus finished instructing...”

Jesus had sent out the twelve.

But He did not stop working Himself.

He **went on** to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee.

Jesus never asked His disciples to do anything He was not doing Himself.

Cross References

Matthew 4:23

> Jesus went everywhere in Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, telling the good news about the kingdom, and healing all the people's diseases and sicknesses.

Matthew 9:35

> Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages. He taught in their synagogues, told the good news about the kingdom, and healed every disease and sickness.

Mark 6:6

> Then Jesus went around to the other villages in that area and taught.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus leads by example.

II. JOHN IN PRISON

Matthew 11:2 — He Heard About the Works of Christ

“When John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about the works of Christ, he sent his disciples”

John the Baptist was **in prison.**

Herod Antipas had arrested him for speaking against Herod's sinful marriage.

The historian Josephus tells us John was held in a fortress called Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea.

John had lived his life in the open wilderness.

Now he was locked in a dark cell.

While there, he **heard about the works of Christ.**

His disciples were still able to visit him and bring him news.

Cross References

Matthew 4:12

> When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He went back to Galilee.

Luke 7:18

> John's followers told him about all these things. So John called two of his followers.

Mark 6:17

> Herod himself had ordered John to be arrested, chained, and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, whom Herod had married.

Spiritual Principle

Faithful servants of God sometimes suffer for doing what is right.

III. JOHN'S QUESTION

Matthew 11:3 — “Are You the One?”

“to ask Him, ‘Are You the one who is to come, or should we look for another?’”

This is a surprising question.

John had pointed to Jesus and said, **“Look, the Lamb of God!”**

He had seen the Spirit come down on Jesus.

Why would he now ask this?

John had preached that the Messiah would bring judgment.

The axe was at the root.

The chaff would be burned.

But Jesus was healing and teaching, not judging.

And John was still in prison.

Perhaps John was confused.

Perhaps he was discouraged.

Perhaps he wanted his own disciples to hear the answer from Jesus.

Whatever the reason, John did the right thing with his doubt.

He took it to Jesus.

Cross References

Luke 7:19

He sent them to the Lord to ask, “Are You the One who is to come, or should we wait for someone else?”

Malachi 3:1

“Look, I am sending My messenger, and he will prepare the road ahead of Me. Then the Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to His temple.”

John 1:29

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Spiritual Principle

Even strong believers can struggle with doubt.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Doubt is not the opposite of faith when it drives us to Jesus for answers.

IV. GO AND TELL JOHN

Matthew 11:4 — What You Hear and See

“Jesus replied, ‘Go back and tell John what you hear and see:’”

Jesus did not give a simple yes or no.

He told John's disciples to report what they **heard** and **saw.**

Jesus pointed to the evidence.

His words and His works spoke for themselves.

Luke tells us that at that very time, Jesus healed many people while John's disciples watched.

Cross References

Luke 7:22

Jesus answered John's followers, “Go tell John what you saw and heard here.”

John 5:36

But I have a proof about Myself that is greater than John's. The work My Father gave Me to finish, the very work I am doing, shows that the Father sent Me.

Isaiah 61:1

> The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on Me, because the LORD has chosen Me to bring good news to the poor.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus answers honest doubt with clear evidence.

V. THE EVIDENCE

Matthew 11:5 — The Blind See, the Dead Are Raised

“The blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news preached to them.”

Jesus listed His works.

Each one connected to promises in Isaiah.

The blind see.

The lame walk.

The deaf hear.

The poor hear the good news.

John knew these prophecies well.

Jesus was saying, **“Look at what Isaiah said the Messiah would do. That is exactly what I am doing.”**

Notice how the list ends.

It does not end with the greatest miracle, raising the dead.

It ends with **the poor have the good news preached to them.**

The gospel reaching the poor was just as important as any miracle.

Cross References

Isaiah 35:5

> Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will hear.

Isaiah 29:18

> On that day the deaf will hear the words of a book. Out of the gloom and darkness, the blind will see.

Luke 4:18

> The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He chose Me to tell the good news to the poor. He sent Me to tell captives they are free and to tell the blind that they can see again. He sent Me to free those who are treated badly.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' works prove that He is the promised Messiah.

Key Truth

The answer to John's question was in the Scriptures John already knew.

VI. BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO DOES NOT STUMBLE

Matthew 11:6 — Not Offended by Jesus

“Blessed is anyone who does not stumble because of Me.”

Jesus added a gentle word for John.

“Blessed is anyone who does not stumble because of Me.”

To **stumble** means to be offended or to fall away.

Jesus was not the kind of Messiah many people expected.

He did not overthrow Rome.

He did not free John from prison.

He did not immediately bring judgment.

Some people would be offended by Him.

Jesus was encouraging John:

Keep trusting Me, even when I do not act the way you expected.

Cross References

Luke 7:23

> Blessed is the person who does not lose faith because of Me.

1 Peter 2:8

> And He is “a stone that causes people to stumble, a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they do not obey God's message.

Romans 9:33

> Look, I am putting in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble, a rock that makes them fall. But anyone who trusts in Him will never be disappointed.

Spiritual Principle

Blessing comes to those who keep trusting Jesus even when they do not understand His ways.

Application

We may be tempted to stumble when:

- God does not answer our prayers the way we hoped.
- We suffer even though we are faithful.
- Evil seems to be winning.
- God's timing feels slow.
- Jesus does not fit our expectations.

VII. A REED SWAYED BY THE WIND?

Matthew 11:7 — What Did You Go Out to See?

“As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind?’”

As soon as John's disciples left, Jesus defended John.

The crowd may have wondered if John had become weak.

Jesus asked them a question.

“What did you go out into the wilderness to see?”

“A reed swayed by the wind?”

Reeds grew along the Jordan River.

They bent in whatever direction the wind blew.

Jesus was saying that John was not like that.

He was not weak.

He did not change his message to please people.

He stood firm, even before a king.

Cross References

Luke 7:24

> When John's followers left, Jesus began talking to the people about John: “What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed blown by the wind?”

1 Kings 14:15

> The LORD will strike Israel so that it will shake like a reed in the water.

Ephesians 4:14

> Then we will no longer be babies. We will not be tossed back and forth by the waves or blown around by every new teaching.

Spiritual Principle

God's servants must stand firm, not bend to every wind.

Key Truth

One moment of doubt did not make John a weak man.

VIII. FINE CLOTHES?

Matthew 11:8 — Those in Kings' Palaces

“If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes live in kings' palaces.”

Jesus asked a second question.

Did they go out to see a man in fine clothes?

Of course not.

John wore camel's hair and a leather belt.

People in fine clothes lived in palaces.

There is an irony here.

John was now in a king's prison, not in a king's palace.

He was there because he would not flatter the king.

John did not live for comfort.

He lived for God.

Cross References

Luke 7:25

> What did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, people who have fine clothes and live in luxury are in kings' palaces.

James 2:2

> Suppose someone comes into your meeting wearing nice clothes and a gold ring. At the same time a poor person comes in wearing old, dirty clothes.

Matthew 6:29

> But I tell you that even Solomon, with all his riches, was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers.

Spiritual Principle

God's true servants are not driven by comfort or wealth.

IX. MORE THAN A PROPHET

Matthew 11:9 — Yes, I Tell You

“Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.”

Jesus asked a third question.

Did they go out to see a **prophet**?

Yes.

John was a true prophet.

The first prophet in Israel in about four hundred years.

But Jesus said he was **more than a prophet.**

The other prophets spoke about the Messiah from far away.

John pointed to Him when He was standing right there.

Cross References

Luke 7:26

> But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, and I tell you, John is more than a prophet.

Luke 1:76

> Now you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God. You will go before the Lord to prepare His way.

Matthew 21:26

> But if we say, “It was from people,” we are afraid of the crowd, because they all believe John was a prophet.

Spiritual Principle

God honors those who faithfully point others to Jesus.

X. THE MESSENGER

Matthew 11:10 — Prepare Your Way

“This is the one about whom it is written: ‘I will send My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way before You.’”

Why was John more than a prophet?

Because John himself was **the subject of prophecy.**

Malachi had promised that God would send a messenger to prepare the way.

John was that messenger.

Notice the words **“ahead of You.”**

In Malachi, God says the messenger will prepare the way **before Me.**

Here, Jesus applies it to Himself.

John prepared the way for God, and Jesus is that God.

Cross References

Malachi 3:1

> “Look, I am sending My messenger, and he will prepare the road ahead of Me. Then the Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to His temple.”

Mark 1:2

> It is written in the book of Isaiah the prophet: “Look, I am sending My messenger ahead of You. He will prepare Your way.”

Luke 7:27

> This is the one about whom it is written: “Look, I am sending My messenger ahead of You. He will prepare the way for You.”

Spiritual Principle

God's plan of salvation was prepared in every detail.

Key Truth

John prepared the way for the LORD, and the LORD was Jesus.

XI. NONE GREATER THAN JOHN

Matthew 11:11 — Yet the Least in the Kingdom Is Greater

“Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist. Yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

Jesus gave John the highest praise.

No one born of a woman was greater than John.

Greater than Abraham.

Greater than Moses.

Greater than Elijah.

Why?

Because John had the greatest privilege.

He introduced the Messiah to the world.

But then Jesus said something amazing.

“Whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

This does not mean John was not saved.

It means John stood at the end of the old age.

He pointed to the cross but did not see it.

Believers today live on the other side of the cross and the resurrection.

The least believer has a greater privilege, knowing the full story of what Jesus has done.

Cross References

Luke 7:28

> I tell you, John is greater than anyone else ever born. But even the least important person in the kingdom of God is greater than John.

Luke 1:15

> John will be a great man in the Lord's sight... He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.

Job 14:1

> All people born of women live only a few days and are full of trouble.

Spiritual Principle

The privileges of the kingdom are greater than any human greatness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

John saw the dawn; we live in the full light of day.

XII. THE KINGDOM ADVANCING

Matthew 11:12 — Forceful People Seize It

“From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful people seize it.”

This verse is one of the hardest in Matthew to understand.

Bible teachers have explained it in different ways.

First view: The kingdom is advancing powerfully, and people who are serious and eager press hard to enter it.

Second view: The kingdom has suffered violence. Violent people, like Herod who imprisoned John, try to attack it.

Both are true in Matthew's Gospel.

The kingdom was breaking into the world with power through Jesus.

At the same time, it was being opposed violently.

John was in prison.

Jesus would be crucified.

But the kingdom would not be stopped.

And those who truly want it must pursue it with their whole heart.

Cross References

Luke 16:16

> The Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets were preached until John came. Since then, the good news about the kingdom of God is being told, and everyone is trying hard to get into it.

Micah 2:12

> I will surely bring all of you together, people of Jacob. I will gather what is left of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in a pen.

Luke 13:24

> Work hard to enter through the narrow door. Many people will try to enter, but they will not be able to.

Spiritual Principle

The kingdom of God is pursued with whole-hearted effort and opposed with fierce resistance.

XIII. THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS UNTIL JOHN

Matthew 11:13 — The End of an Age

“For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.”

The whole Old Testament pointed forward.

The Law and the Prophets were looking ahead to the coming of the Messiah.

John was the last voice of that age.

With John, the time of waiting came to an end.

With Jesus, the time of fulfillment began.

Cross References

Luke 16:16

> The Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets were preached until John came. Since then, the good news about the kingdom of God is being told, and everyone is trying hard to get into it.

Romans 3:21

> But now God has shown us a way to be made right with Him without the law. The Law and the Prophets told us about it.

Acts 3:24

> Samuel and all the prophets who came after him spoke about these days.

Spiritual Principle

The whole Old Testament points to Jesus.

XIV. JOHN IS ELIJAH

Matthew 11:14 — If You Are Willing to Accept It

“And if you are willing to accept it, John is the Elijah who was to come.”

The last words of the Old Testament promised that God would send **Elijah** before the great day of the LORD.

The Jews were waiting for Elijah.

Jesus said John was that Elijah.

John was not Elijah come back to life.

When asked, John said he was not Elijah.

But he came **in the spirit and power of Elijah**, just as the angel told his father.

Notice the words **“if you are willing to accept it.”**

Many would not accept it.

Because if John was Elijah, then Jesus was the Lord he came to prepare for.

Cross References

Malachi 4:5

> Look, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.

Matthew 17:11

> Jesus answered, “Elijah is coming, and he will make everything the way it should be.”

Luke 1:17

> He will go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah. He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children.

Spiritual Principle

Accepting the truth often requires a willing heart.

XV. WHOEVER HAS EARS

Matthew 11:15 — Let Them Hear

“Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

Jesus often said this after an important teaching.

Everyone has ears.

But not everyone truly listens.

To **hear** in the Bible means to listen, understand, and obey.

Jesus was calling the crowd to think carefully about what He had just said.

Cross References

Matthew 13:9

> Whoever has ears should listen.

Revelation 2:7

> Whoever has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

Mark 4:9

> Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear should listen.”

Spiritual Principle

Hearing God's Word must lead to understanding and obedience.

XVI. THIS GENERATION

Matthew 11:16 — Like Children in the Marketplace

“To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to others:”

Now Jesus turns to the people of His day.

He calls them **this generation.**

He compares them to **children in the marketplace.**

In those days, children played games in the town square.

Sometimes they played wedding.

Sometimes they played funeral.

Jesus describes children who are never satisfied.

Whatever game others suggest, they refuse to play.

Cross References

Luke 7:31

> What can I say about the people of this time? What are they like?

Matthew 12:41

> On the Judgment Day the people from Nineveh will stand up with the people who live now, and they will show that you are guilty. When Jonah preached to them, they changed their hearts and lives. And look, someone greater than Jonah is here.

Jeremiah 6:10

> Who can I speak to and warn? Who will listen to me? Their ears are closed, so they cannot hear. The word of the LORD has become something they make fun of. They do not want to hear it.

Spiritual Principle

A heart that does not want God will always find an excuse.

XVII. WE PLAYED THE FLUTE

Matthew 11:17 — You Did Not Dance

“‘We played the flute for you, but you did not dance; we sang a dirge, but you did not mourn.’”

The children complain:

We played happy music, and you would not dance.

We played sad music, and you would not cry.

Nothing worked.

They would not respond either way.

That was this generation.

They would not respond to joy.

They would not respond to sorrow.

Cross References

Luke 7:32

> They are like children sitting in the marketplace, calling to one another, “We played music for you, but you did not dance. We sang a sad song, but you did not cry.”

Ecclesiastes 3:4

> There is a time to cry and a time to laugh. There is a time to be sad and a time to dance.

Amos 5:16

> People will cry loudly in all the public squares... They will call the farmers to come and cry, and they will pay people to sing sad songs.

Spiritual Principle

Stubborn hearts reject God no matter how He speaks.

XVIII. JOHN HAS A DEMON

Matthew 11:18 — Neither Eating Nor Drinking

“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’”

John lived a strict life.

He ate locusts and wild honey.

He did not drink wine.

He called people to mourn over their sins.

That was the funeral song.

But the people did not mourn.

Instead, they said, **“He has a demon.”**

They called his strict life a sign that he was crazy or evil.

Cross References

Luke 7:33

> John the Baptist came and did not eat bread or drink wine, and you say, “He has a demon in him.”

Numbers 6:3

> He must not drink wine or any other strong drink.

Matthew 3:4

> John's clothes were made from camel's hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food, he ate locusts and wild honey.

Spiritual Principle

People who do not want the message will attack the messenger.

XIX. A FRIEND OF SINNERS

Matthew 11:19 — Wisdom Is Proved Right

“The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.”

Jesus came with a different style.

He **ate and drank** with people.

He went to dinners.

He celebrated with sinners who repented.

That was the wedding song.

But the people did not dance.

Instead, they said, **“Here is a glutton and a drunkard.”**

This was a lie.

Jesus never sinned.

But they also said He was **“a friend of tax collectors and sinners.”**

That part was true.

And it is one of the most beautiful things ever said about Jesus.

Then Jesus said, **“Wisdom is proved right by her deeds.”**

In other words, the results will show who is right.

Changed lives would prove that both John and Jesus were sent by God.

Cross References

Luke 7:34

> The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, “Look at Him! He eats too much and drinks too much wine, and He is a friend of tax collectors and sinners!”

Matthew 9:11

> When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His followers, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

Luke 15:2

> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to complain, “This man welcomes sinners and even eats with them.”

Spiritual Principle

The fruit of a ministry proves whether it is from God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The insult “friend of sinners” is the best news a sinner could ever hear.

XX. JESUS DENOUNCES THE TOWNS

Matthew 11:20 — They Did Not Repent

“Then Jesus began to denounce the towns where most of His miracles had been performed, because they did not repent.”

Now Jesus speaks strong words of judgment.

He **denounced** the towns where He had done **most of His miracles.**

These towns had seen more than anyone.

They saw the sick healed.

They saw demons driven out.

They saw the dead raised.

But **they did not repent.**

They were amazed.

They talked about it.

They enjoyed the miracles.

But they did not change their hearts and lives.

Cross References

Luke 10:13

> How terrible for you, Chorazin! How terrible for you, Bethsaida! If the miracles I did in you had happened in Tyre and Sidon, those people would have changed their lives long ago.

Revelation 2:5

> So remember where you were before you fell. Change your hearts and do what you did at first.

Jonah 3:5

> The people of Nineveh believed God. They announced that they would stop eating for a while, and they put on rough cloth to show how sad they were, from the most important to the least important.

Spiritual Warning

Seeing God's power without repenting brings greater judgment.

Key Truth

Miracles can amaze the mind without changing the heart.

XXI. WOE TO CHORAZIN AND BETHSAIDA

Matthew 11:21 — Tyre and Sidon Would Have Repented

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.”

“Woe” is a word of sorrow and warning.

It is like saying, **“How terrible it will be for you.”**

Chorazin and **Bethsaida** were small towns near the Sea of Galilee, close to Capernaum.

Peter, Andrew, and Philip were from Bethsaida.

Tyre and Sidon were Gentile cities on the coast.

They were known for their wealth, pride, and wickedness.

The prophets had announced God's judgment on them.

But Jesus said if they had seen His miracles, they would have repented.

Sackcloth and ashes were signs of deep sorrow and repentance.

Cross References

Luke 10:13

> How terrible for you, Chorazin! How terrible for you, Bethsaida! If the miracles I did in you had happened in Tyre and Sidon, those people would have changed their lives long ago. They would have worn rough cloth and sat in ashes to show they were sorry.

Ezekiel 26:3

> So this is what the Lord GOD says: I am against you, Tyre. I will bring many nations against you, like the sea brings its waves.

Jonah 3:6

> When the king of Nineveh heard this, he got up from his throne, took off his royal robe, covered himself with rough cloth, and sat in ashes.

Spiritual Principle

God knows how every heart would respond in every situation.

XXII. MORE BEARABLE FOR TYRE AND SIDON

Matthew 11:22 — The Day of Judgment

“But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.”

Tyre and Sidon were wicked.

They would be judged.

But their judgment would be **more bearable** than the judgment on Chorazin and Bethsaida.

Why?

Because Chorazin and Bethsaida had seen so much more.

They had the Son of God walking in their streets.

And they still did not repent.

Cross References

Luke 10:14

But on the Judgment Day it will be better for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

Isaiah 23:1

This is a message about Tyre: Cry, you trading ships of Tarshish, because Tyre has been destroyed.

Ezekiel 28:2

Human, say to the ruler of Tyre: This is what the Lord GOD says: You are proud, and you say, “I am a god.”

Spiritual Principle

Greater light brings greater responsibility.

Key Truth

There are different degrees of judgment based on how much truth a person has received.

XXIII. CAPERNAUM

Matthew 11:23 — Down to Hades

“And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.”

Now Jesus speaks to **Capernaum.**

This was His own town.

His home base in Galilee.

More miracles were done there than anywhere else.

Capernaum may have been proud of being Jesus' town.

“Will you be lifted up to the heavens?”

“No, you will go down to Hades.”

Hades is the place of the dead.

Here it is a picture of complete humiliation and judgment.

Jesus said that if **Sodom** had seen these miracles, it would have repented and still be standing.

Sodom was the symbol of the worst wickedness in the Bible.

Yet Capernaum's sin was worse.

Today, Capernaum is in ruins.

Cross References

Luke 10:15

> And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to heaven? No, you will be thrown down to the place of the dead.

Isaiah 14:13

> You said to yourself, “I will go up to heaven. I will set my throne above God's stars.”

Genesis 19:24

> Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah from the LORD out of the sky.

Spiritual Warning

Being close to Jesus' works is not the same as being changed by Jesus.

XXIV. MORE BEARABLE FOR SODOM

Matthew 11:24 — A Solemn Warning

“But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.”

Jesus repeats the warning.

Sodom was destroyed by fire from heaven.

Yet on the day of judgment, it will be more bearable for Sodom than for Capernaum.

This is a solemn warning for anyone who has heard the gospel many times.

Growing up in church.

Hearing many sermons.

Seeing God at work.

All of this is a great privilege.

But it also brings great responsibility.

Cross References

Luke 10:12

> I tell you, on the Judgment Day it will be better for the people of Sodom than for the people of that town.

Genesis 18:20

> Then the LORD said, “I have heard many complaints against the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Their sin is very great.”

2 Peter 2:6

> And God punished the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them until they were nothing but ashes. He made those cities an example of what will happen to those who are against God.

Spiritual Warning

Familiarity with Jesus can harden a heart instead of softening it.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The greatest danger is not never hearing the gospel, but hearing it again and again and never responding.

XXV. JESUS PRAISES THE FATHER

Matthew 11:25 — Revealed to Little Children

“At that time Jesus prayed, ‘I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.’”

Right after speaking words of judgment, Jesus prays.

He **praises** His Father.

He calls Him **Father**, showing closeness.

He calls Him **Lord of heaven and earth**, showing His power.

Then He thanks God for something surprising.

God had **hidden** these things from **the wise and learned.**

And **revealed** them to **little children.**

The **wise and learned** were people who were proud of their knowledge.

Like the religious leaders.

The **little children** were the humble.

Like fishermen, tax collectors, and sinners who knew they needed God.

God does not reveal Himself to people because they are smart.

He reveals Himself to people who are humble.

Cross References

Luke 10:21

> Then Jesus was filled with joy by the Holy Spirit. He said, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from wise and educated people and shown them to little children.”

1 Corinthians 1:27

> But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and He chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

Psalm 8:2

> You have taught children and babies to sing praises to You because of Your enemies.

Spiritual Principle

God reveals Himself to the humble, not to the proud.

Key Truth

Pride closes the door to understanding; humility opens it.

XXVI. YOUR GOOD PLEASURE

Matthew 11:26 — Yes, Father

“Yes, Father, for this was Your good pleasure.”

Jesus said **“Yes”** to the Father's way.

“This was Your good pleasure.”

It pleased God to work this way.

Jesus did not question it.

He rejoiced in it.

Even when many rejected Him, Jesus trusted the Father's plan.

Cross References

Luke 10:21

> Yes, Father, this is what You really wanted.

Ephesians 1:5

> Because of His love, God had already decided to make us His own children through Jesus Christ. That is what He wanted, and it pleased Him.

Luke 12:32

> Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father is happy to give you the kingdom.

Spiritual Principle

Trusting God's wisdom brings peace even when we do not understand everything.

XXVII. ALL THINGS COMMITTED TO ME

Matthew 11:27 — Knowing the Father and the Son

“All things have been committed to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.”

This is one of the greatest statements Jesus ever made about Himself.

“All things have been committed to Me by My Father.”

Jesus has been given all authority.

“No one knows the Son except the Father.”

Jesus is so great that only God fully knows Him.

“No one knows the Father except the Son.”

Jesus knows God perfectly, as only God can.

And then:

“And those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.”

The only way to truly know God is through Jesus.

Jesus is the One who opens the door.

Cross References

Luke 10:22

> My Father has given Me all things. No one knows who the Son is except the Father. And no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those whom the Son chooses to tell.

John 10:15

> I know the Father, just as the Father knows Me. I give My life for the sheep.

John 3:35

> The Father loves the Son and has given Him power over everything.

Spiritual Principle

The only way to know the Father is through the Son.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus.

XXVIII. COME TO ME

Matthew 11:28 — I Will Give You Rest

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

After words of judgment, Jesus gives words of grace.

This is one of the most loved verses in the Bible.

“Come to Me.”

Not to a religion.

Not to a set of rules.

To a Person.

“All you.”

The invitation is open to everyone.

“Who are weary and burdened.”

Weary describes people worn out from working hard.

Burdened describes people carrying a heavy load.

Many people were weighed down by the heavy rules of the Pharisees.

Many were weighed down by sin, guilt, sorrow, and hard lives.

Jesus says, **“Come.”**

“And I will give you rest.”

Rest is a gift.

It is not earned.

It is given.

Cross References

Jeremiah 31:25

> I will give rest to those who are tired, and I will satisfy those who are weak.

Isaiah 40:28

> The LORD is the God who lives forever. He created the whole world. He does not become tired or need to rest.

Exodus 33:14

> The LORD answered, “I Myself will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Spiritual Principle

True rest is found in a Person, not a place or a program.

Key Truth

The same Jesus who warns the proud invites the weary.

Application

Jesus offers rest from:

- The weight of sin and guilt.
- The pressure to earn God's love.
- The burden of trying to be good enough.
- The exhaustion of carrying life alone.
- The fear of judgment.
- The heaviness of sorrow.

XXIX. TAKE MY YOKE

Matthew 11:29 — Learn from Me

“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

A **yoke** was a wooden frame placed on the necks of two animals so they could pull a load together.

In Jewish teaching, a **yoke** was also a picture of a teacher's instruction.

Rabbis spoke of taking on **the yoke of the law.**

Jesus invites us to take **His** yoke.

Rest does not mean doing nothing.

It means walking with Jesus, yoked to Him, learning from Him.

And He tells us what He is like.

“I am gentle and humble in heart.”

This is the only place in the Gospels where Jesus describes His own heart.

And of all the words He could have chosen, He chose these:

Gentle.

Humble.

The Pharisees were harsh and proud.

Jesus is gentle and humble.

“You will find rest for your souls.”

Cross References

Jeremiah 6:16

> This is what the LORD says: “Stand where the roads cross and look. Ask where the old way is, where the good way is, and walk on it. If you do, you will find rest for yourselves.”

Numbers 12:3

> Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the earth.

Philippians 2:8

> He humbled Himself and was fully obedient to God, even when that caused His death — death on a cross.

Spiritual Principle

Rest is found by walking with Jesus, not by walking away from responsibility.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When Jesus describes His own heart, He uses only two words: gentle and humble.

XXX. EASY AND LIGHT

Matthew 11:30 — My Burden Is Light

“For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”

A well-made yoke was carefully shaped to fit the animal.

It did not rub or hurt.

It made the work easier.

Some say Jesus, as a carpenter, may have made yokes Himself.

His yoke is **easy.**

The word means **well-fitting** or **kind.**

His burden is **light.**

This does not mean following Jesus is always easy.

Jesus just said in Matthew 10 that His followers would face persecution and take up a cross.

But it means that His commands are given in love.

And He carries the load with us.

The Pharisees put heavy burdens on people and did not lift a finger to help.

Jesus gives a light burden and carries it with us.

Cross References

1 John 5:3

> Loving God means obeying His commands. And His commands are not too hard for us.

Matthew 23:4

> They make strict rules and try to force people to obey them, but they are not willing to help those who struggle under the weight of their rules.

Acts 15:10

> So now why are you testing God by putting a heavy load around the necks of the believers? It is a load that neither we nor our ancestors were able to carry.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus is not a heavy weight but a gentle partnership.

Key Truth

Man-made religion adds burdens.

Jesus lifts them.

XXXI. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 11

1. Faith Is Tested in Hardship

Even John the Baptist questioned Jesus, yet Christ confirmed His mission through works of power and mercy.

Principle:

Bring your doubts to Jesus, and let Him answer them with His Word and His works.

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2. John Was Great, Yet Christ's Kingdom Is Greater

Spiritual inheritance in the kingdom surpasses even the highest human honor.

Principle:

The smallest place in God's kingdom is greater than the highest place in this world.

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3. This Generation Rejected Both John and Jesus

Unbelief finds excuses whether God speaks through austerity or fellowship.

Principle:

An unwilling heart will always find a reason to reject God.

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4. Judgment Falls on the Unrepentant

Greater revelation brings greater responsibility.

Rejected light brings heavier judgment.

Principle:

The more we have heard, the more we are responsible to respond.

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5. God Reveals Truth to the Humble

Spiritual understanding is given to the childlike, not the proud.

Principle:

Humility is the doorway to knowing God.

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6. Jesus Offers True Rest

In a world of burdens, only Christ gives peace for the soul through surrender to His gentle lordship.

Principle:

Rest is not found by escaping Jesus' yoke but by taking it.

XXXII. WHEN GOD DOES NOT DO WHAT WE EXPECT

John the Baptist's question teaches us how to handle doubt.

John Was in a Hard Place

He was in prison for doing what was right.

John Had Expectations

He expected the Messiah to bring judgment quickly.

John Took His Questions to Jesus

He did not walk away from Jesus.

He asked Jesus.

Jesus Answered with Evidence

He pointed to His works and to Scripture.

Jesus Did Not Condemn John

Right after John's question, Jesus praised him publicly.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is patient with honest doubt, and He answers it with truth.

XXXIII. TWO RESPONSES TO JESUS

Matthew 11 shows two very different kinds of people.

The Proud

- The generation that rejected John and Jesus.
- The towns that saw miracles but did not repent.
- The wise and learned who could not see.

The Humble

- John, who brought his doubts to Jesus.
- The little children to whom God reveals the truth.
- The weary and burdened who come to Jesus for rest.

Key Truth

Pride keeps people from coming to Jesus; humility brings them to Him.

XXXIV. WHAT MATTHEW 11 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 11 presents Jesus as:

The One Who Is to Come

He is the promised Messiah.

The Fulfillment of Isaiah

His works match the prophecies.

The LORD Whose Way Was Prepared

John prepared the way for Him.

The Friend of Sinners

He welcomes those who repent.

The Judge

He warns the unrepentant.

The Son Who Knows the Father

Only He can reveal God fully.

The One Who Gives Rest

He invites the weary to come.

The Gentle and Humble Teacher

His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who has all authority is the Jesus with a gentle and humble heart.

XXXV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did John the Baptist ask if Jesus was the one who was to come?

John was in prison and may have been discouraged.

He had preached that the Messiah would bring judgment, but Jesus was healing and teaching.

Jesus was not acting the way John expected.

So John took his question to Jesus.

Question 2

How did Jesus answer John's question?

He pointed to His works.

The blind see, the lame walk, the dead are raised, and the poor hear the good news.

These were the very things Isaiah said the Messiah would do.

Question 3

What did Jesus mean by “Blessed is anyone who does not stumble because of Me”?

He meant that those who keep trusting Him, even when He does not act as they expect, will be blessed.

Some people would be offended by the kind of Messiah Jesus was.

Question 4

What did Jesus say about John to the crowd?

He said John was not a weak reed or a man of luxury.

He was a prophet and more than a prophet.

He was the messenger Malachi promised, and the Elijah who was to come.

Question 5

How can John be the greatest, yet the least in the kingdom be greater than he?

John had the greatest privilege of anyone before Jesus.

But he stood at the end of the old age and did not see the cross and resurrection.

Believers today have the greater privilege of knowing the full story of what Jesus has done.

Question 6

Was John the Baptist really Elijah?

John was not Elijah come back to life.

But he came in the spirit and power of Elijah, fulfilling the promise of Malachi 4:5.

Question 7

What did Jesus mean by comparing His generation to children in the marketplace?

They were like children who would not play any game.

They rejected John because he was too strict.

They rejected Jesus because He ate with sinners.

Nothing would satisfy them.

Question 8

Why did Jesus denounce Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum?

They had seen most of His miracles but did not repent.

Their judgment would be worse than the judgment on Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom.

Question 9

Why would it be more bearable for Sodom than for Capernaum?

Because Capernaum had much greater light.

The Son of God lived there and did many miracles.

Greater light brings greater responsibility.

Question 10

What did Jesus mean by hiding things from the wise and revealing them to little children?

God does not reveal Himself to people who are proud of their own wisdom.

He reveals Himself to the humble, who come to Him like children.

Question 11

How can we know God the Father?

Only through Jesus.

No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son reveals Him.

Question 12

What does Jesus mean by “Take My yoke upon you”?

A yoke was a picture of a teacher's instruction and of working together.

Jesus invites us to walk with Him, learn from Him, and follow His way.

Question 13

How is Jesus' yoke easy and His burden light?

His commands are given in love.

He walks with us and helps carry the load.

Unlike the heavy rules of the Pharisees, His way brings rest to the soul.

Question 14

What should Matthew 11 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 11 should cause believers to live:

- Bringing their doubts honestly to Jesus.
- Trusting Him when He does not act as expected.
- Standing firm like John.
- Grateful for the privileges of the kingdom.
- Responding to God's Word instead of making excuses.
- Taking seriously the responsibility of hearing the gospel.
- Humble like little children.
- Coming to Jesus for rest.
- Walking with Him under His gentle yoke.

XXXVI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 11 asks several important questions.

Do I Bring My Doubts to Jesus or Run from Him?

Am I Stumbling Because Jesus Has Not Done What I Expected?

Am I a Reed Swayed by the Wind, or Do I Stand Firm?

Do I Appreciate the Privilege of Living After the Cross?

Am I Making Excuses to Avoid Responding to God?

Have I Heard the Gospel Many Times Without Truly Repenting?

Am I Proud of My Own Wisdom, or Humble Like a Child?

Do I Truly Know the Father Through the Son?

What Burdens Am I Carrying That I Need to Bring to Jesus?

Am I Walking with Jesus Under His Yoke, or Trying to Carry Life Alone?

XXXVII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Come to Me”

Matthew 11 is full of people who would not come.

The generation that would not dance or mourn.

The towns that saw miracles and would not repent.

The wise and learned who could not see.

They were close to Jesus.

They heard Him.

They saw Him.

But they did not come to Him.

Then, at the end of the chapter, Jesus opens His arms wide.

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened.”

He does not say, **“Come when you are strong.”**

He does not say, **“Come when you have it all figured out.”**

He does not say, **“Come when you have cleaned yourself up.”**

He says, **“Come.”**

This creates a powerful principle.

The people who receive rest are not the strongest or the smartest.

They are the ones who come.

Principle:

Rest is not found by those who are close to Jesus, but by those who come to Jesus.

XXXVIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 11 begins in a prison cell.

A faithful man sits in the dark.

He has given his life for God.

And he wonders.

“Are You the One?”

Jesus does not scold him.

He sends back the answer:

Look at what I am doing.

The blind see.

The lame walk.

The dead are raised.

The poor hear good news.

Then Jesus honors His servant.

No one born of a woman was greater than John.

But the chapter darkens.

A generation refuses to listen.

Towns that saw the most miracles refuse to repent.

Judgment is coming.

And then, like light breaking through a storm, Jesus speaks words of grace.

“Come to Me.”

Matthew 11 therefore reminds us:

Doubt is not the end of faith if it leads us to Jesus.

Privilege is not the same as repentance.

God hides Himself from the proud and reveals Himself to the humble.

And Jesus still opens His arms to the weary.

The rest Jesus gives does not come from:

Religious knowledge.

Seeing miracles.

Or carrying heavy rules.

It comes from:

Coming to Him.

Taking His yoke.

Learning from His gentle and humble heart.

The same invitation still stands:

Bring your doubts to Him.

Do not stumble over His ways.

Repent while there is time.

Come like a little child.

Come weary.

Come burdened.

Come to Jesus.

And until He returns:

Keep coming.

Keep learning.

Keep walking with Him.

Keep resting in Him.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Jesus, the One who was to come.

Thank You that we do not need to look for another.

Lord Jesus, when we are in dark places, help us remember who You are.

When we have doubts, help us bring them to You.

Thank You for being patient with honest questions.

Keep us from stumbling when You do not do what we expected.

Help us trust Your ways, even when we do not understand them.

Make us strong like John, not reeds blown by every wind.

Thank You for the great privilege of living after the cross and the empty tomb.

Forgive us for the times we have made excuses instead of responding to You.

Keep our hearts soft so that we do not grow hard by hearing Your Word without obeying it.

Give us repentant hearts.

Father, thank You that You reveal Yourself to the humble.

Take away our pride.

Make us like little children before You.

Thank You that we can know You through Your Son.

Lord Jesus, we hear Your invitation.

We are weary.

We are burdened.

We come to You now.

Give us rest for our souls.

Teach us to take Your yoke and learn from You.

Thank You for Your gentle and humble heart.

Thank You that Your yoke is easy and Your burden is light.

Help us walk with You every day.

And help us invite other weary people to come to You too.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” — Matthew 11:28

Central Truth

Jesus is the promised One whose works prove who He is, and though many reject Him, He invites all who are weary to come to Him and find rest for their souls.

Matthew 11 in One Sentence

Jesus answers John's doubt with the evidence of His works, honors John as the greatest of the prophets, warns a stubborn generation and unrepentant towns of judgment, praises the Father for revealing truth to the humble, and invites all who are weary to come to Him for rest.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 12 — Lord of the Sabbath, Power Over Demons, and True Family

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 11 ended with one of the most beautiful invitations in the Bible.

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew Chapter 12 begins with a conflict over **rest.**

It begins with the **Sabbath**, the day of rest God gave to Israel.

The Pharisees had turned the Sabbath into a heavy burden.

They had added hundreds of rules about what could and could not be done.

When Jesus' hungry disciples picked grain on the Sabbath, the Pharisees accused them.

When Jesus healed a man's hand on the Sabbath, they began to plot His death.

Jesus answered with a bold claim:

“The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

Then Matthew shows Jesus as the gentle Servant Isaiah promised.

He does not break a bruised reed.

He does not snuff out a smoldering wick.

Then the conflict grows sharper.

Jesus heals a man who is blind and mute.

The crowds wonder, **“Could this be the Son of David?”**

But the Pharisees say His power comes from the devil.

Jesus answers them with a serious warning about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

He tells them that words reveal the heart.

He refuses to give them a sign, except the sign of Jonah, which points to His death and resurrection.

He warns that an empty life, cleaned up but not filled with God, is in great danger.

Finally, Jesus' family comes looking for Him.

And Jesus points to His disciples and says:

“Here are My mother and My brothers.”

Matthew 12 is a turning point in the Gospel.

The opposition of the religious leaders becomes open and deadly.

From this point on, they are determined to destroy Him.

Matthew 12 therefore shows two great truths:

Jesus is greater than the Sabbath, the temple, Jonah, and Solomon.

And:

Everyone must decide whether they are with Him or against Him.

The central truth of Matthew 12 is:

Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath and the Spirit-filled Servant of God, greater than every institution and prophet, and every person must decide whether they will reject Him or join His true family by doing the Father's will.

I. THROUGH THE GRAINFIELDS

Matthew 12:1 — The Disciples Were Hungry

“At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them.”

“At that time” connects this story to Jesus' invitation to rest.

Jesus and His disciples were walking through **grainfields** on the **Sabbath.**

The Sabbath was the seventh day, Saturday.

God commanded Israel to rest from work on that day.

The disciples were **hungry.**

They picked some heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands, and ate.

The Law of Moses allowed this.

A person could pick grain by hand from a neighbor's field to satisfy hunger.

They just could not use a sickle to harvest it.

Cross References

Mark 2:23

> One Sabbath day, Jesus was walking through some fields of grain. His followers began to pick some grain as they walked.

Luke 6:1

> One Sabbath day Jesus was walking through some fields of grain. His followers picked the heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands, and ate them.

Deuteronomy 23:25

> When you go into your neighbor's field of grain, you may pick the heads of grain with your hands. But you must not use a sickle to cut your neighbor's grain.

Spiritual Principle

God's law made room for human need.

II. THE PHARISEES ACCUSE THE DISCIPLES

Matthew 12:2 — “What Is Unlawful”

“When the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, ‘Look, Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.’”

The **Pharisees** were watching.

They accused the disciples of breaking the Sabbath.

God's law did not forbid picking a few heads of grain.

But the Pharisees had added their own rules.

They listed thirty-nine kinds of forbidden work.

In their eyes, picking grain was **harvesting.**

Rubbing it in the hands was **threshing.**

They had turned a day of rest into a day of rules.

Cross References

Exodus 20:10

> But the seventh day is a day of rest to honor the LORD your God. On that day no one may do any work.

Mark 2:24

> The Pharisees said to Jesus, “Why are Your followers doing what is not allowed on the Sabbath day?”

Exodus 34:21

> You must work for six days, but on the seventh day you must rest. Even during plowing time and harvest time you must rest.

Spiritual Warning

Man-made rules can bury the true meaning of God's commands.

III. WHAT DAVID DID

Matthew 12:3 — When He Was Hungry

“Jesus replied, ‘Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?’”

Jesus answered the Pharisees from Scripture.

“Haven't you read?”

This was a sharp question.

The Pharisees prided themselves on knowing the Scriptures.

Jesus reminded them of **David.**

David was running from King Saul.

He and his men were **hungry.**

Cross References

Mark 2:25

> Jesus answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and those with him were hungry and needed food?”

Luke 6:3

> Jesus answered, “Have you not read what David did when he and those with him were hungry?”

1 Samuel 21:1

> David went to Nob to see Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech was afraid when he met David.

Spiritual Principle

Scripture must be read as a whole, not twisted to support our rules.

IV. THE CONSECRATED BREAD

Matthew 12:4 — Lawful Only for the Priests

“He entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread—which was lawful only for the priests to eat.”

In the tabernacle, twelve loaves of **consecrated bread** were placed before the LORD each week.

When they were replaced, only the priests were allowed to eat the old loaves.

But when David and his men were hungry, the priest gave them this holy bread.

God did not condemn David.

Human need was more important than the ceremony.

If David, Israel's king, could do this, how much more could the Son of David allow His disciples to eat grain?

Cross References

1 Samuel 21:6

> So the priest gave David the holy bread, because there was no other bread there. It was the bread that had been placed before the LORD.

Leviticus 24:9

> The bread will belong to Aaron and his sons. They must eat it in a holy place, because it is a very holy part of the offerings to the LORD.

Mark 2:26

> He went into God's house when Abiathar was high priest and ate the holy bread, which only priests are allowed to eat. And he gave some to those who were with him.

Spiritual Principle

God's laws were given to serve people, not to harm them.

V. THE PRIESTS WORK ON THE SABBATH

Matthew 12:5 — Yet They Are Innocent

“Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and yet are innocent?”

Jesus gave a second example.

The priests **worked** every Sabbath.

They offered sacrifices.

They replaced the holy bread.

They did more work on the Sabbath than on other days.

Yet they were **innocent.**

Why?

Because their work was done in service to God in the temple.

The temple's work was more important than the Sabbath rest.

Cross References

Numbers 28:9

> On the Sabbath day you must offer two male lambs a year old that have nothing wrong with them.

John 7:22

> Moses gave you circumcision... and you circumcise a child even on the Sabbath day.

Leviticus 24:8

> Every Sabbath day Aaron will put the bread in order before the LORD.

Spiritual Principle

Serving God and meeting real needs honor the Sabbath rather than break it.

VI. SOMETHING GREATER THAN THE TEMPLE

Matthew 12:6 — Here

“I tell you that something greater than the temple is here.”

This was an astonishing claim.

The temple was the holiest place in Israel.

It was the place where God's presence dwelled.

But Jesus said **something greater** was here.

If the priests could serve in the temple on the Sabbath, then the disciples could serve the One who is greater than the temple.

Jesus Himself is the true dwelling place of God.

Cross References

Matthew 12:41

> On the Judgment Day the people from Nineveh will stand up with the people who live now, and they will show that you are guilty. When Jonah preached to them, they changed their hearts and lives. And look, someone greater than Jonah is here.

John 2:19

> Jesus answered, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again.”

Haggai 2:9

> “The glory of this new temple will be greater than the glory of the first one,” says the LORD who commands armies. “And in this place I will give peace.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is greater than every holy place.

Key Truth

In Jesus, God came to dwell with people in a way the temple only pictured.

VII. MERCY, NOT SACRIFICE

Matthew 12:7 — Condemning the Innocent

“If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent.”

For the second time in Matthew, Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6.

“I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”

The Pharisees knew the words.

But they did not know what they **meant.**

If they had understood God's heart, they would have shown mercy to hungry men.

Instead, they **condemned the innocent.**

Their rules had made them harsh.

Cross References

Hosea 6:6

> I want your faithful love more than your sacrifices. I want you to know Me more than I want your burnt offerings.

Matthew 9:13

> Go and learn what this means: “I want faithful love more than I want animal sacrifices.” I did not come to call good people, but sinners.

1 Samuel 15:22

> Obeying is better than offering sacrifices. Listening to the LORD is better than offering the fat of rams.

Spiritual Principle

Knowing Scripture without knowing God's heart leads to harshness.

VIII. LORD OF THE SABBATH

Matthew 12:8 — The Son of Man

“For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

This is the climax of the argument.

The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

God made the Sabbath.

Only God is Lord of it.

Jesus was claiming to be that Lord.

He has the authority to say what the Sabbath means and how it should be kept.

And the Sabbath points to Him.

He is the true rest God promised.

Cross References

Mark 2:28

> So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.

Luke 6:5

> Then Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath day.”

Exodus 20:8

> Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is Lord over everything, including the day of rest.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Sabbath was a picture of rest; Jesus is the rest it pictured.

IX. INTO THE SYNAGOGUE

Matthew 12:9 — Going On from There

“Going on from there, He entered their synagogue,”

Jesus went into **their synagogue.**

Notice the word **their.**

This was the place where the Pharisees had influence.

Jesus did not avoid conflict.

He went where people gathered to worship.

Cross References

Mark 3:1

> Another time when Jesus went into a synagogue, a man with a crippled hand was there.

Luke 6:6

> On another Sabbath day Jesus went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man with a crippled right hand was there.

Luke 4:16

> Jesus went to Nazareth, where He had grown up. On the Sabbath day He went to the synagogue, as He always did.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus faithfully worshiped with God's people, even among His critics.

X. A MAN WITH A SHRIVELED HAND

Matthew 12:10 — Looking for a Reason to Accuse

“and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked Him, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?’”

A man with a **shriveled hand** was there.

Luke tells us it was his **right** hand.

This may have kept him from working.

The Pharisees were not concerned about the man.

They were **looking for a reason to accuse Jesus.**

They asked a trap question.

“Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”

Their rules allowed healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger.

This man's hand was not an emergency.

So they expected Jesus to break their rule.

Cross References

Mark 3:2

> Some people watched Jesus closely to see if He would heal the man on the Sabbath day. They wanted to accuse Him.

Luke 6:7

> The teachers of the law and the Pharisees were watching closely to see if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath day so they could accuse Him.

Luke 13:14

> The synagogue leader was angry because Jesus healed on the Sabbath day. He said to the people, “There are six days for work. So come to be healed on one of those days, and not on the Sabbath day.”

Spiritual Warning

Religion without love uses people's suffering as a weapon.

XI. A SHEEP IN A PIT

Matthew 12:11 — Would You Not Lift It Out?

“He said to them, ‘If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not lift it out?’”

Jesus answered with a question.

If a sheep fell into a pit on the Sabbath, wouldn't you lift it out?

Of course they would.

Even their own rules allowed helping an animal in trouble.

The Law of Moses told Israel to help an animal that had fallen, even one that belonged to an enemy.

Cross References

Luke 14:5

> Jesus said to them, “If your son or your ox falls into a well on the Sabbath day, wouldn't you pull him out right away?”

Deuteronomy 22:4

> If you see your neighbor's donkey or ox fallen on the road, don't ignore it. Help him lift it up.

Exodus 23:5

> If you see the donkey of someone who hates you lying under its load, don't leave it there. You must help him with it.

Spiritual Principle

Common sense and compassion should guide how we apply God's commands.

XII. MORE VALUABLE THAN A SHEEP

Matthew 12:12 — Lawful to Do Good

“How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

Jesus made His point.

If they would help a sheep, how much more should they help a **person**?

People are made in God's image.

They are worth far more than animals.

Then Jesus gave a clear principle.

“It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

The Sabbath was never meant to stop people from doing good.

It was made to bring life, rest, and blessing.

Cross References

Luke 14:5

> Jesus said to them, “If your son or your ox falls into a well on the Sabbath day, wouldn't you pull him out right away?”

Mark 3:4

> Then Jesus asked them, “Which is right on the Sabbath day: to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to destroy it?” But they said nothing.

Matthew 6:26

> Look at the birds in the air. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them. And you are worth much more than they are.

Spiritual Principle

It is always right to do good.

Key Truth

The Pharisees valued their rules more than people.

Jesus valued people more than rules.

XIII. STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND

Matthew 12:13 — Completely Restored

“Then He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ So he stretched it out, and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other.”

Jesus spoke to the man.

“Stretch out your hand.”

This was a command the man could not obey on his own.

His hand was shriveled.

But when he obeyed in faith, the power came.

His hand was **completely restored.**

Just as sound as the other.

Notice that Jesus did not do any “work.”

He did not touch the man.

He did not use any medicine.

He only spoke.

The Pharisees could not even accuse Him of breaking their own rules.

Cross References

Mark 3:5

> Jesus was angry as He looked at the people, and He felt very sad because they were stubborn. Then He said to the man, “Hold out your hand.” The man held out his hand, and it was healed.

Luke 6:10

> Jesus looked around at all of them and said to the man, “Hold out your hand.” The man held out his hand, and it was healed.

1 Kings 13:6

> So the man of God prayed to the LORD, and the king's hand was healed. It became as it was before.

Spiritual Principle

When Jesus commands, He gives the power to obey.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Obey Jesus' word, even when it seems impossible, and His power will meet you there.

XIV. THEY PLOTTED TO KILL HIM

Matthew 12:14 — The Pharisees Went Out

“But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.”

This is a turning point in Matthew.

A man had just been healed.

The Pharisees should have rejoiced.

Instead, they **plotted how they might kill Jesus.**

Think about the irony.

They were angry that Jesus did good on the Sabbath.

So on the same Sabbath they planned murder.

Their hearts were hard and full of hatred.

Cross References

Mark 3:6

> Then the Pharisees left and began making plans with the Herodians about a way to kill Jesus.

John 5:18

> This made the Jews try even harder to kill Him. He was not only breaking the Sabbath day law, but He was also saying that God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

John 11:53

> So from that day they started planning to kill Jesus.

Spiritual Warning

A hard heart can see God's goodness and respond with hatred.

XV. JESUS WITHDREW

Matthew 12:15 — He Healed Them All

“Aware of this, Jesus withdrew. Large crowds followed Him, and He healed them all.”

Jesus knew about their plot.

He **withdrew.**

This was not fear.

His time to die had not yet come.

He would go to the cross at the right time, the Father's time.

But even as He withdrew, **large crowds followed Him.**

And **He healed them all.**

The Pharisees were planning death.

Jesus was giving life.

Cross References

Mark 3:7

Jesus left with His followers for the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed Him.

Matthew 4:23

Jesus went everywhere in Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, telling the good news about the kingdom, and healing all the people's diseases and sicknesses.

Isaiah 53:4

Surely He took our sicknesses and carried our pain.

Spiritual Principle

Opposition cannot stop Jesus' compassion.

XVI. DO NOT TELL OTHERS

Matthew 12:16 — A Warning

“He warned them not to tell others about Him.”

Again, Jesus told people not to spread the news.

He was not seeking fame.

He did not want crowds stirred up with wrong ideas about the Messiah.

He was not coming as a political hero.

He was coming as a humble Servant.

Cross References

Mark 3:12

But Jesus strongly warned them not to tell who He was.

Matthew 8:4

Then Jesus said to him, “Don't tell anyone about this. But go and show yourself to the priest.”

Mark 1:44

“Don't tell anyone about this. But go and show yourself to the priest.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus did not seek attention; He sought to do the Father's will.

XVII. TO FULFILL ISAIAH

Matthew 12:17 — What Was Spoken

“This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:”

Matthew explains Jesus' quiet, humble way.

It fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy about the Servant of the LORD.

This is the longest Old Testament quotation in Matthew's Gospel.

Cross References

Isaiah 42:1

> Here is My Servant, the One I support. He is My Chosen One, and I am very pleased with Him. I have put My Spirit on Him.

Matthew 1:22

> All this happened to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet.

Matthew 4:14

> Jesus did this to make come true what the prophet Isaiah had said.

Spiritual Principle

Even Jesus' humility was foretold by God.

XVIII. MY SERVANT, MY BELOVED

Matthew 12:18 — My Spirit on Him

“Here is My servant whom I have chosen, My beloved in whom My soul delights. I will put My Spirit on Him, and He will proclaim justice to the nations.”

God calls Jesus:

My servant.

Whom I have chosen.

My beloved.

In whom My soul delights.

These words echo what the Father said at Jesus' baptism.

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

“I will put My Spirit on Him.”

The Spirit came on Jesus at His baptism.

“He will proclaim justice to the nations.”

Not only to Israel.

To **the nations.**

Cross References

Isaiah 42:1

> Here is My Servant, the One I support. He is My Chosen One, and I am very pleased with Him. I have put My Spirit on Him, and He will bring justice to the nations.

Matthew 3:17

> And a voice from heaven said, “This is My Son, whom I love. I am very pleased with Him.”

Matthew 17:5

> A voice came from the cloud and said, “This is My Son, whom I love. I am very pleased with Him. Listen to Him!”

Spiritual Principle

The Father delights in His Son.

Key Truth

The Pharisees plotted against Him, but the Father delighted in Him.

XIX. HE WILL NOT QUARREL

Matthew 12:19 — No One Will Hear His Voice in the Streets

“He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear His voice in the streets.”

Isaiah described the Servant's character.

He will not quarrel.

He does not fight to prove Himself.

He will not cry out.

He does not shout to draw attention.

No one will hear His voice in the streets.

He does not stir up crowds for His own glory.

This is exactly how Jesus responded to the Pharisees.

He withdrew quietly.

He told people not to make Him famous.

Cross References

Isaiah 42:2

> He will not cry out or shout. He will not speak loudly in the streets.

1 Peter 2:23

> When people insulted Him, He did not insult them back. When He suffered, He did not threaten. He trusted Himself to God, who judges fairly.

Isaiah 53:7

> He was treated badly, but He humbled Himself and did not open His mouth. He was like a lamb led to be killed.

Spiritual Principle

True strength does not need to shout.

XX. A BRUISED REED

Matthew 12:20 — A Smoldering Wick

“A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out, till He brings justice to victory.”

This is one of the most tender descriptions of Jesus in the Bible.

A **bruised reed** is a stalk that is bent and damaged.

Most people would snap it and throw it away.

A **smoldering wick** is a lamp wick that is barely burning.

It smokes more than it shines.

Most people would pinch it out.

But Jesus does not break the bruised.

He does not put out the weak.

He is gentle with people who are hurting and barely holding on.

Yet He is not weak.

He will continue **till He brings justice to victory.**

Cross References

Isaiah 42:3

> He will not break a bent reed or put out a weak flame. He will faithfully bring justice.

Isaiah 61:1

> The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on Me... He has sent Me to heal those with broken hearts.

Ezekiel 34:16

> I will look for the lost, bring back those who wandered away, bandage the injured, and make the weak strong.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is gentle with the broken and the weak.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If you feel like a bruised reed or a smoldering wick, Jesus will not throw you away.

Application

Jesus is gentle with:

- The discouraged.
- The hurting.
- Those whose faith is weak.
- Those who have failed.
- Those who feel they have little left.

XXI. THE NATIONS WILL HOPE

Matthew 12:21 — In His Name

“In His name the nations will put their hope.”

The quotation ends with a wonderful promise.

The nations — the Gentiles — **will put their hope** in Him.

Israel's leaders were rejecting Jesus.

But people from every nation would find hope in His name.

This is the hope of the gospel for the whole world.

Cross References

Isaiah 42:4

> He will not lose hope or give up until He brings justice to the world. And people far away will trust His teachings.

Genesis 49:10

> The scepter will not leave Judah... until He comes to whom it belongs, and the nations will obey Him.

Romans 15:12

> And Isaiah says, “The Root of Jesse will come. He will rise up to rule over the nations, and the nations will put their hope in Him.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the hope of the whole world.

XXII. BLIND AND MUTE

Matthew 12:22 — He Could Talk and See

“Then they brought Him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him so that he could both talk and see.”

A man was brought to Jesus.

He was **demon-possessed.**

He was **blind.**

He was **mute.**

He could not see.

He could not speak.

He was trapped in darkness and silence.

Jesus **healed him.**

Now he could **talk and see.**

Cross References

Luke 11:14

> Jesus was forcing out a demon that made a man unable to talk. When the demon came out, the man was able to speak, and the people were amazed.

Matthew 9:32

> As the two men were leaving, some people brought another man to Jesus. This man could not talk because he had a demon in him.

Isaiah 35:5

> Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will hear.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus frees people from every kind of darkness.

XXIII. COULD THIS BE THE SON OF DAVID?

Matthew 12:23 — The People Were Amazed

“All the people were amazed and said, ‘Could this be the Son of David?’”

The crowd was **amazed.**

They asked an important question.

“Could this be the Son of David?”

Son of David was a title for the Messiah.

The people were beginning to wonder if Jesus was the promised King.

But their question was hesitant.

In Greek, it is worded in a way that expects the answer, **“Probably not, but maybe.”**

They were close to the truth but not yet sure.

Cross References

Matthew 21:9

> The crowds in front of Him and those behind Him shouted, “Praise to the Son of David! God bless the One who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Matthew 9:27

> As Jesus was leaving there, two blind men followed Him. They cried out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

Isaiah 11:1

> A new branch will grow from the stump of Jesse's family. A Branch will grow from its roots and produce fruit.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' works lead people to ask who He really is.

XXIV. BY BEELZEBUL

Matthew 12:24 — The Pharisees' Accusation

“But the Pharisees said, ‘It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man drives out demons.’”

The Pharisees heard the crowd.

They had to stop the people from believing.

They could not deny the miracle.

So they gave an evil explanation.

“It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons.”

Beelzebul was a name for Satan.

They said Jesus was working for the devil.

Notice how they refer to Jesus:

“This man.”

They would not even say His name.

Cross References

Mark 3:22

> The teachers of the law who came from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul in Him! He uses the power of the ruler of demons to force demons out of people.”

Luke 11:15

> But some of them said, “Jesus uses the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, to force demons out of people.”

Matthew 10:25

> If the head of the family is called Beelzebul, then the other members of the family will be called even worse names!

Spiritual Warning

A heart set against Jesus will twist even the clearest evidence.

XXV. A DIVIDED KINGDOM

Matthew 12:25 — Will Not Stand

“Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, ‘Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.’”

Jesus **knew their thoughts.**

Then He answered with simple logic.

A **kingdom divided against itself** will be ruined.

A **city** or **household** divided against itself will fall.

Everyone knows this is true.

Israel itself had been divided into two kingdoms after Solomon, and both eventually fell.

Cross References

Mark 3:24

> A kingdom that is divided against itself cannot continue.

Luke 11:17

> But Jesus knew what they were thinking. So He said to them, “Every kingdom that is divided against itself will be destroyed. And a family that is divided against itself will fall.”

1 Kings 12:16

> When all the Israelites saw that the new king would not listen to them, they said, “We have no share in David! We have no part in the son of Jesse!”

Spiritual Principle

Division destroys.

XXVI. SATAN AGAINST SATAN?

Matthew 12:26 — How Can His Kingdom Stand?

“If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?”

Jesus applied the principle.

If Satan were driving out his own demons, he would be fighting against himself.

His kingdom would fall apart.

The Pharisees' accusation made no sense.

Satan would not destroy his own work.

Cross References

Mark 3:26

> And if Satan is against himself and is divided, he cannot continue. That is the end of Satan.

Luke 11:18

> So if Satan is fighting against himself, how will his kingdom continue? You say that I use the power of Beelzebul to force out demons.

Revelation 12:9

> The giant dragon was thrown down. He is that old snake called the devil or Satan, who tricks the whole world.

Spiritual Principle

Truth exposes the foolishness of lies.

XXVII. YOUR PEOPLE WILL JUDGE YOU

Matthew 12:27 — By Whom Do They Drive Them Out?

“And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges.”

Jesus asked another question.

Some Jewish exorcists also tried to drive out demons.

The Pharisees did not accuse them of working for Satan.

So why accuse Jesus?

They were being unfair.

Their own people would show that they were inconsistent.

Cross References

Luke 11:19

> But if I use the power of Beelzebul to force out demons, what power do your people use to force demons out? So your own people will prove that you are wrong.

Acts 19:13

> But some Jews who traveled around forcing out evil spirits also tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus.

Mark 9:38

> John said, “Teacher, we saw someone using Your name to force demons out of a person, and we told him to stop, because he does not belong to our group.”

Spiritual Principle

Unbelief often uses unfair standards.

XXVIII. THE KINGDOM HAS COME

Matthew 12:28 — By the Spirit of God

“But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

Now Jesus gave the true explanation.

He drove out demons **by the Spirit of God.**

And that meant something wonderful.

The kingdom of God has come upon you.

God's rule was breaking into the world.

Satan's kingdom was being pushed back.

Every demon driven out was proof that the King had arrived.

Cross References

Luke 11:20

> But if I use the power of God to force out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

Luke 17:21

> People will not say, “Look, here it is!” or “There it is!” because the kingdom of God is among you.

John 12:31

> Now is the time for the world to be judged. Now the ruler of this world will be thrown out.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' victory over demons proves that God's kingdom has come.

XXIX. TYING UP THE STRONG MAN

Matthew 12:29 — Plundering His House

“Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house.”

Jesus gave a picture.

A **strong man** guards his house.

No one can rob his house unless they first **tie him up.**

Satan is the strong man.

His possessions are the people he holds captive.

Jesus is the One stronger than Satan.

He has come into Satan's house.

He is tying up the strong man.

And He is setting the captives free.

Cross References

Mark 3:27

> No one can go into a strong man's house and steal his things unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can steal everything from the house.

Luke 11:21

> When a strong man with many weapons guards his own house, his possessions are safe.

Isaiah 49:24

> Can the wealth a soldier wins in war be taken away from him? Can a prisoner be rescued from a strong soldier?

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is stronger than Satan.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Every person Jesus sets free is one more captive taken out of the enemy's house.

XXX. WITH ME OR AGAINST ME

Matthew 12:30 — Gather or Scatter

“Whoever is not with Me is against Me, and whoever does not gather with Me scatters.”

Now Jesus calls for a decision.

There is no neutral ground.

With Me or **against Me.**

Gather or **scatter.**

In a war between God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom, no one can stand on the sidelines.

Not choosing Jesus is choosing against Him.

Cross References

Luke 11:23

> Anyone who is not with Me is against Me. Anyone who does not work with Me is working against Me.

Mark 9:40

> Whoever is not against us is with us.

John 10:12

> The hired worker sees a wolf coming, leaves the sheep, and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them.

Spiritual Principle

There is no neutral position toward Jesus.

XXXI. BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE SPIRIT

Matthew 12:31 — Will Not Be Forgiven

“And so I tell you, every kind of sin and blasphemy can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.”

Jesus began with a wonderful promise.

Every kind of sin and blasphemy can be forgiven.

God's grace is great.

No sin is too big for Him to forgive.

But then Jesus gave a serious warning.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

What is this sin?

It is what the Pharisees were doing.

They saw the clear work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus.

And they deliberately called it the work of the devil.

It is a hardened, final rejection of the Spirit's testimony about Jesus.

Cross References

Mark 3:28

> I tell you the truth, all sins that people do and all the things people say against God can be forgiven.

Luke 12:10

> Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

1 John 5:16

> If anyone sees a brother or sister sinning in a way that does not lead to death, he should pray, and God will give that person life... There is a sin that leads to death.

Spiritual Warning

Hardening your heart against the Holy Spirit is the most dangerous thing a person can do.

Key Truth

The sin is not unforgivable because God's grace is too small.

It is unforgivable because the person has rejected the only One who can lead them to forgiveness.

XXXII. IN THIS AGE OR THE AGE TO COME

Matthew 12:32 — Against the Son of Man

“Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”

Jesus explained further.

Speaking against **the Son of Man** can be forgiven.

Many people misunderstood Jesus at first.

Even His own brothers did not believe in Him for a time.

Paul once persecuted Jesus' followers.

All of them were forgiven when they repented.

But speaking against **the Holy Spirit** is different.

It means rejecting the Spirit's clear testimony that Jesus is the Son of God.

A person who does this has closed the only door to forgiveness.

A person who is worried that they have committed this sin almost certainly has not.

Their concern shows that the Spirit is still working in their heart.

Cross References

Luke 12:10

> Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

Mark 3:29

> But anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. He is guilty of a sin that continues forever.

Hebrews 6:4

> Some people have once understood God's truth. They tasted the gift from heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Principle

There is forgiveness for every sinner who comes to Jesus.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If you are afraid you have committed the unforgivable sin, your fear shows the Spirit is still speaking to you — come to Jesus.

XXXIII. A TREE AND ITS FRUIT

Matthew 12:33 — Recognized by Its Fruit

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.”

Jesus returns to a picture He used in the Sermon on the Mount.

A tree is known by its fruit.

What is inside will come out.

The Pharisees' evil words showed what was in their hearts.

And Jesus' good works showed what was in His.

Cross References

Matthew 7:17

> In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit.

Luke 6:43

> A good tree does not produce bad fruit, and a bad tree does not produce good fruit.

Galatians 5:22

> But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Spiritual Principle

What we are on the inside will show on the outside.

XXXIV. A BROOD OF VIPERS

Matthew 12:34 — The Mouth Speaks What Fills the Heart

“You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.”

Jesus used the same strong words John the Baptist used.

“You brood of vipers.”

Vipers are poisonous snakes.

Their words were poison.

Then Jesus gave an important principle.

“The mouth speaks what the heart is full of.”

Words are like a bucket dipped into a well.

Whatever is in the well comes up in the bucket.

Our words show what is inside us.

Cross References

Matthew 3:7

> Many Pharisees and Sadducees came to be baptized. When John saw them, he said, “You are snakes!”

Luke 6:45

> A good person has good things saved up in his heart, so he brings good things out of his heart... People speak the things that are in their hearts.

Matthew 23:33

> You are snakes! You are a family of poisonous snakes! How will you escape God's judgment?

Spiritual Principle

Our words reveal our hearts.

XXXV. GOOD AND EVIL TREASURE

Matthew 12:35 — Stored Up Inside

“A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.”

The heart is like a **storehouse.**

What we put in will eventually come out.

A good person has good things stored inside.

So good things come out.

An evil person has evil stored inside.

So evil comes out.

If we want our words to change, our hearts must change.

Cross References

Luke 6:45

> A good person has good things saved up in his heart, so he brings good things out of his heart. But an evil person has evil things saved up in his heart, so he brings bad things out.

Proverbs 4:23

> Be very careful about what you think, because your thoughts control your life.

James 3:11

> Can fresh water and salty water flow from the same spring?

Spiritual Principle

Guard what goes into your heart, because it will come out of your mouth.

Application

To fill your heart with good things:

- Read and memorize God's Word.
- Pray every day.
- Choose what you watch and listen to carefully.
- Spend time with godly people.
- Think about what is true and good.
- Ask the Spirit to change your heart.

XXXVI. EVERY CARELESS WORD

Matthew 12:36 — On the Day of Judgment

“But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.”

This is a sobering verse.

Everyone will **give account** for their words.

Not only the evil words.

Not only the angry words.

Every careless word.

Words spoken without thinking.

Words that hurt.

Words that were empty or useless.

God hears every word we say.

Cross References

Romans 14:12

> So each of us will have to explain to God about the things we have done.

Ecclesiastes 12:14

> God will judge everything people do, even the secret things, both good and bad.

James 3:6

> The tongue is like a fire. It is a world of evil among the parts of our body. The tongue spreads its evil through the whole body.

Spiritual Warning

Words matter to God.

XXXVII. BY YOUR WORDS

Matthew 12:37 — Acquitted or Condemned

“For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Our words show what is in our hearts.

So on the day of judgment, our words will be evidence.

This does not mean we are saved by saying the right things.

We are saved by grace through faith in Christ.

But a heart that has been saved will produce words that show it.

And a heart that rejects Christ will reveal itself through its words.

Cross References

Proverbs 18:21

> What you say can mean life or death. Those who love to talk will eat what they say.

James 3:2

> We all make many mistakes. If people never said anything wrong, they would be perfect and able to control their entire selves too.

Proverbs 13:3

> Those who are careful about what they say protect their lives. But whoever speaks without thinking will be ruined.

Spiritual Principle

Words are evidence of the heart.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Your words are a window into your heart — and God sees through the window.

XXXVIII. SHOW US A SIGN

Matthew 12:38 — Teacher, We Want a Sign

“Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to Him, ‘Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.’”

The Pharisees and teachers of the law asked for **a sign.**

This was incredible.

Jesus had just healed a man who was blind, mute, and demon-possessed.

He had healed a shriveled hand.

He had done many miracles.

And they still wanted a sign.

They were not asking honestly.

They had already decided not to believe.

Cross References

Mark 8:11

> The Pharisees came to Jesus and began to ask Him questions. Hoping to trap Him, they asked Jesus for a sign from heaven.

Luke 11:16

> Others, wanting to test Jesus, asked Him to give them a sign from heaven.

John 6:30

> So the people asked, “What miracle will You do? If we see a miracle, we will believe You. What will You do?”

Spiritual Principle

No amount of evidence will convince a heart that refuses to believe.

XXXIX. THE SIGN OF JONAH

Matthew 12:39 — A Wicked Generation

“He answered, ‘A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given except the sign of the prophet Jonah.’”

Jesus called them **a wicked and adulterous generation.**

Adulterous here means spiritually unfaithful to God.

Like a wife who has turned away from her husband.

They would not receive a sign on demand.

They would receive only one sign:

The sign of the prophet Jonah.

Cross References

Luke 11:29

> As the crowd grew larger, Jesus said, “The people who live today are evil. They want to see a miracle as a sign, but no sign will be given them, except the sign of Jonah.”

Matthew 16:4

> Evil and sinful people are the ones who want to see a miracle as a sign. But no sign will be given to them, except the sign of Jonah.

Jonah 1:1

> The LORD spoke His word to Jonah son of Amittai.

Spiritual Principle

God gives the signs He chooses, not the signs we demand.

XL. THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS

Matthew 12:40 — In the Heart of the Earth

“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Jesus explained the sign.

Jonah was **three days and three nights** in the belly of a great fish.

Then he came out alive.

Jesus would be **three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**

This points to His death and burial.

And then His resurrection.

In Jewish counting, any part of a day was counted as a day.

Jesus was buried Friday, was in the tomb Saturday, and rose on Sunday.

His resurrection would be the greatest sign of all.

Cross References

Jonah 1:17

> The LORD sent a very big fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah 2:1

> While Jonah was in the stomach of the fish, he prayed to the LORD his God.

1 Corinthians 15:4

> He was buried and was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures say.

Spiritual Principle

The resurrection is the greatest proof that Jesus is who He said He is.

Key Truth

Every other sign points to this one: the empty tomb.

XLI. THE MEN OF NINEVEH

Matthew 12:41 — Something Greater Than Jonah

“The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at Jonah's preaching, and now something greater than Jonah is here.”

Nineveh was a wicked Gentile city.

Jonah preached a short message of judgment.

And the whole city **repented.**

On the day of judgment, the people of Nineveh will stand up and condemn Jesus' generation.

Why?

Because they repented at the preaching of Jonah.

And Jesus is **greater than Jonah.**

Jonah was a reluctant prophet.

Jesus is the willing Savior.

Jonah did no miracles.

Jesus did many.

Jonah preached judgment.

Jesus offered grace.

Yet Nineveh repented, and Jesus' generation did not.

Cross References

Jonah 3:5

> The people of Nineveh believed God. They announced that they would stop eating for a while, and they put on rough cloth to show how sad they were, from the most important to the least important.

Luke 11:32

> On the Judgment Day the people from Nineveh will stand up with the people who live now, and they will show that you are guilty. When Jonah preached to them, they changed their hearts and lives. And look, someone greater than Jonah is here.

Jonah 3:10

> When God saw what the people did, that they stopped doing evil, He changed His mind and did not do what He had warned. He did not punish them.

Spiritual Principle

Those who have heard more will be judged by those who did more with less.

XLII. THE QUEEN OF THE SOUTH

Matthew 12:42 — Something Greater Than Solomon

“The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear Solomon's wisdom, and now something greater than Solomon is here.”

The Queen of the South is the Queen of Sheba.

She traveled a great distance to hear the wisdom of King Solomon.

She was a Gentile.

She made great effort to hear wisdom.

But Jesus' generation had **someone greater than Solomon** right in front of them.

And they would not listen.

Jesus is greater than the temple.

Greater than Jonah the prophet.

Greater than Solomon the king.

He is Priest, Prophet, and King.

Cross References

1 Kings 10:1

The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon's fame, so she came to test him with hard questions.

Luke 11:31

On the Judgment Day the Queen of the South will stand up with the people who live now, and she will show they are guilty. She came from far away to listen to Solomon's wise teaching. And look, someone greater than Solomon is here.

2 Chronicles 9:1

When the queen of Sheba heard about Solomon's fame, she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions.

Spiritual Principle

The greater the truth that is offered, the greater the responsibility to receive it.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is greater than the temple, greater than the prophet, and greater than the king — He is all three and more.

XLIII. AN IMPURE SPIRIT LEAVES

Matthew 12:43 — Seeking Rest

“When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it.”

Jesus told a short, strange story.

An **impure spirit** leaves a person.

It wanders through **dry places** looking for **rest.**

But it finds none.

Evil spirits are restless.

They cannot find peace.

Cross References

Luke 11:24

When an evil spirit comes out of a person, it travels through dry places, looking for a place to rest. But when it finds no place, it says, “I will go back to the house I left.”

Isaiah 34:14

> Wild animals of the desert will meet there with wild dogs, and wild goats will call to each other. Night creatures will rest there and find a place to stay.

Job 1:7

> The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered, “I have been wandering around the earth, going back and forth in it.”

Spiritual Principle

Evil has no rest, and those who follow it have no rest either.

XLIV. AN EMPTY HOUSE

Matthew 12:44 — Swept Clean and Put in Order

“Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean, and put in order.”

The spirit decides to go back.

It finds the house:

Unoccupied.

Swept clean.

Put in order.

The house looked better.

It was clean and organized.

But it was **empty.**

No one new had moved in.

This is a picture of reformation without regeneration.

A person may clean up their life.

They may stop doing some bad things.

But if Jesus has not moved in, the house is still empty.

Cross References

Luke 11:25

When it comes back, it finds that house swept clean and made neat.

2 Peter 2:20

> They were made free from the evil in the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But if they return to evil things and those things control them, then it is worse for them than it was before.

Proverbs 26:11

> A foolish person who repeats his foolish acts is like a dog that goes back to what it has thrown up.

Spiritual Warning

A cleaned-up life without Christ is still an empty life.

Key Truth

Self-improvement is not salvation.

XLV. WORSE THAN THE FIRST

Matthew 12:45 — This Wicked Generation

“Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.”

The spirit brings **seven others** even more wicked.

They move in.

And the person ends up **worse than before.**

Then Jesus applied the story.

“That is how it will be with this wicked generation.”

Israel had been cleaned up in some ways.

Through John the Baptist's preaching, many had turned from some sins.

But they had not received Jesus.

Their religion was clean on the outside, but empty inside.

And their final condition would be worse.

Cross References

Luke 11:26

> Then the evil spirit goes out and brings back seven other spirits more evil than it is, and they go in and live there. So the person has even more trouble than before.

Matthew 27:64

> So give the order for the tomb to be guarded closely until the third day. Otherwise, His followers might come and steal the body... This last lie would be worse than the first.

2 Peter 2:21

> It would have been better for them never to have known the right way than to know it and then turn away from the holy command that was given to them.

Spiritual Principle

The only way to keep evil out is to let Christ in.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not just sweep the house clean — invite the Master to live there.

XLVI. HIS MOTHER AND BROTHERS

Matthew 12:46 — Standing Outside

“While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, His mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to Him.”

Jesus' **mother and brothers** came to see Him.

They **stood outside.**

Mark tells us they had come because they thought Jesus was out of His mind.

They wanted to take Him home.

At this time, His brothers did not yet believe in Him.

Later, after the resurrection, they would believe.

James, His brother, would become a leader in the church in Jerusalem.

Cross References

Mark 3:31

Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside and sent someone in to tell Him to come out.

Luke 8:19

Jesus' mother and brothers came to see Him, but they could not get near Him because of the crowd.

John 7:5

Even His own brothers did not believe in Him.

Spiritual Principle

Even those closest to Jesus can misunderstand Him.

XLVII. YOUR MOTHER AND BROTHERS ARE OUTSIDE

Matthew 12:47 — Wanting to Speak to You

“Someone told Him, ‘Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to You.’”

Someone brought the message to Jesus.

In that culture, family was extremely important.

Everyone would have expected Jesus to stop teaching and go to His family.

Cross References

Mark 3:32

Many people were sitting around Jesus. They said to Him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for You.”

Luke 8:20

Someone said to Jesus, “Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, and they want to see You.”

John 2:12

After this, Jesus went to Capernaum with His mother, brothers, and followers. They stayed there for a few days.

Spiritual Principle

Family is important, but God's family is even more important.

XLVIII. WHO IS MY MOTHER?

Matthew 12:48 — Who Are My Brothers?

“He replied, ‘Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?’”

Jesus asked a surprising question.

“Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?”

Jesus was not rejecting His family.

He loved His mother.

Even while dying on the cross, He made sure she would be cared for.

But He was teaching that there is a family even closer than the family we are born into.

When He was twelve, He told His parents, **“Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house?”**

His first loyalty was always to His Father.

Cross References

Mark 3:33

> Jesus asked, “Who are My mother and My brothers?”

Luke 8:21

> Jesus answered them, “My mother and My brothers are those who listen to God's teaching and obey it!”

Luke 2:49

> Jesus said to them, “Why were you looking for Me? Didn't you know that I must be in My Father's house?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' first loyalty is to His Father's will.

XLIX. HERE ARE MY MOTHER AND BROTHERS

Matthew 12:49 — Pointing to His Disciples

“Pointing to His disciples, He said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers.’”

Jesus **pointed to His disciples.**

These were the people who had left everything to follow Him.

“Here are My mother and My brothers.”

Those who follow Jesus become His family.

What a privilege.

The Son of God calls His followers His family.

Cross References

Mark 3:34

> Then Jesus looked at those sitting around Him and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers!”

Luke 8:21

> Jesus answered them, “My mother and My brothers are those who listen to God's teaching and obey it!”

John 15:14

> You are My friends if you do what I command you.

Spiritual Principle

Followers of Jesus are part of His family.

L. WHOEVER DOES THE FATHER'S WILL

Matthew 12:50 — Brother and Sister and Mother

“For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

Jesus explained who belongs to His family.

Whoever does the will of My Father in heaven.

Not just those born into His earthly family.

Not just Jews.

Whoever.

Anyone who does the Father's will.

And notice that Jesus added **“sister.”**

His family includes women and men alike.

This is the end of a chapter full of conflict.

The religious leaders rejected Jesus.

His own family misunderstood Him.

But those who do the Father's will are welcomed into the closest relationship with Jesus.

Cross References

Mark 3:35

> My true brother and sister and mother are those who do what God wants.

Galatians 3:26

> You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 2:11

> Jesus, who makes people holy, and those who are made holy are from the same family. So He is not ashamed to call them His brothers and sisters.

Spiritual Principle

God's family is made up of those who do His will.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is not ashamed to call those who obey His Father His brothers and sisters.

LI. EIGHT GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 12

1. Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

True rest is found in Him, not in legalistic rules.

Principle:

Rest is not found in rules but in the Lord of rest.

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2. Mercy Is Greater Than Sacrifice

God desires compassion, not rigid ritual.

Principle:

Rules that crush people miss the heart of God.

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3. Jesus Fulfills Prophecy

He is God's chosen Servant who brings hope to the nations.

Principle:

The gentle Servant is the hope of the whole world.

---

4. The Spirit's Power Proves God's Kingdom

Miracles confirm the arrival of God's reign, not the work of Satan.

Principle:

Jesus is stronger than every power of darkness.

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5. Guard Your Words

Our speech reveals our hearts, and every word matters before God.

Principle:

Change the heart, and the words will follow.

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6. The Only Unforgivable Sin

Rejecting the Holy Spirit's testimony of Christ leads to eternal loss.

Principle:

Do not harden your heart when the Spirit points you to Jesus.

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7. Christ Is Greater Than Jonah and Solomon

He brings a greater message and greater wisdom, yet many reject Him.

Principle:

Greater truth brings greater responsibility.

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8. True Family Is Spiritual

Those who do God's will are part of His household.

Principle:

The deepest family bond is shared obedience to the Father.

LII. GREATER THAN

Matthew 12 shows that Jesus is greater than the most important things in Israel's life.

Greater Than the Sabbath

He is Lord of the Sabbath (verse 8).

Greater Than the Temple

Something greater than the temple is here (verse 6).

Greater Than Jonah

Something greater than Jonah is here (verse 41).

Greater Than Solomon

Something greater than Solomon is here (verse 42).

Greater Than Satan

He ties up the strong man (verse 29).

Key Truth

Jesus is greater than every institution, every prophet, every king, and every enemy.

LIII. THE SABBATH AND THE CHRISTIAN

Matthew 12 helps us understand the Sabbath.

The Sabbath Was a Gift

God gave it for rest and worship.

The Pharisees Made It a Burden

They added rules that crushed people.

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

He has authority over its meaning.

It Is Always Right to Do Good

Mercy fits the purpose of the Sabbath.

Jesus Is Our Rest

The Sabbath pointed forward to the rest Jesus gives.

Spiritual Principle

Christians honor God's pattern of rest and worship, while finding their true rest in Christ.

LIV. UNDERSTANDING THE UNFORGIVABLE SIN

Many people have been troubled by Jesus' words about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

What It Is

- Deliberately calling the work of God's Spirit the work of Satan.
- A hardened, final rejection of the Spirit's testimony about Jesus.
- Refusing to believe even when the truth is clear.

What It Is Not

- A single angry or careless word.
- A moment of doubt.
- A sin committed before coming to Christ.
- A past sin a believer regrets.

Why It Cannot Be Forgiven

- The Holy Spirit is the One who leads people to repentance.
- A person who completely rejects Him rejects the only path to forgiveness.

Key Truth

Anyone who wants to be forgiven can be forgiven, because that desire itself is the work of the Holy Spirit.

LV. WHAT MATTHEW 12 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 12 presents Jesus as:

The Lord of the Sabbath

He has authority over God's day of rest.

Greater Than the Temple

God's presence dwells in Him.

The Healer

He restores the shriveled hand and frees the oppressed.

The Chosen Servant

The Father delights in Him.

The Gentle One

He does not break the bruised reed.

The Hope of the Nations

The world will hope in His name.

The Stronger Man

He binds Satan and frees captives.

The Risen One

The sign of Jonah points to His resurrection.

The Head of God's Family

Those who do the Father's will are His brothers and sisters.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who is greater than all is gentle with the weakest of all.

LVI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Were the disciples breaking God's law when they picked grain on the Sabbath?

No.

God's law allowed people to pick grain by hand from a neighbor's field.

They were only breaking the Pharisees' added rules.

Question 2

Why did Jesus mention David and the consecrated bread?

David and his men ate the holy bread when they were hungry, and God did not condemn him.

This showed that human need can be more important than ceremonial rules.

Question 3

What did Jesus mean by “something greater than the temple is here”?

He meant Himself.

The temple was where God's presence dwelled.

In Jesus, God Himself was present with His people.

Question 4

What does it mean that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath?

It means He has authority over the Sabbath and its meaning.

God made the Sabbath, so this was a claim to be God.

It also means He is the true rest the Sabbath pointed to.

Question 5

Why did the Pharisees plot to kill Jesus after He healed a man?

Their hearts were hard.

They cared more about their rules and their power than about people.

Jesus exposed their hypocrisy, and they hated Him for it.

Question 6

What does it mean that Jesus will not break a bruised reed or snuff out a smoldering wick?

It means Jesus is gentle with people who are hurting, weak, or barely holding on.

He does not throw them away.

He restores them.

Question 7

How did Jesus answer the charge that He drove out demons by Satan?

He said a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.

Satan would not fight against himself.

Jesus drove out demons by the Spirit of God, proving that God's kingdom had come.

Question 8

What is the meaning of tying up the strong man?

Satan is the strong man who holds people captive.

Jesus is stronger.

He binds Satan and sets the captives free.

Question 9

What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

It is deliberately and finally rejecting the Holy Spirit's clear testimony about Jesus, calling God's work the devil's work.

It cannot be forgiven because it rejects the only One who leads people to repentance.

Question 10

What do our words reveal?

Our words reveal what is in our hearts.

The mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

Question 11

What is the sign of Jonah?

Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish.

Jesus would be three days and three nights in the grave and then rise again.

The resurrection is the greatest sign of all.

Question 12

Why will Nineveh and the Queen of the South condemn Jesus' generation?

Nineveh repented at Jonah's preaching.

The Queen of the South traveled far to hear Solomon.

Jesus is greater than both, yet His generation would not listen.

Question 13

What is the lesson of the empty house?

A cleaned-up life without Christ is still empty.

Evil can come back even stronger.

Only Jesus living in a person's life can keep evil out.

Question 14

Was Jesus rejecting His mother and brothers?

No.

He loved His family.

He was teaching that those who do the Father's will belong to an even closer spiritual family.

Question 15

What should Matthew 12 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 12 should cause believers to live:

- Finding their rest in Jesus.
- Showing mercy instead of rigid judgment.
- Doing good at every opportunity.
- Being gentle with the hurting.
- Choosing to stand with Jesus.
- Keeping their hearts soft toward the Holy Spirit.
- Guarding their words.
- Trusting the risen Christ.
- Filling their lives with Christ, not just cleaning them up.
- Doing the Father's will as members of His family.

LVII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 12 asks several important questions.

Am I Finding My Rest in Jesus or in Rules?

Do I Care More About Rules or About People?

Am I Looking for Reasons to Criticize Others?

Do I Feel Like a Bruised Reed or a Smoldering Wick?

Jesus will not throw me away.

Am I With Jesus or Against Him?

There is no middle ground.

Is My Heart Soft or Hard Toward the Holy Spirit?

What Do My Words Say About My Heart?

Am I Asking God for More Signs When He Has Already Given Enough?

Have I Cleaned Up My Life Without Letting Jesus Move In?

Am I Doing the Father's Will as a Member of His Family?

LVIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Greater Than All, Gentle With All”

Matthew 12 shows Jesus in two ways that seem very different.

On one side, He is **greater.**

Greater than the Sabbath.

Greater than the temple.

Greater than Jonah.

Greater than Solomon.

Stronger than Satan.

On the other side, He is **gentle.**

He will not break a bruised reed.

He will not snuff out a smoldering wick.

He heals a man's hand.

He calls His followers His family.

The Pharisees were neither.

They were not great.

And they were not gentle.

They were small and harsh.

This creates a powerful principle.

The greatest One who ever lived is also the gentlest.

His power is never used to crush the weak.

It is used to lift them up.

Principle:

The Jesus who is greater than the temple bends down to lift the bruised reed.

LIX. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 12 is a chapter of conflict.

It begins in a grainfield.

It moves to a synagogue.

It ends in a crowded house.

At every step, the Pharisees oppose Jesus.

They accuse His disciples.

They watch to trap Him.

They plot to kill Him.

They say His power comes from the devil.

They demand a sign.

Even His own family comes to take Him home.

But at every step, Jesus shows who He is.

He is Lord of the Sabbath.

He is greater than the temple.

He is God's chosen Servant.

He is gentle with the bruised and weak.

He is stronger than Satan.

He is greater than Jonah and Solomon.

He is the One who will rise from the dead.

And He welcomes all who do His Father's will into His family.

Matthew 12 therefore reminds us:

Religion without mercy becomes cruelty.

A clean life without Christ is still empty.

Words reveal the heart.

And there is no neutral ground with Jesus.

We are either with Him or against Him.

The story of Matthew 12 does not end with:

The Pharisees' plot.

The demand for a sign.

Or the warning about the unforgivable sin.

It ends with:

Jesus pointing to His followers.

And calling them His family.

The same invitation still stands:

Find your rest in Him.

Show mercy.

Do good.

Keep your heart soft.

Guard your words.

Let Christ fill your life.

Do the will of the Father.

And until He returns:

Keep resting in Him.

Keep doing good.

Keep standing with Him.

Keep living as His family.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath.

Thank You that our true rest is found in Him.

Keep us from turning our faith into a heavy list of rules.

Teach us that You desire mercy, not sacrifice.

Help us care more about people than about our own opinions and traditions.

Show us opportunities to do good every day.

Thank You that Jesus is greater than the temple.

Thank You that in Him, You have come near to us.

Thank You for Your chosen Servant, in whom Your soul delights.

Thank You that He will not break a bruised reed or snuff out a smoldering wick.

When we feel weak and worn out, remind us of His gentleness.

Thank You that Jesus is stronger than Satan.

Set free those who are held captive by the enemy.

Help us stand with Jesus, not against Him.

Keep our hearts soft toward Your Holy Spirit.

Never let us harden ourselves against Your truth.

Lord, fill our hearts with good things.

Let our words bring life, not harm.

Forgive us for careless words we have spoken.

Thank You for the sign of Jonah.

Thank You that Jesus rose from the dead.

Help us respond to the truth You have given us.

Do not let us simply clean up our lives.

Come and live in us.

Fill every room of our hearts.

Thank You that those who do Your will are part of Jesus' family.

Help us live as true brothers and sisters of Christ.

Teach us to do Your will every day.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.” — Matthew 12:50

Central Truth

Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath and the Spirit-filled Servant of God, greater than every institution and prophet, and every person must decide whether they will reject Him or join His true family by doing the Father's will.

Matthew 12 in One Sentence

Jesus claims to be Lord of the Sabbath and greater than the temple, heals in mercy as God's gentle Servant, defeats Satan by the Spirit, warns against rejecting the Spirit and against careless words, points to His resurrection as the sign of Jonah, and welcomes all who do the Father's will into His family.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 13 — Parables of the Kingdom

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 12 was full of conflict.

The Pharisees plotted to kill Jesus.

They said His power came from the devil.

Even His own family misunderstood Him.

Now, in Matthew Chapter 13, Jesus begins to teach in a new way.

He speaks in **parables.**

A **parable** is a story from everyday life that teaches a spiritual truth.

Jesus used farmers, seeds, weeds, bread, treasure, pearls, and fishing nets.

Things everyone understood.

But the meaning was hidden from those who did not want to hear.

And it was revealed to those who did.

Matthew 13 is the third of the five great teaching sections in Matthew.

It contains seven parables about the **kingdom of heaven.**

The Sower — how people respond to God's Word.

The Weeds — good and evil growing together until the end.

The Mustard Seed — the kingdom starts small and grows great.

The Yeast — the kingdom quietly spreads through everything.

The Hidden Treasure — the kingdom is worth everything.

The Pearl — the kingdom is worth everything we have.

The Net — a final separation is coming.

In the middle of these parables, Jesus explains why He teaches this way.

Some people see but do not see.

They hear but do not hear.

Their hearts have grown hard.

But His disciples are blessed.

They see and hear what prophets longed to see and hear.

The chapter ends with a sad scene.

Jesus returns to His hometown of Nazareth.

The people who knew Him best refuse to believe in Him.

Matthew 13 therefore teaches us two great truths:

The kingdom of heaven is growing quietly but surely in the world.

And:

The way we respond to God's Word shows what kind of heart we have.

The central truth of Matthew 13 is:

The kingdom of heaven grows through the Word of God in receptive hearts, it is worth more than everything we own, and at the end of the age God will separate the righteous from the wicked.

I. JESUS SAT BY THE LAKE

Matthew 13:1 — That Same Day

“That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake.”

That same day connects this chapter to Matthew 12.

It was the same day the Pharisees accused Jesus of working with Satan.

The same day His family came looking for Him.

Jesus **went out of the house** and **sat by the lake.**

This was the Sea of Galilee.

Sitting was the normal position for a teacher.

Cross References

Mark 4:1

> Again Jesus began teaching by the lake. A very large crowd gathered around Him.

Luke 8:4

> A large crowd was gathering, and people were coming to Jesus from every town. He told them this story.

Matthew 4:18

> As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus kept teaching even on a day of great opposition.

II. A BOAT FOR A PULPIT

Matthew 13:2 — The People Stood on the Shore

“Large crowds gathered around Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, while the people stood on the shore.”

So many people came that Jesus **got into a boat.**

The boat became His pulpit.

The shore became the seats.

The water carried His voice to the crowd.

There may have been a natural cove where sound carried well.

Cross References

Luke 5:3

> Jesus got into one of the boats, the one that belonged to Simon, and asked him to push off a little from shore. Then He sat down and taught the people from the boat.

Mark 3:9

> Because of the crowd, Jesus told His followers to get a small boat ready for Him so the people would not crowd Him.

Mark 4:1

> So many people came that He got into a boat and sat in it on the lake. All the people stayed on the shore.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus uses ordinary things to carry His Word to people.

III. A FARMER WENT OUT TO SOW

Matthew 13:3 — Many Things in Parables

“He told them many things in parables, saying: ‘A farmer went out to sow seed.’”

This is the first time in Matthew that the word **parable** is used.

The word means **“to put beside.”**

A parable puts an everyday story beside a spiritual truth.

Jesus began with a farmer.

In Israel, a farmer often walked through his field throwing seed by hand.

The seed would land in many different places.

Cross References

Mark 4:2

> Jesus taught them many things by using stories.

Luke 8:5

> A farmer went out to plant his seed.

Ezekiel 17:2

> Human, tell a story and give a lesson to the people of Israel.

Spiritual Principle

God uses simple stories to teach deep truths.

IV. SEED ALONG THE PATH

Matthew 13:4 — The Birds Ate It

“As he scattered it, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.”

Fields in Israel often had paths running through them.

People walked on these paths, packing the soil down hard.

Seed that fell on the path could not sink in.

It just sat on top.

And **the birds came and ate it up.**

Cross References

Mark 4:4

> While he was planting, some seed fell by the road, and the birds came and ate it all up.

Luke 8:5

> While he was planting, some seed fell by the road. People walked on it, and the birds ate it up.

Isaiah 55:10

> Rain and snow fall from the sky and do not return without watering the ground. They make plants grow, and they give seed to the farmer and bread for people to eat.

Spiritual Principle

A hard heart keeps God's Word from going in.

V. SEED ON ROCKY PLACES

Matthew 13:5 — It Sprang Up Quickly

“Some fell on rocky places, where there wasn't much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow.”

In many parts of Galilee, there was a layer of limestone rock just under the surface.

From the top, the soil looked fine.

But it was only a few inches deep.

Seed that fell there **sprang up quickly.**

The shallow soil warmed up fast, so the plant grew fast.

At first, it looked like the best plant in the field.

Cross References

Mark 4:5

> Some seed fell on rocky ground where there was not much dirt. That seed grew very fast, because the ground was not deep.

Luke 8:6

> Some seed fell on rock, and when it began to grow, it died because it had no water.

Hosea 6:4

> Your faithfulness is like a morning mist, like the dew that goes away early in the day.

Spiritual Principle

Quick growth is not always lasting growth.

VI. NO ROOT

Matthew 13:6 — Scorched by the Sun

“But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.”

When the hot sun came, the plants **withered.**

Why?

Because they had no root.

The rock under the soil kept the roots from going deep.

Without deep roots, the plants could not reach water.

What grew fast died fast.

Cross References

Mark 4:6

> But when the sun rose, the plants dried up and died because they did not have deep roots.

James 1:11

> The sun rises with burning heat and dries up the plant. The flower falls off, and its beauty is gone.

Jonah 4:8

> When the sun rose, God sent a hot east wind. The sun beat down on Jonah's head, and he became weak.

Spiritual Principle

Faith without roots cannot survive the heat.

VII. SEED AMONG THORNS

Matthew 13:7 — Choked

“Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.”

Some seed fell where thorn seeds or roots were already in the ground.

The soil may have looked clean.

But the thorns were there.

The good seed and the thorns grew up together.

And the thorns **choked** the good plants.

They took the sunlight, water, and room the good plants needed.

Cross References

Mark 4:7

> Some other seed fell among thorny weeds, which grew and choked the good plants. So those plants did not produce grain.

Luke 8:7

> Some seed fell among thorny weeds, but the weeds grew up with it and choked the good plants.

Jeremiah 4:3

> Plow your fields, which have not been plowed. Don't plant seeds among thorns.

Spiritual Principle

Competing priorities can choke out spiritual life.

VIII. SEED ON GOOD SOIL

Matthew 13:8 — A Hundred, Sixty, or Thirty

“Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.”

Finally, some seed fell on **good soil.**

It was soft, deep, and clean.

And it **produced a crop.**

In those days, a crop of ten times what was planted was considered good.

A crop of thirty, sixty, or a hundred times was amazing.

Not every plant produced the same amount.

But every plant on good soil produced fruit.

Cross References

Mark 4:8

> Some other seed fell on good ground. It began to grow and produced grain. Some plants made thirty times more, some sixty times more, and some a hundred times more.

Luke 8:8

> And some seed fell on good ground and grew and made a hundred times more.

John 15:5

> I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to Me and I stay joined to you, you will produce much fruit.

Spiritual Principle

A receptive heart always produces fruit.

Key Truth

The seed was the same in every place.

The difference was the soil.

IX. WHOEVER HAS EARS

Matthew 13:9 — Let Them Hear

“Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

Jesus ended the story with a call.

Listen.

Think about this.

The parable is about hearing.

And now Jesus asks His listeners how they are hearing.

Cross References

Mark 4:9

> Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear should listen.”

Luke 8:8

> As Jesus finished the story, He called out, “Whoever has ears to hear should listen!”

Revelation 2:7

> Whoever has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

Spiritual Principle

The way we listen to God's Word matters.

X. WHY PARABLES?

Matthew 13:10 — The Disciples Ask

“The disciples came and asked Him, ‘Why do You speak to the people in parables?’”

The disciples noticed a change.

Jesus had been teaching plainly.

Now He was speaking in stories.

So they asked Him why.

Cross References

Mark 4:10

> Later, when Jesus was alone, the twelve apostles and others around Him asked Him about the stories.

Luke 8:9

> Jesus' followers asked Him what this story meant.

John 16:25

> I have told you these things using stories. But the time is coming when I will not use stories to tell you things. I will speak to you in plain words about the Father.

Spiritual Principle

Honest questions bring us closer to Jesus' answers.

XI. THE SECRETS OF THE KINGDOM

Matthew 13:11 — Given to You

“He replied, ‘Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.’”

A **secret** in the Bible is a truth that was hidden in the past but is now revealed by God.

It is not something that can be discovered by human cleverness.

It must be **given.**

The disciples had been given understanding.

Those who had hardened their hearts had not.

Cross References

Mark 4:11

> Jesus said, “You can know the secret about the kingdom of God. But to other people I tell everything by using stories.”

Luke 8:10

> Jesus said, “You have been chosen to know the secrets about the kingdom of God. But I use stories to speak to other people.”

1 Corinthians 2:10

> But God has shown us these things through the Spirit. The Spirit searches out all things, even the deep secrets of God.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual understanding is a gift from God.

XII. WHOEVER HAS WILL BE GIVEN MORE

Matthew 13:12 — Abundance or Loss

“Whoever has will be given more, and they will have abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.”

This is a principle of spiritual growth.

Those who receive God's truth and respond to it will be given **more.**

Those who reject the truth they have will lose even that.

Truth is like a muscle.

If you use it, it grows.

If you refuse it, it weakens.

Cross References

Mark 4:25

> Those who have understanding will be given more. But those who do not have understanding will lose even what they have.

Luke 8:18

> So be careful how you listen. Those who have understanding will be given more. But those who do not have understanding will lose even what they think they have.

Matthew 25:29

> Everyone who has will be given more, and he will have much more than he needs. But the one who does not have anything will have everything taken away from him.

Spiritual Principle

Responding to God's truth leads to more truth.

Key Truth

The more we obey what we know, the more God shows us.

XIII. SEEING BUT NOT SEEING

Matthew 13:13 — Hearing but Not Hearing

“This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.”

The people saw Jesus' miracles.

But they did not **see** who He was.

They heard His words.

But they did not **hear** what He meant.

Parables work like a test.

To those who are seeking, they open up the truth.

To those who have already rejected the truth, they remain a puzzle.

Cross References

Mark 4:12

> I do this so that “they will look and look, but they will not learn. They will listen and listen, but they will not understand.”

Luke 8:10

> I use stories so that “they will look, but they may not see. They will listen, but they may not understand.”

Ezekiel 12:2

> Human, you live among people who refuse to obey. They have eyes to see, but they do not see. They have ears to hear, but they do not hear.

Spiritual Principle

A closed heart cannot receive what open eyes can see.

XIV. ISAIAH'S PROPHECY

Matthew 13:14 — Ever Hearing, Never Understanding

“In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.’”

Jesus quoted Isaiah 6.

When Isaiah was called to be a prophet, God told him that many people would not listen.

They would hear his message, but they would not understand.

The same thing was happening with Jesus.

This verse is quoted many times in the New Testament.

It shows that rejection of the truth is not a surprise to God.

Cross References

Isaiah 6:9

> Then the Lord said, “Go and tell this to the people: ‘You will listen and listen, but you will not understand. You will look and look, but you will not learn.’”

John 12:40

> He has blinded their eyes and closed their minds, so that they will not see with their eyes or understand with their minds.

Acts 28:26

> Go to these people and say: “You will listen and listen, but you will not understand. You will look and look, but you will not learn.”

Spiritual Principle

God's Word is never surprised by human unbelief.

XV. A HARDENED HEART

Matthew 13:15 — Otherwise I Would Heal Them

“For this people's heart has grown hard; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn, and I would heal them.”

Notice why they could not understand.

Their heart has grown hard.

They have closed their eyes.

They chose not to see.

They did not want to **turn.**

Because if they turned, God **would heal them.**

God's desire is to heal.

But a hard heart refuses healing.

Cross References

Isaiah 6:10

> Make the minds of these people stubborn. Make their ears deaf and their eyes blind. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their minds, and come back to Me and be healed.

Acts 28:27

> For the minds of these people have become stubborn. They have stopped up their ears, and they have closed their eyes.

Romans 11:8

> As it is written: “God gave the people a dull mind so they could not understand.”

Spiritual Warning

People can close their eyes to God until they can no longer see.

Key Truth

God wants to heal; a hard heart refuses to be healed.

XVI. BLESSED ARE YOUR EYES

Matthew 13:16 — Because They See

“But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.”

Jesus turned to His disciples.

“Blessed are your eyes.”

They were seeing the truth.

They were hearing and believing.

This was not because they were smarter.

It was because God had opened their hearts.

Cross References

Luke 10:23

> Then Jesus turned to His followers and said privately, “You are blessed to see what you now see.”

1 Peter 1:10

> The prophets searched carefully and tried to learn about this salvation. They spoke about the grace that was coming to you.

Psalm 119:18

> Open my eyes to see the wonderful things in Your teachings.

Spiritual Principle

Seeing the truth about Jesus is a great blessing.

XVII. WHAT THE PROPHETS LONGED TO SEE

Matthew 13:17 — Many Prophets and Righteous People

“Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”

Think about the Old Testament prophets.

Isaiah.

Jeremiah.

David.

They spoke about the coming Messiah.

They longed to see Him.

But they died without seeing Him.

The disciples were living in the time those prophets dreamed about.

They were seeing the Messiah face to face.

Cross References

Luke 10:24

> I tell you, many prophets and kings wanted to see what you now see, but they did not. And they wanted to hear what you now hear, but they did not.

Hebrews 11:13

> All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not get the things God promised, but they saw them coming far in the future and were glad.

John 8:56

> Your father Abraham was very happy that he would see the day when I came. He saw it and was glad.

Spiritual Principle

We live in the age of fulfillment that the prophets longed for.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

What the prophets waited for, we have been given — do not take it for granted.

XVIII. THE MEANING OF THE SOWER

Matthew 13:18 — Listen Then

“Listen then to the meaning of the parable of the sower:”

Now Jesus explains the first parable.

This is one of only a few parables Jesus explained in detail.

His explanation helps us understand how to read the others.

Cross References

Mark 4:13

> Then Jesus said to them, “Don't you understand this story? If you don't, how will you understand any of My stories?”

Luke 8:11

> This is what the story means: The seed is God's message.

Proverbs 1:5

> Wise people can also listen and learn. Even smart people can find good advice in these words.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus explains His Word to those who want to understand.

XIX. THE HARD PATH

Matthew 13:19 — The Evil One Snatches It Away

“When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed along the path.”

The **seed** is **the message about the kingdom.**

The **path** is a hard heart.

The person hears the message but does not let it in.

And **the evil one** — Satan — **snatches it away.**

The birds in the story are a picture of the devil.

He is always ready to steal God's Word before it can take root.

Cross References

Mark 4:15

> Sometimes people hear the teaching, but Satan quickly comes and takes away the teaching that was planted in them.

Luke 8:12

> The devil comes and takes away the teaching from their hearts so they cannot believe it and be saved.

1 Peter 5:8

> Control yourselves and be careful! The devil is your enemy, and he goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to eat.

Spiritual Warning

The enemy works hard to steal God's Word from our hearts.

Application

The enemy steals the Word through:

- Distraction during worship.
- Forgetting what we heard right away.
- Doubt and arguments.
- Busyness after church.
- Never thinking about it again.

XX. THE ROCKY GROUND

Matthew 13:20 — Receives It with Joy

“The seed on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy.”

This person seems like a wonderful response.

They hear the word **immediately.**

They receive it **with joy.**

They are excited.

They seem to be growing fast.

But something is missing underneath.

Cross References

Mark 4:16

> Others are like the seed planted on rocky ground. They hear the teaching and quickly accept it with joy.

Luke 8:13

> The seed that fell on rock is like those who hear God's teaching and accept it gladly.

Hebrews 6:4

> Some people have once understood God's truth. They tasted the gift from heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Principle

Emotional excitement is not the same as deep faith.

XXI. NO ROOT

Matthew 13:21 — When Trouble Comes

“But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.”

They have no root.

Their faith was on the surface.

Then **trouble or persecution** came.

Like the hot sun, it tested them.

And **they quickly fall away.**

Following Jesus costs something.

When the cost came, they quit.

Cross References

Mark 4:17

> But they don't let the teaching go deep into their lives, so they keep it only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the teaching, they quickly give up.

2 Timothy 1:15

> You know that everyone in the country of Asia has left me.

Hebrews 6:6

> And then they fell away from Christ. It is not possible to bring them back to a changed life again.

Spiritual Principle

Hard times reveal whether our faith has roots.

Key Truth

Roots grow in secret before the storm, so the plant can stand during the storm.

XXII. THE THORNY GROUND

Matthew 13:22 — Worries and Riches

“The seed among the thorns is the one who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, making it unfruitful.”

This person hears the word.

They do not reject it.

They do not quit under persecution.

But other things crowd it out.

Jesus named two kinds of thorns.

The worries of this life.

The deceitfulness of riches.

Money promises happiness and security.

But it lies.

Little by little, these thorns **choke the word.**

The person becomes **unfruitful.**

Cross References

Mark 4:18

> Others are like the seed planted among the thorny weeds. They hear the teaching, but the worries of this life, the false hope of riches, and the desire for other things choke the teaching.

Luke 8:14

> The seed that fell among the thorny weeds is like those who hear God's teaching, but they let the worries, riches, and pleasures of this life keep them from growing and producing good fruit.

1 Timothy 6:9

> People who want to get rich bring temptation to themselves and are caught in a trap. They want many foolish and harmful things that ruin and destroy people.

Spiritual Warning

The thorns that choke faith are often ordinary worries and desires.

Application

Thorns in our lives may include:

- Constant worry.
- The love of money.
- Being too busy.
- Chasing pleasure.
- Wanting more and more things.
- Letting entertainment crowd out God.

XXIII. THE GOOD SOIL

Matthew 13:23 — Hears, Understands, Produces

“But the seed on good soil is the one who hears the word, understands it, and produces a harvest —yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.”

The good soil does three things.

Hears the word.

Understands it.

Produces a harvest.

This is a true disciple.

God's Word goes deep.

It takes root.

It grows.

And it produces fruit.

The amount of fruit is different for each person.

But every true believer bears fruit.

Cross References

Mark 4:20

> Others are like the seed planted in the good ground. They hear the teaching and accept it. Then they grow and produce fruit — sometimes thirty times more, sometimes sixty times more, and sometimes a hundred times more.

Luke 8:15

> The seed that fell on good ground is like those who hear God's teaching with good, honest hearts and obey it. They patiently produce good fruit.

Galatians 5:22

> But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Spiritual Principle

The proof of a good heart is fruit.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The question is not whether the seed is good, but whether the soil is ready.

XXIV. THE PARABLE OF THE WEEDS

Matthew 13:24 — Good Seed in His Field

“Jesus told them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.’”

The second parable also begins with a man sowing seed.

But this time, the focus is different.

The first parable was about the soil.

This parable is about what happens in the field after the seed is planted.

The man sowed **good seed.**

Cross References

Matthew 3:12

> He will come ready to clean the grain. He will gather the wheat into His barn, but He will burn the chaff with a fire that cannot be put out.

1 Corinthians 3:9

> We are workers together for God, and you are like God's field.

Job 31:40

> Then let thorns grow instead of wheat, and weeds instead of barley.

Spiritual Principle

What God plants is always good.

XXV. AN ENEMY SOWED WEEDS

Matthew 13:25 — While Everyone Was Sleeping

“But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away.”

At night, **his enemy came.**

He **sowed weeds among the wheat.**

Then he **went away.**

This was a real practice in the ancient world.

Roman law even had penalties for sowing weeds in someone else's field.

The weed was probably **darnel.**

When it is young, darnel looks almost exactly like wheat.

Cross References

Galatians 6:7

Don't be fooled: You cannot cheat God. People harvest only what they plant.

Job 4:8

I have seen that people who plow evil and plant trouble will harvest it.

1 Thessalonians 5:6

So we should not be like other people who are sleeping, but we should be awake and have self-control.

Spiritual Warning

The enemy works secretly while people are not watching.

XXVI. THE WEEDS APPEARED

Matthew 13:26 — When the Wheat Formed Heads

“When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.”

At first, no one could tell the difference.

The weeds and the wheat looked the same.

But when the wheat **formed heads**, the difference became clear.

Wheat produces good grain.

Darnel produces small black seeds that are poisonous.

Fruit reveals what kind of plant it is.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 3:6

I planted the seed, and Apollos watered it. But God is the One who made it grow.

Hosea 8:7

They plant the wind, and they will harvest the whirlwind.

Mark 4:26

Then Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is like someone who plants seed in the ground.”

Spiritual Principle

Time and fruit reveal what is real.

XXVII. WHERE DID THE WEEDS COME FROM?

Matthew 13:27 — The Servants' Question

“The owner's servants came and said, ‘Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’”

The servants were confused.

Their master had planted **good seed.**

So where did the weeds come from?

This is a question many people ask today.

If God is good, why is there evil in the world?

Why are there false believers in the church?

Cross References

Psalm 92:7

> Wicked people may grow like grass, and evil people may do well, but they will be destroyed forever.

2 Timothy 2:20

> In a large house there are things made of gold and silver, but there are also things made of wood and clay.

Proverbs 24:31

> It was covered with thorns and weeds, and the stone wall had fallen down.

Spiritual Principle

God is not the source of evil.

XXVIII. AN ENEMY DID THIS

Matthew 13:28 — Should We Pull Them Up?

“He replied, ‘An enemy did this.’ The servants asked, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’”

The master gave a clear answer.

“An enemy did this.”

Evil did not come from the master.

It came from an enemy.

The servants wanted to fix the problem immediately.

“Do you want us to go and pull them up?”

Cross References

Genesis 3:1

> Now the snake was more clever than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.

Ephesians 6:12

> Our fight is not against people on earth. We are fighting against the rulers and authorities and the powers of this world's darkness, against the spiritual powers of evil.

John 8:44

> You belong to your father the devil... He was a murderer from the beginning. He is a liar and the father of lies.

Spiritual Principle

Evil in the world comes from God's enemy, not from God.

XXIX. NOT YET

Matthew 13:29 — You May Uproot the Wheat

“He answered, ‘No, because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them.’”

The master said **no.**

Why?

Because the roots of the weeds and the wheat were tangled together.

Pulling up the weeds would damage the wheat.

Also, the servants might make mistakes and pull up wheat thinking it was a weed.

Only the master could judge perfectly.

Cross References

Matthew 7:1

> Don't judge other people, or you will be judged.

1 Corinthians 4:5

> So don't judge anything before the right time. Wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light the things that are hidden in darkness.

Romans 14:4

> You cannot judge another person's servant. The master decides if the servant is doing well or not.

Spiritual Principle

Final judgment belongs to God, not to us.

Key Truth

This parable does not mean the church should never correct sin.

It means that final separation is God's work at the end of the age.

XXX. UNTIL THE HARVEST

Matthew 13:30 — Burn the Weeds, Gather the Wheat

“Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat into my barn.”

Let both grow together.

For now, good and evil exist side by side.

But not forever.

Until the harvest.

At the harvest, the separation will be complete.

The weeds will be **burned.**

The wheat will be gathered **into my barn.**

God is patient.

But His patience has an end.

Cross References

Malachi 4:1

> “The day is coming that will burn like a furnace,” says the LORD who commands armies. “All the proud and all who do evil will be like straw.”

Revelation 14:15

> Then another angel came out of the temple and called to the One sitting on the cloud, “Take Your sickle and gather the harvest, because the time to harvest has come.”

Joel 3:13

> Swing the sickle, because the harvest is ready.

Spiritual Principle

God's patience with evil is not approval of evil.

XXXI. THE MUSTARD SEED

Matthew 13:31 — Planted in a Field

“He told them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field.’”

The third parable is about a **mustard seed.**

A mustard seed is very small.

It was the smallest seed farmers in Israel commonly planted.

It was often used as a picture of something tiny.

Cross References

Mark 4:30

> Then Jesus said, “How can I show you what the kingdom of God is like? What story can I use to explain it?”

Luke 13:19

> It is like a mustard seed that a man plants in his garden. The seed grows and becomes a tree.

Daniel 4:10

> I saw a tree standing in the middle of the earth. It was very tall.

Spiritual Principle

God often begins His greatest works in small ways.

XXXII. A GREAT TREE

Matthew 13:32 — Birds Perch in Its Branches

“Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

The tiny seed becomes **the largest of garden plants.**

In Israel, mustard plants could grow ten to twelve feet tall.

Big enough for **birds** to rest in its branches.

The kingdom of heaven began small.

A carpenter from Nazareth.

Twelve ordinary followers.

But it would grow to fill the world.

In the Old Testament, a great tree with birds in its branches was a picture of a great kingdom where nations find shelter.

Cross References

Mark 4:32

> But when planted, this seed grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants. It produces large branches, and the wild birds can make nests in its shade.

Daniel 4:12

> The tree had beautiful leaves and plenty of fruit, enough food for everyone. Wild animals rested under it, and birds lived in its branches.

Ezekiel 17:23

> I will plant it on the high mountain of Israel. Then it will grow branches and produce fruit and become a beautiful cedar tree. Birds of every kind will live in it.

Spiritual Principle

Do not despise small beginnings.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The kingdom that began with twelve men has now reached every nation on earth.

XXXIII. THE YEAST

Matthew 13:33 — Worked All Through the Dough

“He told them still another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.’”

The fourth parable is about **yeast.**

A woman mixed a small amount of yeast into **about sixty pounds of flour.**

That is enough bread to feed more than a hundred people.

The yeast worked quietly.

No one could see it working.

But it spread **all through the dough.**

The mustard seed shows the kingdom's **outward growth.**

The yeast shows the kingdom's **inward power.**

The kingdom changes people from the inside out.

Cross References

Luke 13:21

> It is like yeast that a woman mixed into a large amount of flour until it made all the dough rise.

1 Corinthians 5:6

> You know the saying, “Just a little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise.”

Galatians 5:9

> Be careful! “Just a little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise.”

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom works quietly but powerfully.

Key Truth

In other passages, yeast is a picture of sin spreading.

Here, Jesus uses the same picture to show how His kingdom spreads.

XXXIV. ALWAYS IN PARABLES

Matthew 13:34 — Nothing Without a Parable

“Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; He did not say anything to them without using a parable.”

At this point in His ministry, Jesus taught the crowds **only in parables.**

This was a change.

The crowds had heard Him clearly but had not repented.

Now He spoke in a way that only those who were seeking would understand.

Cross References

Mark 4:33

> Jesus used many stories like these to teach the people as much as they could understand.

Mark 4:34

> He always used stories to teach them. But when He and His followers were alone, Jesus explained everything to them.

John 16:25

> I have told you these things using stories. But the time is coming when I will not use stories to tell you things.

Spiritual Principle

God's truth is open to those who seek it.

XXXV. HIDDEN SINCE CREATION

Matthew 13:35 — I Will Open My Mouth in Parables

“So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: ‘I will open My mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.’”

Matthew quotes Psalm 78.

The writer, Asaph, was called a seer, or prophet.

In that psalm, he tells Israel's history in a way that reveals hidden lessons.

Jesus does something even greater.

He reveals truths about God's kingdom that had been **hidden since the creation of the world.**

Cross References

Psalm 78:2

> I will speak using stories. I will tell things that have been secret since long ago.

Psalm 49:4

> I will pay attention to wise sayings. I will explain my riddle with the harp.

Proverbs 1:6

> Then they will understand wise words and stories, the words of wise people, and their riddles.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus reveals God's hidden plan.

XXXVI. EXPLAIN THE WEEDS

Matthew 13:36 — In the House

“Then Jesus left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to Him and said, ‘Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.’”

Jesus left the crowd.

The disciples came to Him privately.

They wanted to understand.

This shows the difference between the crowd and the disciples.

The crowd went home.

The disciples stayed and asked.

Cross References

Mark 4:34

> But when He and His followers were alone, Jesus explained everything to them.

John 16:29

> Then His followers said, “You are speaking clearly to us now and are not using stories that are hard to understand.”

Mark 7:17

> When Jesus left the people and went into the house, His followers asked Him about this story.

Spiritual Principle

Those who draw near to Jesus with questions will receive understanding.

XXXVII. THE SOWER IS THE SON OF MAN

Matthew 13:37 — The Good Seed

“He answered, ‘The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.’”

Jesus explained each part of the story.

The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

Jesus Himself is the One planting good seed in the world.

Cross References

John 12:24

> I tell you the truth, a grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die to make more seeds. If it never dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

1 Corinthians 3:10

> Using the gift God gave me, I laid the foundation of that house like an expert builder.

Hebrews 1:2

> But now in these last days God has spoken to us through His Son. God has chosen His Son to own all things, and through Him He made the world.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the source of everything good in His kingdom.

XXXVIII. THE FIELD IS THE WORLD

Matthew 13:38 — Good Seed and Weeds

“The field is the world, the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one,”

The field is the world.

Notice this carefully.

The field is not only the church.

It is the whole world.

The good seed stands for **the people of the kingdom.**

These are true believers.

The weeds are **the people of the evil one.**

These are those who belong to Satan.

Both live together in the world.

Cross References

1 John 3:10

> This is how you can tell who are God's children and who are the devil's children: Anyone who does not do what is right is not from God.

John 17:15

> I am not asking You to take them out of the world but to keep them safe from the evil one.

Ephesians 2:2

> In the past you lived the way the world lives. You followed the ruler of the evil powers that are above the earth.

Spiritual Principle

God's people live in the world, but they do not belong to it.

XXXIX. THE ENEMY AND THE HARVEST

Matthew 13:39 — The Devil and the Angels

“and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.”

The enemy is **the devil.**

The harvest is **the end of the age.**

The harvesters are **angels.**

History is moving toward a harvest.

God's angels will carry out His final judgment.

Cross References

Revelation 14:14

> Then I looked, and there was a white cloud. Sitting on the cloud was One who looked like a Son of Man. He had a gold crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.

Matthew 24:31

> He will use a loud trumpet to send His angels all around the earth, and they will gather His chosen people.

Zephaniah 1:3

> I will destroy people and animals. I will destroy the birds in the air and the fish of the sea.

Spiritual Principle

History has an end, and it is in God's hands.

XL. BURNED IN THE FIRE

Matthew 13:40 — At the End of the Age

“As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.”

The weeds will be **pulled up and burned.**

This is a picture of the final judgment of the wicked.

Jesus spoke about judgment more often than almost anyone in the Bible.

He did it not to frighten people needlessly, but to warn them out of love.

Cross References

2 Peter 3:10

> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The skies will disappear with a loud noise, and everything in them will be destroyed by fire.

Revelation 20:9

> They marched across the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people... But fire came down from heaven and burned them up.

Nahum 1:6

> No one can stand up against His anger. No one can survive His great anger. His anger is poured out like fire.

Spiritual Warning

The final judgment is real.

XLI. WEEDED OUT OF HIS KINGDOM

Matthew 13:41 — Everything That Causes Sin

“The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will weed out of His kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.”

Notice that the angels are **His angels.**

Jesus is the King who commands the angels.

They will **weed out of His kingdom** two things:

Everything that causes sin.

All who do evil.

One day, God's kingdom will be completely pure.

No more temptation.

No more evil.

Cross References

Revelation 14:19

The angel swung his sickle over the earth. He gathered the earth's grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's anger.

Ezekiel 34:17

I will judge between one sheep and another, between the male sheep and the male goats.

Matthew 25:32

All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them from each other, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus will one day remove all evil from His kingdom.

XLII. THE BLAZING FURNACE

Matthew 13:42 — Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth

“They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Jesus describes the final punishment with strong words.

The blazing furnace.

Weeping — deep sorrow.

Gnashing of teeth — anger and regret.

These words are meant to warn us.

No one should take hell lightly.

And no one needs to go there, because Jesus has made a way of salvation.

Cross References

Matthew 8:12

But those people who should have the kingdom will be thrown outside into the darkness, where people will cry and grind their teeth with pain.

Daniel 3:6

Anyone who doesn't bow down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.

Revelation 20:15

> Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Spiritual Warning

Hell is real, and Jesus warned about it out of love.

XLIII. THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE

Matthew 13:43 — Like the Sun

“Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

After the dark warning, there is a bright promise.

The righteous will shine like the sun.

God's people will be glorious.

Pure.

Radiant.

In **the kingdom of their Father.**

Then Jesus says again:

“Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

Cross References

Daniel 12:3

> The wise people will shine like the brightness of the sky. Those who teach others to live right will shine like stars forever and ever.

Malachi 4:2

> But for you who honor Me, goodness will shine on you like the sun, with healing in its rays.

1 Corinthians 15:41

> The sun has one kind of beauty, the moon has another beauty, and the stars have another.

Spiritual Principle

The future of God's people is glorious.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The wheat may look ordinary now, but one day it will shine like the sun.

XLIV. THE HIDDEN TREASURE

Matthew 13:44 — In His Joy

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”

In Bible times, there were no banks.

People often buried their valuables in the ground to keep them safe.

Sometimes the owner died, and the treasure was forgotten.

In this parable, a man finds a treasure buried in a field.

He hides it again.

Then **in his joy**, he sells everything he owns to buy that field.

Notice the word **joy.**

He was not sad to give up everything.

He was thrilled.

He knew he was getting something far more valuable.

Cross References

Proverbs 2:4

> Search for it like silver, and hunt for it like hidden treasure.

Job 28:12

> But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding live?

Philippians 3:8

> I think that all things are worth nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

Spiritual Principle

The kingdom of heaven is worth more than everything we have.

Key Truth

Giving up everything for Jesus is not a loss; it is the best trade anyone could ever make.

XLV. THE MERCHANT

Matthew 13:45 — Looking for Fine Pearls

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.”

In the ancient world, pearls were among the most valuable things a person could own.

Some were worth a fortune.

This merchant was **looking** for fine pearls.

The man in the field stumbled onto the treasure.

The merchant was searching for it.

Some people find the kingdom by surprise.

Others find it after a long search.

Cross References

Proverbs 3:15

> Wisdom is worth more than rubies. Nothing you could want is equal to it.

Job 28:18

> The value of wisdom is greater than pearls.

Proverbs 8:11

> Wisdom is more precious than rubies. Nothing you could want is equal to it.

Spiritual Principle

God is found by those who search for Him.

XLVI. THE PEARL OF GREAT VALUE

Matthew 13:46 — He Sold Everything

“When he found one pearl of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

The merchant found **one pearl of great value.**

And he **sold everything he had** to buy it.

He had seen many pearls.

But this one was different.

It was worth more than everything else combined.

Jesus and His kingdom are like that pearl.

Cross References

Philippians 3:7

> At one time all these things were important to me. But now I think they are worth nothing because of Christ.

Luke 14:33

> In the same way, you must give up everything you have to be My follower.

Mark 10:21

> Jesus looked at the man and loved him. He said, “There is one more thing you need to do. Go and sell everything you have, and give the money to the poor... Then come and follow Me.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is worth everything.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When you find the Pearl, nothing else seems valuable anymore.

XLVII. THE NET

Matthew 13:47 — All Kinds of Fish

“Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish.”

The last parable is about fishing.

Many of Jesus' disciples were fishermen.

They knew this picture well.

A large net was let down into the lake.

It **caught all kinds of fish.**

Good fish and bad fish.

The net did not choose.

It gathered everything.

Cross References

Mark 1:17

> Jesus said to them, “Come follow Me, and I will make you fishermen for people.”

Luke 5:6

> When the fishermen did as Jesus said, they caught so many fish that their nets began to break.

Habakkuk 1:14

> You have made people like fish in the sea, like sea creatures without a leader.

Spiritual Principle

The gospel goes out to all kinds of people.

XLVIII. SORTING THE FISH

Matthew 13:48 — Good and Bad

“When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. They sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away.”

When the net was full, the fishermen **pulled it up.**

Then they **sat down** and sorted the catch.

The **good fish** went into baskets.

The **bad fish** were thrown away.

Bad fish may have been fish the law said were unclean, or fish that were not fit to eat.

Cross References

Ezekiel 47:10

> Fishermen will stand along the shore... There will be many kinds of fish, as many as in the Great Sea.

Matthew 22:10

> So the servants went into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Amos 9:9

> I will shake the people of Israel among all the nations, like someone shakes grain in a sifter. But not one grain will fall to the ground.

Spiritual Principle

There will be a final sorting.

XLIX. AT THE END OF THE AGE

Matthew 13:49 — The Angels Will Separate

“This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous”

Jesus explains the parable.

At **the end of the age**, the angels will come.

They will **separate the wicked from the righteous.**

This is the same lesson as the parable of the weeds.

Jesus repeated it because it is so important.

Cross References

Daniel 12:2

> Many people who have died and been buried will wake up. Some will wake up to have life forever, and some will wake up to shame and disgrace forever.

Malachi 3:18

> Then you will again see the difference between good and evil people, between those who serve God and those who don't.

Psalm 1:5

> So the wicked will not escape God's punishment. Sinners will not worship with God's people.

Spiritual Principle

God will make a clear difference between the righteous and the wicked.

L. THE BLAZING FURNACE

Matthew 13:50 — A Second Warning

“and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Jesus repeated the warning from verse 42.

The same words.

The same fire.

The same weeping.

Repetition is a sign of importance.

Jesus wanted His listeners to take this seriously.

Cross References

Matthew 22:13

> So the king told some servants, “Tie this man's hands and feet and throw him out into the darkness, where people will cry and grind their teeth with pain.”

Revelation 21:8

> But cowards, those who refuse to believe, who do evil things, who kill... their place will be in the lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

Isaiah 66:24

> Their worm will never die, and their fire will never go out.

Spiritual Warning

Jesus repeated His warnings so no one could say they were not warned.

LI. HAVE YOU UNDERSTOOD?

Matthew 13:51 — “Yes”

“‘Have you understood all these things?’ Jesus asked. ‘Yes,’ they replied.”

Jesus asked His disciples a direct question.

“Have you understood all these things?”

“Yes.”

Their understanding was not yet complete.

They would still have much to learn.

But they had grasped the main truths.

And Jesus wanted them to understand, because they would soon teach others.

Cross References

Luke 24:45

> Then Jesus opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

Colossians 1:9

> We have not stopped praying for you. We ask God that you will know fully what He wants, and that you will have great wisdom and understanding in spiritual things.

1 Corinthians 13:12

> Now we see a dim reflection, as if we were looking into a mirror, but then we will see clearly. Now I know only a part, but then I will know fully.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus wants His followers to understand His Word.

LII. TREASURES OLD AND NEW

Matthew 13:52 — The Owner of a House

“He said to them, ‘Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.’”

A **teacher of the law** was an expert in the Old Testament.

When such a person becomes **a disciple of the kingdom**, he has two kinds of treasure.

Old treasures — the truths of the Old Testament.

New treasures — the truths Jesus revealed about the kingdom.

A good teacher brings out both.

The Old Testament is not thrown away.

It is understood in a new light through Jesus.

Some believe Matthew may have been describing himself.

His Gospel is full of both old and new treasures.

Cross References

Song of Solomon 7:13

> At our doors are all kinds of delicious fruit, both new and old, that I have saved for you, my love.

1 Peter 4:10

> Each of you has received a gift to use to serve others. Be good servants of God's various gifts of grace.

Proverbs 24:4

> Through knowledge its rooms will be filled with all kinds of valuable and beautiful things.

Spiritual Principle

The Old and New Testaments together reveal the full treasure of God's truth.

LIII. HE MOVED ON

Matthew 13:53 — When Jesus Finished

“When Jesus had finished these parables, He moved on from there.”

This is the phrase Matthew uses to end each of Jesus' five great teaching sections.

“When Jesus had finished...”

The parables were over.

Jesus moved on to His hometown.

Cross References

Mark 6:1

> Jesus left there and went to His hometown, and His followers went with Him.

Matthew 7:28

> When Jesus finished saying these things, the people were amazed at His teaching.

Matthew 19:1

> When Jesus finished saying all these things, He left Galilee and went into the area of Judea on the other side of the Jordan River.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' ministry moved forward according to the Father's plan.

LIV. HOMETOWN AMAZEMENT

Matthew 13:54 — Where Did He Get This Wisdom?

“Coming to His hometown, He began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. They asked, ‘Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?’”

Jesus came to **His hometown**, Nazareth.

He taught in **their synagogue.**

The people were **amazed.**

But their amazement was not faith.

They asked, **“Where did this man get this wisdom?”**

They could not deny His wisdom or His power.

But they could not accept that it came from God.

Notice they called Him **“this man.”**

Cross References

Mark 6:2

> On the Sabbath day He taught in the synagogue. Many people heard Him and were amazed. They said, “Where did this man get these teachings? What is this wisdom that has been given to Him?”

Luke 4:16

> Jesus went to Nazareth, where He had grown up. On the Sabbath day He went to the synagogue, as He always did.

John 7:15

> The Jews were amazed and said, “This man has never studied in school. How did He learn so much?”

Spiritual Principle

Amazement is not the same as faith.

LV. ISN'T THIS THE CARPENTER'S SON?

Matthew 13:55 — His Mother and Brothers

“Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't His mother's name Mary, and aren't His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?”

The people of Nazareth thought they knew Jesus.

“Isn't this the carpenter's son?”

They had watched Him grow up.

They knew His family.

His mother **Mary.**

His brothers **James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas.**

James later became a leader in the church in Jerusalem and wrote the book of James.

Judas, also called Jude, wrote the book of Jude.

But at this time, the people saw Jesus only as an ordinary man from an ordinary family.

Cross References

Mark 6:3

> He is just the carpenter, the son of Mary. He is the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon. And His sisters are here with us.

John 6:42

> They said, “This is Jesus, the son of Joseph. We know His father and mother. How can He say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

Galatians 1:19

> I saw no other apostles except James, the brother of the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

Familiarity can blind people to the truth.

LVI. HIS SISTERS

Matthew 13:56 — Where Then Did He Get All This?

“Aren't all His sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?”

Jesus also had **sisters.**

They still lived in Nazareth.

The people kept asking the same question.

“Where then did this man get all these things?”

The answer was right in front of them.

His wisdom and power came from God.

Because He is God's Son.

But they would not accept it.

Cross References

Mark 6:3

> He is just the carpenter, the son of Mary... And His sisters are here with us. The people were offended by Him.

Luke 4:22

> All the people spoke well of Jesus and were amazed at the words of grace He spoke. They asked, “Isn't this Joseph's son?”

Mark 3:31

> Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside and sent someone in to tell Him to come out.

Spiritual Principle

The truth about Jesus is clear to those who are willing to see it.

LVII. A PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR

Matthew 13:57 — In His Own Town

“And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home.’”

They took offense at Him.

The word means they **stumbled** over Him.

They could not get past the fact that they knew Him as a child.

Jesus answered with a well-known saying.

“A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home.”

People often have the hardest time accepting greatness in someone they grew up with.

Cross References

Mark 6:4

> Jesus said to them, “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his hometown, with his own people, and in his own home.”

Luke 4:24

> Then Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, a prophet is not accepted in his hometown.”

John 4:44

> Jesus had said before that a prophet is not respected in his own country.

Spiritual Principle

Being close to Jesus is not the same as believing in Jesus.

LVIII. NOT MANY MIRACLES

Matthew 13:58 — Because of Their Lack of Faith

“And He did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.”

Jesus **did not do many miracles** in Nazareth.

Why?

Because of their lack of faith.

Jesus was not powerless.

Mark tells us He healed a few sick people there.

But He would not force His blessings on people who refused to believe.

Miracles were meant to lead people to faith.

Where there was only unbelief, Jesus held back.

The chapter ends where it began.

The parable of the sower showed four kinds of soil.

Nazareth was hard ground.

Cross References

Mark 6:5

> Jesus was not able to work any miracles there except to heal a few sick people by putting His hands on them.

Hebrews 3:19

> So we see they were not allowed to enter and have God's rest, because they did not believe.

Hebrews 11:6

> Without faith it is impossible to please God. Anyone who comes to God must believe that He is real and that He rewards those who truly look for Him.

Spiritual Warning

Unbelief closes the door to God's blessings.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Nazareth had the Savior in its streets and the hardest soil in Galilee.

LIX. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 13

1. The Word Produces Fruit in Receptive Hearts

Only those who hear and understand God's Word bear lasting fruit.

Principle:

The seed is always good; the question is the soil.

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2. Good and Evil Grow Together Until Judgment

God will separate the righteous from the wicked at the end of the age.

Principle:

God's patience now does not mean God's judgment will never come.

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3. The Kingdom Starts Small but Grows Great

Like a mustard seed or yeast, God's kingdom spreads until it transforms everything.

Principle:

Never despise small beginnings in God's work.

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4. The Kingdom Is Worth Everything

The treasure and pearl parables show that following Christ is worth total surrender.

Principle:

Whatever you give up for Jesus, you gain far more.

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5. Final Judgment Is Real

The wicked will face fire, while the righteous will shine in God's kingdom.

Principle:

How we live now matters forever.

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6. Familiarity Breeds Unbelief

Even Jesus' hometown rejected Him, reminding us that faith, not background, determines blessing.

Principle:

Never let familiarity with Jesus keep you from faith in Jesus.

LX. THE SEVEN PARABLES OF MATTHEW 13

1. The Sower (Verses 3–9, 18–23)

God's Word is received in different ways by different hearts.

2. The Weeds (Verses 24–30, 36–43)

Good and evil grow together until the final harvest.

3. The Mustard Seed (Verses 31–32)

The kingdom begins small but grows very large.

4. The Yeast (Verse 33)

The kingdom works quietly from the inside out.

5. The Hidden Treasure (Verse 44)

The kingdom is worth everything, and it brings joy.

6. The Pearl (Verses 45–46)

The kingdom is worth more than everything else combined.

7. The Net (Verses 47–50)

There will be a final separation of good and bad.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The parables show how the kingdom begins, how it grows, what it is worth, and how it will end.

LXI. THE FOUR SOILS

The Path — The Hard Heart

Hears but does not understand.

Satan snatches the Word away.

The Rocky Ground — The Shallow Heart

Receives the Word with joy but has no root.

Falls away when trouble comes.

The Thorny Ground — The Crowded Heart

Hears the Word, but worries and riches choke it.

Becomes unfruitful.

The Good Soil — The Receptive Heart

Hears, understands, and produces fruit.

Key Truth

Every person who hears God's Word is one of these four kinds of soil.

Application

To keep your heart good soil:

- Soften your heart through humility and prayer.
- Remove the rocks of shallow commitment.
- Pull out the thorns of worry and greed.
- Let God's Word go deep through study and meditation.
- Obey what you learn.

LXII. WHY JESUS TAUGHT IN PARABLES

To Reveal Truth to Seekers

Those who wanted to understand came to Jesus and learned.

To Hide Truth from the Hard-Hearted

Those who had already rejected Him did not understand.

To Fulfill Prophecy

Isaiah and the psalm said this would happen.

To Make Truth Memorable

Stories are easy to remember and repeat.

To Invite a Response

Parables make listeners ask, **“What does this mean for me?”**

Spiritual Principle

Parables are both a door and a wall — a door for seekers and a wall for the stubborn.

LXIII. WHAT MATTHEW 13 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 13 presents Jesus as:

The Sower

He plants the good seed of God's Word.

The Revealer of Secrets

He makes known what was hidden since creation.

The Fulfillment of Prophecy

Prophets longed to see Him.

The Lord of the Harvest

He sends His angels at the end of the age.

The Judge

He will separate the righteous from the wicked.

The Treasure and the Pearl

He is worth more than everything.

The Rejected Prophet

His own hometown would not honor Him.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who tells the parables is Himself the treasure the parables point to.

LXIV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What is a parable?

A parable is a story from everyday life that teaches a spiritual truth.

The word means **“to put beside.”**

Question 2

Why did Jesus teach in parables?

To reveal truth to those who were seeking and to hide it from those who had hardened their hearts.

It also fulfilled prophecy and made His teaching easy to remember.

Question 3

What do the four soils represent?

They represent four kinds of hearts.

A hard heart, a shallow heart, a crowded heart, and a receptive heart.

Question 4

Who snatches away the seed on the path?

The evil one, Satan.

He tries to steal God's Word before it can take root.

Question 5

Why did the rocky ground fail?

It had no root.

When trouble or persecution came, the person fell away.

Question 6

What are the thorns that choke the Word?

The worries of this life and the deceitfulness of riches.

Question 7

What makes the good soil different?

It hears the Word, understands it, and produces fruit.

Question 8

What does the parable of the weeds teach?

Good and evil will grow together in the world until the end of the age.

Then God will separate them.

Question 9

Why did the master not let the servants pull up the weeds?

Because they might pull up the wheat too.

Final judgment belongs to God.

Question 10

What do the mustard seed and the yeast teach?

The mustard seed shows that the kingdom starts small and grows large.

The yeast shows that it works quietly and changes everything from the inside.

Question 11

What do the hidden treasure and the pearl teach?

The kingdom of heaven is worth more than everything we own.

It is worth giving up everything with joy.

Question 12

What does the parable of the net teach?

At the end of the age, the angels will separate the wicked from the righteous.

Question 13

What are the “old” and “new” treasures?

The old treasures are the truths of the Old Testament.

The new treasures are the truths Jesus revealed about the kingdom.

Question 14

Why did the people of Nazareth reject Jesus?

They knew Him as the carpenter's son.

Their familiarity with Him kept them from believing in Him.

Question 15

What should Matthew 13 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 13 should cause believers to live:

- Listening carefully to God's Word.
- Guarding their hearts from hardness, shallowness, and distraction.
- Putting down deep roots in Christ.
- Bearing fruit.
- Leaving final judgment to God.
- Trusting God's work even when it seems small.
- Treasuring Jesus above everything.
- Taking the final judgment seriously.
- Not letting familiarity with Jesus replace faith in Him.

LXV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 13 asks several important questions.

What Kind of Soil Is My Heart Right Now?

Is the Enemy Stealing God's Word from Me?

Do I Have Deep Roots, or Only Surface Excitement?

What Thorns Are Choking My Spiritual Life?

Is My Life Producing Fruit?

Am I Trying to Judge What Only God Can Judge?

Do I Trust God's Work When It Seems Small?

Is Jesus My Treasure and My Pearl?

What Would I Be Willing to Give Up for Him?

Am I Ready for the Harvest?

Has Familiarity with Jesus Made Me Cold Toward Him?

LXVI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Same Seed, Different Soil”

In the parable of the sower, the farmer threw the same seed everywhere.

The seed did not change.

The farmer did not change.

The only thing that changed was the soil.

On the path, the seed was stolen.

On the rock, the seed died.

Among the thorns, the seed was choked.

In the good soil, the seed produced a harvest.

The same is true for us.

God's Word is perfect.

Jesus is the perfect Sower.

The difference is in our hearts.

This creates a powerful principle.

When God's Word does not seem to be working in our lives, the problem is not the Word.

The problem is the soil.

And the good news is that God can change soil.

He can soften hard hearts.

He can break up rock.

He can pull out thorns.

Principle:

God's Word never fails; the question is always whether our hearts are ready to receive it.

LXVII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 13 begins by a lake and ends in a synagogue.

In between, Jesus tells seven stories.

A farmer sowing seed.

An enemy sowing weeds.

A tiny mustard seed.

A little yeast.

A buried treasure.

A precious pearl.

A fishing net.

Each one shows something about God's kingdom.

It begins small.

It grows quietly.

It is worth everything.

It lives side by side with evil for now.

And one day, it will be complete.

The weeds will be burned.

The bad fish will be thrown away.

And the righteous will shine like the sun.

But the chapter also shows the danger of hearing without receiving.

The crowds heard but did not understand.

Nazareth saw but did not believe.

Matthew 13 therefore reminds us:

The kingdom of heaven is here.

It is growing.

It is worth everything.

And it is coming to completion.

The question is not:

Is the seed good?

Is the Sower faithful?

Is the kingdom real?

The question is:

What kind of soil am I?

The same call still stands:

Listen carefully.

Let the Word go deep.

Pull out the thorns.

Bear fruit.

Trust God's timing.

Treasure Jesus above all.

And until He returns:

Keep listening.

Keep growing.

Keep treasuring Him.

Keep bearing fruit.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the parables of Jesus.

Thank You that You reveal the secrets of Your kingdom to those who seek You.

Make my heart good soil.

Where my heart is hard, soften it.

Where my faith is shallow, give it deep roots.

Where worries and riches are choking Your Word, pull out the thorns.

Do not let the enemy steal Your Word from my heart.

Help me hear, understand, and obey.

Produce fruit in my life for Your glory.

Thank You that we are living in the days the prophets longed to see.

Help me never take Your Word for granted.

Give me patience to trust You while good and evil grow together.

Keep me from judging what only You can judge.

Thank You that Your kingdom began small and has grown across the whole world.

Help me trust Your work even when it seems small and quiet.

Lord Jesus, You are the treasure hidden in the field.

You are the pearl of great value.

Help me treasure You above everything.

Give me joy in giving up anything that keeps me from You.

Prepare me for the day of harvest.

Make me ready to stand before You.

Thank You for the promise that the righteous will shine like the sun in Your kingdom.

Keep me from becoming so familiar with You that I stop believing.

Keep my heart soft and my faith alive.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“But the seed on good soil is the one who hears the word, understands it, and produces a harvest —yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.” — Matthew 13:23

Central Truth

The kingdom of heaven grows through the Word of God in receptive hearts, it is worth more than everything we own, and at the end of the age God will separate the righteous from the wicked.

Matthew 13 in One Sentence

Through seven parables, Jesus teaches that God's Word bears fruit only in receptive hearts, that good and evil grow together until the final harvest, that the kingdom starts small but grows great, that it is worth everything we have, and that His own hometown's unbelief shows how familiarity can blind people to the truth.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 14 — The Death of John the Baptist, the Feeding of the Five Thousand, and Jesus Walks on Water

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 13 ended with Jesus rejected in His hometown of Nazareth.

Matthew Chapter 14 begins with an even darker rejection.

John the Baptist is put to death.

The faithful prophet who prepared the way for Jesus is beheaded by a weak and sinful king.

His death came because he told the truth.

He told King Herod that his marriage was wrong.

Herod imprisoned him.

Then, at a birthday party, Herod made a foolish promise.

And John's head was brought out on a platter.

When Jesus heard the news, He withdrew to a quiet place.

But the crowds followed Him.

And instead of sending them away, Jesus had compassion on them.

He healed their sick.

Then, as evening came, He took five loaves of bread and two fish.

He gave thanks.

He broke the bread.

And more than five thousand people ate until they were full.

Twelve baskets of leftovers were picked up.

That night, the disciples were in a boat fighting the wind and the waves.

Jesus came to them walking on the water.

Peter stepped out of the boat and walked toward Jesus.

But when he looked at the wind, he began to sink.

Jesus caught him.

When they climbed into the boat, the wind stopped.

And the disciples worshiped Him, saying:

“Truly You are the Son of God.”

Matthew 14 shows two very different kings.

Herod, who threw a feast that ended in death.

And:

Jesus, who gave a feast that brought life.

The central truth of Matthew 14 is:

Jesus is the compassionate Son of God who provides for His people, rules over creation, and saves those who call on Him, even when following Him costs everything.

I. HEROD HEARS ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 14:1 — Reports About Jesus

“At that time Herod the ruler heard reports about Jesus.”

This **Herod** was **Herod Antipas.**

He was a son of Herod the Great, who had tried to kill the baby Jesus.

After his father died, Herod Antipas ruled over Galilee and Perea.

He was called a **ruler**, or **tetrarch**, which meant he ruled a part of his father's kingdom.

News about Jesus had reached his palace.

People were talking about the miracles.

Cross References

Mark 6:14

> King Herod heard about Jesus, because He was now well known.

Luke 9:7

Herod, the ruler, heard about all the things that were happening and was confused.

Luke 3:1

It was the fifteenth year of the rule of Tiberius Caesar... Herod was ruler of Galilee.

Spiritual Principle

The news of Jesus reaches even the palaces of the powerful.

II. A GUILTY CONSCIENCE

Matthew 14:2 — “This Is John the Baptist”

“He said to his servants, ‘This is John the Baptist. He has risen from the dead! That is why miraculous powers are at work in Him.’”

Herod's first thought was frightening.

“This is John the Baptist. He has risen from the dead!”

Herod had killed John.

Now he thought John had come back.

His guilty conscience would not leave him alone.

Others thought Jesus was Elijah or one of the prophets.

But Herod was haunted by the man he had murdered.

Cross References

Mark 6:16

But when Herod heard this, he said, “I killed John by cutting off his head. Now he has been raised from the dead!”

Luke 9:9

Herod said, “I cut off John's head. So who is this man I hear such things about?” And Herod kept trying to see Jesus.

Matthew 16:14

They answered, “Some say You are John the Baptist. Others say You are Elijah. Still others say You are Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

Spiritual Principle

A guilty conscience cannot be silenced by power.

Key Truth

Herod could kill the prophet, but he could not kill the truth the prophet spoke.

III. JOHN ARRESTED

Matthew 14:3 — Because of Herodias

“For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.”

Matthew now goes back to explain what had happened earlier.

Herod had **arrested John.**

He had **bound him** and **put him in prison.**

Why?

Because of Herodias.

Herodias had been married to Herod's brother Philip.

Herod divorced his own wife and married Herodias while his brother was still alive.

This was a serious sin under God's law.

Cross References

Mark 6:17

> Herod himself had ordered John to be arrested, chained, and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, whom Herod had married.

Luke 3:19

> But John spoke against Herod the ruler because of Herodias, the wife of Herod's brother, and because of all the other evil things Herod had done.

Leviticus 20:21

> If a man marries his brother's wife, it is shameful. He has dishonored his brother.

Spiritual Principle

Sin often leads to more sin.

IV. “IT IS NOT LAWFUL”

Matthew 14:4 — John's Bold Words

“For John had been saying to him, ‘It is not lawful for you to have her.’”

John did not keep quiet.

He told the king the truth.

“It is not lawful for you to have her.”

Notice the words **“had been saying.”**

John said it again and again.

He did not soften his message because Herod was powerful.

John cared more about God's truth than about his own safety.

Cross References

Leviticus 18:16

> You must not have sexual relations with your brother's wife. That would dishonor your brother.

Mark 6:18

> John had been telling Herod, “It is not right for you to be married to your brother's wife.”

1 Corinthians 5:1

> It is actually being reported that there is sexual sin among you... A man there has his father's wife.

Spiritual Principle

God's servants must speak the truth, even to the powerful.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

John lost his head, but he never lost his integrity.

V. AFRAID OF THE PEOPLE

Matthew 14:5 — They Considered John a Prophet

“Herod wanted to kill John but was afraid of the people, because they considered John a prophet.”

Herod **wanted to kill John.**

But he was **afraid of the people.**

The crowds believed John was a prophet.

Killing him could cause a revolt.

Mark tells us Herod also feared John and liked to listen to him, even though John's words troubled him.

Herod was a divided man.

He wanted to get rid of John, but he was afraid to.

He was not ruled by God's will.

He was ruled by fear.

Cross References

Mark 6:19

> So Herodias hated John and wanted to kill him. But she couldn't.

Matthew 21:26

> But if we say, “It was from people,” we are afraid of the crowd, because they all believe John was a prophet.

Matthew 11:9

> So what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, and I tell you, John is more than a prophet.

Spiritual Warning

Fear of people leads to poor and sinful decisions.

VI. HEROD'S BIRTHDAY

Matthew 14:6 — The Daughter of Herodias Danced

“On Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced for the guests and pleased Herod.”

Herod threw a great birthday party.

Mark tells us important officials, army commanders, and leaders of Galilee were there.

The **daughter of Herodias** danced.

History tells us her name was **Salome.**

Her dance **pleased Herod.**

It was likely an immoral dance, the kind usually done by paid entertainers.

Herod was probably drunk.

This was a party full of pride, lust, and foolishness.

Cross References

Mark 6:21

> Then the perfect time came for Herodias to cause John's death. On Herod's birthday, he gave a dinner party for the most important government leaders, the commanders of his army, and the most important people in Galilee.

Judges 11:34

> When Jephthah came home to Mizpah, his daughter was the first one to come out to meet him. She was playing a tambourine and dancing.

Genesis 40:20

> Three days later it was Pharaoh's birthday, so he gave a feast for all his officers.

Spiritual Warning

Pride and pleasure can set a trap for foolish decisions.

VII. A FOOLISH OATH

Matthew 14:7 — Whatever She Asked

“He promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked.”

Herod made a reckless promise.

Whatever she asked.

Mark says he offered her up to half his kingdom.

He made this promise in front of all his guests.

He spoke without thinking.

And he swore an oath to make it binding.

Cross References

Mark 6:23

> He promised her, “Anything you ask for I will give to you — up to half of my kingdom.”

Judges 11:30

> Jephthah made a promise to the LORD. He said, “If You will let me defeat the Ammonites...”

Ecclesiastes 5:2

> Think before you speak, and be careful about what you promise God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so say only a few words.

Spiritual Principle

Words spoken quickly can lead to great regret.

VIII. THE HEAD OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Matthew 14:8 — Prompted by Her Mother

“Prompted by her mother, she said, ‘Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.’”

The girl went to her mother.

Herodias did not hesitate.

She hated John.

He had exposed her sin.

Now she had her chance.

The girl came back and said:

“Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.”

She asked for it **here**, right away.

Herodias was like Jezebel, the wicked queen who tried to kill the prophet Elijah.

Cross References

Mark 6:24

> The girl went to her mother and asked, “What should I ask for?” Her mother answered, “Ask for the head of John the Baptist.”

1 Kings 19:2

> So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “May the gods punish me terribly if by this time tomorrow I don't kill you just as you killed those prophets.”

1 Kings 21:25

> There was no one like Ahab who had sold himself to do so much evil in the LORD's sight, because his wife Jezebel influenced him to do evil.

Spiritual Warning

Hatred of the truth can lead to terrible cruelty.

IX. THE KING WAS DISTRESSED

Matthew 14:9 — Because of His Oath and His Guests

“The king was distressed, but because of his oath and his guests, he ordered it to be given to her.”

Herod was **distressed.**

He knew this was wrong.

But he gave the order anyway.

Why?

Because of his oath.

Because of his guests.

He was more afraid of looking weak in front of others than of doing evil.

He could have broken a sinful oath.

A promise to do evil should never be kept.

But Herod chose his pride over righteousness.

Cross References

Mark 6:26

> Although the king was very sad, he had made a promise, and his dinner guests had heard it. So he did not want to refuse what she asked.

Judges 11:35

> When Jephthah saw his daughter, he tore his clothes to show his sadness. He said, “My daughter! You have made me so sad... I made a promise to the LORD, and I cannot break it.”

Numbers 30:2

> When a man makes a promise to the LORD or swears an oath to do something, he must not break his word.

Spiritual Principle

A promise to do evil should never be kept.

Spiritual Warning

Caring what people think can lead us to do what we know is wrong.

X. JOHN BEHEADED

Matthew 14:10 — In the Prison

“He sent and had John beheaded in the prison.”

Herod sent a soldier to the prison.

And **John was beheaded.**

There was no trial.

No defense.

No justice.

The greatest prophet born of a woman was killed to satisfy a party guest's request and an angry woman's hatred.

John died as a martyr.

He died for speaking the truth.

Cross References

Mark 6:27

> So the king immediately sent a soldier to bring John's head. The soldier went and cut off John's head in the prison.

Revelation 20:4

> And I saw the souls of those who had been killed because they were faithful to the message of Jesus and the message from God.

Matthew 17:12

> But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and people did not recognize him. They did to him whatever they wanted.

Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness to God may cost us our lives.

Key Truth

John's death was not the end of his story.

He went into the presence of the God he served.

XI. ON A PLATTER

Matthew 14:11 — Carried to Her Mother

“His head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother.”

This is one of the most shocking scenes in the Bible.

In the middle of a party, a man's head was brought out **on a platter.**

Like another dish of food.

The girl **carried it to her mother.**

Herodias got what she wanted.

But God sees.

History records that Herod later lost his kingdom.

He and Herodias were sent away into exile.

Cross References

Mark 6:28

> The soldier brought it back on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother.

1 Kings 21:19

Tell him, “This is what the LORD says: In the same place where the dogs licked up Naboth's blood, they will also lick up your blood!”

2 Kings 9:33

Jehu said, “Throw her down.” So they threw Jezebel down.

Spiritual Warning

The wicked may seem to win for a moment, but God's justice will come.

XII. JOHN'S DISCIPLES BURIED HIM

Matthew 14:12 — Then They Told Jesus

“John's disciples came, took his body, and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.”

John's disciples showed love and courage.

They **came** and **took his body.**

They **buried it** with honor.

Then they did the best thing they could do.

They went and told Jesus.

In their grief, they went to the One John had pointed to.

Cross References

Mark 6:29

When John's followers heard this, they came and got John's body and put it in a tomb.

Acts 8:2

And some believers who worshiped God buried Stephen and cried loudly for him.

John 19:38

Later, Joseph from Arimathea asked Pilate if he could take the body of Jesus... So Joseph came and took Jesus' body away.

Spiritual Principle

When grief comes, take it to Jesus.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

John's disciples did in his death what John taught them in his life — go to Jesus.

XIII. JESUS WITHDREW

Matthew 14:13 — The Crowds Followed

“When Jesus heard what had happened, He withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. But the crowds heard about it and followed Him on foot from the towns.”

When Jesus heard about John's death, **He withdrew.**

He went by boat to **a solitary place.**

John was His relative.

John had baptized Him.

Jesus was grieving.

He also may have known that Herod's attention was now turning to Him.

But the crowds would not leave Him alone.

They **followed Him on foot** around the lake.

Cross References

Mark 6:32

> So they went in a boat by themselves to a lonely place.

John 6:1

> After this, Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias.

Matthew 4:12

> When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He went back to Galilee.

Spiritual Principle

Even Jesus took time to be alone when He was grieving.

XIV. HE HAD COMPASSION

Matthew 14:14 — He Healed Their Sick

“When Jesus landed and saw the large crowd, He had compassion on them and healed their sick.”

Jesus wanted to be alone.

But when He landed, a huge crowd was waiting.

Most people would have been frustrated.

Jesus **had compassion on them.**

He set aside His own grief.

And **He healed their sick.**

Even in His sorrow, Jesus cared for others.

Cross References

Mark 6:34

> When He arrived, He saw a great crowd waiting. He felt sorry for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.

Luke 9:11

> But the people learned where Jesus went and followed Him. He welcomed them and talked with them about God's kingdom. He healed those who needed to be healed.

Matthew 9:36

> When He saw the crowds, He felt sorry for them because they were hurting and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Spiritual Principle

True compassion serves others even in times of personal pain.

Key Truth

Jesus' compassion is greater than His need for rest.

XV. SEND THE CROWDS AWAY

Matthew 14:15 — This Is a Remote Place

“As evening approached, the disciples came to Him and said, ‘This is a remote place, and it's already late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy themselves food.’”

The day was ending.

The disciples saw a problem.

They were in **a remote place.**

It was **late.**

There was no food.

Their solution was simple.

“Send the crowds away.”

It seemed like the responsible thing to do.

But Jesus had a different plan.

Cross References

Mark 6:35

> When it was late in the day, His followers came to Him and said, “No one lives in this place, and it is already very late.”

Luke 9:12

> Late in the afternoon, the twelve apostles came to Jesus and said, “Send the people away. They need to find food and places to sleep in the nearby towns and countryside.”

John 6:5

> When Jesus looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward Him, He said to Philip, “Where can we buy enough bread for all these people to eat?”

Spiritual Principle

What looks like a problem to us is an opportunity for Jesus.

XVI. YOU GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO EAT

Matthew 14:16 — They Don't Need to Go Away

“Jesus replied, ‘They don't need to go away. You give them something to eat.’”

Jesus surprised His disciples.

“They don't need to go away.”

“You give them something to eat.”

The disciples had nothing to give.

Jesus knew that.

He was testing their faith.

He wanted them to see that they could not meet the need on their own.

Cross References

Mark 6:37

> But Jesus answered, “You give them something to eat.” They said to Him, “We would all have to work a month to earn enough money to buy that much bread!”

John 6:6

> Jesus asked Philip this question to test him, because Jesus already knew what He planned to do.

2 Kings 4:42

> A man from Baal Shalishah brought the man of God twenty loaves of barley bread from the first harvest... Elisha said, “Give it to the people to eat.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus often calls us to do what we cannot do without Him.

XVII. ONLY FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH

Matthew 14:17 — “We Have Only...”

“They answered, ‘We have only five loaves of bread and two fish.’”

The disciples looked at what they had.

Only five loaves.

Only two fish.

John tells us this food came from a boy in the crowd.

The loaves were small barley loaves, the bread of poor people.

The fish were probably small dried fish.

It was enough for one person's lunch.

Not for thousands.

Cross References

Mark 6:38

> Jesus asked them, “How many loaves of bread do you have? Go and see.” When they found out, they said, “Five loaves and two fish.”

John 6:9

> Here is a boy with five loaves of barley bread and two little fish, but that is not enough for so many people.

Luke 9:13

> They said, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people.”

Spiritual Principle

What seems too small in our hands is enough in Jesus' hands.

XVIII. BRING THEM TO ME

Matthew 14:18 — “Bring Them Here”

“‘Bring them here to Me,’ He said.”

This is the turning point of the story.

“Bring them here to Me.”

The disciples had to give what they had to Jesus.

As long as the food stayed in their hands, it was only five loaves and two fish.

Once it was placed in Jesus' hands, it became enough for thousands.

Cross References

1 Samuel 21:3

> Now, what food do you have? Give me five loaves of bread or anything else you have.

John 6:35

> Then Jesus said, “I am the bread that gives life. Whoever comes to Me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty.”

Exodus 16:15

> When the Israelites saw it, they asked each other, “What is it?” Moses told them, “This is the bread the LORD has given you to eat.”

Spiritual Principle

God multiplies what we place in His hands.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not ask what you have; ask whose hands you have placed it in.

Application

What can you bring to Jesus?

- Your time.
- Your talents.
- Your money.
- Your weakness.
- Your small faith.
- Your willing heart.

XIX. HE GAVE THANKS AND BROKE THE LOAVES

Matthew 14:19 — The Disciples Gave Them to the People

“He directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, He gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.”

Jesus told the people to **sit down on the grass.**

Mark says they sat in groups of hundreds and fifties.

Then Jesus did four things.

He took the bread.

He looked up to heaven.

He gave thanks.

He broke the loaves.

These same actions are seen later at the Last Supper.

Then Jesus **gave the bread to the disciples.**

And **the disciples gave it to the people.**

Jesus did the miracle.

But He used His disciples to deliver it.

Cross References

Mark 6:39

> Then Jesus told the followers to have the people sit in groups on the green grass.

John 6:11

> Then Jesus took the loaves of bread, thanked God for them, and gave them to the people who were sitting there. He did the same with the fish, giving as much as the people wanted.

Psalm 23:2

> He lets me rest in green pastures. He leads me to calm water.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus provides, and He uses His people to deliver His provision.

Key Truth

The Good Shepherd made His sheep lie down in green pastures and fed them.

XX. TWELVE BASKETS LEFT OVER

Matthew 14:20 — They All Ate and Were Satisfied

“They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve baskets full of leftovers.”

They all ate.

Not just a bite.

They were satisfied.

Everyone had as much as they wanted.

And there were leftovers.

Twelve baskets full.

One basket for each disciple.

Jesus did not just provide enough.

He provided more than enough.

Cross References

Mark 6:42

> All the people ate and were satisfied.

John 6:12

> When they had all had enough to eat, Jesus said to His followers, “Gather the leftover pieces of fish and bread. Don't waste anything.”

2 Kings 4:44

> Then he served it to the people, and they ate and had some food left over, as the LORD had said.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus provides more than enough.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When Jesus feeds His people, there is always something left over.

XXI. FIVE THOUSAND MEN

Matthew 14:21 — Besides Women and Children

“The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.”

About five thousand men.

In that culture, crowds were often counted by the number of men.

Matthew adds **besides women and children.**

The total crowd may have been fifteen or twenty thousand people.

This is the only miracle of Jesus, other than the resurrection, recorded in all four Gospels.

Cross References

Mark 6:44

> There were five thousand men who ate.

John 6:10

> Jesus said, “Tell the people to sit down.” This was a very grassy place, and about five thousand men sat down there.

Luke 9:14

> There were about five thousand men there.

Spiritual Principle

No crowd is too large for Jesus to care for.

XXII. JESUS SENT THE DISCIPLES AHEAD

Matthew 14:22 — Into the Boat

“Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowd.”

Immediately after the miracle, Jesus **made** His disciples get into the boat.

The word means He insisted.

Why the hurry?

John tells us the crowd wanted to make Jesus king by force.

Jesus did not want His disciples caught up in that excitement.

So He sent them away and dismissed the crowd Himself.

Cross References

Mark 6:45

> Immediately Jesus told His followers to get into the boat and go ahead of Him to Bethsaida across the lake. He stayed there to send the people home.

John 6:17

> They got into a boat and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was already dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.

Matthew 8:23

> Jesus got into a boat, and His followers went with Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus protects His followers from dangers they cannot see.

XXIII. ALONE TO PRAY

Matthew 14:23 — On the Mountainside

“After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone.”

After a long day of ministry, Jesus went **by Himself to pray.**

He had wanted to be alone earlier.

Now He finally had time with His Father.

Jesus, the Son of God, needed time in prayer.

How much more do we?

Cross References

Mark 6:46

> After sending them away, He went into the hills to pray.

Luke 6:12

> At that time Jesus went off to a mountain to pray, and He spent the night praying to God.

Luke 9:18

> One time when Jesus was praying alone, His followers were with Him.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer is the source of strength for every servant of God.

Key Truth

After feeding thousands, Jesus went to be fed by His Father.

XXIV. THE WIND WAS AGAINST THEM

Matthew 14:24 — Buffeted by the Waves

“Meanwhile, the boat was already far from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.”

While Jesus prayed, the disciples were in trouble.

The boat was **far from land.**

The waves were beating against it.

The wind was against it.

This time, Jesus was not in the boat.

They were obeying Him.

He had sent them.

And still they faced a storm.

Mark tells us Jesus **saw them** straining at the oars.

Cross References

Mark 6:47

> That night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and Jesus was alone on the land.

Jonah 1:4

> But the LORD sent a strong wind on the sea, which made the sea so rough the ship was in danger of breaking apart.

Psalm 107:25

> He spoke, and a storm came up, which blew up high waves.

Spiritual Principle

Obedience does not always mean calm seas.

Key Truth

Even when we cannot see Jesus, He sees us.

XXV. WALKING ON THE LAKE

Matthew 14:25 — Shortly Before Dawn

“Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake.”

Shortly before dawn means the fourth watch of the night, between three and six in the morning.

The disciples had been fighting the wind for hours.

They were exhausted.

Then **Jesus went out to them.**

Walking on the lake.

In the Old Testament, only God walks on the waves of the sea.

Jesus was doing what only God can do.

Cross References

Job 9:8

> God alone stretches out the skies and walks on the waves of the sea.

Psalm 77:19

> You made a path through the sea and walked through the deep waters, but Your footprints were not seen.

Exodus 14:22

> And the Israelites went through the sea on dry land, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus comes to His people in their darkest hour.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The waves that threatened the disciples were the floor Jesus walked on.

XXVI. “IT'S A GHOST!”

Matthew 14:26 — Terrified

“When the disciples saw Him walking on the water, they were terrified. ‘It's a ghost!’ they said, and cried out in fear.”

The disciples saw a figure coming toward them on the water.

In the dark.

In the storm.

They were **terrified.**

“It's a ghost!”

They did not recognize Jesus.

Sometimes we do not recognize Jesus when He comes to us in our storms.

We are so afraid that we do not see Him.

Cross References

Mark 6:49

> But when they saw Jesus walking on the water, they thought He was a ghost and cried out.

Luke 24:37

> They were fearful and terrified and thought they were seeing a ghost.

Job 9:11

> When He passes me, I cannot see Him. When He goes by, I do not see Him.

Spiritual Principle

Fear can keep us from recognizing Jesus when He comes near.

XXVII. “IT IS I”

Matthew 14:27 — Do Not Be Afraid

“But Jesus immediately said to them: ‘Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid.’”

Jesus spoke **immediately.**

He did not leave them in fear.

“Take courage!”

“It is I.”

“Do not be afraid.”

In Greek, **“It is I”** is literally **“I am.”**

These are the words God used when He revealed His name to Moses.

“I AM WHO I AM.”

Jesus was telling them more than who was walking toward them.

He was telling them who He is.

Cross References

Mark 6:50

> They all saw Him and were afraid. But quickly Jesus spoke to them and said, “Have courage! It is I. Do not be afraid.”

John 6:20

But Jesus said to them, “It is I. Do not be afraid.”

Isaiah 43:2

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. When you cross rivers, you will not drown.

Spiritual Principle

The presence of Jesus is the cure for fear.

Key Truth

The greatest comfort in any storm is knowing who is with us.

XXVIII. “TELL ME TO COME”

Matthew 14:28 — Peter's Request

“‘Lord, if it's really You,’ Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to You on the water.’”

Only Matthew tells us this part of the story.

Peter spoke up.

“Lord, if it's really You.”

Peter did not ask to walk on water to show off.

He asked Jesus to **tell** him to come.

He wanted to be where Jesus was.

And he knew he could only do it if Jesus commanded it.

Cross References

John 21:7

When Simon Peter heard him say it was the Lord, he wrapped his coat around himself and jumped into the water.

2 Corinthians 5:7

We live by what we believe, not by what we can see.

Hebrews 11:1

Faith means being sure of the things we hope for and knowing that something is real even if we do not see it.

Spiritual Principle

Bold faith wants to be where Jesus is.

XXIX. “COME”

Matthew 14:29 — Peter Walked on the Water

“‘Come,’ He said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water, and came toward Jesus.”

Jesus said one word.

“Come.”

And Peter **got down out of the boat.**

The other disciples stayed in the boat.

Peter stepped out.

And he **walked on the water.**

For a few moments, Peter did the impossible.

Because Jesus said, **“Come.”**

Cross References

Psalm 66:6

> He turned the sea into dry land. The people crossed the river on foot.

Habakkuk 3:15

> You marched through the sea with Your horses, stirring up the great waters.

Mark 6:48

> He saw His followers struggling hard to row the boat, because the wind was blowing against them. Between three and six o'clock in the morning, Jesus came to them, walking on the water.

Spiritual Principle

When Jesus calls, He gives the power to obey.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Peter is the only man besides Jesus who ever walked on water — because he was the only one who got out of the boat.

XXX. “LORD, SAVE ME!”

Matthew 14:30 — He Began to Sink

“But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and began to sink. He cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’”

Something changed.

He saw the wind.

Peter took his eyes off Jesus.

He looked at the storm.

And **he was afraid.**

And **he began to sink.**

The wind had been there the whole time.

The waves had been there the whole time.

What changed was where Peter was looking.

Then Peter cried out:

“Lord, save me!”

This is one of the shortest prayers in the Bible.

And one of the best.

Cross References

Psalm 69:1

> God, save me, because the water has risen to my neck.

Psalm 18:16

> The LORD reached down from above and took me. He pulled me from the deep water.

Psalm 144:7

> Reach down from above. Save me and rescue me out of the deep water.

Spiritual Principle

Faith falters when our eyes move from Jesus to our circumstances.

Key Truth

Even sinking faith knows where to turn.

XXXI. JESUS CAUGHT HIM

Matthew 14:31 — “Why Did You Doubt?”

“Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. ‘You of little faith,’ He said, ‘why did you doubt?’”

Immediately.

Jesus did not wait.

He did not let Peter sink deeper.

He **reached out His hand and caught him.**

Then He said gently:

“You of little faith, why did you doubt?”

Jesus did not say Peter had no faith.

He had enough faith to step out of the boat.

But his faith was small.

And doubt pulled him down.

Cross References

Matthew 8:26

> Jesus answered, “Why are you afraid? You don't have enough faith.” Then Jesus got up and gave a command to the wind and the waves, and it became completely calm.

Matthew 6:30

> If God makes the grass in the field so beautiful... then He will dress you even better. You have so little faith!

James 1:6

> But when you ask God, you must believe and not doubt. Anyone who doubts is like a wave in the sea, blown up and down by the wind.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is quick to save those who call on Him.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Peter sank because of the wind, but he was saved because of the hand.

XXXII. THE WIND DIED DOWN

Matthew 14:32 — When They Climbed into the Boat

“When they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.”

Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat together.

And **the wind died down.**

Jesus did not even need to speak this time.

His presence was enough.

When Jesus came into the boat, the storm stopped.

Cross References

Mark 4:39

> Jesus stood up and gave a command to the wind and said to the water, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind stopped, and the lake became completely calm.

Psalm 107:29

> He made the storm quiet, and the waves of the sea became calm.

Mark 6:51

> Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind became calm. The followers were greatly amazed.

Spiritual Principle

The presence of Jesus brings peace.

XXXIII. “TRULY YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD”

Matthew 14:33 — They Worshiped Him

“Then those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God.’”

This is the climax of the chapter.

The disciples **worshiped Him.**

And they said:

“Truly You are the Son of God.”

In Matthew 8, after Jesus calmed a storm, they asked, **“What kind of man is this?”**

Now they knew the answer.

This is the first time in Matthew that the disciples call Jesus **the Son of God.**

And they worshiped Him.

Only God is to be worshiped.

Jesus accepted their worship because He is God.

Cross References

John 1:49

> Then Nathanael said to Him, “Teacher, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

Matthew 16:16

> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Psalm 89:9

> You rule over the raging sea. When its waves rise up, You calm them.

Spiritual Principle

The right response to who Jesus is, is worship.

Key Truth

The storm led the disciples from fear to worship.

XXXIV. GENNESARET

Matthew 14:34 — They Landed

“When they crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret.”

Gennesaret was a fertile plain on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.

It was a beautiful, productive farming area.

The storm was over.

The journey was complete.

And a new day of ministry was beginning.

Cross References

Mark 6:53

> When they had crossed the lake, they came to shore at Gennesaret and tied the boat there.

John 6:21

> Then they were glad to take Him into the boat. At once the boat came to the land where they wanted to go.

Matthew 4:18

> As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus brings His people safely to the other side.

XXXV. THEY RECOGNIZED HIM

Matthew 14:35 — All Their Sick

“The men of that place recognized Jesus and sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to Him”

The people of Gennesaret **recognized Jesus.**

They did not wait.

They **sent word to all the surrounding country.**

They told everyone.

And **people brought all their sick to Him.**

These people did what Nazareth did not do.

They recognized Jesus and brought their needs to Him.

Cross References

Mark 6:54

> When they got out of the boat, people immediately recognized Jesus.

Matthew 4:24

> The news about Jesus spread all over Syria, and people brought all the sick to Him.

Luke 4:14

> Jesus went back to Galilee with the power of the Holy Spirit, and stories about Him spread all through the area.

Spiritual Principle

Those who recognize Jesus bring others to Him.

XXXVI. THE EDGE OF HIS CLOAK

Matthew 14:36 — Completely Healed

“and begged Him to let the sick just touch the edge of His cloak. And all who touched Him were completely healed.”

The people **begged** Jesus.

They only wanted to **touch the edge of His cloak.**

They had heard about the woman who was healed by touching His cloak.

And **all who touched Him were completely healed.**

Not some.

All.

Not partly.

Completely.

The chapter that began with death ends with healing.

Cross References

Mark 6:56

> Everywhere He went — into towns, cities, or countryside — the people brought the sick to the marketplaces. They begged Him to let them touch just the edge of His coat, and all who touched it were healed.

Matthew 9:20

> Then a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years came behind Jesus and touched the edge of His coat.

Mark 5:27

> She had heard about Jesus. So she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His coat.

Spiritual Principle

One touch of Jesus is enough.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The chapter that began with a prophet's death ends with the Healer's touch.

XXXVII. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 14

1. Standing for Truth May Cost Everything

John the Baptist's boldness led to his death, showing the price of faithfulness.

Principle:

It is better to lose your life for the truth than to keep it by giving up the truth.

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2. Jesus Provides Abundantly

With just five loaves and two fish, He fed thousands, teaching that God multiplies what we surrender to Him.

Principle:

Little is much when God is in it.

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3. Faith Requires Focus

Peter walked on water until he looked at the storm.

Faith falters when eyes shift from Jesus to fear.

Principle:

Keep your eyes on Jesus, not on the wind.

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4. Jesus Is the Son of God

His authority over nature and His saving power reveal His divine identity.

Principle:

The One who walks on the sea deserves our worship.

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5. Compassion Moves Christ

Whether feeding the hungry or healing the sick, Jesus responds to human need with mercy.

Principle:

Jesus' compassion is greater than His own need.

XXXVIII. TWO KINGS, TWO FEASTS

Matthew 14 places two feasts side by side.

Herod's Feast

- Held in a palace.
- For the rich and powerful.
- Filled with pride, lust, and drunkenness.
- Ended with a foolish promise.
- Ended in death.

Jesus' Feast

- Held on a grassy hillside.
- For ordinary, hungry people.

- Began with thanksgiving to God.
- Ended with everyone satisfied.
- Brought life and healing.

Key Truth

Herod's banquet served death on a platter; Jesus' banquet served life to thousands.

XXXIX. LESSONS FROM PETER ON THE WATER

Peter Recognized Jesus

He said, **“Lord, if it's really You.”**

Peter Wanted to Be Near Jesus

He asked to come to Him.

Peter Waited for Jesus' Word

He asked Jesus to tell him to come.

Peter Stepped Out in Faith

He got out of the boat when others stayed.

Peter Looked at the Wind

His focus shifted from Jesus to the storm.

Peter Called Out

“Lord, save me!”

Jesus Saved Him Immediately

He reached out His hand and caught him.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

It is better to step out and sink into Jesus' hand than never to step out at all.

XL. WHAT MATTHEW 14 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 14 presents Jesus as:

The One Herod Feared

His power troubled the guilty king.

The Grieving Friend

He withdrew when He heard of John's death.

The Compassionate Shepherd

He healed the crowds even in His sorrow.

The Provider

He fed thousands with five loaves and two fish.

The Praying Son

He spent the night alone with His Father.

The Lord of the Sea

He walked on the water.

The I AM

He said, **“It is I. Do not be afraid.”**

The Savior

He caught Peter when he was sinking.

The Son of God

His disciples worshiped Him.

The Healer

All who touched Him were made well.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who walked on the storm is the Jesus who reaches into it to save us.

XLI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Who was Herod in Matthew 14?

He was Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great.

He ruled Galilee and Perea under the authority of Rome.

Question 2

Why did Herod think Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead?

Herod had a guilty conscience.

He had killed John, and the reports about Jesus' miracles frightened him.

Question 3

Why did John the Baptist tell Herod his marriage was wrong?

Herod had married Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, which was forbidden by God's law.

John spoke the truth even though it was dangerous.

Question 4

Why did Herod go through with John's execution if he was distressed?

Because of his oath and because of his guests.

He cared more about his pride and what others thought than about doing what was right.

Question 5

Should a person keep a promise to do something evil?

No.

A promise to do evil should be broken, and the person should repent for making it.

Question 6

What did John's disciples do after his death?

They buried his body and went to tell Jesus.

Question 7

What did Jesus do when He saw the crowd after He had withdrawn?

He had compassion on them and healed their sick, even though He was grieving.

Question 8

Why did Jesus tell the disciples, “You give them something to eat”?

He was testing their faith.

He wanted them to see that they could not meet the need on their own, but He could.

Question 9

What does the feeding of the five thousand teach us?

Jesus provides abundantly.

God multiplies what we place in His hands.

He uses His disciples to deliver His provision.

Question 10

Why did Jesus go up on the mountain alone?

To pray.

Even the Son of God spent time alone with His Father.

Question 11

What is the meaning of “It is I”?

In Greek, it is literally **“I am,”** the name God used to reveal Himself to Moses.

Jesus was revealing that He is God.

Question 12

Why did Peter begin to sink?

He took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the wind.

He became afraid, and his faith weakened.

Question 13

What did the disciples say after Jesus got into the boat?

They worshiped Him and said, **“Truly You are the Son of God.”**

Question 14

What happened at Gennesaret?

The people recognized Jesus, brought all their sick to Him, and all who touched the edge of His cloak were completely healed.

Question 15

What should Matthew 14 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 14 should cause believers to live:

- Speaking the truth with courage.
- Refusing to be ruled by the fear of people.
- Taking their grief to Jesus.
- Showing compassion even in hard times.
- Bringing what little they have to Jesus.
- Spending time alone in prayer.
- Trusting Jesus in the storms of life.
- Keeping their eyes on Jesus.
- Calling out to Him when they are sinking.
- Worshiping Him as the Son of God.

XLII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 14 asks several important questions.

Am I Willing to Speak the Truth Even When It Costs Me?

Is My Conscience Clear Before God?

Have I Made Any Foolish Promises I Need to Repent Of?

Am I More Concerned with What People Think or What God Thinks?

Where Do I Take My Grief?

Do I Show Compassion Even When I Am Hurting?

What Do I Have That I Need to Bring to Jesus?

Do I Make Time to Be Alone with God in Prayer?

What Storm Am I Facing Right Now?

Am I Looking at Jesus or at the Wind?

Have I Cried Out, “Lord, Save Me”?

Do I Worship Jesus as the Son of God?

XLIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Eyes on Jesus”

Peter's walk on the water teaches one of the most important lessons in the Christian life.

As long as Peter looked at Jesus, he walked.

When he looked at the wind, he sank.

The storm did not get worse.

The waves did not get higher.

Peter's focus changed.

This creates a powerful principle.

The circumstances of life will always be stormy.

There will always be wind.

There will always be waves.

The question is not whether there will be storms.

The question is where we will look.

If we look at the storm, we will sink in fear.

If we look at Jesus, we can walk through what seems impossible.

And even when we do sink, Jesus is close enough to reach out His hand.

Principle:

Look at the wind and you will sink; look at Jesus and you will walk — and if you start to sink, call on Him, and He will catch you.

XLIV. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 14 begins in a king's palace and ends on a crowded shore.

At the start, a faithful prophet dies for speaking the truth.

A weak king keeps a foolish promise.

A head is carried out on a platter.

But the story does not stay there.

Jesus grieves.

Jesus withdraws.

And then Jesus has compassion.

He heals the sick.

He feeds thousands with a boy's lunch.

He prays alone through the night.

He walks on the stormy sea.

He calls Peter out of the boat.

He catches Peter when he sinks.

He calms the wind.

And His disciples fall down and worship Him.

Matthew 14 therefore reminds us:

Faithfulness may cost us everything.

But Jesus is worth everything.

What we have may seem small.

But in His hands, it becomes enough.

The storm may be strong.

But Jesus is stronger.

The story of Matthew 14 does not end with:

A prophet's death.

A fearful crowd.

Or a sinking disciple.

It ends with:

A calm sea.

A worshiping church.

And healing for all who touch Him.

The same call still stands:

Speak the truth.

Bring Him what you have.

Pray.

Step out in faith.

Keep your eyes on Jesus.

Call on Him when you sink.

Worship Him as the Son of God.

And until He returns:

Keep trusting.

Keep looking to Him.

Keep stepping out.

Keep worshiping.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for faithful servants like John the Baptist.

Give us the courage to speak the truth, even when it is costly.

Keep us from being ruled by the fear of people.

Guard us from foolish words and reckless promises.

When we have sinned, give us a clear conscience through repentance.

Lord Jesus, thank You for understanding our grief.

When we lose people we love, help us bring our sorrow to You.

Thank You for Your compassion.

Thank You that You care for the crowds and for each person in them.

Teach us to show compassion even when we are tired or hurting.

Thank You that You feed the hungry.

We bring You what little we have.

Take it, bless it, and use it for Your glory.

Teach us that little is much when it is placed in Your hands.

Help us make time to be alone with You in prayer.

When the wind is against us, remind us that You see us.

When we are afraid, speak to us: “Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid.”

Give us faith to step out of the boat when You call.

Help us keep our eyes on You and not on the storm.

When we begin to sink, help us cry out to You.

Thank You that You are quick to reach out Your hand and save us.

Calm the storms in our lives and in our hearts.

We worship You.

Truly You are the Son of God.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Then those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God.’” — Matthew 14:33

Central Truth

Jesus is the compassionate Son of God who provides for His people, rules over creation, and saves those who call on Him, even when following Him costs everything.

Matthew 14 in One Sentence

After John the Baptist is killed for speaking the truth, Jesus has compassion on the crowds, feeds more than five thousand people with five loaves and two fish, walks on the stormy sea, saves sinking Peter, and is worshiped by His disciples as the Son of God.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 15 — True Purity, Great Faith, and the Feeding of Four Thousand

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 14 ended with healing.

People at Gennesaret touched the edge of Jesus' cloak, and all who touched Him were made well.

Matthew Chapter 15 begins with a complaint.

Religious leaders come all the way from Jerusalem.

They have not come to be healed.

They have come to find fault.

Their complaint is about **hand washing.**

Jesus' disciples were not following the tradition of the elders.

They were eating without first washing their hands in the special religious way.

Jesus answers by turning the question around.

The Pharisees were breaking **God's** command to keep their **own** traditions.

They honored God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him.

Then Jesus teaches a powerful truth.

What makes a person unclean is not what goes into the mouth.

It is what comes out of the heart.

Then the scene changes.

Jesus goes into Gentile territory near Tyre and Sidon.

A Canaanite woman cries out to Him for her daughter.

At first, Jesus does not answer.

The disciples want her sent away.

But she keeps asking.

She kneels.

She says, **“Lord, help me!”**

And Jesus says:

“Woman, you have great faith!”

The religious leaders from Jerusalem had no faith.

A Gentile woman from Canaan had great faith.

Then Jesus heals great crowds on a mountainside.

And once again He feeds a multitude.

This time four thousand men, besides women and children, from seven loaves and a few small fish.

Matthew 15 therefore shows a sharp contrast:

Religious leaders with clean hands and dirty hearts.

And:

An outsider with nothing to offer but humble, persistent faith.

The central truth of Matthew 15 is:

God looks at the heart, not at outward religion, and Jesus welcomes all who come to Him in humble faith, providing for their needs with compassion.

I. LEADERS FROM JERUSALEM

Matthew 15:1 — Pharisees and Teachers of the Law

“Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came from Jerusalem to Jesus and asked,”

These religious leaders came **from Jerusalem.**

Jerusalem was the center of Jewish religious life.

These were likely official investigators.

They had traveled a long way to Galilee.

Not to learn from Jesus.

But to watch Him and find fault.

Cross References

Mark 7:1

> Some Pharisees and some teachers of the law came from Jerusalem and gathered around Jesus.

Matthew 12:2

> When the Pharisees saw this, they said to Jesus, “Look! Your followers are doing something that is against the law to do on the Sabbath day.”

Mark 3:22

> The teachers of the law who came from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul in Him!”

Spiritual Principle

Some people come to Jesus looking for faults instead of looking for faith.

II. THE TRADITION OF THE ELDERS

Matthew 15:2 — They Don't Wash Their Hands

“Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!”

This was not about germs or cleanliness.

It was about religious ritual.

The tradition of the elders was a large collection of rules passed down by Jewish teachers.

These rules were not in the Old Testament.

They were added by people.

One rule required people to wash their hands in a certain way before eating.

They poured water over their hands to remove any ceremonial uncleanness.

The Pharisees treated these traditions as if they were equal to God's Word.

Cross References

Mark 7:2

> They saw that some of Jesus' followers ate food with hands that were not clean, that is, not washed in the way the Pharisees required.

Luke 11:38

> But the Pharisee was surprised when he saw that Jesus did not wash His hands before the meal.

Colossians 2:8

> Be sure that no one leads you away with false and empty teaching that comes from people, from the ruling spirits of this world, and not from Christ.

Spiritual Principle

Human traditions must never be treated as equal to God's Word.

III. BREAKING GOD'S COMMAND

Matthew 15:3 — For the Sake of Your Tradition

“Jesus replied, ‘And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?’”

Jesus answered with a question of His own.

“Why do you break the command of God?”

The disciples were breaking a human tradition.

But the Pharisees were breaking a **divine command.**

That is far worse.

They had made their traditions so important that they were setting aside God's own Word to keep them.

Cross References

Mark 7:8

> You have stopped following the commands of God, and you follow only human teachings.

Mark 7:9

> Then Jesus said to them, “You cleverly ignore the commands of God so you can follow your own teachings.”

Titus 1:14

> Do not accept Jewish false stories and the commands of people who reject the truth.

Spiritual Warning

When tradition becomes more important than Scripture, we will end up disobeying God.

IV. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

Matthew 15:4 — God's Clear Command

“For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother must be put to death.’”

Jesus gave an example.

He quoted the fifth commandment.

“Honor your father and mother.”

Honoring parents included caring for them when they were old.

Providing food, shelter, and help.

Jesus also quoted the law about **cursing** parents.

This sin was so serious it carried the death penalty.

Notice how Jesus introduced these verses.

“For God said.”

These were not human traditions.

They were God's words.

Cross References

Exodus 20:12

> Honor your father and your mother so that you will live a long time in the land that the LORD your God is going to give you.

Exodus 21:17

> Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.

Deuteronomy 5:16

> Honor your father and your mother as the LORD your God has commanded you.

Spiritual Principle

Caring for our parents is a command from God.

V. “DEVOTED TO GOD”

Matthew 15:5 — The Loophole

“But you say that if anyone declares what might have been used to help their father or mother is ‘devoted to God,’”

Notice the contrast.

God said...

But you say...

The Pharisees had a tradition called **Corban.**

A person could declare that his money or property was **“devoted to God.”**

It was set apart as a gift to the temple.

Once he said this, he could not use it to help his parents.

But he could often keep using it for himself.

It was a religious-sounding way to avoid caring for elderly parents.

Cross References

Mark 7:11

> But you teach that a person can say to his father or mother, “I have something I could use to help you, but it is Corban — a gift to God.”

Mark 7:12

> You no longer let that person do anything for his father or mother.

Leviticus 27:9

> If a person promises to give an animal that is accepted as an offering to the LORD, it becomes holy.

Spiritual Warning

Religious words can be used to hide selfishness.

VI. NULLIFYING GOD'S WORD

Matthew 15:6 — For the Sake of Your Tradition

“they are not to honor their father or mother with it. In this way you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.”

Jesus gave the result.

They are not to honor their father or mother.

Their tradition canceled God's command.

To **nullify** means to make something empty or useless.

Their rules had made God's Word powerless in people's lives.

Mark adds that this was only one example.

They did many things like this.

Cross References

Mark 7:13

> By your own rules, which you teach people, you are rejecting what God said. And you do many things like that.

Titus 1:16

> They say they know God, but the way they live shows they don't really know Him.

1 Timothy 5:8

> Whoever does not care for his own relatives, especially his own family members, has turned against the faith and is worse than someone who does not believe in God.

Spiritual Principle

Any teaching that cancels God's Word must be rejected.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When a rule lets you disobey God while looking holy, it is not from God.

VII. YOU HYPOCRITES!

Matthew 15:7 — Isaiah Was Right

“You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:”

Jesus called them **hypocrites.**

The word means **actors.**

They played the part of holy men.

But inside, they were not holy.

Jesus said Isaiah had **prophesied about** them.

Isaiah spoke these words seven hundred years earlier.

But they described the Pharisees perfectly.

Cross References

Mark 7:6

> Jesus answered, “You are all hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he spoke about you.”

Matthew 23:13

> How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You are hypocrites!

Matthew 6:2

> When you give to the poor, don't be like the hypocrites. They blow trumpets so that people will see them.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to perform religion without possessing faith.

VIII. LIPS AND HEARTS

Matthew 15:8 — Their Hearts Are Far from Me

“These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me.”

This is the heart of the problem.

Lips that honor God.

Hearts that are far from Him.

They said the right words.

They prayed the right prayers.

They sang the right songs.

But their hearts were somewhere else.

God is not impressed with words that do not come from the heart.

Cross References

Isaiah 29:13

> These people come near Me with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me.

Ezekiel 33:31

> They come to you and sit in front of you as My people. They hear your words, but they will not obey them. With their mouths they show love, but their hearts are greedy.

James 1:26

> People who think they are religious but say things they should not say are just fooling themselves. Their religion is worth nothing.

Spiritual Principle

God wants our hearts, not just our words.

IX. WORSHIP IN VAIN

Matthew 15:9 — Merely Human Rules

“They worship Me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.”

In vain means **empty** or **useless.**

Their worship accomplished nothing.

Why?

Because **their teachings are merely human rules.**

They taught people's ideas as if they were God's commands.

Worship based on human rules instead of God's truth is empty.

Cross References

Isaiah 29:13

> Their worship of Me is based on nothing but human rules they have memorized.

Mark 7:7

> Their worship of Me is worthless. The things they teach are nothing but human rules.

Colossians 2:22

> These rules are only human commands and teachings. They are about things that are gone as soon as they are used.

Spiritual Warning

Worship can be busy and still be empty.

Key Truth

True worship is based on God's truth and comes from a sincere heart.

X. LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

Matthew 15:10 — Jesus Calls the Crowd

“Jesus called the crowd to Him and said, ‘Listen and understand:’”

Jesus turned from the Pharisees to the crowd.

He wanted everyone to hear this teaching.

“Listen and understand.”

This was important.

The Pharisees had confused people about what makes a person clean before God.

Jesus wanted to make it clear.

Cross References

Mark 7:14

> After Jesus called the crowd to Him again, He said, “Everyone listen to Me, and understand what I am saying.”

Deuteronomy 6:4

> Listen, people of Israel! The LORD is our God. The LORD is the only LORD.

Proverbs 4:1

> My children, listen to your father's teaching. Pay attention so you will understand.

Spiritual Principle

God wants His people to understand His truth, not just hear it.

XI. WHAT COMES OUT OF THE MOUTH

Matthew 15:11 — That Is What Defiles

“What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”

This was a revolutionary statement.

The Jews had many laws about clean and unclean foods.

But Jesus said food does not **defile** a person.

To **defile** means to make someone unclean before God.

What makes a person unclean is **what comes out of their mouth.**

Words reveal the heart.

Later, God showed Peter in a vision that all foods had been made clean.

Cross References

Mark 7:15

> There is nothing people put into their bodies that makes them unclean. People are made unclean by the things that come out of them.

Acts 10:15

> But the voice said to him again, “God has made these things clean, so don't call them unholy!”

James 3:6

> The tongue is like a fire. It is a world of evil among the parts of our body. It spreads its evil through the whole body.

Spiritual Principle

The real problem is not outside us but inside us.

XII. THE PHARISEES WERE OFFENDED

Matthew 15:12 — Do You Know?

“Then the disciples came to Him and asked, ‘Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?’”

The disciples were worried.

“Do You know that the Pharisees were offended?”

These were powerful men from Jerusalem.

The disciples may have thought Jesus had gone too far.

But the truth often offends those who are proud.

Cross References

John 6:61

> Knowing that His followers were complaining about this, Jesus said, “Does this teaching bother you?”

Matthew 11:6

> Blessed is the person who does not lose faith because of Me.

Galatians 5:11

> If I still taught that circumcision is necessary, then the cross would not be a problem to people.

Spiritual Principle

The truth will offend some people, but it must still be spoken.

XIII. PULLED UP BY THE ROOTS

Matthew 15:13 — Not Planted by the Father

“He replied, ‘Every plant that My heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots.’”

Jesus was not worried about offending the Pharisees.

He used a picture.

Every plant that My heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up.

The Pharisees and their traditions were not planted by God.

They were man-made.

And one day, they would be removed.

Only what God plants will last.

Cross References

John 15:1

> I am the true vine, and My Father is the gardener.

Isaiah 60:21

> All your people will do what is right. They will receive the earth forever. They are the plant I planted, the work of My hands, to show My glory.

Psalm 1:4

> But wicked people are not like that. They are like chaff that the wind blows away.

Spiritual Principle

Only what God plants will last forever.

XIV. BLIND GUIDES

Matthew 15:14 — Both Will Fall into a Pit

“Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

“Leave them.”

Do not follow them.

Do not worry about pleasing them.

They are blind guides.

They claimed to lead people to God.

But they could not see the truth themselves.

And when a blind person leads another blind person, **both will fall into a pit.**

Following false teachers leads to disaster.

Cross References

Matthew 23:16

> How terrible for you! You guide the people, but you are blind.

Luke 6:39

> Jesus told them this story: “Can a blind person lead another blind person? No! Both of them will fall into a ditch.”

Isaiah 9:16

> The people who lead them lead them the wrong way, and the people who follow them are destroyed.

Spiritual Warning

Be careful whom you follow.

Key Truth

A guide is only as good as his ability to see.

XV. EXPLAIN THIS PARABLE

Matthew 15:15 — Peter Asks

“Peter said, ‘Explain this parable to us.’”

Peter spoke for the disciples.

He asked Jesus to explain what He meant.

The idea that food does not make a person unclean was hard for Jews to understand.

They had followed food laws all their lives.

Cross References

Mark 7:17

> When Jesus left the people and went into the house, His followers asked Him about this story.

Matthew 13:36

> Then Jesus left the crowd and went into the house. His followers came to Him and said, “Explain to us the meaning of the story about the weeds in the field.”

Mark 4:10

> Later, when Jesus was alone, the twelve apostles and others around Him asked Him about the stories.

Spiritual Principle

Ask Jesus to explain what you do not understand.

XVI. STILL SO DULL?

Matthew 15:16 — Jesus Asks

“‘Are you still so dull?’ Jesus asked them.”

Jesus was surprised at their slowness.

“Are you still so dull?”

They had been with Him for a long time.

They had heard so much teaching.

Yet they still did not understand.

Jesus was patient.

But He wanted them to grow.

Cross References

Mark 7:18

> Jesus said, “Do you still not understand?”

Matthew 16:9

> Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves of bread that fed the five thousand?

Hebrews 5:11

> We have much to tell you about this, but it is hard to explain because you have become so slow to understand.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus wants His followers to grow in understanding.

XVII. INTO THE STOMACH

Matthew 15:17 — Out of the Body

“Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body?”

Jesus explained simply.

Food goes **into the stomach.**

Then it passes **out of the body.**

It does not touch the heart.

Food cannot make the soul unclean.

Mark adds that by saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.

Cross References

Mark 7:19

> Food does not go into a person's mind. It goes into the stomach and then out of the body. (When Jesus said this, He meant that no longer was any food unclean for people to eat.)

1 Corinthians 6:13

> “Food is for the stomach, and the stomach for food.” But God will destroy them both.

Romans 14:17

> In the kingdom of God, eating and drinking are not important. The important things are living right with God, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual purity is not about food.

XVIII. FROM THE HEART

Matthew 15:18 — These Defile Them

“But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them.”

Now Jesus explained what really defiles.

The things that come out of a person's mouth.

And where do they come from?

The heart.

The mouth is like a faucet.

The heart is like the water tank.

Whatever is in the tank will come out of the faucet.

Cross References

Mark 7:20

> And Jesus said, “The things that come out of people are the things that make them unclean.”

Luke 6:45

> A good person has good things saved up in his heart, so he brings good things out of his heart. But an evil person has evil things saved up in his heart, so he brings bad things out. People speak the things that are in their hearts.

Proverbs 4:23

> Be very careful about what you think, because your thoughts control your life.

Spiritual Principle

The heart is the source of everything we say and do.

XIX. OUT OF THE HEART

Matthew 15:19 — Evil Thoughts and Evil Actions

“For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.”

Jesus listed what comes out of a sinful heart.

Evil thoughts come first.

Every sinful action begins as a thought.

Then He listed sins that break the Ten Commandments.

Murder.

Adultery.

Sexual immorality.

Theft.

False testimony.

Slander.

Notice where these come from.

Out of the heart.

The problem is not mainly our surroundings.

The problem is inside us.

We need more than clean hands.

We need new hearts.

Cross References

Mark 7:21

> All these evil things begin inside people, in the mind: evil thoughts, sexual sins, stealing, murder.

Galatians 5:19

> The wrong things the sinful self does are clear: being sexually unfaithful, not being pure, taking part in sexual sins.

Jeremiah 17:9

> More than anything else, a person's mind is evil and cannot be healed. Who can understand it?

Spiritual Principle

We do not become sinners by sinning; we sin because we are sinners.

Key Truth

The human heart needs more than reform; it needs a new birth.

XX. NOT UNWASHED HANDS

Matthew 15:20 — What Defiles a Person

“These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.”

Jesus brought the lesson back to the original question.

The Pharisees were worried about **unwashed hands.**

But unwashed hands do not make a person unclean before God.

A sinful heart does.

The Pharisees had clean hands and dirty hearts.

Cross References

Mark 7:23

> All these evil things come from inside and make people unclean.

Romans 14:14

> I am in the Lord Jesus, and I know that there is no food that is wrong to eat.

1 Timothy 4:4

> Everything God made is good, and nothing should be refused if it is accepted with thanks.

Spiritual Principle

God cares far more about a clean heart than about clean hands.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You can wash your hands a hundred times and still have a dirty heart; only Jesus can make the heart clean.

XXI. TYRE AND SIDON

Matthew 15:21 — Jesus Withdrew

“Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.”

Jesus left Galilee.

He went north to **the region of Tyre and Sidon.**

These were Gentile cities on the Mediterranean coast.

After teaching that food laws do not make a person unclean, Jesus went to people the Jews considered unclean.

Cross References

Mark 7:24

> Jesus left that place and went to the area around Tyre. When He went into a house, He did not want anyone to know He was there, but He could not stay hidden.

Matthew 11:21

> If the same miracles I did in you had happened in Tyre and Sidon, those people would have changed their lives a long time ago.

Ezekiel 28:2

> Human, say to the ruler of Tyre: This is what the Lord GOD says: You are proud, and you say, “I am a god.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus goes to people others consider outsiders.

XXII. A CANAANITE WOMAN

Matthew 15:22 — “Son of David, Have Mercy on Me!”

“A Canaanite woman from that area came to Him, crying out, ‘Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession.’”

Matthew calls her **a Canaanite woman.**

This is surprising.

The Canaanites were the ancient enemies of Israel.

They were the people Israel drove out of the Promised Land.

She was a Gentile.

A woman.

An outsider in every way.

But listen to what she said.

“Lord.”

“Son of David.”

She knew who Jesus was.

She called Him by the Jewish title for the Messiah.

“Have mercy on me!”

Her daughter was **suffering terribly** from a demon.

She was desperate.

Cross References

Mark 7:26

> She was Greek, born in Phoenicia, in Syria. She begged Jesus to force the demon out of her daughter.

Matthew 9:27

> As Jesus was leaving there, two blind men followed Him. They cried out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

Genesis 10:19

> The land of the Canaanites reached from Sidon to Gerar, as far as Gaza.

Spiritual Principle

A parent's love brings them to Jesus for their children.

Key Truth

The religious leaders from Jerusalem did not recognize the Son of David; a Canaanite woman did.

XXIII. JESUS DID NOT ANSWER

Matthew 15:23 — Send Her Away

“Jesus did not answer a word. So His disciples came to Him and urged Him, ‘Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.’”

This is one of the most surprising verses in the Gospels.

Jesus did not answer a word.

Why would Jesus be silent?

Jesus was testing her faith.

He was also teaching His disciples.

The disciples were annoyed.

“Send her away.”

“She keeps crying out after us.”

They wanted her gone.

But she would not stop.

Cross References

Psalm 22:2

> My God, I call to You during the day, but You do not answer. I call at night. I am not silent.

Luke 18:39

> The people in front scolded the blind man and told him to be quiet. But he shouted even more.

Isaiah 65:24

> Before they call to Me, I will answer. While they are still speaking, I will hear them.

Spiritual Principle

God's silence is not always God's refusal.

Application

When God seems silent:

- Keep praying.
- Keep trusting.
- Remember that He hears.
- Let your faith grow stronger.
- Do not give up.

XXIV. THE LOST SHEEP OF ISRAEL

Matthew 15:24 — Sent Only to Israel

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

Jesus finally spoke.

But His words seemed to close the door.

“I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

During His earthly ministry, Jesus' main mission was to Israel.

God's plan was for the gospel to go first to the Jews, and then to the whole world.

But Jesus' words also tested whether the woman would keep coming.

Cross References

Matthew 10:6

> Go instead to the people of Israel, who are like lost sheep.

Matthew 9:36

> When He saw the crowds, He felt sorry for them because they were hurting and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Jeremiah 50:6

> My people have been like lost sheep. Their shepherds led them the wrong way.

Spiritual Principle

God's plan has an order, but His grace reaches beyond every boundary.

XXV. “LORD, HELP ME!”

Matthew 15:25 — She Knelt Before Him

“The woman came and knelt before Him. ‘Lord, help me!’ she said.”

She did not give up.

She came closer.

She **knelt before Him.**

Her prayer became even simpler.

“Lord, help me!”

No arguments.

No long speeches.

Just a humble cry for help.

Cross References

Mark 7:25

A woman whose daughter had an evil spirit in her heard that He was there. So she quickly came to Jesus and fell at His feet.

Psalm 121:1

I look up to the hills, but where does my help come from?

Psalm 46:1

God is our protection and our strength. He always helps in times of trouble.

Spiritual Principle

Humble, persistent prayer moves the heart of Jesus.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Sometimes the best prayer is the shortest one: “Lord, help me!”

XXVI. THE CHILDREN'S BREAD

Matthew 15:26 — Tossed to the Dogs

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

Jesus' answer sounds harsh.

The children were Israel.

The dogs referred to Gentiles.

Jews sometimes called Gentiles “dogs” as an insult.

But Jesus used a softer word that means **little dogs** or **house pets.**

He was not calling her a wild street dog.

He was describing a family scene.

The children eat first at the table.

The family pets are under the table.

Jesus was continuing to test her faith.

And He was showing His disciples what real faith looks like.

Cross References

Mark 7:27

> Jesus told the woman, “It is not right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs. First let the children eat all they want.”

Matthew 7:6

> Don't give holy things to dogs, and don't throw your pearls before pigs.

Philippians 3:2

> Watch out for those who do evil, who are like dogs.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus sometimes tests faith in order to strengthen it.

XXVII. EVEN THE DOGS EAT THE CRUMBS

Matthew 15:27 — “Yes, Lord”

“‘Yes it is, Lord,’ she said. ‘Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.’”

Her answer is one of the greatest answers of faith in the Bible.

She did not argue.

She did not get offended.

She agreed with Jesus.

“Yes, Lord.”

Then she used His own words.

“Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.”

She was saying:

I know I am not part of Israel.

I know I do not deserve a place at the table.

But even a crumb from Your table is enough.

She understood something the Pharisees never did.

Jesus' power is so great that even a crumb of His grace could heal her daughter.

Cross References

Mark 7:28

> But she answered, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table can eat the children's crumbs.”

Luke 16:21

> He wanted to eat only the small pieces of food that fell from the rich man's table.

Judges 1:7

> Adoni-Bezek said, “Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to eat scraps under my table.”

Spiritual Principle

True faith does not demand; it humbly trusts in God's mercy.

Key Truth

She did not ask for the whole loaf; she believed that a crumb of Jesus' power was enough.

XXVIII. GREAT FAITH

Matthew 15:28 — Healed That Very Hour

“Then Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.’ And her daughter was healed at that very hour.”

Jesus praised her.

“Woman, you have great faith!”

Only two people in Matthew's Gospel are said to have **great faith.**

The Roman centurion in Matthew 8.

And this Canaanite woman.

Both were Gentiles.

Both were outsiders.

Jesus often called His own disciples **“you of little faith.”**

But He called this woman's faith **great.**

“Your request is granted.”

And **her daughter was healed at that very hour.**

Jesus healed the girl from a distance, without even seeing her.

Cross References

Mark 7:29

> Then Jesus told her, “Because of your answer, you may go. The demon has left your daughter.”

Matthew 8:10

> When Jesus heard this, He was amazed. He said to those who were following Him, “I tell you the truth, this is the greatest faith I have found, even in Israel.”

Matthew 9:22

> Jesus turned and saw the woman and said, “Be encouraged, dear woman. You are made well because you believed.” And the woman was healed from that moment on.

Spiritual Principle

Great faith is humble, persistent, and trusts completely in Jesus' mercy.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The woman who called herself a dog under the table left with a seat at the King's table.

XXIX. UP ON A MOUNTAINSIDE

Matthew 15:29 — He Sat Down

“Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then He went up on a mountainside and sat down.”

Jesus returned to the area around **the Sea of Galilee.**

Mark tells us He went through the Decapolis, a Gentile region east of the lake.

He **went up on a mountainside and sat down.**

This was the position of a teacher.

Cross References

Mark 7:31

> Then Jesus left the area around Tyre and went through Sidon to Lake Galilee, to the area of the Ten Towns.

Matthew 5:1

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a hill and sat down. His followers came to Him.

Mark 3:13

Then Jesus went up on a mountain and called to Him the people He wanted, and they came to Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus makes Himself available to those who seek Him.

XXX. LAID AT HIS FEET

Matthew 15:30 — He Healed Them

“Great crowds came to Him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and laid them at His feet; and He healed them.”

Great crowds came.

They brought people with every kind of need.

The lame.

The blind.

The crippled.

The mute.

And many others.

They **laid them at His feet.**

This shows humility and trust.

They brought their broken ones and placed them before Jesus.

And He healed them.

Cross References

Isaiah 35:5

Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will hear.

Mark 7:32

While He was there, some people brought a man to Him who was deaf and could hardly talk. The people begged Jesus to put His hand on the man to heal him.

Matthew 11:5

> The blind can see, the crippled can walk, people with skin diseases are healed, the deaf can hear, the dead are raised to life, and the good news is told to the poor.

Spiritual Principle

Bring your brokenness and lay it at Jesus' feet.

Application

What can you lay at Jesus' feet?

- Your pain.
- Your sickness.
- Your fears.
- Your family members.
- Your friends who are hurting.
- Your sin and shame.

XXXI. THEY PRAISED THE GOD OF ISRAEL

Matthew 15:31 — The People Were Amazed

“The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.”

The people were **amazed.**

They saw:

The mute speaking.

The crippled made well.

The lame walking.

The blind seeing.

And they **praised the God of Israel.**

This phrase suggests that many in the crowd were Gentiles.

They were praising Israel's God, the one true God.

Jesus was bringing the nations to worship the God of Israel.

Cross References

Isaiah 35:6

> Crippled people will jump like deer, and those who cannot talk will shout with joy.

Mark 7:37

> The people were completely amazed and said, “Jesus does everything well. He makes the deaf hear and those who can't talk able to speak.”

Luke 7:16

> All the people were filled with fear and began praising God. They said, “A great prophet has come to us!” and “God has come to help His people!”

Spiritual Principle

The works of Jesus lead people to praise God.

XXXII. THREE DAYS WITH NOTHING TO EAT

Matthew 15:32 — “I Have Compassion”

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

The crowd had been with Jesus for **three days.**

They had run out of food.

Jesus said:

“I have compassion for these people.”

Jesus cared about their spiritual needs.

He also cared about their physical needs.

He did not want them to **collapse on the way** home.

This time, Jesus brought up the problem before the disciples did.

Cross References

Mark 8:2

> I feel sorry for these people, because they have already been with Me for three days, and they have nothing to eat.

Matthew 14:14

> When He arrived, He saw a large crowd. He felt sorry for them and healed those who were sick.

Deuteronomy 8:3

> He humbled you by letting you get hungry, and then He fed you with manna.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus cares about every part of our lives, including our daily needs.

XXXIII. WHERE COULD WE GET ENOUGH BREAD?

Matthew 15:33 — In This Remote Place

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

This is a surprising answer.

The disciples had already seen Jesus feed five thousand men.

Yet they asked:

“Where could we get enough bread?”

They had forgotten what Jesus had done before.

It is easy for us to forget God's past faithfulness when we face a new problem.

Cross References

Mark 8:4

> Jesus' followers answered, “How can we get enough bread to feed all these people? We are far away from any town.”

Numbers 11:13

> Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep crying to me, “We want meat!”

2 Kings 4:43

> Elisha's servant asked, “How can I feed a hundred people with this?”

Spiritual Warning

It is easy to forget what God has already done.

Key Truth

The God who provided yesterday will provide today.

XXXIV. SEVEN LOAVES

Matthew 15:34 — And a Few Small Fish

“‘How many loaves do you have?’ Jesus asked. ‘Seven,’ they replied, ‘and a few small fish.’”

Jesus asked a simple question.

“How many loaves do you have?”

“Seven, and a few small fish.”

Once again, it was far too little.

But once again, it would be enough in Jesus' hands.

Cross References

Mark 8:5

> Jesus asked them, “How many loaves of bread do you have?” They answered, “Seven.”

Matthew 14:17

> They said to Him, “But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish.”

Matthew 16:10

> Or the seven loaves of bread that fed the four thousand? Remember how many baskets you filled then?

Spiritual Principle

Jesus always starts with what we have.

XXXV. SIT DOWN ON THE GROUND

Matthew 15:35 — Preparing to Be Fed

“He told the crowd to sit down on the ground.”

Jesus told the people to **sit down.**

Before they were fed, they had to sit and wait.

They had to trust that Jesus would provide.

Cross References

Mark 8:6

> Jesus told the people to sit on the ground.

Matthew 14:19

> Then He told the people to sit down on the grass.

John 6:10

> Jesus said, “Tell the people to sit down.” This was a very grassy place.

Spiritual Principle

Faith waits for God's provision.

XXXVI. HE GAVE THANKS

Matthew 15:36 — He Broke Them

“Then He took the seven loaves and the fish, and when He had given thanks, He broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people.”

Jesus did the same things He did before.

He took the bread.

He gave thanks.

He broke it.

He gave it to the disciples.

These are the same actions Jesus would do at the Last Supper.

Jesus gave thanks for something small.

And God multiplied it.

Cross References

Mark 8:7

> The followers also had a few small fish. After Jesus gave thanks for the fish, He told His followers to give them to the people also.

1 Corinthians 11:24

> He gave thanks for the bread, broke it, and said, “This is My body; it is for you. Do this to remember Me.”

Matthew 26:26

> While they were eating, Jesus took some bread and thanked God for it and broke it. Then He gave it to His followers.

Spiritual Principle

Thanksgiving opens the door to God's provision.

XXXVII. SEVEN BASKETS

Matthew 15:37 — All Ate and Were Satisfied

“They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.”

They all ate.

They were satisfied.

And there was more left over.

Seven basketfuls.

In the first feeding, there were twelve baskets.

Here there are seven.

The word for **basket** here is different.

These were large baskets, big enough to hold a person.

Paul was later let down over a wall in a basket like this.

Jesus provided more than enough again.

Cross References

Mark 8:8

> All the people ate and were satisfied. Then His followers filled seven baskets with the leftover pieces of food.

Matthew 14:20

> All the people ate and were satisfied. Then the followers filled twelve baskets with the leftover pieces of food.

2 Kings 4:44

> Then he served it to the people, and they ate and had some food left over, as the LORD had said.

Spiritual Principle

God's provision always overflows.

XXXVIII. FOUR THOUSAND MEN

Matthew 15:38 — Besides Women and Children

“The number of those who ate was four thousand men, besides women and children.”

Four thousand men.

Besides women and children.

Altogether, perhaps twelve to fifteen thousand people were fed.

This was a different miracle from the feeding of the five thousand.

Different place.

Different crowd.

Different number of loaves and baskets.

The first feeding was mainly for Jewish crowds.

This feeding seems to have included many Gentiles.

Jesus provides for all people.

Cross References

Mark 8:9

There were about four thousand people who ate. After they ate, Jesus sent them home.

Matthew 14:21

There were about five thousand men there who ate, not counting women and children.

Exodus 12:37

The Israelites traveled from Rameses to Succoth. There were about 600,000 men walking, not including the children.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the Bread of Life for Jews and Gentiles alike.

XXXIX. TO MAGDALA

Matthew 15:39 — He Got into the Boat

“After Jesus had sent the crowd away, He got into the boat and went to the region of Magdala.”

Jesus **sent the crowd away.**

They were fed and ready to go home.

Then He **got into the boat** and went to **Magdala.**

Magdala was a town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.

It was the hometown of **Mary Magdalene**, a faithful follower of Jesus.

Cross References

Mark 8:10

Then right away He got into a boat with His followers and went to the area of Dalmanutha.

Matthew 14:22

Immediately Jesus told His followers to get into the boat and go ahead of Him across the lake.

Luke 8:2

Some women who had been healed of sicknesses and evil spirits were also with Him: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' ministry moves on to new places and new people.

XL. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 15

1. Tradition Must Not Override God's Word

Human customs can never replace divine commandments.

Principle:

Test every tradition by the Word of God.

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2. True Purity Is from the Heart

What we say and do reveals whether we are clean or unclean before God.

Principle:

God wants clean hearts more than clean hands.

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3. Faith Crosses Boundaries

The Canaanite woman's persistence shows that genuine faith moves the heart of Jesus.

Principle:

No one is too far outside to receive God's mercy.

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4. Jesus Welcomes the Broken

The blind, lame, and hurting were healed when laid at His feet.

Principle:

Whatever is broken, lay it at Jesus' feet.

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5. Jesus Provides in Abundance

With a few loaves and fish, He fed four thousand, showing His compassion and provision.

Principle:

The God who provided before will provide again.

XLI. CLEAN HANDS, DIRTY HEARTS

Matthew 15 shows two very different kinds of people.

The Pharisees

- From Jerusalem, the holy city.
- Experts in religion.
- Careful about washing hands.
- Honored God with their lips.
- Their hearts were far from God.
- Left offended.

The Canaanite Woman

- From a Gentile region.
- An outsider with no religious standing.
- Humble and desperate.
- Called Jesus “Lord” and “Son of David.”
- Her heart reached out to Him.
- Left with her daughter healed.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The insiders missed Jesus because of pride; the outsider found Him through humble faith.

XLII. THE MARKS OF GREAT FAITH

The Canaanite woman shows us what great faith looks like.

Great Faith Recognizes Jesus

She called Him **“Lord, Son of David.”**

Great Faith Is Desperate

She cried out for her daughter.

Great Faith Is Persistent

She kept asking even when Jesus was silent.

Great Faith Is Humble

She knelt and accepted that she did not deserve His help.

Great Faith Trusts God's Mercy

She believed even a crumb of His grace was enough.

Great Faith Is Rewarded

Her daughter was healed that very hour.

Key Truth

Great faith is not proud faith; it is humble faith that will not let go.

XLIII. TWO FEEDINGS, ONE SAVIOR

Matthew records two great feeding miracles.

The Five Thousand (Matthew 14)

- Five loaves and two fish.
- About five thousand men.
- Twelve baskets left over.
- Mainly Jewish crowds.

The Four Thousand (Matthew 15)

- Seven loaves and a few small fish.
- About four thousand men.
- Seven large baskets left over.
- Many Gentiles in the crowd.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the Bread of Life for all people — Jew and Gentile alike.

XLIV. WHAT MATTHEW 15 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 15 presents Jesus as:

The Defender of God's Word

He exposed traditions that canceled God's commands.

The Searcher of Hearts

He knew that true uncleanness comes from within.

The Lord of All Foods

He declared that food does not make a person unclean.

The Son of David

Even a Canaanite woman recognized Him.

The Tester and Rewarder of Faith

He tested the woman's faith and then praised it.

The Healer of the Nations

He healed Gentiles who praised the God of Israel.

The Compassionate Provider

He fed thousands who were hungry.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who sees through religious masks also sees the faith in a humble heart.

XLV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What was the tradition of the elders?

It was a collection of rules added by Jewish teachers over many years.

They were not part of God's law, but the Pharisees treated them as if they were.

Question 2

Why were the Pharisees upset about hand washing?

It was not about germs.

It was about a religious ritual they believed made a person ceremonially clean.

Question 3

How were the Pharisees breaking God's command?

They allowed people to declare money “devoted to God” so they would not have to use it to care for their parents.

This broke the command to honor father and mother.

Question 4

What does it mean to honor God with our lips while our hearts are far from Him?

It means saying the right religious words without truly loving or obeying God.

Question 5

What did Jesus mean when He said food does not defile a person?

Food goes into the stomach, not the heart.

It cannot make a person spiritually unclean.

What makes a person unclean is the sin that comes from the heart.

Question 6

What comes out of the heart, according to Jesus?

Evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, and slander.

Question 7

What did Jesus mean by “blind guides”?

The Pharisees claimed to lead people to God, but they could not see the truth themselves.

Following them would lead to disaster.

Question 8

Why is it surprising that the woman was a Canaanite?

The Canaanites were the ancient enemies of Israel.

She was an outsider in every way, yet she recognized Jesus as the Son of David.

Question 9

Why did Jesus not answer the woman at first?

He was testing and strengthening her faith.

He was also teaching His disciples what real faith looks like.

Question 10

What did Jesus mean by the children's bread and the dogs?

The children were Israel, and the little dogs were Gentiles.

Jesus' main mission at that time was to Israel.

He used a gentle word that pictures family pets under the table.

Question 11

Why was the woman's answer so remarkable?

She humbly agreed with Jesus and said that even the dogs eat the crumbs.

She believed that even a crumb of His power was enough to heal her daughter.

Question 12

Who are the two people in Matthew said to have great faith?

The Roman centurion and the Canaanite woman.

Both were Gentiles.

Question 13

Why did the disciples ask where they could find enough bread?

They had forgotten that Jesus had already fed five thousand.

It is easy to forget God's past faithfulness when facing a new problem.

Question 14

How is the feeding of the four thousand different from the feeding of the five thousand?

It happened in a different place, with a different number of loaves, people, and baskets.

This crowd seems to have included many Gentiles.

Question 15

What should Matthew 15 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 15 should cause believers to live:

- Testing traditions by God's Word.
- Caring for their parents and families.
- Worshiping God from the heart.
- Guarding their hearts and their words.
- Being careful whom they follow.
- Praying with humble persistence.
- Welcoming outsiders.
- Laying their needs at Jesus' feet.
- Remembering God's past faithfulness.
- Giving thanks for what they have.

XLVI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 15 asks several important questions.

Do I Value Any Tradition More Than God's Word?

Am I Using Religious Excuses to Avoid My Responsibilities?

Am I Caring for My Parents and Family as God Commands?

Do I Honor God with My Lips but Not with My Heart?

What Is Coming Out of My Mouth, and What Does It Say About My Heart?

Am I Following Blind Guides?

Do I Keep Praying When God Seems Silent?

Am I Humble Enough to Ask for Crumbs of God's Mercy?

What Broken Thing Do I Need to Lay at Jesus' Feet?

Have I Forgotten What God Has Already Done for Me?

XLVII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Crumbs from the Master's Table”

The Pharisees came from Jerusalem.

They had the Scriptures.

They had the temple.

They had every religious advantage.

And they left offended.

The Canaanite woman came from the region of Tyre and Sidon.

She had no religious standing.

She was from a people who were Israel's enemies.

And she left with her prayer answered.

What made the difference?

The Pharisees thought they deserved a place at God's table.

The woman knew she did not.

She asked only for crumbs.

And Jesus gave her everything she asked for.

This creates a powerful principle.

God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

The person who thinks they deserve God's blessing will often miss it.

The person who knows they do not deserve it, but trusts in God's mercy, will receive it.

Principle:

Those who come asking for crumbs of mercy find a full table of grace.

XLVIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 15 is a chapter of contrasts.

Religious leaders from the holy city.

A Gentile woman from a pagan land.

Clean hands.

Dirty hearts.

Lips that honor God.

Hearts that are far from Him.

A mother who will not stop asking.

Disciples who want her sent away.

Crowds of broken people laid at Jesus' feet.

Thousands of hungry people fed with a few loaves.

And through it all, Jesus shows what God truly cares about.

Not outward ritual.

But the heart.

Not religious pride.

But humble faith.

Matthew 15 therefore reminds us:

Our traditions must bow to God's Word.

Our hearts matter more than our hands.

God's mercy reaches beyond every boundary.

And Jesus still has compassion on the hungry, the hurting, and the helpless.

The story of Matthew 15 does not end with:

Offended religious leaders.

Confused disciples.

Or an empty hillside.

It ends with:

A healed daughter.

A praising crowd.

And baskets of leftovers.

The same call still stands:

Honor God with your heart.

Let His Word rule your traditions.

Guard what comes out of your mouth.

Keep asking in faith.

Lay your needs at His feet.

Remember His faithfulness.

Give thanks.

And until He returns:

Keep your heart clean.

Keep praying.

Keep trusting His mercy.

Keep coming to His table.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that You look at the heart.

Forgive us for the times we have honored You with our lips while our hearts were far away.

Keep us from empty worship.

Help us worship You in spirit and in truth.

Show us any tradition or habit we have put above Your Word.

Help us obey Your commands, even when it is inconvenient.

Teach us to honor and care for our parents and families.

Lord Jesus, You know what is in our hearts.

Create clean hearts in us.

Guard our thoughts and our words.

Keep evil thoughts from taking root in our minds.

Protect us from blind guides.

Give us wisdom to follow those who truly follow You.

Thank You for the Canaanite woman and her great faith.

Teach us to pray like she prayed.

Help us keep asking when You seem silent.

Make us humble enough to ask for crumbs of Your mercy.

Thank You that Your grace reaches beyond every boundary.

Thank You that no one is too far outside to receive Your help.

We lay our broken places at Your feet.

Heal what only You can heal.

Thank You for Your compassion for the hungry and the weary.

Help us never forget what You have already done for us.

Teach us to give thanks for what we have, and to trust You to multiply it.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Then Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.’ And her daughter was healed at that very hour.” — Matthew 15:28

Central Truth

God looks at the heart, not at outward religion, and Jesus welcomes all who come to Him in humble faith, providing for their needs with compassion.

Matthew 15 in One Sentence

Jesus exposes religious leaders who honor God with their lips but break His Word for their traditions, teaches that true uncleanness comes from the heart, praises the great faith of a humble Canaanite woman, heals great crowds, and feeds four thousand men with seven loaves and a few small fish.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 16 — The Confession of Christ and the Call to the Cross

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 15 ended with Jesus feeding four thousand men with seven loaves and a few small fish.

Matthew Chapter 16 begins with the religious leaders asking for a sign.

They had just seen miracle after miracle.

And yet they wanted more proof.

Jesus refused.

The only sign they would receive was the sign of Jonah.

Then Jesus warned His disciples about the **yeast** of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The disciples thought He was talking about bread.

But He was talking about false teaching.

Then comes one of the most important moments in all four Gospels.

At Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asks His disciples a question:

“Who do you say I am?”

Peter answers:

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus says that this truth was revealed to Peter by the Father.

And He promises to build His church, a church the gates of hell will not overcome.

But right after this great confession, the chapter turns.

For the first time, Jesus tells His disciples plainly that He must suffer, die, and be raised to life.

Peter cannot accept it.

He pulls Jesus aside and says, **“Never, Lord!”**

And Jesus answers with some of His strongest words:

“Get behind Me, Satan!”

Then Jesus calls every disciple to follow Him on the same road.

Deny yourself.

Take up your cross.

Follow Me.

Matthew 16 is a turning point in the Gospel.

From this point on, Jesus is heading toward Jerusalem and the cross.

Matthew 16 therefore shows two great truths:

Who Jesus is — the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And:

What Jesus came to do — to suffer, die, and rise again, and to call His followers to take up their cross.

The central truth of Matthew 16 is:

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, who builds His church on the truth of who He is and calls His followers to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him.

I. A SIGN FROM HEAVEN

Matthew 16:1 — To Test Jesus

“The Pharisees and Sadducees came to test Jesus by asking Him to show them a sign from heaven.”

The Pharisees and Sadducees came together.

This is unusual.

These two groups were usually enemies.

The Pharisees were strict about the law and traditions.

The Sadducees were wealthy priests who did not believe in the resurrection or angels.

But they joined together against Jesus.

They came **to test** Him.

They asked for **a sign from heaven.**

They did not want to believe.

They wanted to trap Him.

Cross References

Mark 8:11

> The Pharisees came to Jesus and began to ask Him questions. Hoping to trap Him, they asked Jesus for a sign from heaven.

Luke 11:16

> Others, wanting to test Jesus, asked Him to give them a sign from heaven.

John 6:30

> So the people asked, “What miracle will You do? If we see a miracle, we will believe You.”

Spiritual Principle

People who are against Jesus will often unite with each other, even if they disagree on everything else.

II. FAIR WEATHER

Matthew 16:2 — The Sky Is Red

“He replied, ‘When evening comes, you say, “It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.”’”

Jesus used a common saying about the weather.

A red sky in the evening meant good weather the next day.

People knew how to read the sky.

They paid close attention to it.

Cross References

Luke 12:54

> Then Jesus said to the people, “When you see clouds coming up in the west, you say, ‘It's going to rain,’ and it happens.”

Job 38:37

> Who is wise enough to count the clouds? Who can pour water from the jars of the sky?

Judges 6:37

> I will put some wool on the threshing floor. If only the wool is wet with dew while all the ground is dry, then I will know You will use me to save Israel.

Spiritual Principle

People often pay more attention to the weather than to God.

III. THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Matthew 16:3 — You Cannot Interpret Them

“And in the morning, ‘Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.”

A red sky in the morning meant a storm was coming.

They could read the sky.

But they **could not interpret the signs of the times.**

The signs were all around them.

The blind were seeing.

The lame were walking.

The dead were being raised.

The good news was being preached.

Prophecy was being fulfilled.

The Messiah was standing in front of them.

And they missed it.

Cross References

Luke 12:56

> You hypocrites! You know how to understand the appearance of the earth and sky. Why don't you understand what is happening now?

Luke 19:44

> You did not recognize the time when God came to save you.

Isaiah 5:12

> They have parties with harps, flutes, and wine, but they don't see what the LORD has done.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to be skilled at reading the world and blind to the work of God.

IV. THE SIGN OF JONAH

Matthew 16:4 — He Left Them

“A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given except the sign of Jonah.” Then He left them and went away.

Jesus repeated what He said in Matthew 12.

A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign.

Adulterous means spiritually unfaithful to God.

The only sign would be **the sign of Jonah.**

Jonah was three days in the belly of the fish.

Jesus would be three days in the grave and then rise.

Then **He left them and went away.**

Jesus did not keep arguing.

He walked away from those who refused to believe.

Cross References

Matthew 12:39

> Jesus answered, “Evil and sinful people are the ones who want to see a miracle as a sign. But no sign will be given to them, except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”

Jonah 1:17

> The LORD sent a very big fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

Luke 11:29

> The people who live today are evil. They want to see a miracle as a sign, but no sign will be given them, except the sign of Jonah.

Spiritual Principle

The resurrection is the final sign God has given.

Spiritual Warning

Jesus will not stay forever where He is not wanted.

V. THEY FORGOT TO BRING BREAD

Matthew 16:5 — Across the Lake

“When the disciples went across the lake, they forgot to bring bread.”

The disciples crossed the lake.

And **they forgot to bring bread.**

Mark tells us they had only one loaf with them in the boat.

This simple, ordinary problem would become a teaching moment.

Cross References

Mark 8:14

The followers had only one loaf of bread with them in the boat. They had forgotten to bring more.

Matthew 14:17

They said to Him, “But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish.”

Mark 6:52

They did not understand about the miracle of the bread. Their minds were closed.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus can use everyday problems to teach spiritual lessons.

VI. THE YEAST OF THE PHARISEES

Matthew 16:6 — Be Careful

“Jesus said to them, ‘Be careful. Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.’”

Jesus gave a warning.

“Be careful.”

“Watch out.”

The yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Yeast is a small thing that spreads through the whole batch of dough.

It works quietly.

You cannot see it working.

But it affects everything.

False teaching works the same way.

Cross References

Mark 8:15

Jesus warned them, “Be careful! Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod.”

Luke 12:1

Jesus said to His followers, “Be careful of the yeast of the Pharisees, because they are hypocrites.”

1 Corinthians 5:6

> Don't you know the saying, “Just a little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise”?

Spiritual Warning

False teaching spreads quietly and affects everything it touches.

VII. BECAUSE WE DIDN'T BRING BREAD

Matthew 16:7 — The Disciples Misunderstood

“They discussed this among themselves and said, ‘It is because we didn't bring any bread.’”

The disciples completely missed the point.

They thought Jesus was scolding them for forgetting bread.

They were thinking about their stomachs.

Jesus was thinking about their souls.

Cross References

Mark 8:16

> His followers discussed the meaning of this, saying, “He said this because we have no bread.”

John 6:26

> Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, you aren't looking for Me because you saw Me do miracles. You are looking for Me because you ate the bread and were satisfied.”

Matthew 15:33

> His followers asked Him, “How can we get enough bread to feed all these people? We are far away from any town.”

Spiritual Principle

We often think about physical needs when God is teaching us about spiritual truths.

VIII. YOU OF LITTLE FAITH

Matthew 16:8 — Why Are You Talking About Bread?

“Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, ‘You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread?’”

Jesus **knew** what they were saying.

He called them **“you of little faith.”**

Why?

Because they were worried about bread.

They had seen Jesus feed thousands.

He could easily provide bread for twelve men in a boat.

Their worry showed that their faith was still small.

Cross References

Matthew 6:30

> If God makes the grass in the field so beautiful... then He will dress you even better. You have so little faith!

Matthew 14:31

> Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught Peter. Jesus said, “Your faith is small. Why did you doubt?”

Mark 8:17

> Knowing what they were talking about, Jesus asked them, “Why are you talking about not having bread? Do you still not understand?”

Spiritual Principle

Worry about provision shows that we have forgotten who our Provider is.

IX. DON'T YOU REMEMBER?

Matthew 16:9 — The Five Loaves

“Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered?”

Jesus asked them to **remember.**

The five loaves for the five thousand.

How many baskets were left over?

Twelve.

Jesus had provided more than enough.

Why would they worry now?

Cross References

Matthew 14:19

> Then He told the people to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and the two fish and, looking to heaven, He thanked God for the food.

John 6:9

> Here is a boy with five loaves of barley bread and two little fish.

Mark 6:41

> Jesus took the five loaves and two fish and, looking up to heaven, He thanked God for the food. He divided the bread and gave it to His followers.

Spiritual Principle

Remembering what God has done builds faith for what we face now.

X. THE SEVEN LOAVES

Matthew 16:10 — The Four Thousand

“Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered?”

Jesus reminded them of the second miracle too.

The seven loaves for the four thousand.

Seven large baskets were left over.

Two miracles.

Two times Jesus provided more than enough.

And still they worried about bread.

Cross References

Matthew 15:36

> He took the seven loaves of bread and the fish and gave thanks to God. Then He divided the food and gave it to His followers.

Mark 8:8

> All the people ate and were satisfied. Then His followers filled seven baskets with the leftover pieces of food.

Mark 8:19

> Jesus asked, “When I divided five loaves of bread for the five thousand, how many baskets did you fill with leftover pieces?” They answered, “Twelve.”

Spiritual Principle

God's past faithfulness is a reason to trust Him today.

XI. NOT ABOUT BREAD

Matthew 16:11 — Be on Your Guard

“How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Jesus made it clear.

“I was not talking to you about bread.”

Then He repeated His warning.

“Be on your guard against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

The Pharisees added human rules to God's Word.

The Sadducees took away from God's Word by denying the resurrection and the spiritual world.

Both were dangerous.

One added to the truth.

One subtracted from it.

Cross References

Galatians 5:9

> Be careful! “Just a little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise.”

Colossians 2:8

> Be sure that no one leads you away with false and empty teaching that comes from people, and not from Christ.

Titus 1:9

> He must hold on to the true message as it was taught, so that he can encourage others with sound teaching and correct those who are against it.

Spiritual Warning

Adding to God's Word and taking away from it are both dangerous.

XII. THEY UNDERSTOOD

Matthew 16:12 — Their Doctrine

“Then they understood that He was telling them to guard against their doctrine, not the yeast used in bread.”

Finally, **they understood.**

Jesus was warning them about **doctrine** — teaching.

Wrong teaching can spread like yeast.

It can affect a person's whole life and a whole church.

That is why we must be careful about what we believe and who we listen to.

Cross References

Mark 8:21

> Then Jesus said to them, “Don't you understand yet?”

1 Timothy 4:16

> Be careful in your life and in your teaching. If you continue to live and teach rightly, you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.

2 John 1:10

> If someone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not welcome that person into your house.

Spiritual Principle

What we believe shapes how we live.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A little wrong teaching can ruin a lot of right living.

XIII. CAESAREA PHILIPPI

Matthew 16:13 — “Who Do People Say I Am?”

“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’”

Caesarea Philippi was about twenty-five miles north of the Sea of Galilee.

It was near the base of Mount Hermon.

It was a Gentile area.

The city was full of pagan temples.

There was a famous cave there linked to the worship of the false god Pan.

There was also a temple honoring Caesar.

In this place of false gods and earthly power, Jesus asked the most important question.

First, He asked about others.

“Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

Cross References

Mark 8:27

> Jesus and His followers went to the towns around Caesarea Philippi. While they were traveling, Jesus asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

Luke 9:18

> One time when Jesus was praying alone, His followers were with Him. He asked them, “Who do the people say I am?”

John 1:41

> The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and say to him, “We have found the Messiah.”

Spiritual Principle

The question of who Jesus is matters more than any other question.

XIV. WHAT PEOPLE SAID

Matthew 16:14 — John, Elijah, Jeremiah

“They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’”

The people had many opinions.

John the Baptist — Herod thought this.

Elijah — the prophet promised to come before the Messiah.

Jeremiah — the weeping prophet.

One of the prophets.

These were all great compliments.

But they were all wrong.

Jesus was not just another prophet.

He was much more.

Cross References

Matthew 14:2

> So he said to his servants, “Jesus is John the Baptist, who has risen from the dead.”

Mark 6:14

> Some people said, “He is John the Baptist, who has risen from the dead.”

Luke 9:19

> They answered, “Some say You are John the Baptist. Others say You are Elijah. And others say You are one of the prophets from long ago who has come back to life.”

Spiritual Principle

Calling Jesus a great man is not the same as knowing who He really is.

Key Truth

Many people today still say good things about Jesus while missing the truth about Him.

XV. WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

Matthew 16:15 — The Personal Question

“‘But what about you?’ He asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’”

Now Jesus made it personal.

“But what about you?”

The word **you** is plural.

Jesus was asking all the disciples.

It was not enough to know what others thought.

Each of them had to answer for themselves.

This is the question every person must answer.

Cross References

Mark 8:29

> Then Jesus asked, “But who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.”

Luke 9:20

> Then Jesus asked, “But who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ from God.”

John 6:69

> We believe and know that You are the Holy One from God.

Spiritual Principle

Everyone must decide for themselves who Jesus is.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Your eternity depends not on what others say about Jesus, but on what you say about Him.

XVI. YOU ARE THE CHRIST

Matthew 16:16 — The Son of the Living God

“Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”

Peter spoke up.

And his answer is one of the greatest statements in the Bible.

“You are the Christ.”

Christ means **Messiah**, the **Anointed One.**

The promised King from David's line.

The One the whole Old Testament was waiting for.

“The Son of the living God.”

Not a son of the false gods worshiped in Caesarea Philippi.

Those gods were dead idols.

Jesus is the Son of **the living God.**

Peter confessed that Jesus is both the Messiah and the divine Son of God.

Cross References

John 11:27

> Martha answered, “Yes, Lord. I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, the One who was to come into the world.”

John 20:31

> But these things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Then, by believing, you may have life through His name.

1 John 4:15

> Whoever says, “I believe that Jesus is the Son of God,” has God living in him, and he lives in God.

Spiritual Principle

The heart of the Christian faith is knowing who Jesus is.

Key Truth

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

XVII. REVEALED BY THE FATHER

Matthew 16:17 — Blessed Are You

“Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by My Father in heaven.’”

Jesus said Peter was **blessed.**

Why?

Because Peter had not figured this out on his own.

This was not revealed to you by flesh and blood.

No human taught it to him.

But by My Father in heaven.

God Himself had opened Peter's eyes.

Knowing who Jesus truly is, is a gift from God.

Cross References

Galatians 1:16

> God was pleased to show His Son to me so that I could tell the good news about Him to the non-Jewish people. I did not get advice from any person.

1 Corinthians 2:10

> But God has shown us these things through the Spirit. The Spirit searches out all things, even the deep secrets of God.

John 6:44

> No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him to Me.

Spiritual Principle

Saving faith in Jesus is a gift from God.

XVIII. ON THIS ROCK

Matthew 16:18 — I Will Build My Church

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it.”

This is one of the most discussed verses in the Bible.

“You are Peter.”

The name **Peter** means **rock.**

In Greek, **Peter** is **Petros.**

Rock is **petra.**

“On this rock I will build My church.”

Christians have understood **this rock** in different ways.

Some believe the rock is **Peter himself**, as the leader of the apostles.

Some believe the rock is **Peter's confession** — the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Some believe the rock is **Christ Himself**, the One Peter confessed.

Each of these views points to something true.

Peter did become a foundational leader in the early church.

The truth he confessed is the foundation of the church.

And the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus Christ is the true foundation and cornerstone.

Notice two more important things.

“I will build.”

Jesus Himself builds the church.

“My church.”

The church belongs to Jesus.

This is the first time the word **church** appears in the New Testament.

It means **a gathering of people called out.**

“The gates of hell will not overcome it.”

Hell here is **Hades**, the realm of death.

Gates hold people in.

Death and the powers of darkness cannot stop the church Jesus builds.

Cross References

Ephesians 2:20

> You are like a building that was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus Himself is the most important stone in that building.

1 Corinthians 3:11

> No one can lay any other foundation than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 28:16

> Look, I am laying a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a valuable cornerstone, a firm foundation. Whoever trusts in it will never be shaken.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is building His church, and nothing can stop it.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The church does not belong to a pastor, a denomination, or a building — it belongs to Jesus, and He is the One who builds it.

XIX. THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

Matthew 16:19 — Binding and Loosing

“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Keys are a picture of authority.

They open and close doors.

In the Old Testament, a king's chief steward held the keys to the palace.

He decided who could come in.

Jesus gave Peter **the keys of the kingdom of heaven.**

In the book of Acts, Peter opened the door of the gospel.

He preached on the day of Pentecost to the Jews.

He went to the Samaritans.

He preached to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert.

Binding and loosing were terms used by Jewish teachers.

They meant **forbidding** and **allowing.**

Peter and the apostles would teach what God had already decided in heaven.

In Matthew 18, Jesus gives this same authority to the whole church.

Cross References

Isaiah 22:22

> I will put the key to David's house around his neck. What he opens, no one can shut. What he shuts, no one can open.

Revelation 3:7

> These are the words of the One who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. When He opens a door, no one can close it.

Matthew 18:18

> I tell you the truth, the things you don't allow on earth will be the things God does not allow. The things you allow on earth will be the things that God allows.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus gives His church authority to open the door of salvation through the gospel.

XX. TELL NO ONE

Matthew 16:20 — Not Yet

“Then He ordered His disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Christ.”

Jesus told them **not to tell anyone.**

Why?

Because people had the wrong idea about the Messiah.

They expected a political king who would overthrow Rome.

They did not expect a Messiah who would suffer and die.

Before the disciples could tell others, they needed to understand what kind of Messiah Jesus was.

That is exactly what Jesus would teach them next.

Cross References

Matthew 17:9

> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Don't tell anyone about what you saw until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.”

Mark 8:30

> Jesus warned His followers not to tell anyone who He was.

Luke 9:21

> Jesus warned them not to tell anyone.

Spiritual Principle

We must understand the whole truth about Jesus before we can share it rightly.

XXI. HE MUST SUFFER

Matthew 16:21 — Killed and Raised

“From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”

“From that time on.”

This is a major turning point in Matthew.

The same words appear in Matthew 4:17, when Jesus began His public ministry.

Now a new stage begins.

Jesus begins to teach about the cross.

Notice the word **must.**

He must go to Jerusalem.

He must suffer.

He must be killed.

He must be raised.

This was not an accident.

It was God's plan.

Jesus named who would be responsible.

The elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law.

The religious leaders of Israel.

But the story would not end in death.

On the third day He would **be raised to life.**

Cross References

Mark 8:31

> Then Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and that He would be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law. He told them that the Son of Man must be killed and then rise from the dead after three days.

Luke 9:22

> Then Jesus said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things. He will be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law. He will be killed, and after three days He will be raised from the dead.”

Matthew 20:18

> Look, we are going to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be turned over to the leading priests and the teachers of the law, and they will say He must die.

Spiritual Principle

The cross was always God's plan, not a tragic mistake.

Key Truth

Jesus knew exactly what was coming, and He walked toward it willingly.

XXII. “NEVER, LORD!”

Matthew 16:22 — Peter Rebukes Jesus

“Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. ‘Never, Lord! This shall never happen to You!’”

Peter could not accept it.

He **took Jesus aside.**

And he **began to rebuke Him.**

Think about this.

A few moments earlier, Peter confessed that Jesus is the Son of God.

Now he was correcting the Son of God.

“Never, Lord!”

These two words do not go together.

If Jesus is **Lord**, we cannot say **never** to Him.

Peter loved Jesus.

He did not want Him to suffer.

But he did not understand God's plan.

Cross References

Mark 8:32

> Jesus told them plainly what would happen. Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to tell Him not to talk like that.

John 13:8

> Peter said to Him, “No, You will never wash my feet.”

Matthew 26:33

> Peter said, “All the other followers may stumble in their faith because of You, but I will not.”

Spiritual Warning

We cannot call Jesus “Lord” and tell Him “never” in the same breath.

XXIII. GET BEHIND ME, SATAN!

Matthew 16:23 — A Stumbling Block

“But Jesus turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.’”

These are some of the strongest words Jesus ever spoke.

“Get behind Me, Satan!”

Jesus said almost the same words to Satan in the wilderness.

Satan had offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world without the cross.

Now Peter was offering the same thing.

A crown without a cross.

Peter was not Satan.

But Satan was using Peter's words to tempt Jesus.

“You are a stumbling block to Me.”

A few verses earlier, Peter was called a **rock** for building.

Now he was a **rock** for tripping.

“You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

Peter was thinking the way people think.

Avoid pain.

Protect yourself.

Choose the easy road.

But God's way went through the cross.

Cross References

Mark 8:33

> But Jesus turned and looked at His followers. Then He told Peter not to talk like that. He said, “Go away from Me, Satan! You don't care about the things of God, but only about the things people think are important.”

Matthew 4:10

> Jesus said to Satan, “Go away from Me, Satan! It is written in the Scriptures, ‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.’”

Romans 8:5

> Those who live following their sinful selves think only about things that their sinful selves want. But those who live following the Spirit are thinking about the things the Spirit wants them to do.

Spiritual Principle

Even well-meaning words can be used by Satan if they turn us from God's will.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The same man can be a rock in one moment and a stumbling block in the next — it depends on whether he is thinking God's thoughts or man's thoughts.

XXIV. DENY YOURSELF

Matthew 16:24 — Take Up Your Cross

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Me.’”

Jesus had just said He must go to the cross.

Now He said His followers must go the same way.

There are three parts to His call.

Deny themselves.

This means saying **no** to self.

No to our own will.

No to living for ourselves.

Take up their cross.

In those days, a person carrying a cross was walking to his death.

To take up your cross means being willing to suffer and even die for Jesus.

It means putting to death your old, selfish life.

Follow Me.

Go where Jesus goes.

Live the way He lived.

Obey what He says.

Cross References

Mark 8:34

> Then Jesus called the crowd to Him, along with His followers. He said, “If any of you want to be My followers, you must say no to yourselves, pick up your cross, and follow Me.”

Luke 9:23

> Jesus said to all of them, “If anyone wants to follow Me, he must say no to himself. He must be willing to give up his life every day and follow Me.”

Luke 14:27

> Whoever is not willing to carry his cross and follow Me cannot be My follower.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus means dying to self every day.

Application

Denying yourself and taking up your cross can mean:

- Saying no to sinful desires.
- Putting others' needs before your own.
- Obeying God when it is hard.
- Accepting rejection for following Jesus.
- Giving up your plans for God's plans.
- Living for Jesus instead of for yourself.

XXV. SAVE YOUR LIFE, LOSE IT

Matthew 16:25 — Lose It, Find It

“For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for My sake will find it.”

This is one of the great paradoxes of the Christian life.

Whoever wants to save their life will lose it.

If you live only for yourself, trying to protect your comfort, your plans, and your safety, you will lose what matters most.

Whoever loses their life for My sake will find it.

If you give your life to Jesus, you will find true life now and eternal life forever.

Notice the words **for My sake.**

It is not just about sacrifice.

It is about sacrifice for Jesus.

Cross References

Mark 8:35

> Whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever gives up his life for Me and for the good news will have true life.

Luke 9:24

> Whoever wants to save his life will give up true life. But whoever gives up his life for Me will have true life.

John 12:25

> Whoever loves his life will lose it. But whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Spiritual Principle

The only life we truly keep is the life we give to Jesus.

XXVI. THE WHOLE WORLD OR YOUR SOUL

Matthew 16:26 — What Can You Give in Exchange?

“What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”

Jesus asked two powerful questions.

What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

Imagine having everything.

All the money.

All the power.

All the fame.

And losing your soul.

It would be a terrible trade.

What can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

Nothing.

Your soul is worth more than the whole world.

Once it is lost, nothing can buy it back.

Cross References

Mark 8:36

> It is worth nothing for you to have the whole world if you lose your soul.

Luke 9:25

> It is worth nothing for you to have the whole world if you yourself are destroyed or lost.

Psalm 49:7

> No one can buy back the life of another. No one can pay God for his own life.

Spiritual Principle

Your soul is worth more than the whole world.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The worst business deal in history is trading your soul for the world.

XXVII. IN HIS FATHER'S GLORY

Matthew 16:27 — He Will Reward Each Person

“For the Son of Man is going to come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will reward each person according to what they have done.”

Jesus looked beyond the cross.

He spoke about His **second coming.**

The Son of Man is going to come.

In His Father's glory.

With His angels.

The One who would be rejected and killed would one day return as King and Judge.

And **He will reward each person according to what they have done.**

Our lives matter.

What we do with Jesus' call matters forever.

Cross References

Matthew 25:31

> The Son of Man will come again in His great glory, with all His angels. He will be King and sit on His great throne.

Revelation 22:12

> Listen! I am coming soon! I will bring My reward with Me, and I will repay each one of you for what you have done.

Romans 2:6

> God will reward or punish every person for what that person has done.

Spiritual Principle

Living with eternity in view changes how we live today.

XXVIII. SOME WILL NOT TASTE DEATH

Matthew 16:28 — The Son of Man Coming in His Kingdom

“Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

This verse has been understood in different ways.

Many Bible teachers believe it points to the **Transfiguration**, which happens in the very next chapter.

Six days later, Peter, James, and John saw Jesus in His glory on the mountain.

Others believe it points to Jesus' **resurrection and ascension**, when He began to reign.

Others see it as pointing to the **coming of the Holy Spirit** at Pentecost and the spread of the church.

In each case, some of the disciples would see the power and glory of Jesus' kingdom before they died.

Cross References

Mark 9:1

> Then Jesus said to the people, “I tell you the truth, some people standing here will see the kingdom of God come with power before they die.”

Luke 9:27

> I tell you the truth, some people standing here will see the kingdom of God before they die.

Matthew 17:2

> While they watched, Jesus' appearance was changed. His face became bright like the sun, and His clothes became white as light.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus gives His followers glimpses of His glory to strengthen them for the road ahead.

XXIX. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 16

1. Signs Are Not the Basis for Faith

A wicked generation demands signs, but true faith rests in Christ Himself.

Principle:

God has already given the greatest sign — the resurrection.

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2. Beware False Teaching

The “yeast” of the Pharisees and Sadducees represents corrupt doctrine that spreads and corrupts.

Principle:

Guard what you believe, because it shapes how you live.

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3. The Confession of Christ Is Foundational

Peter's declaration reveals the solid rock upon which the Church is built.

Principle:

Everything rests on knowing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

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4. Jesus' Mission Includes Suffering

The cross was central to His purpose, and no human plan could change it.

Principle:

There is no salvation without the cross.

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5. Discipleship Requires Self-Denial

To follow Christ means surrendering our own will, taking up the cross, and living for Him.

Principle:

Following Jesus means saying no to self and yes to Him.

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6. Eternal Perspective Matters

Gaining the world is worthless if it costs the soul.

Principle:

Your soul is worth more than everything this world can offer.

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7. Christ's Glory Is Coming

His kingdom will be revealed, and each person will be repaid according to their deeds.

Principle:

Live today in light of the day He returns.

XXX. WHO IS JESUS?

Matthew 16 records the most important question ever asked.

What People Said

- John the Baptist.
- Elijah.
- Jeremiah.
- One of the prophets.

What Peter Said

- **The Christ** — the promised Messiah.
- **The Son of the living God** — fully divine.

Where Peter Learned It

- Not from people.
- From the Father in heaven.

What It Means for Us

- We must answer the question personally.
- Our answer determines our eternity.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Many people have opinions about Jesus; only those who confess Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, know who He really is.

XXXI. FROM ROCK TO STUMBLING BLOCK

Peter's experience in Matthew 16 teaches an important lesson.

Peter the Rock

- He confessed the truth about Jesus.
- He was blessed by Jesus.
- He received truth from the Father.
- He was given the keys of the kingdom.

Peter the Stumbling Block

- He rebuked Jesus.
- He opposed the cross.
- He was used by Satan.
- He was thinking human thoughts.

Key Truth

The same believer can be used by God one moment and by the enemy the next; we must keep our minds set on the things of God.

XXXII. THE CROWN AND THE CROSS

Matthew 16 shows that the way to glory goes through the cross.

For Jesus

- First the cross.

- Then the resurrection.
- Then the glory of His coming.

For His Followers

- First deny yourself.
- Take up your cross.
- Then share in His reward.

Spiritual Principle

There is no crown without a cross, but there is no cross without a crown for those who follow Jesus.

XXXIII. WHAT MATTHEW 16 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 16 presents Jesus as:

The Sign of Jonah

His resurrection is the final sign.

The Teacher of Truth

He warns against false doctrine.

The Christ

The promised Messiah.

The Son of the Living God

Fully divine.

The Builder of the Church

He builds it, and it belongs to Him.

The Holder of the Keys

He gives authority to His church.

The Suffering Servant

He must suffer, die, and rise again.

The One Who Calls Us to Follow

He leads the way to the cross.

The Coming King

He will return in His Father's glory.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Christ we confess is the Christ who carried the cross — and He calls us to carry ours.

XXXIV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the Pharisees and Sadducees ask for a sign?

They wanted to test Jesus and trap Him.

They were not seeking truth; they had already decided not to believe.

Question 2

What did Jesus mean by “the signs of the times”?

He meant the clear evidence that the Messiah had come — the miracles, fulfilled prophecies, and His teaching.

They could read the weather but not the work of God.

Question 3

What is the sign of Jonah?

Jonah was three days in the fish.

Jesus would be three days in the grave and then rise.

The resurrection is the greatest sign.

Question 4

What did Jesus mean by the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees?

He meant their false teaching.

Like yeast, false teaching spreads quietly and affects everything.

Question 5

Why did Jesus ask the disciples to remember the feeding miracles?

To remind them that He could provide whatever they needed.

Their worry about bread showed that they had forgotten His power.

Question 6

Why did Jesus ask the disciples who they said He was?

Because each person must answer for themselves.

It is not enough to know what others think.

Question 7

What did Peter mean when he said Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God”?

He meant that Jesus is the promised Messiah and the divine Son of God.

Question 8

How did Peter know this?

It was revealed to him by the Father in heaven.

Saving knowledge of Jesus is a gift from God.

Question 9

What is the “rock” on which Jesus builds His church?

Christians have understood it as Peter, Peter's confession, or Christ Himself.

Each points to truth: Peter was a foundational leader, his confession is the foundation of faith, and Christ is the true cornerstone.

Question 10

What do the keys of the kingdom represent?

They represent authority to open the door of salvation through the gospel.

Peter used them in Acts when he preached to Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles.

Question 11

Why did Jesus tell the disciples not to tell anyone He was the Christ?

People expected a political Messiah.

The disciples first needed to understand that the Messiah must suffer and die.

Question 12

Why did Jesus call Peter “Satan”?

Peter was trying to keep Jesus from the cross, the same temptation Satan offered in the wilderness.

Peter was thinking human thoughts, not God's thoughts.

Question 13

What does it mean to deny yourself and take up your cross?

It means saying no to living for yourself, being willing to suffer and die for Jesus, and following Him wherever He leads.

Question 14

What does it profit a person to gain the whole world and lose their soul?

Nothing.

The soul is worth more than the whole world, and nothing can buy it back.

Question 15

What should Matthew 16 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 16 should cause believers to live:

- Trusting Christ without demanding signs.
- Guarding against false teaching.
- Remembering God's past faithfulness.
- Confessing Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.
- Trusting Jesus to build His church.
- Accepting God's plan, even when it includes suffering.
- Thinking God's thoughts, not human thoughts.
- Denying themselves daily.

- Taking up their cross.
- Valuing their soul above the world.
- Living in light of Christ's return.

XXXV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 16 asks several important questions.

Am I Demanding Signs Instead of Trusting Christ?

Am I Paying Attention to the Signs of God's Work Around Me?

What Teaching Am I Allowing Into My Life?

Have I Forgotten What God Has Already Done for Me?

Who Do I Say Jesus Is?

Do I Trust Jesus to Build His Church?

Am I Telling Jesus “Never” in Any Area of My Life?

Am I Thinking God's Thoughts or Merely Human Thoughts?

What Does Denying Myself Look Like for Me Today?

What Cross Am I Being Called to Carry?

Am I Trading My Soul for Something This World Offers?

Am I Living in Light of Jesus' Return?

XXXVI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Confession and the Cross”

Matthew 16 holds two moments side by side.

The first is a great confession.

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

The second is a great rejection.

“Never, Lord! This shall never happen to You!”

Peter got the first part right.

He knew **who** Jesus was.

But he got the second part wrong.

He did not understand **what** Jesus came to do.

Peter wanted a Christ without a cross.

Many people still do.

They want a Jesus who blesses them.

But not a Jesus who calls them to deny themselves.

They want the crown.

But not the cross.

This creates a powerful principle.

It is not enough to confess Jesus as Christ.

We must also accept His cross — and take up our own.

Principle:

A true confession of Christ always leads to the cross — first His, then ours.

XXXVII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 16 begins with a demand and ends with a call.

The religious leaders demand a sign.

Jesus gives them only the sign of Jonah.

The disciples worry about bread.

Jesus warns them about false teaching.

Then, in a city of false gods, Jesus asks the question that matters most:

“Who do you say I am?”

And Peter answers:

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

On that truth, Jesus will build His church.

And nothing — not even the gates of hell — will stop it.

But then Jesus reveals the path ahead.

The cross.

Peter cannot accept it.

Jesus will not turn from it.

And He calls every disciple to the same road.

Deny yourself.

Take up your cross.

Follow Me.

Matthew 16 therefore reminds us:

The most important question in life is who Jesus is.

The most important decision in life is whether we will follow Him.

The road to glory goes through the cross.

And the soul is worth more than the whole world.

The story of Matthew 16 does not end with:

A sign from heaven.

An easy road.

Or a crown without a cross.

It ends with:

A Savior heading to the cross.

A call to follow Him.

And the promise of His coming glory.

The same call still stands:

Trust Him without demanding signs.

Guard your heart from false teaching.

Confess Him as the Christ.

Think God's thoughts.

Deny yourself.

Take up your cross.

Follow Him.

And until He returns:

Keep confessing Him.

Keep carrying your cross.

Keep following Him.

Keep looking for His glory.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for revealing to us who Jesus is.

Keep us from demanding signs when You have already given us so much.

Thank You for the sign of Jonah — for the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

Open our eyes to see Your work around us.

Protect us from the yeast of false teaching.

Give us wisdom to recognize what adds to Your Word or takes away from it.

Help us remember all that You have done for us, so that we do not worry about what we need.

Lord Jesus, we confess with Peter:

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Thank You that this truth was revealed to us by the Father.

Thank You that You are building Your church.

Thank You that the gates of hell will never overcome it.

Help us trust You to build Your church in Your way.

Forgive us for the times we have said, “Never, Lord.”

Forgive us for thinking human thoughts instead of Your thoughts.

Keep us from becoming a stumbling block to others.

Thank You for walking willingly to the cross for us.

Thank You that You suffered, died, and rose again on the third day.

Give us grace to deny ourselves.

Give us strength to take up our cross.

Help us follow You every day.

Remind us that our souls are worth more than the whole world.

Keep us from trading eternal life for anything this world offers.

Help us live every day in light of Your coming glory.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’” — Matthew 16:16

Central Truth

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, who builds His church on the truth of who He is and calls His followers to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him.

Matthew 16 in One Sentence

Jesus refuses to give a sign except the sign of Jonah, warns against false teaching, receives Peter's confession that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, promises to build His church, reveals that He must suffer, die, and rise again, and calls His followers to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 17 — The Transfiguration, Faith Like a Mustard Seed, and the Temple Tax

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 16 ended with hard words.

Jesus told His disciples that He must suffer, die, and be raised to life.

He told them that they must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him.

Then He made a promise:

Some who were standing there would see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

Matthew Chapter 17 begins with that promise being fulfilled.

Six days later, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a high mountain.

And there, He is **transfigured.**

His face shines like the sun.

His clothes become as white as light.

Moses and Elijah appear and talk with Him.

A bright cloud covers them.

And the Father speaks from heaven:

“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!”

The disciples fall on their faces in fear.

But Jesus touches them and says, **“Get up. Don't be afraid.”**

When they look up, they see no one except Jesus.

Then they come down the mountain.

And they come down into a world of trouble.

A father's son is tormented by a demon.

The other disciples have tried to help, but they could not.

Jesus heals the boy and teaches His disciples about faith.

Even faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains.

Then Jesus tells them again that He will be killed and raised.

And the chapter ends with a surprising lesson about paying the temple tax.

Jesus, the Son of the King, is not required to pay.

But He pays anyway so that no one is offended.

And He provides the money in an amazing way.

Matthew 17 therefore shows us two great truths:

The glory of Jesus as the beloved Son of God.

And:

The humility of Jesus as He walks the road to the cross.

The central truth of Matthew 17 is:

Jesus is the glorious, beloved Son of God whom the Father commands us to hear, and He calls His followers to trust Him with mustard-seed faith and to live humbly as children of the King.

I. UP A HIGH MOUNTAIN

Matthew 17:1 — Peter, James, and John

“Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother and led them up a high mountain by themselves.”

Six days later connects this event to Jesus' promise at the end of Matthew 16.

Jesus **took Peter, James, and John.**

These three were Jesus' closest disciples.

They were with Him when He raised Jairus's daughter.

They would be with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Now they would see something no one else would see.

Jesus **led them up a high mountain.**

Many believe this was Mount Hermon, near Caesarea Philippi.

Others believe it was Mount Tabor.

In the Bible, mountains are often places where God reveals Himself.

Moses met God on Mount Sinai.

Elijah met God on the same mountain.

Cross References

Mark 9:2

> Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a high mountain by themselves.

Luke 9:28

> About eight days after Jesus said these things, He took Peter, John, and James and went up on a mountain to pray.

Exodus 24:15

> When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it.

Spiritual Principle

God often reveals Himself to those who go apart with Him.

II. TRANSFIGURED

Matthew 17:2 — His Face Shone Like the Sun

“There He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as light.”

Transfigured means **changed in form.**

The Greek word is the word we get **metamorphosis** from.

Jesus' outward appearance changed to show the glory that was always inside Him.

His face shone like the sun.

His clothes became as white as light.

When Moses came down from the mountain, his face shone because he had been with God.

Moses reflected God's glory.

Jesus did not reflect glory.

The glory came from within Him.

For a moment, the disciples saw Jesus as He truly is.

Cross References

Exodus 34:29

> When Moses came down from Mount Sinai... he did not know that his face was shining because he had talked with the LORD.

Mark 9:3

> His clothes became shining white, whiter than anyone on earth could make them.

Revelation 1:16

> His face was like the sun shining at its brightest time.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' glory is His own; He does not borrow it from anyone.

Key Truth

The humble carpenter from Nazareth is the glorious Son of God.

III. MOSES AND ELIJAH

Matthew 17:3 — Talking with Him

“Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and were talking with Him.”

Moses and **Elijah** appeared.

Moses represented **the Law.**

Elijah represented **the Prophets.**

Together, they stood for the whole Old Testament.

And they were **talking with Him.**

Luke tells us what they were talking about.

Jesus' **departure** — His death — which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem.

The Law and the Prophets were pointing to the cross.

Cross References

Luke 9:30

> Then two men, Moses and Elijah, were talking with Jesus.

Malachi 4:4

> Remember the teaching of My servant Moses, the laws and rules I gave him on Mount Sinai for all the people of Israel.

Deuteronomy 18:15

> The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people. Listen to him.

Spiritual Principle

The whole Old Testament points to Jesus.

IV. THREE SHELTERS

Matthew 17:4 — It Is Good for Us to Be Here

“Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You wish, I will put up three shelters—one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’”

Peter spoke up.

“Lord, it is good for us to be here.”

He was right.

It was a wonderful moment.

Then he offered to build **three shelters.**

These may have been like the shelters used during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Peter may have wanted to stay on the mountain.

He wanted the glory to last.

But Peter made a mistake.

He put Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah.

One for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

Jesus is not one great prophet among others.

He is far greater.

Mark tells us Peter did not know what to say because he was so afraid.

Cross References

Mark 9:5

> Peter said to Jesus, “Teacher, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents — one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

Luke 9:33

> Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents.” Peter did not know what he was talking about.

Leviticus 23:34

> On the fifteenth day of the seventh month is the Feast of Shelters. This festival to the LORD will continue for seven days.

Spiritual Warning

No one is equal to Jesus — not even the greatest servants of God.

V. LISTEN TO HIM!

Matthew 17:5 — A Voice from the Cloud

“While Peter was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!’”

While Peter was still speaking, God interrupted him.

A bright cloud covered them.

In the Old Testament, a cloud often showed God's presence.

The cloud led Israel through the wilderness.

The cloud filled the tabernacle and the temple.

Then **a voice from the cloud** spoke.

“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

These are the same words the Father spoke at Jesus' baptism.

Then the Father added three more words:

“Listen to Him!”

Moses had said that God would raise up a prophet, and the people must **listen to him.**

Now God was saying, **This is that Prophet.**

Moses and Elijah were great.

But Jesus is the One we must listen to.

Cross References

Matthew 3:17

> And a voice from heaven said, “This is My Son, whom I love. I am very pleased with Him.”

2 Peter 1:17

> Jesus heard the voice of God, the Greatest Glory, when He received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice said, “This is My Son, whom I love, and I am very pleased with Him.”

Luke 9:35

> A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is My Son, whom I have chosen. Listen to Him!”

Spiritual Principle

The Father commands us to listen to His Son above every other voice.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When God speaks from heaven, His message is simple: Listen to Jesus.

VI. FACEDOWN AND TERRIFIED

Matthew 17:6 — The Disciples Fell

“When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified.”

The disciples **heard** the voice of God.

And they **fell facedown to the ground.**

They were **terrified.**

This is how people in the Bible often respond when they meet the holy God.

Ezekiel fell on his face.

Daniel fell on his face.

John fell at Jesus' feet as though he were dead.

God's holiness is overwhelming.

Cross References

Ezekiel 1:28

> This was what the glory of the LORD looked like. When I saw it, I bowed facedown on the ground.

Daniel 10:9

> Then I heard the man speaking. As I listened, I fell into a deep sleep with my face on the ground.

Revelation 1:17

> When I saw Him, I fell down at His feet like a dead man.

Spiritual Principle

A true sight of God's holiness humbles us.

VII. “GET UP. DON'T BE AFRAID.”

Matthew 17:7 — Jesus Touched Them

“But Jesus came and touched them. ‘Get up,’ He said. ‘Don't be afraid.’”

This is a beautiful verse.

The disciples were on the ground, shaking with fear.

Jesus came to them.

He touched them.

“Get up.”

“Don't be afraid.”

The glorious Son of God was also gentle and kind.

His touch gave them courage.

The same Jesus who shines with heavenly glory also reaches down to lift up frightened people.

Cross References

Daniel 10:10

> Then a hand touched me, and I was set on my hands and knees, shaking with fear.

Revelation 1:17

> He put His right hand on me and said, “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.”

Matthew 14:27

> But Jesus quickly spoke to them and said, “Have courage! It is I. Do not be afraid.”

Spiritual Principle

The glorious Jesus is also the gentle Jesus.

Key Truth

Jesus' glory does not push us away; His touch draws us near.

VIII. NO ONE EXCEPT JESUS

Matthew 17:8 — When They Looked Up

“When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.”

When the disciples looked up, everything was different.

Moses was gone.

Elijah was gone.

The cloud was gone.

They saw no one except Jesus.

Moses and Elijah had done their work.

They pointed to Jesus.

Now Jesus alone remained.

This is a picture of the whole Christian life.

In the end, it is about **Jesus only.**

Cross References

Mark 9:8

> Suddenly Peter, James, and John looked around, but they saw only Jesus there alone with them.

Luke 9:36

> When the voice finished speaking, only Jesus was there.

Hebrews 12:2

> Let us look only to Jesus, the One who began our faith and who makes it perfect.

Spiritual Principle

Every great servant of God fades away, but Jesus remains.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When everything else disappears, Jesus is still there — and He is enough.

IX. DON'T TELL ANYONE

Matthew 17:9 — Until the Son of Man Has Been Raised

“As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, ‘Don't tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.’”

As they came down the mountain, Jesus gave them an instruction.

“Don't tell anyone what you have seen.”

Not yet.

Until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.

The people would not understand the glory of Jesus until they understood the cross and the resurrection.

After the resurrection, the disciples could tell everyone.

And they did.

Peter later wrote about this moment.

He said, **“We saw His majesty with our own eyes.”**

Cross References

Mark 9:9

> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone about what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Luke 9:36

> Peter, James, and John said nothing and told no one at that time what they had seen.

Matthew 16:20

> Then Jesus warned His followers not to tell anyone He was the Christ.

Spiritual Principle

The glory of Jesus is understood only in light of the cross and the resurrection.

X. ELIJAH MUST COME FIRST

Matthew 17:10 — The Disciples' Question

“The disciples asked Him, ‘Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?’”

The disciples had a question.

They had just seen Elijah.

They knew Malachi's prophecy.

God would send **Elijah** before the great day of the LORD.

The teachers of the law said Elijah must come **before** the Messiah.

So the disciples were confused.

If Jesus is the Messiah, where was Elijah?

Cross References

Mark 9:11

> Then they asked Jesus, “Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?”

Malachi 4:5

> Look, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.

John 1:21

> They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He answered, “No, I am not.”

Spiritual Principle

Honest questions about Scripture should be brought to Jesus.

XI. ELIJAH WILL RESTORE ALL THINGS

Matthew 17:11 — Indeed, Elijah Is Coming

“Jesus replied, ‘Indeed, Elijah is coming and will restore all things.’”

Jesus agreed with the Scripture.

Elijah is coming.

And he **will restore all things.**

Malachi said Elijah would turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers.

His work would be to prepare people's hearts for the Lord.

Cross References

Malachi 4:6

> He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers.

Acts 3:21

> Jesus must stay in heaven until the time comes when all things will be made right again, as God promised long ago through His holy prophets.

Luke 1:16

> He will help many people of Israel return to the Lord their God.

Spiritual Principle

God always prepares the way before He acts.

XII. ELIJAH HAS ALREADY COME

Matthew 17:12 — They Did Not Recognize Him

“But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but they did to him whatever they pleased. In the same way the Son of Man will suffer at their hands.”

Then Jesus said something surprising.

“Elijah has already come.”

“They did not recognize him.”

“They did to him whatever they pleased.”

Herod had imprisoned and beheaded him.

And Jesus connected John's suffering to His own.

“In the same way the Son of Man will suffer at their hands.”

The forerunner suffered.

The Messiah would suffer too.

Cross References

Matthew 11:14

> And if you will believe what they said, you will believe that John is Elijah, whom they said would come.

Mark 9:13

> I tell you that Elijah has already come. And people did to him whatever they wanted to do, just as the Scriptures said it would happen.

Matthew 14:10

> He sent soldiers to the prison to cut off John's head.

Spiritual Principle

People often fail to recognize God's messengers until it is too late.

Key Truth

The path of John and the path of Jesus both led through suffering.

XIII. THEY UNDERSTOOD

Matthew 17:13 — John the Baptist

“Then the disciples understood that He was talking about John the Baptist.”

The disciples finally understood.

Jesus was talking about **John the Baptist.**

John was not Elijah come back from the dead.

But he came **in the spirit and power of Elijah.**

He fulfilled the prophecy.

And the One he prepared the way for was Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 11:14

> And if you will believe what they said, you will believe that John is Elijah, whom they said would come.

Luke 1:17

> He will go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah.

John 1:21

> They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He answered, “No, I am not.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus helps His followers understand the Scriptures.

XIV. A FATHER KNELT BEFORE JESUS

Matthew 17:14 — Down from the Mountain

“When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before Him.”

Jesus and the three disciples came down from the mountain.

From the glory of heaven, they came into the trouble of earth.

A crowd was waiting.

A man came to Jesus.

He **knelt before Him.**

He was desperate.

Cross References

Mark 9:14

> When Jesus, Peter, James, and John came back to the other followers, they saw a great crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them.

Luke 9:37

> The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met Jesus.

Matthew 8:2

> Then a man with a skin disease came to Jesus. The man bowed down before Him.

Spiritual Principle

Mountaintop experiences prepare us for valley ministry.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

We cannot live on the mountain; we must bring what we saw there down into the valley where people are hurting.

XV. HAVE MERCY ON MY SON

Matthew 17:15 — Into the Fire and the Water

“‘Lord, have mercy on my son,’ he said. ‘He has seizures and suffers greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water.’”

The father cried out:

“Lord, have mercy on my son.”

His son **has seizures.**

He **suffers greatly.**

He **often falls into the fire or into the water.**

Mark tells us this had been happening since the boy was a child.

The demon was trying to destroy him.

This father had watched his son suffer for years.

Cross References

Mark 9:18

> Whenever the spirit attacks him, it throws him on the ground. He foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes very stiff.

Luke 9:39

> An evil spirit seizes my son, and suddenly he screams. It causes him to lose control of himself and foam at the mouth.

Mark 9:22

> The spirit often throws him into a fire or into water to kill him. If You can do anything for him, please have pity on us and help us.

Spiritual Principle

A parent's love brings their children to Jesus.

XVI. THEY COULD NOT HEAL HIM

Matthew 17:16 — The Disciples Failed

“I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not heal him.”

The father had already tried.

He brought his son **to Your disciples.**

But they could not heal him.

This was surprising.

In Matthew 10, Jesus had given His disciples authority to drive out demons.

They had done it before.

But this time, they failed.

Cross References

Mark 9:18

> I asked Your followers to force the evil spirit out, but they couldn't.

Matthew 10:1

> Jesus called His twelve followers together and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and sickness.

Luke 9:40

> I begged Your followers to force the evil spirit out, but they could not do it.

Spiritual Principle

Past success does not guarantee present power.

XVII. HOW LONG?

Matthew 17:17 — Bring the Boy to Me

“Jesus replied, ‘You unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to Me.’”

Jesus spoke with strong feeling.

“You unbelieving and perverse generation.”

Unbelieving — they lacked faith.

Perverse — twisted, turned away from what is right.

These words may have been directed at the crowd, the teachers of the law who were arguing, and even the disciples.

“How long shall I stay with you?”

“How long shall I put up with you?”

Jesus had just come from the glory of heaven on the mountain.

Now He was surrounded by unbelief.

But then He said:

“Bring the boy here to Me.”

Even in His frustration, Jesus did not turn the boy away.

Cross References

Mark 9:19

> Jesus answered, “You people have no faith. How long must I stay with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy to Me.”

Luke 9:41

> Jesus answered, “You people have no faith, and you are evil. How long must I stay with you and be patient with you? Bring your son here.”

Deuteronomy 32:5

> They have done evil against Him. They are not His children. They are a twisted and crooked people.

Spiritual Principle

Unbelief grieves the heart of Jesus.

Key Truth

Jesus' frustration with unbelief never stopped His compassion for the hurting.

XVIII. HEALED AT THAT MOMENT

Matthew 17:18 — Jesus Rebuked the Demon

“Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed at that moment.”

Jesus **rebuked the demon.**

And **it came out of the boy.**

He was healed at that moment.

What the disciples could not do, Jesus did instantly.

Years of suffering ended with one word.

Cross References

Mark 9:25

> When Jesus saw that a crowd was quickly gathering, He spoke to the evil spirit. He said, “You spirit that makes people unable to hear or speak, I command you to come out of this boy and never enter him again!”

Luke 9:42

> Jesus gave a strong command to the evil spirit and healed the boy. Then He gave him back to his father.

Matthew 8:16

> That evening people brought to Jesus many who had demons. Jesus spoke and the demons left them, and He healed all the sick.

Spiritual Principle

What we cannot do, Jesus can do.

XIX. WHY COULDN'T WE?

Matthew 17:19 — A Private Question

“Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and asked, ‘Why couldn't we drive it out?’”

The disciples were embarrassed.

They came to Jesus **privately.**

“Why couldn't we drive it out?”

This was a good question to ask.

They did not make excuses.

They did not blame the boy or the father.

They came to Jesus to learn.

Cross References

Mark 9:28

> When Jesus went into the house, His followers asked Him privately, “Why couldn't we force that evil spirit out?”

Luke 9:40

> I begged Your followers to force the evil spirit out, but they could not do it.

Matthew 10:8

> Heal the sick, raise the dead to life again, heal those who have skin diseases, and force demons out of people.

Spiritual Principle

Failure can become a classroom if we bring it to Jesus.

XX. FAITH LIKE A MUSTARD SEED

Matthew 17:20 — Nothing Will Be Impossible

“He replied, ‘Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.’”

Jesus gave the reason.

“Because you have so little faith.”

Then He said something surprising.

“If you have faith as small as a mustard seed...”

A mustard seed was one of the smallest seeds.

Jesus was not saying they needed **more** faith.

He was saying that even a tiny amount of **real** faith is powerful.

The issue was not the size of their faith.

It was the object of their faith.

Perhaps they were trusting in their own past success.

Perhaps they had begun to think the power was theirs.

“You can say to this mountain, ‘Move,’ and it will move.”

Moving mountains was a Jewish way of describing something that seemed impossible.

“Nothing will be impossible for you.”

Not because of the strength of our faith.

But because of the greatness of our God.

Cross References

Luke 17:6

> The Lord said, “If your faith is as big as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Dig yourself up and plant yourself in the sea,’ and it will obey you.”

Mark 11:23

> I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, “Go, fall into the sea.” And if you have no doubts in your mind and believe that what you say will happen, God will do it for you.

1 Corinthians 13:2

> I may have so much faith that I can move mountains. But even with all these things, if I don't have love, then I am nothing.

Spiritual Principle

Small faith in a great God can do great things.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

It is not great faith in God that we need, but faith in a great God.

XXI. PRAYER AND FASTING

Matthew 17:21 — This Kind

“But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Jesus added another reason.

“This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Some battles require deeper dependence on God.

The disciples may have tried to drive out the demon in their own strength.

They may have been going through the motions.

Prayer shows dependence on God.

Fasting shows seriousness and humility before God.

This verse is not found in some of the oldest copies of Matthew.

But Mark records Jesus saying that this kind can come out only by prayer.

The lesson is clear either way.

Spiritual power comes from dependence on God.

Cross References

Mark 9:29

> Jesus answered, “That kind of spirit can only be forced out by prayer.”

Ezra 8:23

> So we fasted and prayed to our God about our trip, and He answered our prayers.

Daniel 9:3

> Then I turned to the Lord God and prayed and asked Him for help. I did not eat any food. I put on rough cloth and sat in ashes.

Spiritual Principle

Deeper battles require deeper dependence on God.

Application

Building dependence on God includes:

- Praying regularly, not only in emergencies.
- Fasting to seek God with focus.
- Admitting our own weakness.

- Not relying on past success.
- Trusting God's power, not our own.

XXII. DELIVERED INTO THE HANDS OF MEN

Matthew 17:22 — In Galilee

“When they came together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, ‘The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.’”

For the second time, Jesus predicted His death.

“The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.”

Delivered means **handed over** or **betrayed.**

Jesus knew Judas would betray Him.

He knew the religious leaders would hand Him over to the Romans.

And He knew that, behind it all, the Father was handing Him over for our salvation.

Cross References

Mark 9:31

> Jesus was teaching His followers. He said to them, “The Son of Man will be handed over to people, and they will kill Him.”

Luke 9:44

> Don't forget what I tell you now: The Son of Man will be handed over to people.

Matthew 20:18

> Look, we are going to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over to the leading priests and the teachers of the law.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus repeated the truth about the cross because it was central to His mission.

XXIII. THE DISCIPLES WERE FILLED WITH GRIEF

Matthew 17:23 — Raised on the Third Day

“They will kill Him, and on the third day He will be raised to life.” And the disciples were filled with grief.

“They will kill Him.”

“On the third day He will be raised to life.”

Jesus always spoke of His death and His resurrection together.

But the disciples heard only the first part.

They were filled with grief.

They did not yet understand the resurrection.

They only heard that Jesus would die.

Their sorrow was real.

But it would one day turn to joy.

Cross References

Mark 9:32

> But the followers did not understand what Jesus meant, and they were afraid to ask Him.

Luke 9:45

> But the followers did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them so they could not understand it.

John 16:6

> Your hearts are filled with sadness because I have told you these things.

Spiritual Principle

Never stop at the cross; always remember the resurrection.

Key Truth

The grief of Good Friday gives way to the joy of Easter morning.

XXIV. THE TEMPLE TAX

Matthew 17:24 — Doesn't Your Teacher Pay?

“After Jesus and His disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma temple tax came to Peter and asked, ‘Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?’”

Jesus and His disciples came back to **Capernaum.**

The collectors of the two-drachma temple tax came to Peter.

This tax was not a Roman tax.

It was a tax for the temple in Jerusalem.

The Law of Moses required every Jewish man over twenty to pay half a shekel for the work of God's house.

In Jesus' day, it was equal to about two days' wages.

The collectors asked Peter:

“Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?”

Cross References

Exodus 30:13

> Each person who is counted must pay half a shekel. This half shekel is an offering to the LORD.

Exodus 38:26

> Every man who was counted, twenty years old or older, paid a half shekel.

Nehemiah 10:32

> We will each give one-eighth of an ounce of silver every year to support the work of the Temple of our God.

Spiritual Principle

Supporting the work of God's house is part of faithful living.

XXV. “YES, HE DOES”

Matthew 17:25 — Jesus Spoke First

“‘Yes, He does,’ Peter replied. When Peter came into the house, Jesus spoke first. ‘What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own children or from others?’”

Peter answered quickly.

“Yes, He does.”

When Peter came into the house, **Jesus spoke first.**

Jesus already knew what had happened.

He had not been there, but He knew.

Then Jesus asked Peter a question.

From whom do the kings of the earth collect taxes?

From their own children or from others?

Cross References

Matthew 22:21

> Then Jesus said to them, “Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and give to God the things that are God's.”

Romans 13:7

> Pay everyone what you owe him. If you owe any kind of tax, pay it.

1 Samuel 8:17

> He will take one-tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows what happens even when He is not visibly present.

XXVI. THE CHILDREN ARE EXEMPT

Matthew 17:26 — From Others

“‘From others,’ Peter answered. ‘Then the children are exempt,’ Jesus said to him.”

Peter knew the answer.

Kings do not tax their own children.

They tax others.

“Then the children are exempt.”

Jesus' point was powerful.

The temple tax was for God's house.

Jesus is God's Son.

So He should not have to pay a tax for His own Father's house.

And those who belong to Jesus are children of God too.

Cross References

Galatians 4:7

> So now you are not a slave. You are God's child, and God will give you what He promised, because you are His child.

John 8:36

> So if the Son makes you free, you will be truly free.

Romans 8:15

> The Spirit we received does not make us slaves again to fear. The Spirit we have makes us God's chosen children, and with that Spirit we cry out, “Father.”

Spiritual Principle

Those who belong to Jesus are children of the King, not slaves.

XXVII. A COIN IN A FISH'S MOUTH

Matthew 17:27 — So That We May Not Cause Offense

“But so that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth, and you will find a coin. Take it and give it to them for My tax and yours.”

Jesus did not have to pay.

But He chose to pay anyway.

Why?

So that we may not cause offense.

Jesus did not want to give anyone a reason to reject His message over something small.

He set aside His rights for the sake of others.

Then He gave Peter unusual instructions.

Go to the lake.

Throw out your line.

Take the first fish.

Open its mouth.

You will find a coin.

The coin would be enough to pay the tax for both Jesus and Peter.

Peter was a fisherman.

Jesus met his need through the very thing Peter knew best.

And notice the words **“for My tax and yours.”**

Jesus provided for Peter's need along with His own.

Cross References

Exodus 30:13

> Each person who is counted must pay half a shekel. This half shekel is an offering to the LORD.

2 Kings 4:6

> When all the jars were full, she said to her son, “Bring me another jar.” But he said, “There are no more jars.” Then the oil stopped flowing.

John 21:6

> He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they did, and they caught so many fish they could not pull the net back into the boat.

Spiritual Principle

Sometimes love chooses to give up its rights so that others are not offended.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The King's Son paid a tax He did not owe — and at the cross, He paid a debt He did not owe for us.

XXVIII. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 17

1. Jesus' Glory Is Revealed

The Transfiguration confirms Him as God's beloved Son, greater than Moses and Elijah.

Principle:

Jesus is not one of the great servants of God; He is the Son of God.

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2. Listen to Jesus

The Father commands us to hear Christ above all voices.

Principle:

Every other voice must be measured by the voice of Jesus.

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3. Faith Unlocks God's Power

Even faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains.

Principle:

It is the greatness of God, not the size of our faith, that moves mountains.

---

4. Some Victories Require Prayer and Fasting

Deeper battles need deeper dependence on God.

Principle:

Spiritual power flows from spiritual dependence.

---

5. Jesus' Death and Resurrection Were Certain

He prepared His disciples to understand the cross and the empty tomb.

Principle:

The cross and the resurrection always go together.

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6. We Live Humbly, Not to Cause Offense

Jesus paid the temple tax even though He was exempt, modeling humility and peace.

Principle:

Love sometimes gives up its rights for the sake of others.

XXIX. THE MOUNTAIN AND THE VALLEY

Matthew 17 moves from the mountain of glory to the valley of need.

On the Mountain

- Jesus shines with glory.
- Moses and Elijah appear.
- The Father speaks.
- The disciples worship.

In the Valley

- A boy is tormented by a demon.
- A father is desperate.
- The disciples have failed.
- A crowd is full of unbelief.

What Connects Them

- The same Jesus is present in both places.
- The glory of the mountain gives power for the valley.

Key Truth

Jesus is just as glorious in the valley as He is on the mountain.

XXX. WHY MOSES AND ELIJAH?

Moses Represents the Law

God gave the Law through Moses.

Elijah Represents the Prophets

Elijah was one of the greatest prophets.

Both Met God on a Mountain

Moses and Elijah both met God on Mount Sinai.

Both Had Unusual Endings

God buried Moses, and Elijah was taken to heaven in a whirlwind.

Both Pointed to Jesus

The Law and the Prophets point to Christ.

Both Disappeared

Only Jesus remained.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Law and the Prophets came to the mountain to bow before the One they had been pointing to all along.

XXXI. WHAT MATTHEW 17 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 17 presents Jesus as:

The Glorious One

His face shone like the sun.

Greater Than Moses and Elijah

The Law and the Prophets point to Him.

The Beloved Son

The Father is well pleased with Him.

The One We Must Hear

“Listen to Him!”

The Gentle Comforter

He touched His frightened disciples.

The Deliverer

He freed a tormented boy.

The Teacher of Faith

He showed that small faith in God is powerful.

The Suffering Savior

He would be delivered, killed, and raised.

The Son of the King

He was exempt from the temple tax.

The Humble Servant

He paid it anyway.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who shone on the mountain is the same Jesus who walked humbly toward the cross.

XXXII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What does “transfigured” mean?

It means changed in form.

Jesus' outward appearance changed to reveal His inner glory as the Son of God.

Question 2

Why did Jesus take only Peter, James, and John?

They were His closest disciples.

They were also with Him at other important moments, like raising Jairus's daughter and in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Question 3

Why did Moses and Elijah appear?

Moses represented the Law, and Elijah represented the Prophets.

Together, they showed that the whole Old Testament points to Jesus.

Question 4

What were Moses and Elijah talking about with Jesus?

Luke tells us they were talking about His departure — His death — that He would accomplish in Jerusalem.

Question 5

What was wrong with Peter's idea of building three shelters?

It put Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah.

Jesus is far greater than any prophet.

Question 6

What did the Father say from the cloud?

“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!”

Question 7

What does it mean that the disciples saw “no one except Jesus”?

Moses and Elijah had done their work in pointing to Him.

In the end, Jesus alone remains, and He is enough.

Question 8

How was John the Baptist the Elijah who was to come?

John came in the spirit and power of Elijah.

He prepared the way for the Messiah, fulfilling Malachi's prophecy.

Question 9

Why couldn't the disciples drive out the demon?

Jesus said it was because of their little faith.

They may have been relying on their own past success instead of on God.

Question 10

What does faith like a mustard seed mean?

It means even a small amount of real faith in God is powerful.

The power is not in the size of our faith but in the greatness of God.

Question 11

Why does Jesus mention prayer and fasting?

Some battles require deeper dependence on God.

Prayer and fasting show that we are relying on Him, not on ourselves.

Question 12

Why were the disciples grieved when Jesus predicted His death?

They heard that He would be killed but did not yet understand the resurrection.

Question 13

What was the temple tax?

It was a tax every Jewish man paid for the support of the temple in Jerusalem.

It was based on the half shekel required in the Law of Moses.

Question 14

Why did Jesus pay the temple tax if He was exempt?

To avoid causing offense.

He set aside His rights so that no one would stumble over something small.

Question 15

What should Matthew 17 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 17 should cause believers to live:

- Worshiping Jesus as the glorious Son of God.
- Listening to Jesus above all other voices.
- Trusting His gentle touch when they are afraid.
- Keeping their eyes on Jesus alone.
- Bringing the glory of worship into the valleys of life.
- Trusting God with even small faith.
- Depending on God through prayer and fasting.
- Remembering both the cross and the resurrection.
- Living as children of the King.
- Setting aside their rights for the sake of others.

XXXIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 17 asks several important questions.

Do I Make Time to Go Apart with Jesus?

Do I See Jesus in His Glory, or Only as a Good Teacher?

Am I Placing Anyone or Anything on the Same Level as Jesus?

Am I Listening to Jesus Above All Other Voices?

When I Am Afraid, Do I Let Jesus Touch Me and Lift Me Up?

When Everything Else Fades, Is Jesus Enough for Me?

Am I Bringing What I Learn from God into the Valleys Where People Hurt?

Have I Been Relying on Past Success Instead of on God?

Is My Faith, Even If Small, Truly Resting in God?

Do I Depend on God Through Prayer and Fasting?

Do I Remember the Resurrection When I Think About the Cross?

Am I Willing to Give Up My Rights So That Others Are Not Offended?

XXXIV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Jesus Only”

On the mountain, the disciples saw amazing things.

Jesus shining like the sun.

Moses and Elijah.

A bright cloud.

The voice of God.

Peter wanted to build shelters and stay.

He wanted to hold on to the moment.

He wanted Moses and Elijah to stay too.

But then the Father spoke.

“Listen to Him!”

And when the disciples looked up, everything else was gone.

They saw **no one except Jesus.**

This creates a powerful principle.

Great experiences fade.

Great leaders pass away.

Even the greatest servants of God point beyond themselves.

In the end, what remains is Jesus.

And Jesus is enough.

Principle:

When the mountaintop moments are gone and the great voices are silent, Jesus remains — and He is all we need.

XXXV. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 17 begins on a mountain and ends by a lake.

On the mountain, Jesus shines with the glory of God.

Moses and Elijah appear.

The Father speaks:

“This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him!”

The disciples fall on their faces.

Jesus touches them and lifts them up.

And they see Jesus only.

Then they come down into the valley.

A boy is suffering.

A father is desperate.

The disciples have failed.

But Jesus speaks, and the boy is healed.

Then Jesus teaches them that even faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains.

He tells them again that He will die and rise.

And He shows humility by paying a tax He did not owe.

Matthew 17 therefore reminds us:

Jesus is far greater than anyone else.

The Father calls us to listen to Him.

His glory does not drive us away; His touch draws us near.

Small faith in a great God is powerful.

Spiritual battles require dependence on God.

And love is willing to give up its rights for the sake of others.

The story of Matthew 17 does not end with:

Three shelters on a mountain.

Failed disciples.

Or grieving followers.

It ends with:

A healed boy.

A lesson in faith.

And a King who humbly pays what He does not owe.

The same call still stands:

Go apart with Jesus.

See His glory.

Listen to Him.

Let Him lift you up.

Keep your eyes on Jesus only.

Trust Him with mustard-seed faith.

Depend on Him in prayer.

Live humbly as a child of the King.

And until He returns:

Keep listening to Him.

Keep trusting Him.

Keep praying.

Keep your eyes on Jesus only.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for revealing the glory of Your Son.

Thank You that Jesus is not just a teacher or a prophet, but Your beloved Son.

Lord Jesus, we worship You.

Your face shines like the sun.

You are greater than Moses and Elijah.

The whole Old Testament points to You.

Forgive us for the times we have placed anyone or anything on the same level as You.

Father, we hear Your command: “Listen to Him.”

Help us listen to Jesus above every other voice.

When Your holiness overwhelms us, let us feel the touch of Jesus.

Help us hear Him say, “Get up. Don't be afraid.”

When everything else fades away, help us see Jesus only.

Teach us that He is enough.

Give us grace to bring what we learn on the mountain into the valleys where people are hurting.

Forgive us when we rely on our past success instead of on You.

Give us faith, even if it is as small as a mustard seed, that rests completely in You.

Teach us to depend on You through prayer and fasting.

Help us face every battle with humble dependence on Your power.

Thank You that Jesus was delivered into the hands of men for us.

Thank You that He was killed and raised on the third day.

When we grieve, remind us of the resurrection.

Thank You that through Jesus we are children of the King.

Teach us to live humbly, setting aside our rights so that others are not offended.

And thank You that Jesus paid a debt He did not owe so that we could be free.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“While Peter was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!’” — Matthew 17:5

Central Truth

Jesus is the glorious, beloved Son of God whom the Father commands us to hear, and He calls His followers to trust Him with mustard-seed faith and to live humbly as children of the King.

Matthew 17 in One Sentence

Jesus is transfigured in glory before Peter, James, and John as the Father commands them to listen to Him, then He comes down to heal a tormented boy, teaches that mustard-seed faith can move mountains, predicts His death and resurrection again, and humbly pays the temple tax He did not owe.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 18 — Humility, Forgiveness, and the Kingdom of Heaven

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 17 ended with Jesus humbly paying a tax He did not owe.

Matthew Chapter 18 begins with His disciples arguing about who is the greatest.

Jesus had just told them again that He would be killed.

And they were thinking about their own importance.

So Jesus called a little child and placed the child in the middle of them.

“Unless you turn and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 18 is the fourth of the five great teaching sections in Matthew.

It is often called **the Community Discourse.**

It teaches how the people of God's kingdom should live together.

Jesus teaches about:

Humility — becoming like a child.

Protecting the weak — not causing others to stumble.

Seeking the lost — the shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine.

Correcting sin — going privately, gently, and with the goal of restoration.

Praying together — Jesus is present when two or three gather in His name.

Forgiving without limit — not seven times, but seventy times seven.

The chapter ends with one of Jesus' most powerful parables.

A servant is forgiven a debt he could never pay.

Then he refuses to forgive a fellow servant a small debt.

And the king is angry.

Matthew 18 therefore teaches two great truths:

Greatness in God's kingdom comes through humility.

And:

Those who have received great mercy must show great mercy.

The central truth of Matthew 18 is:

In God's kingdom, the humble are the greatest, every lost soul matters, sin is dealt with in love, and those who have been forgiven much must forgive from the heart.

I. WHO IS THE GREATEST?

Matthew 18:1 — The Disciples' Question

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’”

At that time connects this question to what just happened.

Jesus had just predicted His death.

He had just paid the temple tax in humility.

And the disciples asked:

“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

Mark tells us they had been arguing about this on the road.

They were thinking about position, rank, and honor.

Perhaps Peter, James, and John being chosen for the mountain had stirred up jealousy.

Cross References

Mark 9:34

> But they did not answer, because their argument on the road was about which one of them was the greatest.

Luke 9:46

> Jesus' followers began to have an argument about which one of them was the greatest.

Luke 22:24

> The apostles also began to argue about which one of them was the most important.

Spiritual Warning

Pride can creep into the hearts of even the closest followers of Jesus.

II. A LITTLE CHILD

Matthew 18:2 — Placed Among Them

“Jesus called a little child and placed the child among them.”

Jesus did not answer with a long speech.

He gave them a picture.

He **called a little child.**

He **placed the child among them.**

In that culture, children had little status.

They had no power.

No rank.

No importance in society.

And Jesus put this child right in the center.

Cross References

Mark 9:36

> Then Jesus took a small child and had him stand among them. He took the child in His arms.

Luke 9:47

> Jesus knew what they were thinking, so He took a little child and stood the child beside Him.

Matthew 19:14

> But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people who are like these children.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus turns the world's idea of greatness upside down.

III. BECOME LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN

Matthew 18:3 — Or You Will Never Enter

“He said, ‘Truly I tell you, unless you turn and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.’”

The disciples asked who would be **greatest** in the kingdom.

Jesus told them how to **enter** the kingdom.

“Unless you turn.”

They needed to change direction.

They needed to turn away from pride.

“And become like little children.”

Not childish.

Childlike.

Children are dependent.

They trust.

They know they need help.

They do not come with a list of achievements.

“You will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

This is a strong warning.

Pride does not just make us less great.

It can keep us out of the kingdom altogether.

Cross References

Mark 10:15

> I tell you the truth, you must accept the kingdom of God as if you were a little child, or you will never enter it.

Luke 18:17

> I tell you the truth, you must accept the kingdom of God as if you were a child, or you will never enter it.

1 Peter 2:2

> As newborn babies want milk, you should want the pure and simple teaching.

Spiritual Principle

The door to the kingdom is low; only the humble can enter.

IV. WHOEVER HUMBLES HIMSELF

Matthew 18:4 — The Greatest in the Kingdom

“Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Now Jesus answered their question.

Who is the greatest?

Whoever humbles himself like this child.

Greatness in God's kingdom is not about power.

Not about position.

Not about being served.

It is about humility.

Notice the words **humbles himself.**

Humility is a choice.

We must choose to lower ourselves before God and others.

Cross References

Matthew 23:12

> Whoever makes himself great will be made humble. Whoever makes himself humble will be made great.

James 4:10

> Humble yourselves in the Lord's presence, and He will honor you.

Luke 14:11

> All who make themselves great will be made humble, but those who make themselves humble will be made great.

Spiritual Principle

In God's kingdom, the way up is down.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The disciples asked who would be on top; Jesus showed them a child at the bottom and said, “This is the greatest.”

V. WELCOMING A CHILD

Matthew 18:5 — Welcomes Me

“And whoever welcomes one such child in My name welcomes Me.”

Jesus went further.

Whoever welcomes one such child in My name welcomes Me.

Jesus identifies with the small and the weak.

How we treat the least important people shows how we treat Jesus.

This includes children.

It also includes new believers and humble followers of Jesus who are like children in faith.

Cross References

Mark 9:37

> Whoever accepts a child like this in My name accepts Me. And whoever accepts Me accepts the One who sent Me.

Luke 9:48

> Whoever accepts this little child in My name accepts Me... Whoever is least among you all is the greatest.

Matthew 25:40

> The King will answer, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least important of My brothers and sisters, you did for Me.”

Spiritual Principle

How we treat the weak shows how we treat Jesus.

Application

Welcoming the little ones means:

- Caring for children.
- Being patient with new believers.
- Noticing people others ignore.
- Serving those who cannot pay you back.
- Treating every person as someone Jesus loves.

VI. A MILLSTONE AROUND THE NECK

Matthew 18:6 — Causing Little Ones to Stumble

“But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”

Now Jesus gave a serious warning.

If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble.

To **cause someone to stumble** means to lead them into sin or to cause them to fall away from faith.

These little ones who believe in Me includes children and anyone with simple, humble faith.

A large millstone was a huge stone turned by a donkey to grind grain.

It could weigh hundreds of pounds.

Jesus said it would be better to be drowned with that stone tied around your neck than to cause a little one to fall.

This shows how seriously Jesus takes the harm done to His little ones.

Cross References

Mark 9:42

> If one of these little children believes in Me, and someone causes that child to sin, it would be better for that person to have a large stone tied around his neck and be drowned in the sea.

Luke 17:2

> It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a large stone around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to sin.

Luke 17:1

> Jesus said to His followers, “Things that cause people to sin will happen, but how terrible for the person who causes them to happen!”

Spiritual Warning

Jesus takes very seriously any harm done to those who trust Him.

VII. WOE TO THE WORLD

Matthew 18:7 — Offenses Must Come

“Woe to the world because of such offenses! Offenses must come, but woe to the one through whom they come!”

Woe is a word of sorrow and warning.

Woe to the world because of such offenses!

The world is full of things that lead people into sin.

Offenses must come.

In a sinful world, temptations and stumbling blocks are certain.

But woe to the one through whom they come!

The fact that sin is common does not excuse the person who causes it.

Each person is responsible for their own actions.

Cross References

Luke 17:1

> Jesus said to His followers, “Things that cause people to sin will happen, but how terrible for the person who causes them to happen!”

1 Corinthians 11:19

> It is necessary to have differences among you so that it may be clear which of you really have God's approval.

Romans 14:13

> So we should stop judging each other. We must make up our minds not to do anything that will make another believer stumble or sin.

Spiritual Principle

Living in a sinful world does not excuse us from responsibility for our influence on others.

VIII. CUT IT OFF

Matthew 18:8 — Hand or Foot

“If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or maimed than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.”

Jesus turned from causing others to sin to causing ourselves to sin.

He used the same strong language He used in the Sermon on the Mount.

Cut it off.

Throw it away.

Jesus is not telling us to literally harm our bodies.

He is using strong language to show how seriously we must deal with sin.

The **hand** represents what we do.

The **foot** represents where we go.

Whatever leads us into sin must be removed.

Cross References

Mark 9:43

> If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to lose part of your body and live forever than to have two hands and go to hell, where the fire never goes out.

Matthew 5:30

> If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Romans 8:13

> If you use your lives to do the wrong things your sinful selves want, you will die spiritually. But if you use the Spirit's help to stop doing the wrong things you do with your body, you will have true life.

Spiritual Principle

Deal with sin seriously, before it destroys you.

IX. PLUCK IT OUT

Matthew 18:9 — The Eye

“And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell fire.”

The **eye** represents what we look at and desire.

Many sins begin with what we see.

Jesus says it is better to give up anything, even something precious, than to be lost forever.

Notice the contrast.

Enter life.

Thrown into hell fire.

There are only two final destinations.

Cross References

Mark 9:47

> If your eye causes you to sin, take it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell.

Matthew 5:29

> If your right eye causes you to sin, take it out and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into hell.

Job 31:1

> I made a promise with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman.

Spiritual Principle

Nothing is worth keeping if it costs you your soul.

Application

Things we may need to “cut off” include:

- Relationships that pull us into sin.
- Habits that lead to temptation.
- Places we should not go.
- Things we should not watch.
- Anything that keeps us from Jesus.

X. DO NOT LOOK DOWN ON THEM

Matthew 18:10 — Their Angels in Heaven

“See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father in heaven.”

Do not look down on one of these little ones.

Do not treat them as unimportant.

Why?

Their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father.

God cares so much about His little ones that His angels watch over them.

And those angels have direct access to God's presence.

The people the world ignores are precious in heaven.

Cross References

Psalm 34:7

> The angel of the LORD camps around those who respect God, and he saves them.

Hebrews 1:14

> All the angels are spirits who serve God and are sent to help those who will receive salvation.

Acts 12:15

> They said to her, “You are crazy!” But she kept on saying it was true, so they said, “It must be Peter's angel.”

Spiritual Principle

No one is unimportant to God.

Key Truth

Heaven pays attention to the people earth overlooks.

XI. TO SAVE THE LOST

Matthew 18:11 — The Son of Man Came

“For the Son of Man came to save the lost.”

This short verse explains why the little ones matter so much.

The Son of Man came to save the lost.

Jesus came for people who are lost, weak, and wandering.

This verse is not found in some of the oldest copies of Matthew.

But the same words appear in Luke 19:10, where Jesus spoke them to Zacchaeus.

The truth is clear throughout the Gospels.

Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

Cross References

Luke 19:10

> The Son of Man came to find lost people and save them.

Luke 15:4

> Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep but loses one of them. Then he will leave the other ninety-nine sheep in the open field and go out and look for the lost sheep until he finds it.

1 Timothy 1:15

> Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Spiritual Principle

The mission of Jesus is to save the lost.

XII. THE LOST SHEEP

Matthew 18:12 — Leaving the Ninety-Nine

“What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?”

Jesus told a short story.

A man has **a hundred sheep.**

One of them wanders away.

What does he do?

He **leaves the ninety-nine** and **goes to look for the one.**

In Luke, Jesus told this story to show God's love for lost sinners.

In Matthew, He uses it to show God's love for believers who wander away.

One sheep might seem unimportant when you have ninety-nine others.

But to the shepherd, every single sheep matters.

Cross References

Luke 15:4

> Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep but loses one of them. Then he will leave the other ninety-nine sheep in the open field and go out and look for the lost sheep until he finds it.

Ezekiel 34:11

> This is what the Lord GOD says: I Myself will search for My sheep and take care of them.

Psalm 119:176

> I have wandered like a lost sheep. Look for Your servant, because I have not forgotten Your commands.

Spiritual Principle

Every single person matters to God.

XIII. HAPPIER ABOUT THE ONE

Matthew 18:13 — When He Finds It

“And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off.”

When the shepherd **finds** the lost sheep, he is filled with joy.

He is **happier about that one sheep** than about the ninety-nine.

This does not mean he loves the ninety-nine less.

It means there is special joy when the lost is found.

God rejoices when a wandering child comes home.

Cross References

Luke 15:7

> In the same way, I tell you, there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who changes his heart and life, than over ninety-nine good people who don't need to change.

Luke 15:6

> When he gets home, he calls his friends and neighbors together and says to them, “Be happy with me because I found my lost sheep!”

Ezekiel 34:16

> I will look for the lost, bring back those who wandered away, bandage the injured, and make the weak strong.

Spiritual Principle

Heaven rejoices when the lost are found.

XIV. NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH

Matthew 18:14 — Your Father in Heaven

“In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.”

Jesus explained the story.

Your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

God does not want anyone to be lost.

His heart is to seek and save.

So we should share that heart.

We should not look down on the weak.

We should not cause them to stumble.

We should go after them when they wander.

Cross References

2 Peter 3:9

> The Lord is not slow in doing what He promised... He does not want anyone to be lost, but He wants all people to change their hearts and lives.

John 6:39

> And this is what the One who sent Me wants Me to do: I must not lose even one of those He gave Me.

Ezekiel 18:23

> “I don't really want the wicked to die,” says the Lord GOD. “I want them to stop their evil ways and live.”

Spiritual Principle

God's heart is to rescue, not to reject.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If the Shepherd leaves ninety-nine to find one, His people should never give up on the one.

XV. JUST BETWEEN THE TWO OF YOU

Matthew 18:15 — You Have Won Them Over

“If your brother sins against you, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.”

Jesus now teaches how to handle sin in the church.

Notice how this connects to the lost sheep.

The goal is to **win them over** — to bring the wandering one back.

The first step is private.

Go.

Do not wait for them to come to you.

Point out their fault.

Be honest.

Just between the two of you.

Do not gossip.

Do not tell others first.

Keep it private.

If they listen to you, you have won them over.

The goal is not to win an argument.

It is to win a brother or sister back.

Cross References

Leviticus 19:17

> Do not hate your brother in your heart. If your neighbor does something wrong, tell him about it, or you will be guilty too.

Luke 17:3

> So be careful! If another follower sins, warn him. If he is sorry and stops sinning, forgive him.

Galatians 6:1

> Brothers and sisters, if someone in your group does something wrong, you who are spiritual should go to that person and gently help make him right again.

Spiritual Principle

The goal of correction is always restoration.

Application

When going to someone about their sin:

- Pray first.
- Check your own heart.
- Go privately.
- Speak gently and honestly.
- Listen to their side.
- Aim to restore, not to punish.

XVI. TAKE ONE OR TWO OTHERS

Matthew 18:16 — Two or Three Witnesses

“But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’”

If the private talk does not work, there is a second step.

Take one or two others along.

This follows the Law of Moses.

Every matter must be confirmed by **two or three witnesses.**

The others can help make sure the situation is understood fairly.

They can help bring the person back.

They also protect against false accusations.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 19:15

> One witness is not enough to accuse a person of a crime or sin. A case must be proved by two or three witnesses.

2 Corinthians 13:1

> Every case must be proved by two or three witnesses.

John 8:17

> Your own law says that when two witnesses say the same thing, you must accept what they say.

Spiritual Principle

Correction must be fair, careful, and confirmed.

XVII. TELL IT TO THE CHURCH

Matthew 18:17 — As a Pagan or Tax Collector

“If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

If they still will not listen, there is a third step.

Tell it to the church.

The whole church family becomes involved.

If they **refuse to listen even to the church**, there is a final step.

Treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

This means treating them as someone outside the church family.

But remember how Jesus treated pagans and tax collectors.

He ate with them.

He loved them.

He called Matthew, a tax collector, to follow Him.

Even this final step has restoration as its goal.

The door is always open for them to repent and return.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 5:4

> When you meet together in the name of our Lord Jesus, and I meet with you in spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus...

Titus 3:10

> After a first and second warning, have nothing to do with a person who causes division.

Romans 16:17

> Brothers and sisters, I ask you to look out for those who cause people to be against each other and who upset other people's faith. Stay away from them.

Spiritual Principle

Church discipline is an act of love that aims to bring the wanderer home.

Key Truth

Even the last step of discipline keeps the door open for repentance.

XVIII. BINDING AND LOOSING

Matthew 18:18 — In Heaven

“Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

In Matthew 16, Jesus gave Peter authority to bind and loose.

Now He gives this authority to the whole church.

When the church follows God's Word in dealing with sin, its decisions reflect what God has already decided in heaven.

The church does not make up its own rules.

It carries out heaven's will on earth.

Cross References

Matthew 16:19

> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The things you don't allow on earth will be the things that God does not allow. The things you allow on earth will be the things that God allows.

John 20:23

> If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven. If you don't forgive them, they are not forgiven.

Isaiah 22:22

> I will put the key to David's house around his neck. What he opens, no one can shut. What he shuts, no one can open.

Spiritual Principle

The church acts with heaven's authority when it follows heaven's Word.

XIX. IF TWO OF YOU AGREE

Matthew 18:19 — Done by My Father

“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven.”

This verse is often used for prayer in general.

And it does teach the power of united prayer.

But notice the setting.

Jesus is talking about church discipline and restoring a brother or sister.

When believers **agree** together, seeking God's will in these hard situations, God hears.

The word **agree** gives us our word **symphony.**

It means being in harmony.

When believers pray in harmony with each other and with God's will, God answers.

Cross References

Matthew 21:22

> If you believe, you will get anything you ask for in prayer.

1 John 5:14

> This is the confidence we have when we come to God: if we ask for anything that agrees with what He wants, He hears us.

Mark 11:24

> So I tell you to believe that you have received the things you ask for in prayer, and God will give them to you.

Spiritual Principle

United prayer that seeks God's will is powerful.

XX. WHERE TWO OR THREE GATHER

Matthew 18:20 — There Am I with Them

“For where two or three gather in My name, there am I with them.”

This is one of the most beloved promises in the Bible.

Where two or three gather in My name.

Not a large crowd.

Just **two or three.**

There am I with them.

Jesus is present with His people when they gather in His name.

Jewish teachers said that when two people study God's law together, God's presence is with them.

Jesus said that when two or three gather in **His** name, **He** is there.

This is a claim that only God could make.

Cross References

Exodus 20:24

> In every place where I choose to be worshiped, I will come and bless you.

Malachi 3:16

> Then those who honored the LORD spoke with each other, and the LORD listened and heard them.

Hebrews 10:25

> You should not stay away from the church meetings, as some are doing, but you should meet together and encourage each other.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is present when His people gather in His name.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The smallest gathering in Jesus' name is never small, because He is there.

XXI. HOW MANY TIMES?

Matthew 18:21 — Up to Seven Times?

“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?’”

Peter asked a question about forgiveness.

How many times shall I forgive?

Up to seven times?

Peter probably thought he was being very generous.

Some Jewish teachers said a person should forgive someone three times.

Peter doubled that and added one.

Seven times seemed more than enough.

Cross References

Luke 17:4

> If he sins against you seven times in one day and says that he is sorry each time, forgive him.

Genesis 4:24

> If Cain's killer is punished seven times, then Lamech's killer will be punished seventy-seven times.

Proverbs 24:16

> A good person may fall seven times, but he gets up again.

Spiritual Principle

Forgiveness cannot be measured with a counter.

XXII. SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN

Matthew 18:22 — Not Seven Times

“Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven.’”

Jesus' answer went far beyond Peter's.

Not seven times.

But seventy times seven.

That would be 490 times.

Some translations say **seventy-seven times.**

Either way, Jesus' point is the same.

Stop counting.

Forgiveness has no limit.

In Genesis, Lamech boasted that he would take revenge **seventy-seven times.**

Jesus reversed that.

His followers would forgive **seventy times seven.**

Unlimited revenge was replaced with unlimited forgiveness.

Cross References

Genesis 4:24

> If Cain's killer is punished seven times, then Lamech's killer will be punished seventy-seven times.

Luke 17:4

> If he sins against you seven times in one day and says that he is sorry each time, forgive him.

Colossians 3:13

> Be patient with each other, and forgive anyone who has done something wrong to you. Forgive each other because the Lord forgave you.

Spiritual Principle

God's people forgive without keeping count.

Key Truth

If you are still counting, you have not yet forgiven.

XXIII. A KING SETTLES ACCOUNTS

Matthew 18:23 — The Parable Begins

“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.”

To explain unlimited forgiveness, Jesus told a parable.

The kingdom of heaven is like **a king** who wanted to **settle accounts** with his servants.

In the story, the king represents God.

The servants represent us.

One day, every person will give an account to God.

Cross References

Matthew 25:19

> After a long time the master came home and asked the servants what they did with his money.

Luke 16:2

> So he called the manager in and said to him, “What is this I hear about you? Give me a report of what you have done with my money.”

Romans 14:12

> So each of us will have to explain to God about the things we have done.

Spiritual Principle

Every person will one day give an account to God.

XXIV. TEN THOUSAND TALENTS

Matthew 18:24 — An Impossible Debt

“As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.”

A man **owed him ten thousand talents.**

This was an unimaginable amount.

A **talent** was the largest unit of money.

It was worth about twenty years' wages for a common worker.

Ten thousand talents would be worth about two hundred thousand years of wages.

In today's terms, it would be billions of dollars.

Ten thousand was the largest number used in Greek.

Jesus was describing a debt that could never be paid.

This is a picture of our debt of sin before God.

Cross References

Matthew 25:15

> He gave one servant five bags of gold, another servant two bags, and a third servant one bag.

Romans 3:23

> All people have sinned and are not good enough for God's glory.

Colossians 2:14

> He canceled the debt, which listed all the rules we failed to follow. He took away that record with its rules and nailed it to the cross.

Spiritual Principle

Our debt of sin before God is too great for us to ever repay.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus used the biggest number He could to describe how much we owe — and then He showed how much God forgives.

XXV. SOLD TO REPAY THE DEBT

Matthew 18:25 — Not Able to Pay

“Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.”

He was not able to pay.

Of course he wasn't.

No one could pay such a debt.

So the master ordered that **he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold.**

In those days, people who could not pay their debts could be sold into slavery.

Even then, it would not come close to paying what he owed.

This shows the hopelessness of our situation without God's mercy.

Cross References

2 Kings 4:1

> Now the man he owed money to is coming to take my two sons as his slaves.

Leviticus 25:39

> If anyone in your country becomes very poor and sells himself as a slave to you, you must not make him work like a slave.

Nehemiah 5:5

> We are forced to sell our sons and daughters as slaves.

Spiritual Principle

Without God's mercy, we are completely helpless.

XXVI. BE PATIENT WITH ME

Matthew 18:26 — I Will Pay Back Everything

“The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’”

The servant **fell on his knees.**

He **begged.**

“Be patient with me, and I will pay back everything.”

This was an impossible promise.

He could never pay back everything.

Many people think they can make up for their sins.

If they just try harder.

If they do enough good.

But no one can pay the debt of sin.

Cross References

Matthew 18:29

> The other servant fell on his knees and begged him, “Be patient with me, and I will pay you everything I owe.”

Luke 7:41

> Two people owed money to the same banker. One owed five hundred coins and the other owed fifty.

Psalm 86:15

> But Lord, You are a God who shows mercy and is kind. You don't become angry quickly. You have great love and faithfulness.

Spiritual Principle

We cannot earn our way out of the debt of sin.

XXVII. THE DEBT CANCELED

Matthew 18:27 — He Let Him Go

“The master took pity on him, canceled the debt, and let him go.”

This is the heart of the gospel.

The master took pity on him.

Canceled the debt.

Let him go.

The servant asked for more time.

The master gave him complete forgiveness.

The servant offered to pay.

The master paid the cost himself by canceling the debt.

This is what God does for us.

Through Jesus, our impossible debt of sin is completely canceled.

Cross References

Colossians 2:13

God forgave all our sins.

Psalm 103:12

He has taken our sins away from us as far as the east is from west.

Isaiah 43:25

I, I am the One who erases all your sins, for My sake. I will not remember your sins.

Spiritual Principle

God's forgiveness is complete and free.

Key Truth

The servant asked for patience; the master gave him pardon.

XXVIII. A HUNDRED SILVER COINS

Matthew 18:28 — Pay Back What You Owe!

“But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.”

Now the story takes a shocking turn.

The forgiven servant **went out.**

He found **a fellow servant** who owed him **a hundred silver coins.**

A silver coin, or **denarius**, was about one day's wages.

So the debt was about a hundred days' wages.

It was a real debt.

But it was tiny compared to ten thousand talents.

The first debt was about **600,000 times larger.**

And yet the forgiven servant **grabbed him and began to choke him.**

“Pay back what you owe me!”

He had just been forgiven billions.

And he would not forgive a few months' pay.

Cross References

James 2:13

Anyone who does not show mercy will be judged without mercy. But mercy wins over judgment.

Luke 7:41

Two people owed money to the same banker. One owed five hundred coins and the other owed fifty.

Proverbs 3:27

Whenever you are able, do good to people who need help.

Spiritual Warning

Forgetting how much we have been forgiven makes us harsh toward others.

XXIX. THE SAME PLEA

Matthew 18:29 — Be Patient with Me

“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’”

Notice the words.

They are almost exactly the same words the first servant had used.

He fell to his knees.

He begged.

“Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.”

And this debt really could be paid back.

It would just take time.

The forgiven servant should have recognized his own words.

Cross References

Matthew 18:26

The servant fell on his knees and begged, “Be patient with me, and I will pay you everything I owe.”

Proverbs 25:15

With patience you can convince a ruler, and a gentle word can get through to the hard-headed.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Help those who are weak. Be patient with everyone.

Spiritual Principle

When others plead for mercy, we should remember when we pleaded for mercy.

XXX. THROWN INTO PRISON

Matthew 18:30 — He Refused

“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.”

He refused.

He had no mercy.

He **had the man thrown into prison.**

In prison, the man could not work to pay back his debt.

It was cruel and pointless.

The forgiven servant used the very punishment he himself had escaped.

Cross References

Matthew 5:25

> If your enemy is taking you to court, become friends quickly, before you go to court. Otherwise, he might turn you over to the judge, and you might be thrown into jail.

Luke 12:58

> If you don't, he may drag you to the judge, and the judge will turn you over to the officer, and the officer will throw you into jail.

Proverbs 21:13

> Whoever refuses to listen when poor people cry out will also cry out and not be answered.

Spiritual Warning

An unforgiving heart is a cruel heart.

XXXI. THE OTHER SERVANTS WERE OUTRAGED

Matthew 18:31 — They Told Their Master

“When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.”

The other servants saw what had happened.

They were **outraged.**

They knew how much the first servant had been forgiven.

They could not believe what he had done.

So they **told their master everything.**

Unforgiveness does not stay hidden.

Others see it.

And God sees it.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 24:15

> Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and depends on it. Otherwise, he will cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.

Job 34:28

> They made the poor cry out to God, and He heard the cry of those who were treated badly.

Proverbs 24:11

> Save those who are being led to their death. Rescue those who are about to be killed.

Spiritual Principle

God hears the cry of those who are treated without mercy.

XXXII. YOU WICKED SERVANT

Matthew 18:32 — I Canceled All That Debt

“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.’”

The master **called the servant in.**

“You wicked servant.”

Notice that the master did not call him wicked for owing the debt.

He called him wicked for refusing to forgive.

“I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.”

All that debt.

Every bit of it.

And the servant had refused to forgive even a little.

Cross References

Luke 7:42

> They had no money to pay what they owed, but the banker told both of them they did not have to pay him.

Ephesians 4:32

> Be kind and loving to each other. Forgive each other just as God forgave you in Christ.

Matthew 6:14

> Yes, if you forgive others for their sins, your Father in heaven will also forgive you for your sins.

Spiritual Principle

Refusing to forgive is a serious sin in God's eyes.

XXXIII. SHOULDN'T YOU HAVE HAD MERCY?

Matthew 18:33 — Just as I Had on You

“Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?”

This is the key question of the parable.

Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?

The mercy we receive from God should flow out to others.

We forgive because we have been forgiven.

The servant received mercy.

But it never changed his heart.

Cross References

Micah 6:8

> The LORD has told you what is good. He has told you what He wants from you: Do what is right to other people. Love being kind to others. And live humbly, trusting your God.

James 2:13

> Anyone who does not show mercy will be judged without mercy. But mercy wins over judgment.

Luke 6:36

> Show mercy, just as your Father shows mercy.

Spiritual Principle

Mercy received must become mercy given.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The question is not whether the other person deserves forgiveness, but whether you remember how much you have been forgiven.

XXXIV. HANDED OVER TO THE JAILERS

Matthew 18:34 — Until He Should Pay

“In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.”

The master was angry.

He **handed him over to the jailers.**

Until he should pay back all he owed.

And he could never pay.

The servant who refused mercy lost the mercy he had received.

This is a sobering ending.

Cross References

Matthew 5:26

> I tell you the truth, you will not leave there until you have paid everything you owe.

Luke 12:47

> The servant who knows what his master wants but does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be punished severely.

Romans 2:5

> But you are stubborn and refuse to change, so you are making your own punishment greater and greater on the day God shows His anger.

Spiritual Warning

Those who refuse to show mercy show that they have never truly received it.

XXXV. FROM YOUR HEART

Matthew 18:35 — How My Father Will Treat You

“This is how My heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Jesus applied the parable directly.

This is how My heavenly Father will treat each of you.

Unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.

Notice the words **from your heart.**

Not just with words.

Not just on the outside.

Real forgiveness comes from a heart changed by God's mercy.

This does not mean we earn God's forgiveness by forgiving others.

God's forgiveness is a free gift.

But a person who has truly received that gift will be changed by it.

A heart that refuses to forgive shows that it has never truly understood God's grace.

Cross References

Matthew 6:12

> Forgive us for our sins, just as we have forgiven those who sinned against us.

Matthew 6:14

> Yes, if you forgive others for their sins, your Father in heaven will also forgive you for your sins.

Mark 11:25

> When you are praying, if you are angry with someone, forgive him so that your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins.

Spiritual Principle

True forgiveness comes from the heart.

Key Truth

We forgive not because others deserve it, but because God forgave us when we did not deserve it.

XXXVI. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 18

1. Greatness Comes Through Humility

To be great in God's kingdom, we must become childlike in trust and humility.

Principle:

The lower we bow, the greater we become in God's eyes.

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2. God Values Every Soul

He seeks out the one lost sheep and rejoices when it is found.

Principle:

No one is too small to matter to God.

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3. Sin Must Be Dealt With

Correction should be done gently, privately, and with the goal of restoration.

Principle:

The goal of correction is always to win the person back.

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4. Unity in Prayer Has Power

When believers agree together, God moves in response.

Principle:

Jesus is present where His people gather in His name.

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5. Forgiveness Is Unlimited

God calls us to forgive without limit, as He has forgiven us.

Principle:

Stop counting and start forgiving.

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6. Mercy Received Must Become Mercy Given

Those who experience God's grace must extend it to others.

Principle:

Remember how much you have been forgiven.

XXXVII. THE STEPS OF RESTORATION

Jesus gives a clear process for dealing with sin among believers.

Step 1: Go Privately (Verse 15)

Talk to the person one-on-one.

Step 2: Take One or Two Others (Verse 16)

If they will not listen, bring witnesses.

Step 3: Tell the Church (Verse 17)

If they still will not listen, involve the church.

Step 4: Treat Them as an Outsider (Verse 17)

If they refuse the church, treat them as someone who needs to be reached again.

Key Truth

At every step, the goal is not punishment but restoration.

Application

Common mistakes in dealing with sin:

- Telling others before talking to the person.
- Ignoring the sin completely.
- Going with anger instead of love.
- Skipping steps.
- Giving up on the person.

XXXVIII. TWO DEBTS

The parable of the unforgiving servant shows two very different debts.

The First Debt

- Ten thousand talents.
- About 200,000 years of wages.
- Impossible to repay.
- Completely canceled by the king.
- A picture of our debt to God.

The Second Debt

- A hundred silver coins.
- About 100 days of wages.
- Could be repaid with time.
- Refused by the forgiven servant.
- A picture of what others owe us.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Whatever others owe us is small compared to what God has forgiven us.

XXXIX. WHAT FORGIVENESS IS AND IS NOT

Forgiveness Is

- A choice to release the debt.
- Giving up the right to get even.
- Leaving justice in God's hands.
- Coming from the heart.
- Something we do again and again.

Forgiveness Is Not

- Pretending the wrong did not happen.
- Saying the wrong was not serious.
- Always trusting the person right away.
- Ignoring the need for consequences.
- A feeling we wait for before we act.

Spiritual Principle

Forgiveness frees the one who forgives as much as the one who is forgiven.

XL. WHAT MATTHEW 18 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 18 presents Jesus as:

The Humble King

He calls a child into the center.

The Protector of the Little Ones

He warns against causing them to stumble.

The Savior of the Lost

He came to save the lost.

The Good Shepherd

He leaves the ninety-nine to find the one.

The Restorer

He teaches how to bring wanderers back.

The Ever-Present Lord

He is with two or three gathered in His name.

The Teacher of Forgiveness

He calls us to forgive seventy times seven.

The Revealer of the Father's Mercy

He shows the King who cancels an impossible debt.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who leaves the ninety-nine to find the one is the Jesus who forgives a debt we could never pay.

XLI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the disciples ask who was the greatest?

They were thinking about position, rank, and honor.

They had been arguing among themselves on the road.

Question 2

Why did Jesus use a little child as an example?

Children had little status in that culture.

They are dependent and trusting.

Jesus showed that humility, not power, is the path to greatness.

Question 3

What does it mean to become like a little child?

It means turning from pride and coming to God with humble trust and dependence.

It does not mean being childish.

Question 4

What does it mean to cause a little one to stumble?

It means leading a child or a humble believer into sin or causing them to fall away from faith.

Jesus takes this very seriously.

Question 5

Is Jesus telling us to literally cut off our hands or pluck out our eyes?

No.

He is using strong language to show how seriously we must deal with sin.

We must remove whatever leads us into sin.

Question 6

What does Jesus mean by “their angels”?

God cares for His little ones so much that His angels watch over them and have direct access to God's presence.

Question 7

What does the parable of the lost sheep teach?

Every single person matters to God.

He seeks those who wander and rejoices when they are found.

Question 8

What is the first step in dealing with a brother or sister who sins against you?

Go to them privately, just between the two of you, and point out their fault.

Question 9

What is the goal of correcting a brother or sister?

To win them back.

The goal is always restoration, not punishment.

Question 10

What does it mean to treat someone as a pagan or tax collector?

It means treating them as someone outside the church family who needs to be reached again.

Jesus loved and reached out to pagans and tax collectors.

Question 11

What does Jesus promise when two or three gather in His name?

He promises to be present with them.

Question 12

What did Jesus mean by “seventy times seven”?

He meant that forgiveness should have no limit.

We should stop counting.

Question 13

How large was the first servant's debt compared to the second?

The first debt was about 600,000 times larger.

It was an impossible debt, while the second could be repaid with time.

Question 14

Why was the first servant called wicked?

Not because he owed a great debt, but because he refused to forgive a small debt after being forgiven so much.

Question 15

Do we earn God's forgiveness by forgiving others?

No.

God's forgiveness is a free gift.

But a heart that has truly received it will forgive others.

Refusing to forgive shows that we have not understood God's grace.

Question 16

What should Matthew 18 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 18 should cause believers to live:

- Humble like little children.
- Welcoming the weak and overlooked.
- Careful not to cause others to stumble.
- Serious about removing sin from their lives.
- Seeking those who wander away.
- Correcting others privately and gently.
- Aiming for restoration, not punishment.
- Praying together in agreement.
- Forgiving without keeping count.
- Remembering how much they have been forgiven.

XLII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 18 asks several important questions.

Am I Seeking to Be Great or Seeking to Be Humble?

Do I Come to God with Childlike Trust?

How Do I Treat People Who Seem Unimportant?

Is My Life Causing Anyone to Stumble?

Is There Anything I Need to “Cut Off” from My Life?

Do I Care About the One Who Has Wandered Away?

Is There Someone I Need to Go to Privately About Their Sin?

Have I Been Gossiping Instead of Going Directly to Someone?

Do I Value Gathering with Other Believers in Jesus' Name?

Am I Keeping Count of How Many Times I Have Forgiven Someone?

Is There Someone I Have Refused to Forgive?

Do I Remember How Much God Has Forgiven Me?

XLIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Forgiven Much, Forgive Much”

The servant in Jesus' story was forgiven a debt he could never pay.

Billions of dollars.

Two hundred thousand years of wages.

Completely canceled.

And then he walked out the door and choked a man who owed him a few months' pay.

How could he do it?

He had forgotten.

He had forgotten how much he had been forgiven.

This creates a powerful principle.

Every time we refuse to forgive, we are acting like that servant.

We are forgetting the great debt God has canceled for us.

When we remember how much God has forgiven us, forgiving others becomes possible.

Not easy.

But possible.

Because the debt others owe us will always be small compared to the debt Jesus paid for us.

Principle:

The more we remember the cross, the easier it becomes to forgive.

XLIV. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 18 begins with an argument about greatness.

And it ends with a parable about forgiveness.

In between, Jesus teaches His followers how to live together as the family of God.

He places a child in the middle and says:

Become like this.

He warns against causing little ones to stumble.

He tells of a shepherd who leaves ninety-nine sheep to find one.

He teaches how to go to a brother or sister who has sinned.

Privately.

Gently.

With the goal of winning them back.

He promises to be present when two or three gather in His name.

And when Peter asks how many times to forgive, Jesus says:

Stop counting.

Then He tells of a servant who was forgiven an impossible debt but would not forgive a small one.

Matthew 18 therefore reminds us:

Greatness in God's kingdom looks like humility.

Every person matters to God.

Sin must be dealt with, but always in love.

Jesus is with His people when they gather.

And those who have been forgiven much must forgive much.

The story of Matthew 18 does not end with:

Disciples arguing about greatness.

A sheep lost on the hills.

Or a servant thrown into prison.

It ends with:

A call to forgive from the heart.

Because the King has forgiven us.

The same call still stands:

Humble yourself.

Welcome the little ones.

Remove what causes you to sin.

Seek the one who wanders.

Correct with love.

Pray together.

Forgive without counting.

Remember the mercy you have received.

And until He returns:

Keep humbling yourself.

Keep seeking the lost.

Keep forgiving.

Keep remembering His mercy.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Forgive us for the times we have wanted to be great instead of humble.

Teach us to become like little children before You.

Give us hearts that trust You and depend on You completely.

Help us welcome the little ones in Jesus' name.

Make us gentle with children, patient with new believers, and kind to those others overlook.

Keep us from ever causing someone to stumble.

Show us anything in our lives that leads us into sin, and give us courage to remove it.

Thank You that the little ones are precious in Your sight.

Lord Jesus, thank You for being the Good Shepherd.

Thank You that You leave the ninety-nine to find the one.

Thank You that You came looking for us when we wandered away.

Give us Your heart for the lost and the wandering.

Teach us how to go to a brother or sister who has sinned.

Help us go privately, gently, and with love.

Keep us from gossip, anger, and pride.

Let our goal always be to win them back.

Thank You for the promise that where two or three gather in Your name, You are with us.

Help us value gathering with Your people.

Father, thank You for canceling the debt we could never pay.

Thank You for Your mercy through Jesus Christ.

Help us never forget how much we have been forgiven.

Show us anyone we have refused to forgive.

Give us grace to forgive them from our hearts.

Teach us to stop counting and start forgiving.

Let the mercy we have received flow through us to others.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?” — Matthew 18:33

Central Truth

In God's kingdom, the humble are the greatest, every lost soul matters, sin is dealt with in love, and those who have been forgiven much must forgive from the heart.

Matthew 18 in One Sentence

Jesus teaches that greatness in His kingdom comes through childlike humility, warns against causing little ones to stumble, shows God's love for every lost sheep, explains how to restore a brother or sister who sins, promises His presence when believers gather, and calls His followers to forgive without limit because they have been forgiven an impossible debt.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 19 — Marriage, Children, Riches, and Eternal Rewards

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 18 ended with Jesus teaching about unlimited forgiveness.

Matthew Chapter 19 begins a new stage in Jesus' journey.

He leaves Galilee for the last time.

He begins traveling toward Jerusalem, where He will be crucified.

Along the way, people come to Him with questions.

The Pharisees ask about **divorce.**

Jesus takes them back to the beginning.

God created marriage as a lifelong union of one man and one woman.

“What God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Then people bring **little children** to Jesus.

The disciples try to send them away.

But Jesus welcomes them.

“The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Then a rich young man comes to Jesus.

He asks what good thing he must do to have eternal life.

He has kept the commandments.

But when Jesus tells him to sell his possessions and follow Him, he goes away sad.

He loved his wealth more than he loved Jesus.

Jesus then teaches about the danger of riches.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

The disciples are shocked.

“Who then can be saved?”

Jesus answers:

“With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Finally, Peter asks what the disciples will receive for leaving everything.

Jesus promises great rewards.

But He also gives a warning:

“Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”

Matthew 19 therefore teaches two great truths:

God's design for life is good and must be honored.

And:

Nothing in this world — not wealth, not status, not even good works — can earn eternal life; it comes only through God's power and by following Jesus.

The central truth of Matthew 19 is:

Jesus calls His followers to honor God's design for marriage, to come to Him with childlike faith, and to treasure Him above all riches, trusting that with God all things are possible and that every sacrifice for Him will be richly rewarded.

I. LEAVING GALILEE

Matthew 19:1 — Beyond the Jordan

“When Jesus had finished these teachings, He left Galilee and went into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.”

When Jesus had finished these teachings.

This phrase marks the end of the fourth of Jesus' five great teaching sections in Matthew.

Then **He left Galilee.**

This was the last time Jesus would minister in Galilee before His death.

He went **into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.**

This area was east of the Jordan River, also called Perea.

Jesus was now on His way to Jerusalem.

Cross References

Mark 10:1

> Then Jesus left that place and went into the area of Judea and across the Jordan River.

John 3:26

> So they came to John and said, “Teacher, remember the man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan River?”

John 1:28

> This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing people.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus moved steadily toward the cross, according to the Father's plan.

II. LARGE CROWDS FOLLOWED

Matthew 19:2 — He Healed Them

“Large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there.”

Even on His way to the cross, Jesus kept caring for people.

Large crowds followed Him.

He healed them there.

Jesus never stopped showing compassion.

Cross References

Mark 10:1

> Again, crowds came to Him, and Jesus taught them as He usually did.

Matthew 4:23

> Jesus went everywhere in Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, telling the good news about the kingdom, and healing all the people's diseases and sicknesses.

Luke 6:17

> A large crowd of His followers was there, and many people came from all over Judea.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' compassion never takes a break.

III. A TEST ABOUT DIVORCE

Matthew 19:3 — For Any Reason?

“Some Pharisees came to test Him. They asked, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?’”

The Pharisees came **to test Him.**

They were trying to trap Jesus.

They asked about **divorce.**

“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?”

In that day, Jewish teachers were divided on this question.

They argued about Deuteronomy 24:1, which allowed divorce when a man found **something indecent** in his wife.

One group, following Rabbi Shammai, said this meant only serious sexual sin.

Another group, following Rabbi Hillel, said a man could divorce his wife for almost any reason, even burning his food.

The Pharisees wanted Jesus to pick a side.

They were also in the territory of Herod Antipas, who had put John the Baptist to death for speaking against his marriage.

Cross References

Mark 10:2

> Some Pharisees came to Jesus and tried to trick Him. They asked, “Is it right for a man to divorce his wife?”

Deuteronomy 24:1

> Suppose a man marries a woman, but later he finds something shameful about her and is not pleased with her. He may write her divorce papers, give them to her, and send her away from his house.

Malachi 2:16

> “I hate divorce,” says the LORD, the God of Israel.

Spiritual Principle

The world's arguments must be answered with God's Word.

IV. MALE AND FEMALE

Matthew 19:4 — In the Beginning

“Jesus replied, ‘Haven't you read that in the beginning the Creator “made them male and female”?’”

Jesus did not start with Deuteronomy.

He went back further.

“In the beginning.”

He took them to the book of Genesis.

Before the fall.

Before sin.

Before divorce.

The Creator made them male and female.

God designed two different and complementary sexes.

Marriage was not a human invention.

It was God's design from the start.

Cross References

Genesis 1:27

> So God created human beings in His image. In the image of God He created them. He created them male and female.

Genesis 5:2

> He created them male and female, and on that day He blessed them and named them human.

Mark 10:6

> But when God made the world, “He made them male and female.”

Spiritual Principle

To understand God's design, we must go back to the beginning.

V. ONE FLESH

Matthew 19:5 — Leave and Be United

“And said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’?”

Jesus quoted Genesis 2:24.

Marriage has three parts.

Leave — a man leaves his father and mother.

The marriage becomes the most important human relationship.

Be united — he is joined to his wife.

The word means **to cling** or **to be glued.**

Become one flesh — the two become one.

This includes physical union.

But it is also a joining of their whole lives.

Cross References

Genesis 2:24

> So a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one body.

Mark 10:7

> So a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife.

Ephesians 5:31

> The Scripture says, “So a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one body.”

Spiritual Principle

Marriage is a deep union designed by God.

Application

Building a strong marriage includes:

- Leaving — putting your spouse before your parents.
- Cleaving — staying committed through hard times.
- Becoming one — sharing your whole life together.
- Keeping God at the center.

VI. WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER

Matthew 19:6 — Let No One Separate

“So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Jesus drew the conclusion.

They are no longer two, but one flesh.

Then He gave a command.

What God has joined together, let no one separate.

Notice who joins a couple together.

God.

Marriage is not just a human agreement.

It is a covenant made before God.

And what God joins, people should not tear apart.

Cross References

Mark 10:8

> And the two will become one body. So there are not two, but one.

1 Corinthians 6:16

> The Scripture says, “The two will become one body.”

Malachi 2:15

> God made husbands and wives to become one body and one spirit for His purpose... So be careful, and do not break your promise to the wife you married when you were young.

Spiritual Principle

Marriage is a covenant God makes, not just a contract people sign.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God is the One who joins a husband and wife, and He does not intend for them to be separated.

VII. WHY DID MOSES COMMAND IT?

Matthew 19:7 — A Certificate of Divorce

“They asked Him, ‘Why then did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?’”

The Pharisees pushed back.

“Why then did Moses command...?”

They said Moses **commanded** divorce.

But that is not what Deuteronomy says.

Moses did not command divorce.

He **regulated** it.

The certificate of divorce protected the woman.

It gave her legal proof that she was free to remarry.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 24:1

> He may write her divorce papers, give them to her, and send her away from his house.

Mark 10:4

They said, “Moses allowed a man to write divorce papers and send his wife away.”

Jeremiah 3:8

I gave unfaithful Israel a divorce letter and sent her away because of her adultery.

Spiritual Principle

God's permission because of sin is not the same as God's command.

VIII. HARD HEARTS

Matthew 19:8 — Not from the Beginning

“Jesus answered, ‘Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.’”

Jesus corrected them.

Moses permitted divorce.

Not commanded.

Permitted.

Why?

Because your hearts were hard.

Divorce was allowed because of human sin and stubbornness.

It was a way to limit the damage sin caused.

But it was not this way from the beginning.

God's original design was lifelong marriage.

Divorce was never part of His perfect plan.

Cross References

Mark 10:5

Jesus said, “Moses wrote that command for you because you were stubborn.”

Deuteronomy 10:16

Give yourselves completely to serving the LORD, and don't be stubborn any longer.

Ezekiel 36:26

> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will take out the stubborn heart of stone from your bodies, and I will give you a new, obedient heart of flesh.

Spiritual Principle

Hard hearts lead to broken relationships; God offers new hearts.

IX. EXCEPT FOR SEXUAL IMMORALITY

Matthew 19:9 — Commits Adultery

“I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman, commits adultery.”

Jesus gave His own teaching.

Anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman, commits adultery.

This was stricter than either of the rabbis.

Jesus gave one exception here:

Sexual immorality.

Unfaithfulness breaks the marriage covenant.

But even then, divorce is permitted, not required.

Forgiveness and restoration are always better when possible.

This is a sensitive subject.

Many people have been hurt by divorce.

Some were sinned against.

Some have sinned.

God's grace is available to all who come to Him.

The goal of Jesus' teaching is not to crush the broken but to protect marriage as God designed it.

Cross References

Matthew 5:32

> But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual sin, is causing her to commit adultery.

Mark 10:11

> Jesus answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of adultery against her.”

Luke 16:18

> If a man divorces his wife and marries another woman, he is guilty of adultery.

Spiritual Principle

God's standard for marriage is high, and His grace for the broken is deep.

Key Truth

Jesus raised the standard to protect marriage, not to condemn those who are hurting.

X. BETTER NOT TO MARRY?

Matthew 19:10 — The Disciples' Reaction

“The disciples said to Him, ‘If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.’”

The disciples were shocked.

They had probably grown up thinking divorce was easy.

Now Jesus said marriage was for life.

So they said:

“It is better not to marry.”

If you cannot get out of marriage easily, maybe it is better to stay single.

Their reaction shows how seriously Jesus' teaching struck them.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 7:1

> Now I will discuss the things you wrote me about. It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.

1 Corinthians 7:27

> If you are married, do not try to become free from your wife. If you are not married, do not look for a wife.

Genesis 2:18

> Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is right for him.”

Spiritual Principle

God's standards may surprise us, but they are always for our good.

XI. NOT EVERYONE CAN ACCEPT THIS

Matthew 19:11 — Only Those to Whom It Is Given

“Jesus replied, ‘Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it has been given.’”

Jesus answered their comment about not marrying.

Not everyone can accept this teaching.

Staying single is not for everyone.

Only those to whom it has been given.

Some people are given the ability by God to live a single life with contentment.

Paul later called this a gift.

Marriage is good.

Singleness can also be good.

Both are gifts from God.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 7:7

> I wish everyone were like me, but each person has his own gift from God. One has one gift, another has another gift.

Matthew 13:11

> Jesus answered, “You have been chosen to know the secrets about the kingdom of heaven, but others cannot know these secrets.”

John 6:65

> Jesus said, “That is the reason I said, ‘If the Father does not bring a person to Me, that one cannot come.’”

Spiritual Principle

Both marriage and singleness can be gifts from God.

XII. FOR THE SAKE OF THE KINGDOM

Matthew 19:12 — Eunuchs

“For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have chosen to live like this for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.”

A **eunuch** was a man who could not have children or a normal married life.

Jesus described three kinds.

Some were born that way.

Some were made that way by men.

In the ancient world, some servants in royal courts were made eunuchs.

Others have chosen to live like this for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

This does not mean harming the body.

It means choosing to remain single and devoted to God's work.

Paul is an example.

He stayed single so he could serve the Lord without distraction.

Isaiah promised that God would welcome eunuchs who love Him and give them a place in His house.

In the book of Acts, an Ethiopian eunuch was one of the first Gentiles to believe.

Cross References

Isaiah 56:4

> This is what the LORD says: “The eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, who choose to do what pleases Me and keep My covenant... I will give them a place in My house.”

Acts 8:27

> So Philip got ready and went. On the road he saw a man from Ethiopia, a eunuch. He was an important officer in the service of the queen of the Ethiopians.

1 Corinthians 7:32

> I want you to be free from worry. A man who is not married is busy with the Lord's work, trying to please the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

A single life devoted to God is honorable and valuable.

Key Truth

Singleness is not second-class in God's kingdom.

XIII. LITTLE CHILDREN BROUGHT TO JESUS

Matthew 19:13 — The Disciples Rebuked Them

“Then people brought little children to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.”

People **brought little children to Jesus.**

They wanted Him to **place His hands on them and pray for them.**

Jewish parents often brought their children to rabbis for a blessing.

But **the disciples rebuked them.**

They thought Jesus was too busy and too important for children.

They had forgotten what Jesus taught them only a short time before.

In Matthew 18, He placed a child in the middle of them as an example.

Cross References

Mark 10:13

> Some people brought their little children to Jesus so He could touch them, but His followers told them to stop.

Luke 18:15

> Some people brought even their babies to Jesus so He could touch them. When the followers saw this, they told the people to stop.

Matthew 18:3

> I tell you the truth, you must change and become like little children. Otherwise, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Spiritual Warning

It is easy to forget what Jesus has taught us when we are busy.

XIV. LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME

Matthew 19:14 — Do Not Stop Them

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not stop them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’”

Jesus corrected His disciples.

“Let the little children come to Me.”

“Do not stop them.”

Mark tells us Jesus was **indignant** — He was upset with the disciples.

Then He gave the reason.

“The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Children were not too small for Jesus.

They were exactly the kind of people He welcomed.

Their trust and dependence picture what it means to enter God's kingdom.

Cross References

Mark 10:14

> When Jesus saw this, He was upset and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these children.”

Luke 18:16

> But Jesus called for the children, saying, “Let the little children come to Me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these children.”

Matthew 18:4

> The greatest person in the kingdom of heaven is the one who makes himself humble like this child.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus welcomes children, and He wants us to bring them to Him.

Application

Bringing children to Jesus includes:

- Praying for them.
- Teaching them God's Word.
- Taking them to church.
- Showing them Jesus' love.
- Never treating them as unimportant.

XV. HE PLACED HIS HANDS ON THEM

Matthew 19:15 — Then He Went On

“He placed His hands on them and then went on His way.”

Jesus **placed His hands on them.**

He blessed them.

Mark tells us He **took them in His arms.**

In the Old Testament, placing hands on someone was a way of giving a blessing.

Jacob blessed his grandsons this way.

Moses passed authority to Joshua this way.

Jesus took time for the children.

Then **He went on His way** toward Jerusalem.

Cross References

Mark 10:16

> Then Jesus took the children in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them.

Genesis 48:14

> But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on the head of Ephraim, the younger son. He put his left hand on Manasseh's head.

Numbers 27:18

> So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun. My Spirit is in him. Put your hand on him.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is never too busy to bless a child.

XVI. WHAT GOOD THING MUST I DO?

Matthew 19:16 — A Man Came Up to Jesus

“A man came up to Jesus and asked, ‘Teacher, what good thing must I do to have eternal life?’”

A man came up to Jesus.

Matthew tells us he was **young** and **rich.**

Luke tells us he was a **ruler.**

He had youth, wealth, and position.

Everything the world values.

Yet he knew something was missing.

He asked:

“What good thing must I do to have eternal life?”

Notice the words **“good thing”** and **“do.”**

He thought eternal life was something he could earn.

If he just did the right good deed, he would have it.

Cross References

Mark 10:17

> As Jesus started to leave, a man ran to Him and fell on his knees before Jesus. The man asked, “Good teacher, what must I do to have life forever?”

Luke 18:18

> A certain leader asked Jesus, “Good Teacher, what must I do to have life forever?”

Luke 10:25

> Then an expert on the law stood up to test Jesus, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to get life forever?”

Spiritual Principle

Many people think eternal life is something they can earn.

XVII. ONLY ONE WHO IS GOOD

Matthew 19:17 — Keep the Commandments

“Jesus replied, ‘Why do you ask Me about what is good? There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.’”

Jesus answered with a question.

“Why do you ask Me about what is good?”

“There is only One who is good.”

Only God is truly good.

Jesus was pushing the young man to think.

If only God is good, then no human being can be good enough on their own.

Then Jesus said:

“If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.”

Jesus was not teaching that we are saved by keeping the law.

He was showing the man that he could not keep the law perfectly.

The law reveals our need for a Savior.

Cross References

Mark 10:18

> Jesus answered, “Why do you call Me good? Only God is good.”

Luke 18:19

> Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? Only God is good.”

Leviticus 18:5

> Obey My laws and rules. A person who obeys them will live because of them. I am the LORD.

Spiritual Principle

Only God is truly good, and no one can be good enough to earn eternal life.

XVIII. WHICH ONES?

Matthew 19:18 — The Commandments About Others

“‘Which ones?’ he asked. Jesus replied, ‘“You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony,”’”

The young man asked:

“Which ones?”

Perhaps he wanted to find the most important ones.

Jesus listed several of the Ten Commandments.

Do not murder.

Do not commit adultery.

Do not steal.

Do not give false testimony.

Notice that Jesus listed the commandments about how we treat other people.

Cross References

Exodus 20:13

> You must not murder anyone.

Deuteronomy 5:17

> You must not murder anyone.

Romans 13:9

> The law says, “You must not be guilty of adultery. You must not murder anyone. You must not steal. You must not want to take your neighbor's things.” All these commands are really only one rule: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.”

Spiritual Principle

God's commands show us how to love others.

XIX. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Matthew 19:19 — Honor Your Father and Mother

“honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

Jesus added two more.

Honor your father and mother.

Love your neighbor as yourself.

The last one sums up all the others.

Loving your neighbor as yourself means caring about others' needs as much as your own.

This would be the test.

Did this young man truly love his neighbor as himself?

Cross References

Exodus 20:12

> Honor your father and your mother so that you will live a long time in the land that the LORD your God is going to give you.

Leviticus 19:18

> Love your neighbor as you love yourself. I am the LORD.

Ephesians 6:2

> The command says, “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first command that has a promise with it.

Spiritual Principle

Love for others is the heart of God's law.

XX. WHAT DO I STILL LACK?

Matthew 19:20 — I Have Kept All These

“The young man said, ‘I have kept all these since I was young. What do I still lack?’”

The young man was confident.

“I have kept all these since I was young.”

Outwardly, he probably had.

He had not murdered.

He had not committed adultery.

He had not stolen.

But then he asked an honest question.

“What do I still lack?”

Deep down, he knew something was missing.

Keeping the rules had not given him peace.

Mark tells us that Jesus looked at him and **loved him.**

Cross References

Mark 10:20

> The man said, “Teacher, I have obeyed all these things since I was a boy.”

Luke 18:21

> But the leader said, “I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy.”

Philippians 3:6

> If anyone could be made right with God by following the law, I could. I obeyed the law perfectly.

Spiritual Principle

Outward obedience cannot fill the emptiness of a heart that is not fully given to God.

XXI. SELL, GIVE, FOLLOW

Matthew 19:21 — Treasure in Heaven

“Jesus answered, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.’”

Jesus put His finger on the problem.

“If you want to be perfect.”

Perfect means complete or whole.

Then Jesus gave four commands.

Go.

Sell your possessions.

Give to the poor.

Follow Me.

Jesus does not ask every person to sell everything they own.

But He knew this young man's heart.

His wealth was his god.

He did not truly love his neighbor as himself, because he would not share with the poor.

He had kept the second part of the law outwardly.

But he had broken the first commandment.

He had another god before the true God.

And the most important command was the last one.

“Then come, follow Me.”

Eternal life is not about doing one more good thing.

It is about following Jesus.

Cross References

Mark 10:21

> Jesus looked at the man and loved him. Jesus said, “There is one more thing you need to do. Go and sell everything you have, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow Me.”

Luke 18:22

> When Jesus heard this, He said to him, “There is still one more thing you need to do. Sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow Me.”

Luke 12:33

> Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Get for yourselves purses that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never run out.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus asks us to give up whatever takes His place in our hearts.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The young man asked what good thing he could do; Jesus told him what god he needed to give up.

XXII. HE WENT AWAY SAD

Matthew 19:22 — He Had Great Wealth

“When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.”

This is one of the saddest verses in the Bible.

He went away.

He walked away from Jesus.

Sad.

He was not happy with his choice.

But he made it anyway.

Because he had great wealth.

He did not own his wealth.

His wealth owned him.

He came to Jesus asking about eternal life.

He left with his money and without eternal life.

Cross References

Mark 10:22

> When the man heard this, he became very sad and left, because he was rich.

Luke 18:23

> But when the man heard this, he became very sad, because he was very rich.

1 Timothy 6:9

> Those who want to become rich bring temptation to themselves and are caught in a trap.

Spiritual Warning

Anything we love more than Jesus will keep us from Him.

Key Truth

He kept his riches and lost the true treasure.

XXIII. HARD FOR THE RICH

Matthew 19:23 — To Enter the Kingdom

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.’”

Jesus turned to His disciples.

“It is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Why?

Riches make people feel secure.

They make people feel they do not need God.

They pull the heart toward this world.

They make it hard to give up everything to follow Jesus.

Cross References

Mark 10:23

> Then Jesus looked at His followers and said, “How hard it will be for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

Luke 18:24

> Jesus looked at him and said, “It is very hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of God.”

Proverbs 11:28

> Those who trust in their riches will be ruined, but a good person will be healthy like a green leaf.

Spiritual Principle

Riches can make it harder to see our need for God.

XXIV. A CAMEL AND A NEEDLE

Matthew 19:24 — Easier for a Camel

“Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

Jesus used a striking picture.

A **camel** was the largest animal in Israel.

The **eye of a needle** was one of the smallest openings.

Jesus was saying something that is humanly impossible.

Some people have said there was a small gate in Jerusalem called the Needle's Eye.

But there is no evidence such a gate existed in Jesus' day.

Jesus meant exactly what He said.

It is impossible.

Cross References

Mark 10:25

> It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

Luke 18:25

> It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

Jeremiah 9:23

> This is what the LORD says: “Wise people must not brag about their wisdom. Strong people must not brag about their strength. Rich people must not brag about their money.”

Spiritual Principle

No one can save themselves — not by money, power, or effort.

XXV. WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?

Matthew 19:25 — The Disciples Were Astonished

“When the disciples heard this, they were astonished and asked, ‘Who then can be saved?’”

The disciples were **astonished.**

In their culture, people thought wealth was a sign of God's blessing.

If the rich, who seemed blessed by God, could not be saved, then who could?

“Who then can be saved?”

This was exactly the right question.

Cross References

Mark 10:26

> The followers were even more surprised and said to each other, “Then who can be saved?”

Luke 18:26

> When the people heard this, they asked, “Then who can be saved?”

Luke 13:23

> Someone asked Jesus, “Lord, will only a few people be saved?”

Spiritual Principle

When we see how impossible salvation is for us, we are ready to see how possible it is for God.

XXVI. WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

Matthew 19:26 — Impossible with Man

“Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

Jesus looked at them.

Then He gave one of the most important answers in the Bible.

“With man this is impossible.”

No one can save themselves.

Not the rich.

Not the poor.

Not the religious.

Not anyone.

“But with God all things are possible.”

Salvation is a work of God.

He can do what we cannot.

He can change even a heart that loves money.

He can save anyone.

Cross References

Luke 1:37

> God can do anything!

Genesis 18:14

> Is anything too hard for the LORD?

Job 42:2

> I know that You can do all things. No plan of Yours can be ruined.

Spiritual Principle

Salvation is impossible for us and possible for God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The camel cannot squeeze itself through the needle, but God can do the impossible.

XXVII. WE HAVE LEFT EVERYTHING

Matthew 19:27 — What Then Will There Be for Us?

“Peter answered Him, ‘We have left everything to follow You! What then will there be for us?’”

Peter spoke up.

“We have left everything to follow You!”

The rich young man would not leave his wealth.

But the disciples had left their boats, their nets, their homes, and their jobs.

“What then will there be for us?”

This was an honest question.

Peter wanted to know if their sacrifice was worth it.

Cross References

Mark 10:28

Peter said to Jesus, “Look, we have left everything to follow You.”

Luke 18:28

Peter said, “Look, we have left everything we had and followed You.”

Luke 5:11

They brought their boats to the shore, left everything, and followed Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

God sees every sacrifice made for Jesus.

XXVIII. TWELVE THRONES

Matthew 19:28 — The Renewal of All Things

“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’”

Jesus gave a wonderful promise.

At the renewal of all things.

This is a picture of the new creation.

The day when God makes everything new.

When the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne.

Jesus will reign as King.

You who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones.

The disciples would share in His rule.

Judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

They would have a place of honor and authority in His kingdom.

The fishermen who gave up their boats would sit on thrones.

Cross References

Luke 22:30

> You will eat and drink at My table in My kingdom. You will sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

Revelation 21:5

> The One who was sitting on the throne said, “Look! I am making everything new!”

Acts 3:21

> Jesus must stay in heaven until the time comes when all things will be made right again, as God promised long ago through His holy prophets.

Spiritual Principle

What we give up for Jesus is small compared to what He will give us.

XXIX. A HUNDRED TIMES AS MUCH

Matthew 19:29 — Eternal Life

“And everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, wife, children, or lands for My name's sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.”

The promise was not only for the twelve.

Everyone who has left things **for My name's sake.**

Houses.

Family.

Lands.

They **will receive a hundred times as much.**

Mark adds that this includes receiving it **in this life**, along with persecutions.

Believers gain a new family in the church.

Brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers in the faith.

Homes open to them everywhere.

And will inherit eternal life.

The very thing the rich young man wanted but would not give up his wealth for.

Cross References

Mark 10:29

> Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or farms for Me and for the good news will get a hundred times more in this life.”

Luke 18:29

> Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, all those who have left houses, wives, brothers, parents, or children for the kingdom of God will get much more in this life. And in the age that is coming, they will have life forever.”

Job 42:10

> After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD gave him success again. The LORD gave Job twice as much as he had owned before.

Spiritual Principle

No one ever loses by giving to Jesus.

Key Truth

The rich young man kept his possessions and lost eternal life; the disciples gave up their possessions and gained eternal life.

XXX. FIRST WILL BE LAST

Matthew 19:30 — Last Will Be First

“But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”

Jesus ended with a warning.

Many who are first will be last.

Many who are last will be first.

God's kingdom turns the world's values upside down.

The rich young man was first in the world's eyes.

Young.

Rich.

Powerful.

But he was last in God's kingdom.

The disciples were last in the world's eyes.

Poor fishermen and a tax collector.

But they would be first in God's kingdom.

This was also a warning to the disciples.

They must not become proud of their sacrifice.

In the next chapter, Jesus tells a parable to explain this saying.

Cross References

Matthew 20:16

> So those who are last now will be first in the future, and those who are first now will be last in the future.

Mark 10:31

> Many who have the highest place now will have the lowest place in the future. And many who have the lowest place now will have the highest place in the future.

Luke 13:30

> There are those who are last now who will be first in the future. And there are those who are first now who will be last in the future.

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom reverses the world's ranking.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not judge who is first by this world's standards — God's ranking will surprise everyone.

XXXI. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 19

1. Marriage Is God's Design

From the beginning, God created marriage as a permanent union of one man and one woman.

Principle:

Marriage is God's idea, so it should be lived God's way.

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2. Divorce Is Not God's Ideal

Though permitted because of human hardness, God's will is lifelong faithfulness.

Principle:

Hard hearts break marriages; God offers new hearts.

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3. The Kingdom Belongs to the Humble

Children represent the childlike faith required to enter heaven.

Principle:

Come to Jesus with simple, trusting faith.

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4. Eternal Life Is Not Earned by Works

The rich young ruler kept commandments but lacked surrender.

Eternal life comes through following Christ.

Principle:

We cannot earn eternal life; we receive it by following Jesus.

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5. Wealth Can Hinder Faith

Riches easily bind the heart, but with God, salvation is possible for anyone.

Principle:

Hold your possessions loosely and Jesus tightly.

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6. God Rewards Sacrifice

Those who give up everything for Christ will receive eternal treasures far greater than what was lost.

Principle:

What you give up for Jesus is never lost.

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7. The Kingdom Inverts Human Status

The first will be last, and the last will be first.

Principle:

God's measure of greatness is not the world's measure.

XXXII. GOD'S DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE

Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19 gives a clear picture of marriage.

Marriage Was Created by God

“The Creator made them.”

Marriage Is Between a Man and a Woman

“Male and female.”

Marriage Involves Leaving

“A man will leave his father and mother.”

Marriage Involves Cleaving

“Be united to his wife.”

Marriage Creates Oneness

“The two will become one flesh.”

Marriage Is Joined by God

“What God has joined together.”

Marriage Is Meant to Last

“Let no one separate.”

Key Truth

Marriage is not a human contract that can be broken at will; it is a covenant God creates and intends to last for life.

XXXIII. THE RICH YOUNG MAN AND THE DISCIPLES

Matthew 19 shows two very different responses to Jesus' call.

The Rich Young Man

- Young, rich, and powerful.
- Kept the commandments outwardly.
- Asked what good thing he could do.
- Was told to sell everything and follow.
- Went away sad.
- Kept his wealth and lost eternal life.

The Disciples

- Ordinary, poor, and unimportant.
- Made many mistakes.
- Asked what they would receive.
- Had left everything to follow.
- Were promised thrones and rewards.
- Gave up their possessions and gained eternal life.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The question is not how much you have, but whether you are willing to let it go to follow Jesus.

XXXIV. WHAT MATTHEW 19 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 19 presents Jesus as:

The One Moving Toward the Cross

He left Galilee for Jerusalem.

The Compassionate Healer

He healed the crowds along the way.

The Authority on Marriage

He took people back to God's original design.

The Friend of Children

He welcomed and blessed them.

The Loving Teacher

He looked at the rich young man and loved him.

The One Worth Everything

He called people to leave all and follow Him.

The God of the Impossible

With God all things are possible.

The Coming King

He will sit on His glorious throne.

The Rewarder

He will repay a hundred times over.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who welcomed the children and loved the rich young man still invites everyone to come and follow Him.

XXXV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the Pharisees ask Jesus about divorce?

They wanted to test Him and trap Him.

Jewish teachers were divided on the question, and they wanted Jesus to pick a side.

Question 2

Where did Jesus go to answer the question about divorce?

He went back to the beginning, to Genesis.

He showed that God created marriage as a lifelong union of one man and one woman.

Question 3

What does it mean for two to become one flesh?

It means a deep union of their whole lives, including physical, emotional, and spiritual oneness.

Question 4

Did Moses command divorce?

No.

He permitted it and regulated it because of the hardness of people's hearts.

It was never God's original design.

Question 5

What exception did Jesus give for divorce?

Sexual immorality.

But even then, divorce is permitted, not required, and forgiveness and restoration are better when possible.

Question 6

What did Jesus say about staying single?

He said some are given the ability to stay single for the sake of the kingdom.

Both marriage and singleness can be gifts from God.

Question 7

Why did the disciples try to stop the children from coming to Jesus?

They thought Jesus was too busy or too important for children.

Question 8

What did Jesus say about the children?

He said to let them come, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

Question 9

What was wrong with the rich young man's question?

He thought eternal life was something he could earn by doing a good thing.

Question 10

Why did Jesus tell him to keep the commandments?

To show him that he could not keep them perfectly and that he needed more than rule-keeping.

Question 11

Why did Jesus tell him to sell his possessions?

Because his wealth was his god.

He loved his money more than he loved God or his neighbor.

Question 12

What does the camel and the eye of a needle mean?

It means that salvation is humanly impossible, especially for those who trust in riches.

Question 13

Who can be saved?

No one can save themselves.

But with God, all things are possible.

He can save anyone.

Question 14

What did Jesus promise to those who leave everything for Him?

He promised a hundred times as much and eternal life.

The twelve disciples would sit on thrones in His kingdom.

Question 15

What does “the first will be last, and the last will be first” mean?

God's kingdom reverses the world's values.

Those who seem great now may be last, and those who seem unimportant may be first.

Question 16

What should Matthew 19 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 19 should cause believers to live:

- Honoring God's design for marriage.
- Protecting and strengthening their marriages.
- Showing grace to those hurt by divorce.
- Valuing both marriage and singleness.
- Bringing children to Jesus.
- Not trying to earn eternal life.
- Holding possessions loosely.
- Trusting God for the impossible.
- Giving up whatever takes Jesus' place.
- Trusting that every sacrifice for Jesus will be rewarded.

XXXVI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 19 asks several important questions.

Do I Honor God's Design for Marriage?

If I Am Married, Am I Leaving, Cleaving, and Becoming One with My Spouse?

Do I Show Grace to Those Hurt by Divorce?

Do I See Singleness as a Gift and Not a Failure?

Am I Bringing Children to Jesus, or Getting in the Way?

Am I Trying to Earn Eternal Life?

What Do I Still Lack?

Is There Anything I Love More Than Jesus?

Do My Possessions Own Me?

Do I Believe That With God All Things Are Possible?

What Have I Given Up for Jesus, and Do I Trust Him to Reward It?

Am I Measuring Greatness by the World's Standards or God's?

XXXVII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The One Thing You Lack”

The rich young man had almost everything.

He was young.

He was rich.

He was powerful.

He was moral.

He had kept the commandments.

And yet he asked:

“What do I still lack?”

Jesus told him.

He lacked one thing.

A heart fully surrendered to God.

His wealth was in the way.

He could not follow Jesus while holding on to his riches.

So he walked away.

This creates a powerful principle.

The thing we refuse to give up is often the very thing keeping us from Jesus.

For the rich young man, it was money.

For others, it may be a relationship, a habit, a dream, or their own pride.

Jesus loves us too much to let us keep a rival god.

Principle:

The one thing we will not give up for Jesus is the one thing that will keep us from Him.

XXXVIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 19 takes place on the road to Jerusalem.

Jesus is heading toward the cross.

And along the way, He meets people with questions.

The Pharisees ask about divorce.

Jesus takes them back to the beginning, where God created marriage to last.

Parents bring little children.

The disciples try to stop them.

Jesus welcomes them and blesses them.

A rich young man asks how to have eternal life.

Jesus tells him to sell everything and follow Him.

And the young man walks away sad.

The disciples are shocked.

“Who then can be saved?”

And Jesus answers:

“With God all things are possible.”

Then Jesus promises that everyone who leaves anything for Him will receive far more.

Matthew 19 therefore reminds us:

God's design for marriage is good.

Children matter to Jesus.

Eternal life cannot be earned.

Riches can keep us from Jesus.

Salvation is impossible for us but possible for God.

And every sacrifice for Jesus will be richly rewarded.

The story of Matthew 19 does not end with:

A trap from the Pharisees.

A sad young man walking away.

Or shocked disciples.

It ends with:

A promise of thrones.

A hundred times more.

And eternal life for all who follow Him.

The same call still stands:

Honor God's design.

Bring the children to Him.

Stop trying to earn eternal life.

Let go of whatever takes His place.

Trust the God of the impossible.

Follow Jesus.

And until He returns:

Keep honoring His design.

Keep holding possessions loosely.

Keep following Him.

Keep trusting His reward.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Your good design for life.

Thank You for creating marriage from the beginning.

Strengthen marriages in our homes and churches.

Help husbands and wives leave, cleave, and become one.

Protect what You have joined together.

Soften hard hearts, and give new hearts where there has been pain.

Give grace and healing to those who have been hurt by divorce.

Help us honor both marriage and singleness as gifts from You.

Lord Jesus, thank You for welcoming the little children.

Help us bring children to You and never stand in their way.

Give us childlike faith.

Forgive us for the times we have tried to earn eternal life.

Show us what we still lack.

Reveal anything in our hearts that we love more than You.

Loosen our grip on our possessions.

Help us hold everything loosely and hold You tightly.

Thank You that what is impossible for us is possible for You.

Thank You that You can save anyone, even those who seem far away.

Thank You for the promise that nothing we give up for You is ever lost.

Help us live by Your standards, not the world's.

Keep us humble, remembering that the first will be last and the last will be first.

Give us grace to follow You, whatever it costs.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” — Matthew 19:26

Central Truth

Jesus calls His followers to honor God's design for marriage, to come to Him with childlike faith, and to treasure Him above all riches, trusting that with God all things are possible and that every sacrifice for Him will be richly rewarded.

Matthew 19 in One Sentence

On the road to Jerusalem, Jesus teaches that marriage is God's lifelong design, welcomes and blesses little children, calls a rich young man to give up his wealth and follow Him, teaches that salvation is impossible for man but possible with God, and promises great rewards to all who leave everything to follow Him.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 20 — The Parable of the Vineyard, True Greatness, and Healing the Blind

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 19 ended with a surprising saying:

“Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”

Matthew Chapter 20 begins with a parable that explains it.

A landowner hires workers for his vineyard.

Some start early in the morning.

Some start at nine.

Some at noon.

Some at three.

And some just one hour before sunset.

At the end of the day, everyone receives the same pay.

The workers who started first are angry.

But the landowner says:

“Are you envious because I am generous?”

This parable teaches that God's grace is not earned.

It is a gift.

And God is free to be generous to whomever He chooses.

Then Jesus tells His disciples for the third time that He will die in Jerusalem.

This time, He gives more detail than ever.

He will be condemned, mocked, flogged, and crucified.

And on the third day, He will be raised.

But right after this, the mother of James and John asks Jesus for a favor.

She wants her sons to have the highest places in His kingdom.

The other disciples are angry.

So Jesus teaches them what true greatness looks like.

“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.”

And He points to Himself:

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

The chapter ends with two blind men by the road.

They cry out for mercy.

The crowd tells them to be quiet.

But they shout louder.

And Jesus stops, has compassion on them, and opens their eyes.

Matthew 20 therefore teaches two great truths:

God's grace is generous and cannot be earned.

And:

True greatness in God's kingdom is found in serving, just as Jesus served.

The central truth of Matthew 20 is:

God gives His grace generously to all who come, and Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom, calls His followers to find greatness in humble service.

I. A LANDOWNER HIRES WORKERS

Matthew 20:1 — Early in the Morning

“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard.”

Jesus began a parable.

The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner.

In the story, the landowner represents God.

He **went out early in the morning.**

The workday usually began at sunrise, about six in the morning.

He went **to hire workers for his vineyard.**

In the Old Testament, Israel was often pictured as God's vineyard.

At harvest time, extra workers were needed to gather the grapes before the rains came.

Cross References

Isaiah 5:1

> Now I will sing a song to my friend about his vineyard. My friend had a vineyard on a hill with very rich soil.

Matthew 9:37

> Jesus said to His followers, “There are many people to harvest, but there are only a few workers to help harvest them.”

1 Corinthians 3:9

> We are workers together for God, and you are like God's field.

Spiritual Principle

God goes out to call people into His work.

II. A DENARIUS FOR THE DAY

Matthew 20:2 — An Agreement

“He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.”

The landowner **agreed to pay them a denarius for the day.**

A **denarius** was a silver coin.

It was the normal wage for a full day's work.

It was enough to feed a family for a day.

The first workers made an agreement.

They knew exactly what they would receive.

Cross References

Leviticus 19:13

> Do not cheat your neighbor or rob him. Do not keep a hired worker's pay all night until morning.

James 5:4

> The pay you did not give the workers who mowed your fields cries out against you.

Colossians 4:1

> Masters, give what is good and fair to your slaves. Remember that you have a Master in heaven.

Spiritual Principle

God is always fair and keeps His word.

III. STANDING IN THE MARKETPLACE

Matthew 20:3 — Nine in the Morning

“About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing.”

About nine in the morning, the landowner went out again.

The **marketplace** was where workers waited to be hired for the day.

He saw others **standing... doing nothing.**

They were not lazy.

They simply had not been hired yet.

Cross References

Ecclesiastes 9:10

> Whatever work you do, do your best.

Matthew 20:7

> They answered, “No one gave us a job.” The man said to them, “Then you can go and work in my vineyard.”

Romans 12:11

> Do not be lazy but work hard. Serve the Lord with all your heart.

Spiritual Principle

God keeps calling people into His work throughout the day.

IV. WHATEVER IS RIGHT

Matthew 20:4 — So They Went

“He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went.”

The landowner invited them.

“You also go and work in my vineyard.”

This time, he did not name an amount.

He said, **“I will pay you whatever is right.”**

These workers trusted the landowner.

They did not bargain.

So they went.

Cross References

Colossians 3:23

> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as if you were working for the Lord and not for people.

Hebrews 6:10

> God is fair. He will not forget the work you did and the love you showed for Him.

Ruth 2:12

> May the LORD reward you for all you have done. May you be paid in full by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for protection.

Spiritual Principle

Those who trust God's goodness do not need to bargain with Him.

V. NOON AND THREE O'CLOCK

Matthew 20:5 — The Same Thing

“He went out again about noon and three in the afternoon and did the same thing.”

The landowner kept going out.

About noon.

About three in the afternoon.

Each time, he hired more workers.

He did not stop looking for people.

He kept inviting them into his vineyard.

Cross References

John 9:4

> While it is daytime, we must continue doing the work of the One who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work.

Galatians 6:9

> We must not become tired of doing good. We will receive our harvest of eternal life at the right time if we do not give up.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

> There is a time for everything, and everything on earth has its special season.

Spiritual Principle

God's invitation keeps going out to more and more people.

VI. FIVE IN THE AFTERNOON

Matthew 20:6 — Why Have You Been Standing Here?

“About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day doing nothing?’”

About five in the afternoon, the landowner went out one more time.

The workday ended at about six.

Only one hour was left.

Most employers would not hire anyone this late.

But this landowner did.

He found **still others standing around.**

He asked:

“Why have you been standing here all day doing nothing?”

Cross References

Proverbs 6:9

> How long will you lie there, you lazy person? When will you get up from sleeping?

1 Thessalonians 5:6

> So we should not be like other people who are sleeping, but we should be awake and have self-control.

John 9:4

> While it is daytime, we must continue doing the work of the One who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work.

Spiritual Principle

It is never too late to answer God's call while there is still time.

VII. NO ONE HAS HIRED US

Matthew 20:7 — You Also Go

“‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered. He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’”

Their answer was simple and sad.

“Because no one has hired us.”

They wanted to work.

But no one wanted them.

Perhaps they were older.

Perhaps they were weaker.

Perhaps they were overlooked.

But the landowner wanted them.

“You also go and work in my vineyard.”

This is a picture of God's grace.

He calls people the world has passed by.

Cross References

Ezekiel 34:6

> My sheep wandered over all the mountains and hills. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.

Matthew 9:36

> When He saw the crowds, He felt sorry for them because they were hurting and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Romans 10:14

But before people can ask the Lord for help, they must believe in Him. And before they can believe in Him, they must hear about Him.

Spiritual Principle

God calls those whom no one else has called.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When the world says, “No one wants you,” God says, “You also go.”

VIII. PAYING THE WORKERS

Matthew 20:8 — Beginning with the Last

“When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’”

When evening came, it was time to pay the workers.

The Law of Moses required that day workers be paid at the end of each day.

They needed the money to buy food for their families.

Then the owner gave a surprising instruction.

Beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.

The last would be paid first.

And the first would see what the last received.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 24:15

Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and depends on it.

Leviticus 19:13

Do not keep a hired worker's pay all night until morning.

Matthew 20:16

So those who are last now will be first in the future, and those who are first now will be last in the future.

Spiritual Principle

God's way of doing things often reverses ours.

IX. A FULL DAY'S PAY

Matthew 20:9 — Each Received a Denarius

“The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius.”

The workers who were hired at five o'clock came forward.

They had worked only one hour.

And **each received a denarius.**

A full day's pay.

They did not earn it.

It was a gift.

This is a picture of salvation.

God does not give us what we earn.

He gives us what we need, by His grace.

Cross References

Romans 6:23

> The payment for sin is death. But God gives us the free gift of life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 2:8

> I mean that you have been saved by grace through believing. You did not save yourselves. It was a gift from God.

Titus 3:5

> He saved us because of His mercy, not because of good deeds we did to be right with Him.

Spiritual Principle

Salvation is a gift of grace, not a wage we earn.

Key Truth

The thief on the cross came to Jesus in the last hour of his life — and received the same eternal life as those who served for years.

X. THEY EXPECTED MORE

Matthew 20:10 — But Each Received a Denarius

“So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius.”

The workers who were hired first watched what happened.

They saw the one-hour workers get a full day's pay.

So **they expected to receive more.**

If the last workers got a denarius, surely they would get more.

But each one of them also received a denarius.

Exactly what they agreed to.

Exactly what was fair.

But not what they expected.

Cross References

Matthew 19:30

> Many who have the highest place now will have the lowest place in the future.

Luke 15:29

> The older son said to his father, “I have served you like a slave for many years and have always obeyed your commands. But you never gave me even a young goat to have a party with my friends.”

1 Corinthians 4:7

> Who says you are better than others? What do you have that was not given to you?

Spiritual Principle

Comparing ourselves to others steals our joy in God's goodness.

XI. THEY COMPLAINED

Matthew 20:11 — Against the Landowner

“When they received it, they began to complain against the landowner.”

They received exactly what they were promised.

But **they began to complain.**

They grumbled against the landowner.

Complaining is often the result of comparing.

They were not unhappy with their pay until they saw what others received.

Cross References

Exodus 16:2

> Then the whole community of Israel complained to Moses and Aaron in the desert.

1 Corinthians 10:10

> Do not complain as some of them did — and they were killed by the angel that destroys.

Philippians 2:14

> Do everything without complaining or arguing.

Spiritual Warning

Complaining reveals a heart that has forgotten God's goodness.

XII. WE BORE THE HEAT OF THE DAY

Matthew 20:12 — You Made Them Equal to Us

“‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’”

Their complaint was clear.

“These who were hired last worked only one hour.”

“You have made them equal to us.”

“We have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.”

They had worked hard.

They had worked in the hot sun.

They felt they deserved more.

Their problem was not that they were treated unfairly.

It was that others were treated generously.

Cross References

Genesis 31:40

> In the daytime the heat wore me out, and at night the cold kept me from sleeping.

Matthew 11:30

> The work I ask you to accept is easy. The load I give you to carry is light.

Isaiah 4:6

> It will be a shelter from the heat of the day, and a place of safety from the storm and rain.

Spiritual Principle

Grace offends those who think they have earned more than others.

XIII. FRIEND, I AM NOT UNFAIR

Matthew 20:13 — Didn't You Agree?

“But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?’”

The landowner answered one of them.

He called him **“Friend.”**

He was not harsh.

“I am not being unfair to you.”

“Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?”

The worker received exactly what he agreed to.

No one cheated him.

God is never unfair.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 32:4

> He is the Rock, and His works are perfect, and all His ways are right. He is a faithful God who does no wrong, who is right and fair.

Job 34:10

> God would never do evil. The Almighty would never do wrong.

Romans 9:14

> So what should we say about this? Is God unfair? In no way.

Spiritual Principle

God is never unfair, even when He is generous to others.

XIV. I WANT TO GIVE THE SAME

Matthew 20:14 — Take Your Pay and Go

“Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you.”

“Take your pay and go.”

Be content with what you received.

“I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you.”

The key word is **want.**

The landowner chose to be generous.

It was his decision.

God's grace is not based on what we deserve.

It is based on His generous heart.

Cross References

Romans 5:15

> But God's free gift is not like Adam's sin... the grace from God and the gift that came through the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, were much greater.

Luke 15:31

> The father said to him, “Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.”

Ephesians 2:4

> But God's mercy is great, and He loved us very much.

Spiritual Principle

God's generosity flows from His heart, not from our performance.

XV. ENVIOUS BECAUSE I AM GENEROUS?

Matthew 20:15 — My Own Money

“Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?”

The landowner asked two questions.

“Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money?”

It was his money.

He could give it as he chose.

God has the right to give His grace as He chooses.

“Or are you envious because I am generous?”

Literally, the Greek says, **“Is your eye evil because I am good?”**

The real problem was envy.

The first workers were upset not because they were cheated, but because someone else was blessed.

This parable was a warning for the disciples.

Peter had just asked, **“What will there be for us?”**

Jesus warned them not to become proud or envious of others in the kingdom.

Cross References

Romans 9:20

> You are only human, and human beings have no right to question God.

Proverbs 23:6

> Don't eat the food of a selfish person or want his fine food.

Genesis 4:5

> But God did not accept Cain and his offering. So Cain became very angry and looked unhappy.

Spiritual Warning

Envy cannot celebrate when God is good to others.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The problem was not that the landowner was unfair, but that he was generous — and some hearts cannot stand grace given to others.

XVI. THE LAST WILL BE FIRST

Matthew 20:16 — And the First Will Be Last

“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Jesus ended the parable with the same saying He used at the end of Matthew 19.

The last will be first.

The first will be last.

In God's kingdom, those who think they deserve the most may find themselves at the end.

And those who know they deserve nothing receive everything by grace.

This was a warning to the religious leaders who thought they were first.

And it was a comfort to the outcasts, sinners, and Gentiles who came to God late.

Cross References

Mark 10:31

> Many who have the highest place now will have the lowest place in the future.

Luke 13:30

> There are those who are last now who will be first in the future.

Matthew 23:12

> Whoever makes himself great will be made humble. Whoever makes himself humble will be made great.

Spiritual Principle

God's grace turns human rankings upside down.

XVII. GOING UP TO JERUSALEM

Matthew 20:17 — Jesus Took the Twelve Aside

“Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, He took the Twelve aside and said to them,”

Jesus was going up to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was on a high hill, so people always spoke of going **up** to it.

Jesus knew what was waiting for Him there.

Mark tells us Jesus was walking ahead of them.

The disciples were amazed and afraid.

He took the Twelve aside.

He wanted to tell them privately what was about to happen.

Cross References

Mark 10:32

> Jesus and the people with Him were on the road to Jerusalem, and Jesus was leading the way. His followers were amazed, but others who followed were afraid.

Luke 9:51

> When the time was coming near for Jesus to be taken up to heaven, He made up His mind to go to Jerusalem.

Luke 18:31

> Then Jesus took the twelve apostles aside and said to them, “We are going to Jerusalem. Everything the prophets wrote about the Son of Man will happen.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus walked toward the cross with determination.

XVIII. CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Matthew 20:18 — Delivered to the Chief Priests

“We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death”

This is the third time Jesus predicted His death.

And this time, He gave the most detail.

The Son of Man will be delivered over.

He would be betrayed.

To the chief priests and the teachers of the law.

The religious leaders of Israel.

They will condemn Him to death.

His own people's leaders would sentence Him.

Cross References

Matthew 16:21

> From that time on Jesus began telling His followers that He must go to Jerusalem, where the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law would make Him suffer many things.

Isaiah 53:3

> He was hated and rejected by people. He had much pain and suffering.

Mark 9:31

> The Son of Man will be handed over to people, and they will kill Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knew every detail of His suffering and went anyway.

XIX. MOCKED, FLOGGED, AND CRUCIFIED

Matthew 20:19 — Raised on the Third Day

“and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked, flogged, and crucified. On the third day He will be raised to life!”

Jesus continued.

They will hand Him over to the Gentiles.

The Jewish leaders did not have the power to carry out the death penalty.

So they would hand Jesus over to the Romans.

To be mocked.

Flogged.

Crucified.

This is the first time in Matthew that Jesus says He will be **crucified.**

Crucifixion was the most painful and shameful death in the Roman world.

But again, Jesus ended with victory.

On the third day He will be raised to life!

Cross References

Isaiah 50:6

> I let them beat My back. I let them pull out My beard. I did not hide My face when they insulted Me and spit on Me.

Psalm 22:16

> Evil people have surrounded Me... They have pierced My hands and feet.

Hosea 6:2

> In two days He will give us new life. On the third day He will raise us up so that we may live in His presence.

Spiritual Principle

The cross is never the end of the story; the resurrection always follows.

Key Truth

Every detail Jesus predicted came true.

XX. A MOTHER'S REQUEST

Matthew 20:20 — Kneeling Before Jesus

“Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of Him.”

Right after Jesus spoke about His suffering, something surprising happened.

The mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus.

Her sons were **James and John.**

She may have been **Salome**, who is named among the women at the cross.

Some believe she was the sister of Jesus' mother, Mary, which would make James and John Jesus' cousins.

She came **with her sons.**

She knelt and **asked a favor.**

Mark tells us James and John asked this themselves.

They likely came together.

Cross References

Mark 10:35

> Then James and John, sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said, “Teacher, we want to ask You to do something for us.”

1 Kings 1:16

> Bathsheba bowed down before the king. He asked, “What do you want?”

Matthew 27:56

> Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were there.

Spiritual Principle

Even good parents can seek the wrong things for their children.

XXI. YOUR RIGHT AND YOUR LEFT

Matthew 20:21 — In Your Kingdom

“‘What is it you want?’ He asked. She said, ‘Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at Your right and the other at Your left in Your kingdom.’”

Jesus asked:

“What is it you want?”

She asked for the highest places in His kingdom.

One at Your right.

One at Your left.

These were the places of greatest honor and power next to a king.

She believed Jesus would be King.

That shows faith.

But she was thinking of an earthly throne.

And she was asking for her sons to be above the others.

Jesus had just said He would be crucified.

And they were thinking about thrones.

Cross References

Mark 10:37

> They answered, “Let one of us sit at Your right side and one of us sit at Your left side in Your glory in Your kingdom.”

Matthew 19:28

> When the Son of Man sits on His great throne, you who followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones.

Psalm 110:1

> The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit by Me at My right side until I put Your enemies under Your control.”

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to follow Jesus and still be thinking about our own glory.

XXII. CAN YOU DRINK THE CUP?

Matthew 20:22 — “We Can”

“Jesus said, ‘You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?’ ‘We can,’ they answered.”

Jesus answered:

“You don't know what you are asking.”

They did not understand what it would cost to be close to Jesus in His kingdom.

“Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?”

In the Old Testament, a **cup** was often a picture of suffering and God's judgment.

Jesus' cup was the cross.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, He would pray, **“Let this cup pass from Me.”**

They answered quickly:

“We can.”

They were confident.

But they did not understand.

A few days later, when Jesus was arrested, they would run away.

Cross References

Matthew 26:39

> He prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, do not give Me this cup of suffering. But do what You want, not what I want.”

John 18:11

> Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back. Shouldn't I drink the cup the Father gave Me?”

Isaiah 51:17

> Wake up! Wake up! Get up, Jerusalem. You have drunk from the cup of the LORD's anger.

Spiritual Principle

The path to glory goes through suffering.

XXIII. YOU WILL DRINK FROM MY CUP

Matthew 20:23 — Prepared by My Father

“Jesus said to them, ‘You will indeed drink from My cup, but to sit at My right or left is not for Me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by My Father.’”

Jesus told them:

“You will indeed drink from My cup.”

They would suffer for Him.

James became the first of the twelve apostles to die for his faith.

King Herod Agrippa had him killed with a sword.

John lived a long life but suffered persecution and was exiled to the island of Patmos.

Then Jesus said:

“To sit at My right or left is not for Me to grant.”

“These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by My Father.”

Jesus humbly submitted to the Father's plan.

The Father decides who receives these honors.

Cross References

Mark 10:40

> But I cannot choose who will sit at My right or My left. Those places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.

Acts 12:2

> He ordered that James, the brother of John, be killed with a sword.

Matthew 25:34

> Then the King will say to the people on His right, “Come, My Father has given you His blessing. Receive the kingdom God has prepared for you since the world was made.”

Spiritual Principle

Rewards in God's kingdom are given by the Father, not grabbed by us.

XXIV. THE TEN WERE INDIGNANT

Matthew 20:24 — Angry with the Brothers

“When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers.”

The other ten disciples heard about it.

And **they were indignant.**

They were angry.

Why?

Probably not because James and John were wrong to seek greatness.

But because they wanted those places for themselves.

They had the same pride.

Cross References

Mark 10:41

> When the other ten followers heard this, they began to be angry with James and John.

Genesis 37:11

> Joseph's brothers were jealous of him.

Luke 22:24

The apostles also began to argue about which one of them was the most important.

Spiritual Warning

Pride in others often reveals the same pride in us.

XXV. THE RULERS OF THE GENTILES

Matthew 20:25 — Lording It Over Them

“Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.’”

Jesus **called them together.**

He did not scold just James and John.

He taught all twelve.

The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them.

Rulers in the world use their power to control people.

Their high officials exercise authority over them.

In the world, greatness means being on top.

Giving orders.

Being served.

Cross References

Mark 10:42

> Jesus called them together and said, “The non-Jewish people have rulers. You know that those rulers love to show their power over the people.”

Luke 22:25

> Jesus said to them, “The kings of the world rule over their people, and those who have authority over others like to be called ‘friends of the people.’”

1 Peter 5:3

> Do not be like a ruler over people you are responsible for, but be good examples to them.

Spiritual Principle

The world's idea of greatness is power over others.

XXVI. NOT SO WITH YOU

Matthew 20:26 — Become a Servant

“Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,”

“Not so with you.”

These are some of the most important words Jesus spoke to His followers.

God's kingdom is different.

Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.

Greatness in God's kingdom is not about how many people serve you.

It is about how many people you serve.

Cross References

Mark 10:43

> But it should not be that way among you. Whoever wants to become great among you must serve the rest of you like a servant.

Matthew 23:11

> Whoever serves you as a servant is the greatest among you.

Galatians 5:13

> Serve each other with love.

Spiritual Principle

In God's kingdom, greatness is measured by service.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The world asks, “How many people serve you?” God asks, “How many people do you serve?”

XXVII. FIRST MUST BE A SLAVE

Matthew 20:27 — Your Slave

“and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—”

Jesus went even further.

Whoever wants to be first must be your slave.

A **servant** might work for wages.

A **slave** gave up all rights.

He lived completely for his master.

Jesus was calling His followers to give themselves completely to serving others.

Cross References

Mark 10:44

> Whoever wants to become first among you must serve all of you like a slave.

Matthew 18:4

> The greatest person in the kingdom of heaven is the one who makes himself humble like this child.

1 Corinthians 9:19

> I am free and belong to no one. But I make myself a slave to all people to win as many as I can.

Spiritual Principle

The highest place in God's kingdom belongs to the lowest servant.

XXVIII. A RANSOM FOR MANY

Matthew 20:28 — Not to Be Served, but to Serve

“just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

This is one of the most important verses in the Bible.

Jesus pointed to Himself as the example.

The Son of Man did not come to be served.

He is the King of kings.

He deserved to be served.

But to serve.

He washed feet.

He healed the sick.

He touched lepers.

He fed the hungry.

And to give His life as a ransom for many.

A **ransom** was the price paid to set a slave or prisoner free.

Jesus would pay the price for our freedom.

With His own life.

We were slaves to sin.

Jesus gave His life to set us free.

For many means for all who believe in Him.

Cross References

Mark 10:45

> In the same way, the Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve others and to give His life as a ransom for many people.

Isaiah 53:10

> But it was the LORD who decided to crush Him and make Him suffer... He offered His life as a sacrifice for sin.

1 Timothy 2:6

> He gave Himself as a payment to free all people.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' greatness is shown most clearly in His sacrifice.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The greatest One who ever lived became the greatest servant who ever lived — and paid the greatest price ever paid.

XXIX. LEAVING JERICHO

Matthew 20:29 — A Large Crowd

“As Jesus and His disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed Him.”

Jericho was about fifteen miles from Jerusalem.

It was the last major town on the road to Jerusalem.

It was the same city whose walls fell in Joshua's day.

Many people were traveling to Jerusalem for the Passover.

A large crowd followed Him.

Cross References

Mark 10:46

> Then they came to the town of Jericho. As Jesus was leaving there with His followers and a great many people, a blind man named Bartimaeus was sitting by the road.

Luke 18:35

> As Jesus was coming near the city of Jericho, there was a blind man sitting beside the road, begging.

Joshua 6:1

> The people of Jericho were afraid because the Israelites were near. So they closed the city gates and guarded them.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus kept ministering to people on His way to the cross.

XXX. TWO BLIND MEN

Matthew 20:30 — “Lord, Son of David, Have Mercy on Us!”

“Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, ‘Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!’”

Two blind men were sitting by the road.

Mark and Luke focus on one of them, **Bartimaeus.**

Matthew tells us there were two.

They could not see.

But they **heard that Jesus was going by.**

This might be their only chance.

So they **shouted.**

“Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

Son of David is a title for the Messiah.

These blind men saw who Jesus was more clearly than many who could see.

Cross References

Mark 10:47

> When he heard that Jesus from Nazareth was walking by, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Luke 18:38

> The blind man shouted, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Matthew 9:27

> As Jesus was leaving there, two blind men followed Him. They cried out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

Spiritual Principle

Recognize the opportunity when Jesus passes by.

XXXI. THEY SHOUTED LOUDER

Matthew 20:31 — The Crowd Rebuked Them

“The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, ‘Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!’”

The crowd rebuked them.

They **told them to be quiet.**

The crowd thought they were a bother.

Jesus was too important to be stopped by blind beggars.

But they shouted all the louder.

They would not be silenced.

They knew Jesus was their only hope.

Cross References

Mark 10:48

> Many people warned the blind man to be quiet, but he shouted even more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Luke 18:39

> The people in front scolded the blind man and told him to be quiet. But he shouted even more.

Matthew 15:23

> But Jesus did not answer the woman. So His followers came to Jesus and begged Him, “Tell the woman to go away. She is following us and shouting.”

Spiritual Principle

Do not let anyone silence your cry to Jesus.

Application

People may try to silence our cry to Jesus through:

- Discouragement.
- Embarrassment.
- Criticism.
- Busyness.
- Doubt.

Like the blind men, keep crying out.

XXXII. JESUS STOPPED

Matthew 20:32 — What Do You Want Me to Do?

“Jesus stopped and called them. ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ He asked.”

Jesus stopped.

He was on His way to Jerusalem.

On His way to the cross.

With a large crowd following.

But He stopped for two blind beggars.

He called them.

Then He asked:

“What do you want Me to do for you?”

This is the same question He asked the mother of James and John.

She asked for power and position.

These men asked for mercy.

Cross References

Mark 10:49

> Jesus stopped and said, “Tell the man to come here.” So they called the blind man, saying, “Cheer up! Get to your feet. Jesus is calling you.”

Luke 18:41

> Jesus asked, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

John 5:6

> When Jesus saw the man and knew that he had been sick for such a long time, Jesus asked him, “Do you want to be well?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is never too busy to stop for those who cry out to Him.

Key Truth

The same question — “What do you want?” — revealed a request for glory and a request for mercy.

XXXIII. WE WANT OUR EYES OPENED

Matthew 20:33 — “Lord”

“‘Lord,’ they answered, ‘we want our eyes to be opened.’”

Their answer was simple.

“Lord, we want our eyes to be opened.”

They knew exactly what they needed.

They did not ask for money.

They asked for sight.

Isaiah had promised that when the Messiah came, the eyes of the blind would be opened.

Cross References

Isaiah 35:5

> Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will hear.

Mark 10:51

> Jesus asked him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” The blind man answered, “Teacher, I want to see.”

John 9:25

> He answered, “I do not know if He is a sinner. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see.”

Spiritual Principle

Ask Jesus for what you truly need.

XXXIV. THEY FOLLOWED HIM

Matthew 20:34 — Immediately They Received Their Sight

“Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed Him.”

Jesus had compassion on them.

His heart was moved.

He touched their eyes.

Immediately they received their sight.

And then they did the best thing they could do.

They followed Him.

They followed Jesus on the road to Jerusalem.

On the road to the cross.

The disciples were arguing about who would be greatest.

The blind men simply followed.

Cross References

Mark 10:52

> Jesus said, “Go, you are healed because you believed.” At once the man could see, and he followed Jesus on the road.

Luke 18:43

> At once the man was able to see, and he followed Jesus, thanking God. All the people who saw this praised God.

Matthew 9:29

> Then Jesus touched their eyes and said, “Because you believe I can make you see, it will happen.”

Spiritual Principle

Those whose eyes Jesus opens will follow Him.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The disciples could see but were blind to true greatness; the blind men received sight and followed Jesus.

XXXV. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 20

1. God's Grace Is Generous

The parable of the vineyard shows that salvation is not earned by hours of labor but given by God's kindness.

Principle:

God gives what we need, not what we earn.

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2. God's Rewards Are Equal and Fair

The last will be first and the first last, overturning human ideas of status.

Principle:

Never be envious when God is generous to others.

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3. Jesus Faced the Cross Willingly

He clearly predicted His betrayal, suffering, death, and resurrection.

Principle:

Jesus knew the cost and paid it anyway.

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4. True Greatness Is Servanthood

In God's kingdom, greatness comes not from authority but from humility and service.

Principle:

The way up in God's kingdom is down.

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5. Jesus Came to Serve

He gave His life as a ransom to free us from sin.

Principle:

We are free because Jesus paid the price.

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6. Faith Cries Out for Mercy

The blind men's persistent plea moved Jesus, and their faith was rewarded with healing.

Principle:

Keep crying out to Jesus, no matter who tells you to be quiet.

XXXVI. THE WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

The Early Workers

- Hired at six in the morning.
- Agreed to a denarius.
- Worked all day in the heat.
- Received exactly what they agreed to.
- Complained when others received the same.

The Late Workers

- Hired at five in the afternoon.
- No one else had hired them.
- Worked only one hour.
- Received a full day's pay.
- Received grace, not wages.

The Landowner

- Kept going out to call workers.
- Was fair to the first.
- Was generous to the last.
- Had the right to do what he wanted with his own money.

Key Truth

Salvation is not about how long we have worked but about how generous God is.

XXXVII. TWO REQUESTS, ONE QUESTION

Jesus asked the same question twice in Matthew 20.

“What do you want?”

The Mother of James and John

- Asked for positions of power.
- Wanted her sons to be above others.
- Did not understand the cost.
- Was told the places belong to the Father to give.

The Two Blind Men

- Asked for mercy.
- Wanted their eyes to be opened.
- Knew exactly what they needed.
- Received their sight and followed Jesus.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

What we ask Jesus for reveals what is in our hearts.

XXXVIII. THE WORLD'S GREATNESS AND GOD'S GREATNESS

The World's Greatness

- Being served.
- Having power over others.
- Being first.
- Giving orders.
- Holding on to rights.

God's Greatness

- Serving others.
- Using power to help others.
- Being willing to be last.
- Following Jesus' example.
- Giving up rights for others.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus redefined greatness by washing feet and carrying a cross.

XXXIX. WHAT MATTHEW 20 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 20 presents Jesus as:

The Revealer of God's Generosity

He reveals God's generous grace.

The One Who Calls the Overlooked

He calls those no one else has hired.

The Suffering Messiah

He would be condemned, mocked, flogged, and crucified.

The Risen Lord

He would be raised on the third day.

The One Who Drank the Cup

He took on the suffering that was ours.

The Humble Son

He submitted to the Father's plan.

The Servant King

He came not to be served, but to serve.

The Ransom

He gave His life to set us free.

The Son of David

The blind men recognized Him.

The Compassionate Healer

He stopped, touched, and healed.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who stopped for two blind beggars on His way to the cross is the Jesus who stops for us.

XL. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What does the parable of the workers in the vineyard teach?

It teaches that God's grace is generous and cannot be earned.

Salvation is a gift, not a wage.

Question 2

What was a denarius?

A silver coin that was the normal pay for a full day's work.

Question 3

Why did the landowner pay the last workers first?

So that the first workers would see what the last received.

It showed that God's kingdom reverses human expectations.

Question 4

Were the first workers treated unfairly?

No.

They received exactly what they agreed to.

The landowner was fair to them and generous to others.

Question 5

What was the real problem with the first workers?

They were envious.

They were not upset because they were cheated, but because others were blessed.

Question 6

What does “the last will be first, and the first will be last” mean?

In God's kingdom, those who think they deserve the most may be last, and those who come by grace may be first.

Question 7

What new details did Jesus give in His third prediction of His death?

He said He would be handed over to the Gentiles, mocked, flogged, and crucified, and raised on the third day.

Question 8

What did the mother of James and John ask for?

She asked that her sons sit at Jesus' right and left in His kingdom — the places of greatest honor.

Question 9

What was the cup Jesus spoke about?

The cup of suffering — His death on the cross.

Question 10

Did James and John drink from Jesus' cup?

Yes.

James was the first apostle to be killed for his faith.

John suffered persecution and exile.

Question 11

How did Jesus define greatness?

Whoever wants to be great must be a servant, and whoever wants to be first must be a slave.

Question 12

What is a ransom?

A price paid to set a slave or prisoner free.

Jesus gave His life to set us free from sin.

Question 13

Why did the crowd try to silence the blind men?

They thought the blind men were a bother and that Jesus was too important to stop for them.

Question 14

What did the blind men do after they were healed?

They followed Jesus.

Question 15

What should Matthew 20 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 20 should cause believers to live:

- Grateful for God's generous grace.
- Celebrating when God blesses others.
- Not envious or comparing.
- Remembering Jesus' suffering and resurrection.
- Seeking to serve, not to be served.
- Using any position to help others.
- Following Jesus' example of humility.
- Crying out to Jesus with persistent faith.
- Following Jesus wherever He leads.

XLI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 20 asks several important questions.

Do I Think I Have Earned God's Favor?

Do I Celebrate When God Is Generous to Others?

Am I Comparing My Blessings to Someone Else's?

Have I Been Complaining Against God?

Am I Envious Because God Is Good to Others?

Do I Remember What Jesus Suffered for Me?

Am I Seeking Position and Power, or Seeking to Serve?

Do I Understand the Cost of Following Jesus?

Whom Can I Serve This Week?

Am I Living Like the Servant King?

Is Anyone Trying to Silence My Cry to Jesus?

What Do I Want Jesus to Do for Me?

Am I Following Him?

XLII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Not So with You”

The disciples lived in a world where greatness meant power.

Kings ruled over people.

Officials gave orders.

The great were served by the small.

James and John wanted that kind of greatness.

The other ten wanted it too.

But Jesus said three powerful words:

“Not so with you.”

In His kingdom, things are different.

The great serve.

The first become slaves.

And the King Himself came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom.

This creates a powerful principle.

Followers of Jesus must not measure greatness the way the world does.

We must measure it the way Jesus lived it.

By serving.

By giving.

By laying down our lives for others.

Principle:

The world's question is, “Who will serve me?” Jesus' question is, “Whom can I serve?”

XLIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 20 begins in a vineyard and ends on a dusty road outside Jericho.

In the vineyard, a generous landowner keeps going out to call workers.

At the end of the day, he gives everyone the same pay.

The first workers complain.

But the landowner says:

“Are you envious because I am generous?”

On the road to Jerusalem, Jesus tells His disciples for the third time that He will suffer, die, and rise again.

But a mother asks for thrones for her sons.

The disciples argue about who will be greatest.

And Jesus says:

“Not so with you.”

The greatest must be the servant.

The first must be the slave.

Just as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Then, outside Jericho, two blind men cry out.

The crowd tells them to be quiet.

But Jesus stops.

He has compassion.

He touches their eyes.

And they follow Him.

Matthew 20 therefore reminds us:

God's grace is a gift, not a wage.

We should never be envious when God is generous to others.

Jesus willingly walked to the cross.

True greatness is found in serving.

And Jesus still stops for those who cry out to Him.

The story of Matthew 20 does not end with:

Grumbling workers.

Arguing disciples.

Or a crowd telling beggars to be quiet.

It ends with:

A Servant King who gave His life as a ransom.

And two men with opened eyes following Him.

The same call still stands:

Rejoice in God's grace.

Celebrate His generosity to others.

Remember His sacrifice.

Serve instead of seeking to be served.

Cry out to Him for mercy.

Follow Him.

And until He returns:

Keep serving.

Keep rejoicing in His grace.

Keep crying out to Him.

Keep following Him.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Your generous grace.

Thank You that You keep going out to call people into Your kingdom.

Thank You that You called us, even when no one else wanted us.

Forgive us for thinking we have earned Your favor.

Forgive us for comparing our blessings to the blessings of others.

Forgive us for complaining when You are generous to someone else.

Take away envy from our hearts.

Teach us to celebrate when others receive Your grace.

Lord Jesus, thank You for walking willingly to Jerusalem.

Thank You for being betrayed, condemned, mocked, flogged, and crucified for us.

Thank You that on the third day You were raised to life.

Forgive us for seeking our own glory.

Forgive us for wanting to be first and to be served.

Help us understand the cup You drank for us.

Teach us that greatness in Your kingdom is found in serving.

Help us hear Your words: “Not so with you.”

Make us servants like You.

Thank You that You did not come to be served, but to serve.

Thank You for giving Your life as a ransom for many.

Thank You for setting us free.

Son of David, have mercy on us.

Open our eyes to see You clearly.

Do not let anyone silence our cry to You.

And when You open our eyes, help us follow You wherever You lead.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” — Matthew 20:28

Central Truth

God gives His grace generously to all who come, and Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom, calls His followers to find greatness in humble service.

Matthew 20 in One Sentence

Jesus tells a parable showing that God's grace is generous and cannot be earned, predicts His suffering, death, and resurrection for the third time, teaches His disciples that true greatness comes through serving as He came to serve and give His life as a ransom, and opens the eyes of two blind men who then follow Him.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 21 — The King Enters Jerusalem, Authority Challenged, and Parables of Judgment

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 20 ended outside Jericho, with two blind men receiving their sight and following Jesus.

Matthew Chapter 21 begins as Jesus arrives at Jerusalem.

This is the beginning of the last week of His life on earth.

Christians often call this week **Holy Week.**

Jesus enters the city riding on a donkey.

Crowds spread their cloaks and branches on the road.

They shout:

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

It is a royal welcome.

The King has come to His city.

But Jesus does not go to a palace.

He goes to the temple.

And what He finds there makes Him angry.

The house of prayer has become a marketplace.

He overturns the tables and drives out the buyers and sellers.

Then the blind and the lame come to Him, and He heals them.

Children shout His praises.

But the religious leaders are angry.

The next morning, Jesus curses a fig tree that has leaves but no fruit.

It withers immediately.

It is a picture of a religion that looks good on the outside but produces no fruit.

Then the religious leaders challenge His authority.

“Who gave You this authority?”

Jesus answers with a question about John the Baptist that they cannot answer.

Then He tells two parables.

In the first, two sons are asked to work in their father's vineyard.

One says no but later goes.

The other says yes but never goes.

In the second, tenant farmers beat and kill the owner's servants, and finally they kill his son.

The religious leaders realize Jesus is talking about them.

Matthew 21 therefore shows two great truths:

Jesus is the King who comes humbly and has all authority.

And:

Those who reject Him, no matter how religious they appear, will face judgment, while God's kingdom will be given to those who produce its fruit.

The central truth of Matthew 21 is:

Jesus enters Jerusalem as the humble King with divine authority, calling for true worship and real fruit, and warning that those who reject God's Son will lose the kingdom He offers.

I. APPROACHING JERUSALEM

Matthew 21:1 — Bethphage on the Mount of Olives

“As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples,”

Jesus and His disciples were coming near **Jerusalem.**

They came to **Bethphage**, a small village **on the Mount of Olives.**

The Mount of Olives is a hill just east of Jerusalem.

From its top, a person can look across the valley and see the whole city and the temple.

The prophet Zechariah said that one day the Lord would stand on the Mount of Olives.

Jesus **sent two disciples** ahead to prepare for His entry into the city.

Cross References

Mark 11:1

> As they came near Jerusalem, to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of His followers.

Luke 19:29

> As Jesus came near Bethphage and Bethany, at the hill called the Mount of Olives, He sent out two of His followers.

Zechariah 14:4

> On that day He will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus planned every detail of His final week.

II. A DONKEY AND HER COLT

Matthew 21:2 — Untie Them

“saying, ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt beside her. Untie them and bring them to Me.’”

Jesus gave clear instructions.

Go to the village.

You will find a donkey tied there, with her colt.

Untie them and bring them to Me.

Jesus knew exactly what they would find.

Mark and Luke focus on the colt, which no one had ever ridden.

Matthew mentions the mother donkey too.

A young colt would be calmer with its mother beside it.

In Genesis, Jacob had prophesied that the King from Judah would tie his donkey's colt to a vine.

Cross References

Genesis 49:11

> He ties his donkey to a grapevine and his young donkey to the best branch.

Mark 11:2

> Go to the town you can see there. When you enter it, you will quickly find a colt tied, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here to Me.

Luke 19:30

> Go to the town you can see there. When you enter it, you will find a colt tied, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here to Me.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows what is ahead before we get there.

III. THE LORD NEEDS THEM

Matthew 21:3 — He Will Send Them Right Away

“If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

Jesus prepared them for questions.

If anyone asks, tell him that the Lord needs them.

The owner would **send them right away.**

Perhaps the owner was a follower of Jesus.

Or perhaps God moved his heart.

Either way, the Lord's need was enough.

Cross References

Mark 11:3

> If anyone asks you why you are doing this, tell him its Master needs the colt, and he will send it at once.

Luke 19:31

> If anyone asks you why you are untying it, say that the Master needs it.

Luke 19:34

The followers answered, “The Master needs it.”

Spiritual Principle

When the Lord needs what we have, we should give it gladly.

Application

The Lord may need your:

- Time.
- Home.
- Money.
- Talents.
- Possessions.
- Willingness.

IV. TO FULFILL WHAT WAS SPOKEN

Matthew 21:4 — The Prophet

“This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:”

Matthew explains why Jesus did this.

To fulfill what was spoken by the prophet.

Jesus was not riding a donkey by chance.

He was deliberately fulfilling prophecy.

He was announcing that He was the promised King.

Cross References

Matthew 1:22

> All this happened to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet.

John 12:14

> Jesus found a colt and sat on it. This was as the Scripture says.

Luke 24:44

> Everything written about Me must happen — everything in the law of Moses, the books of the prophets, and the Psalms.

Spiritual Principle

Every detail of Jesus' life fulfilled God's Word.

V. YOUR KING COMES TO YOU

Matthew 21:5 — Gentle and Riding on a Donkey

“‘Say to the daughter of Zion, “See, your King comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”’”

Matthew quotes Zechariah 9:9.

The daughter of Zion means the people of Jerusalem.

See, your King comes to you.

This was a royal announcement.

Gentle and riding on a donkey.

Kings going to war rode horses.

Kings coming in peace rode donkeys.

King Solomon rode a donkey at his coronation.

Jesus did not come as a warrior on a war horse.

He came as a gentle King of peace.

He came to save, not to conquer by force.

Cross References

Zechariah 9:9

> Rejoice, people of Jerusalem! Shout for joy! Your King is coming to you. He does what is right, and He saves. He is gentle and riding on a donkey, on the colt of a donkey.

Isaiah 62:11

> Tell the people of Jerusalem, “Look, your Savior is coming!”

John 12:15

> Don't be afraid, people of Jerusalem! Your King is coming, sitting on the colt of a donkey.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is a King who comes in humility and peace.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The King of kings chose a donkey, not a war horse, because He came to make peace, not war.

VI. THE DISCIPLES OBEYED

Matthew 21:6 — As Jesus Instructed

“The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them.”

The disciples went.

They did as Jesus had instructed them.

They did not argue.

They did not ask questions.

They obeyed.

And everything happened just as Jesus said.

Cross References

Mark 11:6

> The followers answered the way Jesus told them to answer, and the people let them take the colt.

Luke 19:32

> The two followers went into town and found the colt just as Jesus had told them.

Matthew 26:19

> The followers did what Jesus told them to do, and they prepared the Passover meal.

Spiritual Principle

Obedience to Jesus' word always finds His word true.

VII. CLOAKS ON THE DONKEYS

Matthew 21:7 — Jesus Sat on Them

“They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them.”

The disciples **brought the donkey and the colt.**

They **placed their cloaks on them.**

This made a saddle for Jesus.

And Jesus sat on them — that is, on the cloaks placed on the colt.

In the Old Testament, when Jehu was declared king, people spread their cloaks under him.

This was a sign of honor for a king.

Cross References

2 Kings 9:13

> Then the officers quickly took off their coats and put them on the steps in front of Jehu. They blew the trumpet and shouted, “Jehu is king!”

Mark 11:7

> They brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it, and Jesus sat on it.

Luke 19:35

> They brought it to Jesus, threw their coats on the colt's back, and put Jesus on it.

Spiritual Principle

Honoring Jesus as King begins with giving Him what we have.

VIII. CLOAKS AND BRANCHES

Matthew 21:8 — On the Road

“A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.”

A very large crowd gathered.

It was Passover season.

Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims were coming to Jerusalem.

They **spread their cloaks on the road.**

This was like rolling out a red carpet for a king.

Others cut branches from the trees.

John tells us these were **palm branches.**

That is why this day is called **Palm Sunday.**

Palm branches were a symbol of victory and celebration.

Cross References

John 12:13

> They took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Jesus, shouting, “Praise God! God bless the One who comes in the name of the Lord! God bless the King of Israel!”

Leviticus 23:40

> On the first day pick good fruit from the fruit trees, and take branches from palm trees... Celebrate before the LORD your God for seven days.

Mark 11:8

> Many people spread their coats on the road. Others cut branches in the fields and spread them on the road.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is worthy of our greatest honor.

IX. HOSANNA!

Matthew 21:9 — Blessed Is He Who Comes

“The crowds that went ahead of Him and those that followed shouted, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!’”

The crowds shouted with joy.

“Hosanna!”

Hosanna is a Hebrew word that means **“Save us now!”**

Over time, it became a shout of praise.

“To the Son of David!”

They were calling Jesus the Messiah, the promised King from David's family.

“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

This comes from Psalm 118, a psalm sung by pilgrims coming to Jerusalem for the feasts.

“Hosanna in the highest!”

Let all heaven praise Him.

Within a week, some voices in Jerusalem would be shouting, **“Crucify Him!”**

Cross References

Psalm 118:25

> Please, LORD, save us! Please, LORD, give us success!

Psalm 118:26

> God bless the one who comes in the name of the LORD. We bless all of you from the Temple of the LORD.

Mark 11:9

> The people walking ahead of Jesus and behind Him were shouting, “Praise God! God bless the One who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the King who saves.

Spiritual Warning

Praise that is shallow can quickly turn into rejection.

X. WHO IS THIS?

Matthew 21:10 — The Whole City Was Stirred

“When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, ‘Who is this?’”

The whole city was stirred.

The word **stirred** means **shaken**, like an earthquake.

Jerusalem was in an uproar.

They asked:

“Who is this?”

More than thirty years earlier, when wise men came asking about the newborn King, **all Jerusalem** was disturbed.

Now the King had come, and the city was shaken again.

Cross References

Matthew 2:3

When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, as were all the people in Jerusalem.

Luke 19:37

As Jesus was coming close to Jerusalem, on the way down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of followers began joyfully shouting praise to God for all the miracles they had seen.

John 12:19

So the Pharisees said to each other, “You can see that nothing is going right for us. Look! The whole world is following Him.”

Spiritual Principle

When Jesus comes, people must answer the question, “Who is this?”

XI. THE PROPHET FROM NAZARETH

Matthew 21:11 — The Crowd's Answer

“The crowds answered, ‘This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.’”

The crowds answered.

“This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

This answer was true.

But it was not the whole truth.

Jesus was a prophet.

But He was much more.

He was the Messiah.

He was the Son of God.

The crowds saw part of who He was.

Cross References

John 1:45

Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the One Moses wrote about in the law... He is Jesus of Nazareth.”

John 6:14

When the people saw this miracle that Jesus did, they said, “He must truly be the Prophet who is coming into the world.”

Luke 7:16

> All the people were filled with fear and began praising God. They said, “A great prophet has come to us!”

Spiritual Principle

Seeing part of who Jesus is is not the same as seeing all of who He is.

XII. JESUS CLEANSES THE TEMPLE

Matthew 21:12 — Overturning the Tables

“Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.”

Jesus went straight to **the temple.**

The temple had a large outer area called the **Court of the Gentiles.**

This was the only place where non-Jews could come to pray.

But it had become a noisy marketplace.

People sold animals for sacrifices.

Money changers exchanged foreign coins for temple coins, often charging high fees.

Those selling doves sold the sacrifices that poor people used.

Jesus **drove out all who were buying and selling.**

He overturned the tables.

This was holy anger.

They had turned a place of prayer into a place of profit.

And they were cheating the poor and keeping the Gentiles from worship.

Cross References

John 2:15

> Jesus made a whip out of cords and forced all of them, both the sheep and cattle, to leave the Temple. He turned over the tables and scattered the money of those who were exchanging it.

Mark 11:15

> When Jesus returned to Jerusalem, He went into the Temple and began to throw out those who were buying and selling there. He turned over the tables of those who were exchanging money.

Malachi 3:1

> Then the Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to His Temple.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is zealous for the purity of worship.

Key Truth

The gentle King on the donkey is also the holy King who cleans His house.

XIII. A HOUSE OF PRAYER

Matthew 21:13 — A Den of Thieves

“He said to them, ‘It is written: “My house shall be called a house of prayer,” but you are making it a den of thieves.’”

Jesus explained His actions from Scripture.

“My house shall be called a house of prayer.”

This comes from Isaiah 56.

Mark adds the rest of the verse: **“for all nations.”**

The temple was meant to be a place where everyone could come to pray.

“But you are making it a den of thieves.”

This comes from Jeremiah 7.

A **den** is a hideout.

Thieves go to a den to hide after they steal.

The religious leaders were using the temple to cover up their greed and sin.

Cross References

Isaiah 56:7

> I will make them happy in My house of prayer... because My Temple will be called a house of prayer for people from all nations.

Jeremiah 7:11

> This Temple where I have chosen to be worshiped has become a hiding place for robbers.

Mark 11:17

> Then He taught the people, saying, “It is written in the Scriptures, ‘My Temple will be called a house for prayer for people from all nations.’ But you are changing God's house into a hiding place for thieves.”

Spiritual Principle

God's house is for prayer, not for profit.

Application

Ways worship can become corrupted today:

- Treating church as a business.
- Seeking money or fame through ministry.
- Making it hard for outsiders to come.
- Using religion to cover up sin.
- Forgetting that prayer is central.

XIV. THE BLIND AND THE LAME

Matthew 21:14 — He Healed Them

“The blind and the lame came to Him at the temple, and He healed them.”

After Jesus cleared out the sellers, **the blind and the lame came to Him.**

In David's day, the blind and the lame were kept out of the palace.

Some traditions also limited them in the temple.

But Jesus welcomed them.

And He healed them.

Jesus drove out those who were using the temple for profit.

And He welcomed those who needed mercy.

This is what the temple was supposed to be.

Cross References

2 Samuel 5:8

That is why people say, “The blind and the crippled cannot enter the palace.”

Matthew 11:5

The blind can see, the crippled can walk, people with skin diseases are healed, the deaf can hear.

Luke 14:13

Instead, when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus makes room for the broken in God's house.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus drove out the greedy and welcomed the needy.

XV. CHILDREN SHOUTING HOSANNA

Matthew 21:15 — The Leaders Were Indignant

“But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things He did and the children shouting in the temple courts, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ they were indignant.”

The **chief priests and the teachers of the law** saw two things.

The wonderful things He did.

The blind seeing.

The lame walking.

And the children shouting in the temple courts.

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

The children had picked up the praise of the crowds.

They were calling Jesus the Messiah.

How did the religious leaders respond?

They were indignant.

They were angry.

They saw miracles and heard worship, and it made them furious.

Cross References

Mark 11:18

> The leading priests and the teachers of the law heard all this and began trying to find a way to kill Jesus.

Luke 19:47

> Jesus taught in the Temple every day. The leading priests, the experts on the law, and some of the leaders of the people wanted to kill Him.

Psalm 8:2

> You have taught children and babies to sing praises to You because of Your enemies.

Spiritual Warning

A hardened heart is angered by what should bring joy.

XVI. FROM THE LIPS OF CHILDREN

Matthew 21:16 — Perfected Praise

“They asked Him, ‘Do You hear what these children are saying?’ ‘Yes,’ replied Jesus, ‘have you never read, “From the lips of children and infants You, Lord, have called forth praise”?’”

The leaders asked:

“Do You hear what these children are saying?”

They expected Jesus to stop them.

Instead, Jesus said:

“Yes.”

Then He quoted Psalm 8.

“From the lips of children and infants You, Lord, have called forth praise.”

In Psalm 8, this praise is given to **God.**

Jesus accepted it for Himself.

This was another claim to be God.

The experts in the law could not see what the children saw.

Cross References

Psalm 8:2

> You have taught children and babies to sing praises to You because of Your enemies.

Mark 11:18

> The leading priests and the teachers of the law heard all this and began trying to find a way to kill Jesus.

1 Corinthians 1:27

> But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise.

Spiritual Principle

God often receives the purest praise from the humblest hearts.

XVII. TO BETHANY

Matthew 21:17 — He Spent the Night

“And He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where He spent the night.”

Jesus **left them.**

He did not stay to argue.

He went out of the city to Bethany.

Bethany was a small village about two miles from Jerusalem.

It was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

Jesus likely stayed with His friends there each night during this final week.

Cross References

Mark 11:11

> Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the Temple. After He had looked at everything, since it was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve apostles.

Luke 21:37

> During the day, Jesus taught the people in the Temple, and at night He went out of the city and stayed on the Mount of Olives.

John 11:1

A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in the town of Bethany, where Mary and her sister Martha lived.

Spiritual Principle

Even Jesus found rest in the homes of friends.

XVIII. HE WAS HUNGRY

Matthew 21:18 — Early in the Morning

“Early in the morning, as Jesus was on His way back to the city, He was hungry.”

The next morning, Jesus was walking back to Jerusalem.

He was hungry.

This small detail reminds us that Jesus was fully human.

He got tired.

He got thirsty.

He got hungry.

Cross References

Mark 11:12

The next day as Jesus was leaving Bethany, He became hungry.

Matthew 4:2

Jesus ate nothing for forty days and nights. After this, He was very hungry.

John 4:6

Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from His long trip, so He sat down beside the well.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus understands our human needs because He experienced them.

XIX. NOTHING BUT LEAVES

Matthew 21:19 — May You Never Bear Fruit Again

“Seeing a fig tree by the road, He went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then He said to it, ‘May you never bear fruit again!’ Immediately the tree withered.”

Jesus saw **a fig tree by the road.**

It was full of **leaves.**

Fig trees often produced small early figs at the same time as their leaves.

A tree full of leaves seemed to promise fruit.

But Jesus **found nothing on it except leaves.**

It looked fruitful.

But it was not.

Jesus said, **“May you never bear fruit again!”**

Immediately the tree withered.

This was not an act of temper.

It was an acted-out parable.

The fig tree was a picture of Israel's religious leaders.

They had all the outward signs of religion.

The temple.

The sacrifices.

The rituals.

But they had no real fruit of faith and obedience.

And judgment was coming.

Cross References

Jeremiah 8:13

> “I will take away their harvest,” says the LORD. “There will be no grapes on the vine and no figs on the fig tree. Even the leaves will dry up.”

Luke 13:6

> A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came looking for some fruit on the tree, but he found none.

Mark 11:14

> So Jesus said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And Jesus' followers heard Him say this.

Spiritual Warning

Leaves without fruit is religion without reality.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God is not looking for leaves of religious show; He is looking for the fruit of a changed life.

XX. HOW QUICKLY IT WITHERED

Matthew 21:20 — The Disciples Were Amazed

“When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. ‘How quickly the fig tree withered!’ they said.”

The disciples **were amazed.**

“How quickly the fig tree withered!”

Jesus' word had immediate power.

What He said happened at once.

Cross References

Mark 11:20

> The next morning as Jesus was passing by with His followers, they saw the fig tree dry and dead, even to the roots.

Isaiah 40:7

> The grass dies and the flowers fall when the breath of the LORD blows on them.

Psalm 90:6

> In the morning it springs up new, but by evening it dries up and dies.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' word has power over all creation.

XXI. FAITH THAT MOVES MOUNTAINS

Matthew 21:21 — If You Do Not Doubt

“Jesus replied, ‘Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but you can also say to this mountain, “Go, throw yourself into the sea,” and it will be done.’”

Jesus used the moment to teach about faith.

If you have faith and do not doubt.

Faith that trusts God completely.

You can say to this mountain, “Go, throw yourself into the sea,” and it will be done.

This mountain may have been the Mount of Olives, which they were walking on.

Or it may have been the temple mount.

Moving a mountain was a picture of doing something that seemed impossible.

Faith in God can overcome what seems impossible.

Cross References

Mark 11:23

> I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, “Go, fall into the sea.” And if you have no doubts in your mind and believe that what you say will happen, God will do it for you.

Matthew 17:20

> I tell you the truth, if your faith is as big as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move.

1 Corinthians 13:2

> I may have so much faith that I can move mountains. But even with all these things, if I don't have love, then I am nothing.

Spiritual Principle

Faith in God can face the impossible.

XXII. WHATEVER YOU ASK IN PRAYER

Matthew 21:22 — If You Believe

“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”

Jesus gave a promise about prayer.

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.

This is not a blank check to get anything we want.

Other Scriptures teach that we must ask according to God's will and in Jesus' name.

But this promise teaches that believing prayer is powerful.

God answers the prayers of those who trust Him.

Cross References

Mark 11:24

> So I tell you to believe that you have received the things you ask for in prayer, and God will give them to you.

John 14:13

> And if you ask for anything in My name, I will do it for you so that the Father's glory will be shown through the Son.

1 John 5:14

> This is the confidence we have when we come to God: if we ask for anything that agrees with what He wants, He hears us.

Spiritual Principle

Believing prayer, in line with God's will, is powerful.

XXIII. BY WHAT AUTHORITY?

Matthew 21:23 — Who Gave You This Authority?

“Jesus entered the temple courts, and while He was teaching, the chief priests and elders of the people came to Him. ‘By what authority are You doing these things?’ they asked. ‘And who gave You this authority?’”

Jesus went back to **the temple courts.**

He was **teaching.**

The chief priests and elders of the people came to Him.

These were the official leaders of Israel.

They asked two questions.

“By what authority are You doing these things?”

“And who gave You this authority?”

These things included riding into the city as King, clearing the temple, healing, and teaching.

The leaders believed they were in charge of the temple.

Jesus had no official position.

They wanted to know who gave Him the right.

Cross References

Mark 11:28

> They said to Him, “What authority do You have to do these things? Who gave You this authority?”

Luke 20:2

> They said, “Tell us what authority You have to do these things. Who gave You this authority?”

John 2:18

> Some of His own people said to Jesus, “Show us a miracle to prove You have the right to do these things.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' authority comes from God, not from human institutions.

XXIV. ONE QUESTION

Matthew 21:24 — If You Answer Me

“Jesus replied, ‘I will also ask you one question. If you answer Me, I will tell you by what authority I do these things.’”

Jesus answered with a question.

This was a common way of teaching among rabbis.

“I will also ask you one question.”

“If you answer Me, I will tell you.”

Jesus was not avoiding the question.

His question would show whether they were honestly seeking truth.

Cross References

Mark 11:29

> Jesus answered, “I will ask you one question. If you answer Me, I will tell you what authority I have to do these things.”

Luke 20:3

> Jesus answered, “I will also ask you a question. Tell Me.”

Job 38:3

> Be strong like a man! I will ask you questions, and you must answer Me.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus often answers our questions by asking us to examine our own hearts.

XXV. JOHN'S BAPTISM

Matthew 21:25 — From Heaven or from Men?

“John's baptism—where did it come from? From heaven, or from men?” They discussed it among themselves and said, ‘If we say, “From heaven,” He will ask, “Then why didn't you believe him?”’

Jesus asked:

“John's baptism—where did it come from?”

“From heaven, or from men?”

In other words, was John sent by God or not?

This was not changing the subject.

John had pointed to Jesus as the Messiah.

If John was from God, then Jesus' authority came from God too.

The leaders **discussed it among themselves.**

They saw the problem.

If we say, “From heaven,” He will ask, “Then why didn't you believe him?”

They had rejected John.

They did not want to admit they were wrong.

Cross References

Mark 11:30

> Tell Me: When John baptized people, was that authority from God or just from other people?

Luke 20:4

> When John baptized people, was that authority from God or just from other people?

Luke 7:30

> But the Pharisees and experts on the law refused to accept God's plan for themselves. They did not let John baptize them.

Spiritual Principle

Rejecting God's messenger means rejecting God's message.

XXVI. AFRAID OF THE PEOPLE

Matthew 21:26 — They All Hold That John Was a Prophet

“But if we say, ‘From men,’ we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.”

They saw the other problem too.

If we say, “From men,” we are afraid of the people.

The crowds believed John was a true prophet.

If the leaders said John was not from God, the people might turn against them.

Notice what they did not ask.

They did not ask, **“What is true?”**

They only asked, **“What is safe?”**

Cross References

Mark 11:32

> But if we say, “It was from other people,” the crowd will be against us.

Luke 20:6

> But if we say, “It was from people,” all the people will stone us to death, because they believe John was a prophet.

Matthew 14:5

> Herod wanted to kill him, but he was afraid of the people, because they believed John was a prophet.

Spiritual Warning

When we care more about what is safe than what is true, we lose the truth.

XXVII. “WE DON'T KNOW”

Matthew 21:27 — Neither Will I Tell You

“So they answered Jesus, ‘We don't know.’ Then He said, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.’”

They gave a cowardly answer.

“We don't know.”

They did know.

They just would not say.

These were the religious leaders of Israel.

It was their job to judge whether a prophet was from God.

And they claimed they could not tell.

So Jesus said:

“Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

They were not seeking truth.

So Jesus would not give them more.

But then He told them parables that made the answer clear.

Cross References

Mark 11:33

> So they answered Jesus, “We don't know.” Jesus said to them, “Then I won't tell you what authority I have to do these things.”

Luke 20:8

> Jesus said to them, “Then I won't tell you what authority I have to do these things.”

John 9:29

> We know that God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this man comes from!

Spiritual Principle

Those who refuse the light they have will not be given more light.

XXVIII. TWO SONS

Matthew 21:28 — Go and Work in the Vineyard

“What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’”

Jesus told a parable.

“What do you think?”

He invited them to judge the story.

A man had two sons.

He asked the first son:

“Son, go and work today in the vineyard.”

Notice the word **today.**

The work was urgent.

Cross References

Luke 15:11

> Then Jesus said, “A man had two sons.”

Matthew 20:1

The kingdom of heaven is like a person who owned some land. One morning, he went out very early to hire some people to work in his vineyard.

James 1:22

Do what God's teaching says; don't just listen and do nothing.

Spiritual Principle

God calls each of us to work in His vineyard today.

XXIX. “I WILL NOT”

Matthew 21:29 — But Later He Changed His Mind

“‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.”

The first son said:

“I will not.”

He was rude and rebellious.

But later he changed his mind and went.

He repented.

His first answer was wrong.

But his final action was right.

Cross References

Ezekiel 18:21

But suppose the wicked stop doing all the sins they have done and obey all My rules and do what is fair and right. Then they will surely live; they will not die.

Jonah 3:10

When God saw what the people did, that they stopped doing evil, He changed His mind and did not do what He had warned.

Luke 15:18

I will leave and return to my father and say to him, “Father, I have sinned against God and against you.”

Spiritual Principle

It is never too late to change your mind and obey God.

XXX. “I WILL, SIR”

Matthew 21:30 — But He Did Not Go

“Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.”

The father asked the second son the same thing.

The second son answered politely.

“I will, sir.”

He said the right words.

He was respectful.

But he did not go.

His words were empty.

Cross References

Titus 1:16

> They say they know God, but the way they live shows they don't really know Him.

Ezekiel 33:31

> They come to you... They hear your words, but they will not obey them. With their mouths they show love, but their hearts are greedy.

James 2:14

> My brothers and sisters, what good is it if someone says he has faith but does nothing to show it?

Spiritual Warning

Saying the right words is not the same as doing the right thing.

XXXI. WHICH SON OBEYED?

Matthew 21:31 — Tax Collectors and Prostitutes First

“Which of the two did what his father wanted?” “The first,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.”

Jesus asked:

“Which of the two did what his father wanted?”

The answer was obvious.

“The first.”

The leaders had judged themselves.

Then Jesus applied the parable.

“Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.”

The first son represented the open sinners.

At first, they said **no** to God.

But when John preached repentance, they changed their minds.

The second son represented the religious leaders.

They said **yes** to God with their words.

But they did not obey Him.

They rejected John and they were rejecting Jesus.

Cross References

Luke 7:29

> When all the people, even the tax collectors, heard this, they agreed that God's teaching was good, because they had been baptized by John.

Luke 18:14

> I tell you, when this tax collector went home, he was right with God, but the Pharisee was not.

1 Timothy 1:15

> Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the worst of them.

Spiritual Principle

God welcomes sinners who repent over religious people who refuse to obey.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God is more interested in the son who says “no” and then obeys than in the son who says “yes” and never moves.

XXXII. YOU DID NOT BELIEVE HIM

Matthew 21:32 — Even After You Saw This

“For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.”

Jesus explained.

John came to you to show you the way of righteousness.

You did not believe him.

But the tax collectors and prostitutes did.

Then Jesus said something even more serious.

Even after you saw this, you did not repent.

They saw sinners' lives changed.

They saw the fruit of John's ministry.

And still they would not repent.

Cross References

Luke 3:12

> Even tax collectors came to John to be baptized. They said to him, “Teacher, what should we do?”

Luke 7:30

> But the Pharisees and experts on the law refused to accept God's plan for themselves.

2 Peter 2:21

> It would have been better for them never to have known the right way than to know it and then turn away from the holy command that was given to them.

Spiritual Warning

Seeing God change others' lives and still refusing to repent hardens the heart.

XXXIII. THE LANDOWNER'S VINEYARD

Matthew 21:33 — He Rented It to Farmers

“Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place.”

Jesus told a second parable.

A landowner planted a vineyard.

He did everything to make it successful.

A wall for protection.

A winepress for making wine.

A watchtower for guarding it.

Then he **rented the vineyard to some farmers.**

This parable is based on Isaiah 5.

In Isaiah's song, the vineyard was Israel.

Everyone listening would have understood.

The **landowner** is God.

The **vineyard** is Israel.

The **farmers** are Israel's religious leaders.

Cross References

Isaiah 5:1

> Now I will sing a song to my friend about his vineyard. My friend had a vineyard on a hill with very rich soil.

Isaiah 5:2

> He dug and cleared the field of stones and planted the best grapevines there. He built a tower in the middle of it and cut out a winepress as well.

Mark 12:1

> Jesus began to use stories to teach the people. He said, “A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it and dug a hole for a winepress and built a tower.”

Spiritual Principle

God has given His people everything they need to bear fruit.

XXXIV. COLLECTING THE FRUIT

Matthew 21:34 — Harvest Time

“When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.”

When the harvest time approached, the landowner sent his servants.

They came **to collect his fruit.**

The fruit belonged to the owner.

The tenants were only supposed to care for the vineyard.

The servants in the story represent God's prophets.

God sent them again and again to call His people to bear fruit.

Cross References

Mark 12:2

> When it was time for the grapes to be picked, he sent a servant to the farmers to get his share of the grapes.

Luke 20:10

> When it was time for the grapes to be picked, he sent a servant to those farmers to get some of the grapes.

Isaiah 5:4

> What more could I have done for My vineyard than I have already done? I expected good grapes to grow, but only bad ones grew.

Spiritual Principle

God expects fruit from what He has given us.

XXXV. THEY BEAT, KILLED, AND STONED

Matthew 21:35 — The Servants Mistreated

“The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third.”

The tenants did terrible things.

They **seized** the servants.

They **beat one.**

They **killed another.**

They **stoned a third.**

This is exactly how Israel had often treated God's prophets.

Jeremiah was beaten and thrown into a pit.

Zechariah the priest was stoned in the temple courtyard.

Many prophets were rejected and killed.

Cross References

2 Chronicles 24:21

> But the people made plans against Zechariah. At the king's command, they threw stones at him until he died in the courtyard of the Temple of the LORD.

Nehemiah 9:26

> But they disobeyed You and turned against You... They killed Your prophets who had warned them to come back to You.

Mark 12:3

> But the farmers grabbed the servant and beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

Spiritual Warning

Rejecting God's messengers is rejecting God.

XXXVI. MORE SERVANTS SENT

Matthew 21:36 — Treated the Same Way

“Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way.”

The landowner was patient.

He **sent other servants.**

More than the first time.

But **the tenants treated them the same way.**

God sent prophet after prophet.

He was patient again and again.

But His people kept rejecting His messengers.

Cross References

2 Chronicles 36:15

> The LORD, the God of their ancestors, sent prophets to warn them again and again, because He had pity on His people and on His Temple.

Jeremiah 7:25

> Since the day your ancestors left Egypt until now, I have sent My servants the prophets to you again and again.

Mark 12:5

> So the man sent another servant, whom they killed. The man sent many others. The farmers beat some of them and killed others.

Spiritual Principle

God is amazingly patient with His people.

XXXVII. HE SENT HIS SON

Matthew 21:37 — They Will Respect My Son

“Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.”

Last of all, he sent his son.

This was his final appeal.

His greatest act of love.

“They will respect my son.”

The son represents Jesus.

God had sent prophets.

Now He sent His own Son.

Jesus was not just another prophet.

He was the Son of the owner of the vineyard.

Cross References

Mark 12:6

> The man had one person left to send, his son whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, “They will respect my son.”

Hebrews 1:1

> In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets many times and in many different ways. But now in these last days God has spoken to us through His Son.

Luke 20:13

> The owner of the vineyard said, “What will I do now? I will send my son whom I love. Maybe they will respect him.”

Spiritual Principle

God's final and greatest message to the world is His Son.

Key Truth

Jesus was telling the religious leaders exactly who He was — the Son of the Owner.

XXXVIII. THIS IS THE HEIR

Matthew 21:38 — Let's Kill Him

“But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.’”

The tenants recognized the son.

“This is the heir.”

They knew who he was.

And they made a plan.

“Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.”

They wanted the vineyard for themselves.

The religious leaders wanted to keep control of Israel.

They saw Jesus as a threat to their power.

And they were already plotting to kill Him.

Their words echo the words of Joseph's brothers: **“Come, let's kill him.”**

Cross References

Genesis 37:20

> “Come, let's kill him and throw him into one of the wells. We can tell our father that a wild animal killed him.”

Mark 12:7

> But the farmers said to each other, “This son will inherit the vineyard. If we kill him, it will be ours.”

Psalm 2:8

> Ask Me, and I will give You the nations. All the people on earth will be Yours.

Spiritual Warning

People reject Jesus because they want to keep control of their own lives.

XXXIX. THREW HIM OUT AND KILLED HIM

Matthew 21:39 — Out of the Vineyard

“So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.”

They took him.

They threw him out of the vineyard.

They killed him.

This is exactly what would happen to Jesus a few days later.

He would be arrested.

He would be taken outside the city walls of Jerusalem.

And He would be crucified.

Jesus was predicting His own death in the parable.

Cross References

Hebrews 13:12

> So Jesus also suffered outside the city to make His people holy with His own blood.

Mark 12:8

> So they took the son, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

John 19:17

> Carrying His own cross, Jesus went out to a place called the Place of the Skull.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knew exactly what was coming and spoke about it openly.

XL. WHAT WILL THE OWNER DO?

Matthew 21:40 — When He Comes

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”

Jesus asked the leaders to judge the story.

When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?

They had just heard about murder and rebellion.

What would a just owner do?

Cross References

Mark 12:9

> So what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those farmers and give the vineyard to other farmers.

Luke 20:15

So they threw the son out of the vineyard and killed him. What will the owner of this vineyard do to them?

Isaiah 5:5

Now I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge, and it will be burned.

Spiritual Principle

God will hold accountable those who reject His Son.

XLI. A WRETCHED END

Matthew 21:41 — Other Tenants

“They replied, ‘He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.’”

The leaders answered.

“He will bring those wretches to a wretched end.”

“He will rent the vineyard to other tenants.”

They had judged themselves without realizing it.

Just like David did when the prophet Nathan told him a story.

The new tenants would **give him his share of the crop.**

They would produce the fruit the owner wanted.

Cross References

Romans 11:11

So I ask: When the Jews fell, did that fall destroy them? No! But their failure brought salvation to the non-Jews.

Acts 13:46

Paul and Barnabas spoke very boldly and said, “We must speak the message of God to you first. But you refuse to listen... So we will now go to the non-Jewish people.”

Isaiah 5:6

I will ruin it. It will not be trimmed or hoed, and weeds and thorns will grow there.

Spiritual Principle

Those who judge others often unknowingly judge themselves.

XLII. THE REJECTED STONE

Matthew 21:42 — The Cornerstone

“Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the Scriptures: “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes”?’”

Jesus quoted Psalm 118.

This is the same psalm the crowds sang when He entered Jerusalem.

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

The builders were the religious leaders.

They were supposed to be building God's people.

The stone was Jesus.

They rejected Him.

But God made Him **the cornerstone.**

The **cornerstone** was the most important stone in a building.

It held everything together.

“The Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.”

The rejection of Jesus would not stop God's plan.

It would accomplish it.

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus became the foundation of God's people.

Cross References

Psalm 118:22

> The stone that the builders rejected became the cornerstone.

Psalm 118:23

> The LORD did this, and it is wonderful to us.

1 Peter 2:7

> This stone is worth much to you who believe. But to the people who do not believe, “the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

Spiritual Principle

What people reject, God can make the foundation of everything.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The stone the builders threw away became the stone God built everything on.

XLIII. GIVEN TO A PEOPLE WHO PRODUCE FRUIT

Matthew 21:43 — The Kingdom Taken Away

“Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.”

Jesus applied the parable directly.

The kingdom of God will be taken away from you.

He was speaking to the religious leaders who had rejected Him.

And given to a people who will produce its fruit.

This **people** is the community of all who follow Jesus.

It includes Jews and Gentiles alike.

The first followers of Jesus were Jewish.

The apostles were Jewish.

God did not reject Israel.

But the leaders who rejected the Son would lose their place.

And God's kingdom would be given to all who trust in Jesus and bear fruit.

Cross References

Romans 11:20

> They were broken off because they did not believe, and you stand only because you believe. Do not be proud, but be afraid.

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen people, royal priests, a holy nation, a nation that belongs to God.

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom belongs to those who produce its fruit.

Spiritual Warning

No one should become proud; the same warning applies to all who claim to follow Jesus.

XLIV. BROKEN OR CRUSHED

Matthew 21:44 — This Stone

“Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”

Jesus gave a final warning about **this stone.**

Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces.

Those who stumble over Jesus and reject Him will be broken.

Some also see this as a picture of humbly falling before Jesus, being broken in repentance.

Anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.

In Daniel 2, a stone cut out without human hands destroys the kingdoms of the world.

Jesus will come one day as Judge.

Those who reject Him will be crushed.

Everyone will meet this stone.

We can either fall on it in humility now or be crushed by it in judgment later.

Cross References

Isaiah 8:14

He will be a stone that causes people to stumble. He will be a rock that makes them fall.

Daniel 2:34

> While you were looking at the statue, you saw a rock cut free, but not by human hands. It hit the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them.

Luke 20:18

> Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken, and the person on whom it falls will be crushed.

Spiritual Warning

Everyone will meet Jesus — either as Savior now or as Judge later.

XLV. THEY KNEW HE WAS TALKING ABOUT THEM

Matthew 21:45 — The Leaders Understood

“When the chief priests and Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew He was talking about them.”

The leaders understood.

They knew He was talking about them.

They were the son who said **yes** and did not go.

They were the tenants who killed the servants.

They were planning to kill the Son.

They understood the parables perfectly.

But understanding is not the same as repenting.

Cross References

Mark 12:12

> The Jewish leaders knew that the story was about them. So they wanted to find a way to arrest Jesus.

Luke 20:19

> The teachers of the law and the leading priests wanted to arrest Jesus at once, because they knew the story was about them.

John 8:37

> I know you are Abraham's children, but you want to kill Me because you don't accept My teaching.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to understand the truth and still refuse it.

XLVI. THEY WANTED TO ARREST HIM

Matthew 21:46 — Afraid of the Crowd

“They looked for a way to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that He was a prophet.”

Instead of repenting, they **looked for a way to arrest Him.**

But **they were afraid of the crowd.**

The people believed Jesus was **a prophet.**

The leaders feared people more than they feared God.

They would wait for a better time.

Within days, they would find it.

Cross References

Luke 22:2

> The leading priests and teachers of the law were trying to find a way to kill Jesus, because they were afraid of the people.

John 7:30

> When Jesus said this, they tried to take Him. But no one was able to touch Him, because it was not yet the right time.

Matthew 21:11

> The crowd answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from the town of Nazareth in Galilee.”

Spiritual Principle

Nothing can happen to Jesus before the Father's appointed time.

XLVII. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 21

1. Jesus Enters as King

He fulfilled prophecy by riding humbly into Jerusalem as the promised Messiah.

Principle:

Jesus is the gentle King who comes to save.

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2. Worship Belongs to Him

The crowds and even children praised Him, declaring His kingship.

Principle:

Jesus is worthy of our loudest praise.

---

3. True Fruit Matters

The cursed fig tree represents fruitless faith.

God calls for genuine fruit in our lives.

Principle:

Leaves of religion are not enough; God wants the fruit of obedience.

---

4. Jesus' Authority Is Divine

His power and mission came directly from the Father, not from men.

Principle:

Jesus does not need human permission to be Lord.

---

5. Obedience Proves Faith

The parable of the two sons shows that actions matter more than empty words.

Principle:

Do not just say yes to God; go.

---

6. Rejecting God's Son Brings Judgment

The parable of the tenants warns that those who reject Christ will face destruction, but God's kingdom will advance through others who believe.

Principle:

The Son God sent is the Stone everyone must face.

XLVIII. THE KING'S FIRST DAYS IN JERUSALEM

Sunday — The Triumphal Entry

Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey.

The crowds shout, **“Hosanna!”**

Monday — The Fig Tree and the Temple

Mark tells us that Jesus cursed the fig tree and cleared the temple on the next day.

Matthew groups these events together to show their connection.

Tuesday — Authority Challenged

The leaders question His authority.

Jesus tells parables of judgment.

Key Truth

Every step of Jesus' final week moved toward the cross, and He walked it with purpose.

XLIX. THE FIG TREE AND THE TEMPLE

The fig tree and the temple are connected.

The Fig Tree

- Had leaves.
- Looked fruitful from a distance.
- Had no fruit.
- Was cursed and withered.

The Temple

- Was busy with religious activity.
- Looked holy from the outside.
- Had no true prayer or righteousness.
- Would be destroyed in A.D. 70.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God sees past the leaves to look for the fruit.

L. TWO PARABLES OF REJECTION

The Two Sons

- One said no but later obeyed.
- One said yes but never obeyed.
- Tax collectors and prostitutes repented.
- Religious leaders did not.

The Wicked Tenants

- The owner gave everything needed for fruit.
- The tenants beat and killed his servants.
- They killed his son.
- The vineyard was given to others.

Key Truth

Both parables show that God judges not by words or position, but by repentance and fruit.

LI. WHAT MATTHEW 21 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 21 presents Jesus as:

The Promised King

He fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy.

The Gentle King

He came riding on a donkey.

The Son of David

The crowds hailed Him as the Messiah.

The Lord Who Needs

“The Lord needs them.”

The Purifier of the Temple

He drove out the greedy.

The Healer

He welcomed and healed the blind and lame.

The One Worthy of Praise

He accepted the praise of children as God.

The Judge of Fruitless Religion

He cursed the fig tree.

The One with Divine Authority

His authority came from God.

The Son of the Owner

He is the beloved Son sent last of all.

The Rejected Stone

God made Him the cornerstone.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The King who rode in on a donkey is the Stone on which the whole world will stand or fall.

LII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey?

To fulfill Zechariah 9:9 and to show that He was a King who came in peace and humility, not as a warrior.

Question 2

What does “Hosanna” mean?

It means **“Save us now!”**

It also became a shout of praise.

Question 3

Why did the crowd spread cloaks and branches on the road?

To honor Jesus as King, like rolling out a royal welcome.

Question 4

Why did Jesus drive the sellers out of the temple?

They had turned God's house of prayer into a marketplace, cheating people and crowding out the Gentiles who came to pray.

Question 5

Who came to Jesus after He cleared the temple?

The blind and the lame, and He healed them.

Question 6

Why were the religious leaders angry when the children praised Jesus?

The children were calling Jesus the Son of David, the Messiah, and the leaders rejected that.

Question 7

Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?

It was an acted-out parable.

The tree had leaves but no fruit, like religion that looks good outwardly but has no real faith or obedience.

Question 8

What did Jesus teach about faith after the fig tree withered?

That faith without doubt can do what seems impossible, and that believing prayer is powerful.

Question 9

Why did Jesus ask about John's baptism?

Because John pointed to Jesus.

If John was from God, then Jesus' authority came from God too.

Question 10

Why wouldn't the leaders answer Jesus' question?

They cared more about what was safe than what was true.

They were afraid of looking wrong and afraid of the people.

Question 11

What does the parable of the two sons teach?

That obedience matters more than words.

Sinners who repent will enter the kingdom ahead of religious people who refuse to obey.

Question 12

What does the parable of the wicked tenants teach?

That God sent prophets and finally His Son, and those who reject the Son will face judgment.

Question 13

What does it mean that the rejected stone became the cornerstone?

The religious leaders rejected Jesus, but God made Him the foundation of His people through His death and resurrection.

Question 14

Who receives the kingdom that is taken away?

A people who produce its fruit — all who follow Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles.

Question 15

What should Matthew 21 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 21 should cause believers to live:

- Welcoming Jesus as their King.
- Giving gladly whatever the Lord needs.
- Praising Him with joy.
- Keeping worship pure and centered on prayer.
- Making room for the broken.
- Bearing real fruit, not just leaves.
- Praying with faith.
- Obeying God, not just saying yes.
- Honoring God's messengers.
- Building their lives on Jesus, the Cornerstone.

LIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 21 asks several important questions.

Have I Welcomed Jesus as My King?

Is There Something the Lord Needs from Me?

Is My Praise Real, or Only Shallow Excitement?

Is There Anything in My Life That Needs to Be Cleared Out?

Am I Making Room for the Broken and Needy?

Does My Life Have Fruit, or Only Leaves?

Am I Praying with Faith?

Do I Care More About What Is Safe or What Is True?

Am I the Son Who Says “Yes” but Does Not Go?

Am I Trying to Keep Control Instead of Giving It to Jesus?

Have I Built My Life on Jesus, the Cornerstone?

LIV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Leaves or Fruit?”

From a distance, the fig tree looked healthy.

It was covered with leaves.

Anyone passing by would think it had fruit.

But when Jesus came close, He found nothing but leaves.

The temple looked the same way.

It was busy.

It was crowded.

It was full of religious activity.

But when Jesus came close, He found greed instead of prayer.

The second son looked the same way.

He said, **“I will, sir.”**

But he never went.

This creates a powerful principle.

It is possible to look fruitful from a distance and be empty up close.

Jesus does not stay at a distance.

He comes close.

And He looks for fruit.

Principle:

Jesus is not impressed by the leaves of religious activity; He comes close looking for the fruit of a changed life.

LV. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 21 begins with a royal parade.

The King rides into Jerusalem.

Not on a war horse, but on a donkey.

The crowds spread their cloaks.

They wave branches.

They shout, **“Hosanna to the Son of David!”**

But the King does not go to a palace.

He goes to the temple.

And He cleans house.

He drives out the greedy.

He welcomes the blind and the lame.

He receives the praise of children.

Then He curses a tree with leaves but no fruit.

He silences leaders who will not tell the truth.

And He tells two stories.

A son who says yes but does not go.

And tenants who kill the owner's son.

Matthew 21 therefore reminds us:

Jesus is the King.

He comes in humility, but He comes with authority.

He welcomes the broken and judges the proud.

He looks for real fruit, not religious leaves.

He values obedience over empty words.

And everyone must decide what to do with the Son God has sent.

The story of Matthew 21 does not end with:

A shouting crowd.

An empty fig tree.

Or angry leaders plotting in the shadows.

It ends with:

The rejected Stone becoming the Cornerstone.

And the kingdom given to those who bear its fruit.

The same call still stands:

Welcome the King.

Give Him what He needs.

Praise Him.

Let Him clean your heart.

Bear real fruit.

Obey, don't just agree.

Build your life on the Cornerstone.

And until He returns:

Keep praising Him.

Keep bearing fruit.

Keep obeying Him.

Keep building on the Rock.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for sending Jesus as our King.

Thank You that He came humbly, riding on a donkey, to bring peace.

Lord Jesus, we welcome You as our King.

Hosanna! Save us now!

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

Whatever You need from us, help us give it gladly.

Make our praise real and not shallow.

Keep us from shouting Your praise one day and turning away the next.

Come into the temple of our hearts and clear out anything that does not belong.

Drive out greed, pride, and anything that keeps us from true prayer.

Make our lives a house of prayer.

Help us make room for the blind, the lame, and the broken.

Give us the simple, honest praise of children.

Lord, we do not want to be like the fig tree with leaves but no fruit.

Produce real fruit in our lives by Your Spirit.

Teach us to pray with faith.

Keep us from caring more about what is safe than what is true.

Help us not to be the son who says yes but never goes.

Make us people who obey.

Thank You for Your patience in sending messenger after messenger.

Thank You for sending Your Son.

Forgive us for the times we have tried to keep control of our own lives.

Thank You that the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

Help us build our lives on Jesus.

Let us bear the fruit of Your kingdom.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“The crowds that went ahead of Him and those that followed shouted, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!’” — Matthew 21:9

Central Truth

Jesus enters Jerusalem as the humble King with divine authority, calling for true worship and real fruit, and warning that those who reject God's Son will lose the kingdom He offers.

Matthew 21 in One Sentence

Jesus rides into Jerusalem as the humble King, cleanses the temple and heals the broken, curses a fruitless fig tree, silences those who question His authority, and tells parables showing that those who reject God's Son will lose the kingdom while it is given to those who bear its fruit.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 22 — The Wedding Feast, Questions of Authority, and the Greatest Commandment

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 21 ended with the religious leaders wanting to arrest Jesus.

They knew His parables were about them.

But they were afraid of the crowds.

Matthew Chapter 22 continues the conflict.

It all takes place in the temple courts during the last week before Jesus' death.

Jesus begins with another parable.

A king prepares a wedding banquet for his son.

He invites guests.

But they refuse to come.

Some ignore the invitation.

Others kill the king's servants.

So the king sends his servants into the streets to invite anyone they can find.

The hall is filled.

But one man comes without wedding clothes and is thrown out.

Then Jesus' enemies come with three trick questions.

The Pharisees and Herodians ask about paying taxes to Caesar.

The Sadducees ask about marriage in the resurrection.

An expert in the law asks which commandment is the greatest.

Each time, Jesus answers with wisdom no one can match.

“Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.”

“He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart... Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Finally, Jesus asks them a question.

“Whose son is the Christ?”

If He is David's son, why does David call Him **Lord**?

No one can answer.

And from that day on, no one dares to ask Him any more questions.

Matthew 22 therefore shows two great truths:

God graciously invites everyone to His Son's wedding feast, but each person must come on His terms.

And:

Jesus is wiser than all His enemies, and He is both David's son and David's Lord.

The central truth of Matthew 22 is:

God invites all people to the wedding feast of His Son, calls them to give Him their whole hearts in love, and reveals Jesus as the living Lord who is both the Son of David and the Lord of David.

I. AGAIN IN PARABLES

Matthew 22:1 — Jesus Spoke to Them

“Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying,”

Jesus **spoke to them again in parables.**

Them refers to the chief priests and Pharisees from the end of Matthew 21.

They had just tried to arrest Him.

But Jesus kept teaching.

He kept warning them.

He kept inviting them.

Cross References

Matthew 13:34

> Jesus used stories to tell all these things to the people. He always used stories to teach people.

Psalm 78:2

> I will speak using stories. I will tell things that have been secret since long ago.

Mark 12:1

> Jesus began to use stories to teach the people.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus keeps speaking truth, even to those who oppose Him.

II. A WEDDING BANQUET

Matthew 22:2 — For His Son

“The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.”

The kingdom of heaven is like a king.

The king represents God.

Who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.

The son represents Jesus.

A royal wedding was the greatest celebration in the ancient world.

It could last for days.

To be invited was a great honor.

In the Bible, God's salvation is often pictured as a great feast.

Isaiah spoke of a banquet God would prepare for all peoples.

Revelation speaks of **the wedding supper of the Lamb.**

Cross References

Isaiah 25:6

> The LORD who commands armies will prepare a feast on this mountain for all people. It will be a feast with the best food and wine.

Revelation 19:9

> Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who have been invited to the wedding meal of the Lamb!”

Luke 14:16

> Jesus said to him, “A man gave a big banquet and invited many people.”

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom is a joyful celebration of His Son.

III. THEY REFUSED TO COME

Matthew 22:3 — The Invited Guests

“He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet, but they refused to come.”

In those days, guests were invited twice.

First, they were told the date.

Then, when the feast was ready, servants came to tell them it was time.

The guests in the story had already been invited.

They knew the feast was coming.

But when the servants came, **they refused to come.**

The invited guests represent Israel and especially its religious leaders.

God had invited them through the prophets.

Now the feast was ready.

But they refused.

Cross References

Luke 14:17

> When it was time to eat, the man sent his servant to tell the guests, “Come. Everything is ready.”

Proverbs 1:24

> I called, but you refused to listen. I held out my hand, but you paid no attention.

Jeremiah 35:15

> I sent all My servants the prophets to you again and again... But you have not listened to Me.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to be invited and still refuse to come.

IV. EVERYTHING IS READY

Matthew 22:4 — Come to the Wedding Banquet

“Then he sent more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited: I have prepared my dinner. My oxen and fattened cattle are butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’”

The king was patient.

He **sent more servants.**

He gave them a warm message.

I have prepared my dinner.

My oxen and fattened cattle are butchered.

Everything is ready.

Come.

The best food had been prepared.

Nothing was missing.

The king had done everything.

The guests only needed to come.

This is a picture of the gospel.

God has prepared everything through Jesus.

We are simply invited to come.

Cross References

Proverbs 9:2

> She has prepared her meat and wine and set her table.

Luke 15:23

> And get our fat calf and kill it so we can have a big feast and celebrate.

Zephaniah 1:7

> Be silent before the Lord GOD, because the LORD's day of judging is coming soon. The LORD has prepared a sacrifice.

Spiritual Principle

God has prepared everything; we are invited to come.

V. THEY PAID NO ATTENTION

Matthew 22:5 — One to His Field, Another to His Business

“But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business.”

Some guests **paid no attention.**

They did not argue.

They did not attack.

They just did not care.

One went to his field.

Another to his business.

These were not evil things.

Work is good.

But they let ordinary things keep them from the king's invitation.

They treated the king's feast as less important than their daily routine.

Cross References

Luke 14:18

> But all the guests made excuses. The first one said, “I have just bought a field, and I must go look at it. Please excuse me.”

Haggai 1:9

> You look for much, but you find little... Why? Because My Temple is still in ruins, while each of you is busy working on your own house.

Luke 17:28

> It will be the same as during the time of Lot. People were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building.

Spiritual Warning

Indifference can be as dangerous as open rebellion.

Application

People today ignore God's invitation because of:

- Work.
- Money.
- Busyness.
- Entertainment.
- Comfort.
- Thinking there will be time later.

VI. THEY KILLED THE SERVANTS

Matthew 22:6 — Mistreated and Killed

“The rest seized his servants, mistreated them, and killed them.”

Other guests were worse.

They seized his servants.

Mistreated them.

Killed them.

This was shocking.

Who would kill someone for delivering a wedding invitation?

But this is how God's prophets had been treated.

And it is how Jesus' apostles would soon be treated.

Cross References

1 Thessalonians 2:15

> They killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and they forced us to leave that country.

Acts 7:52

> Your ancestors tried to hurt every prophet who ever lived. Those prophets said long ago that the One who is good would come, but your ancestors killed them.

Jeremiah 26:23

> They brought Uriah back from Egypt and took him to King Jehoiakim, who had him killed with a sword.

Spiritual Warning

Some people do not just reject God's invitation; they attack those who bring it.

VII. THE KING WAS FURIOUS

Matthew 22:7 — Burned Their City

“The king was furious. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.”

The king was furious.

His patience had been rejected.

His servants had been killed.

He sent his army.

He destroyed those murderers.

He burned their city.

Many see this as a prophecy of what happened to Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

About forty years after Jesus spoke these words, the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem and burned the temple.

Cross References

2 Kings 25:9

> He set fire to the Temple of the LORD, the palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem.

Daniel 9:26

> The people of the leader who is to come will destroy the city and the holy place.

Luke 19:27

> But bring here my enemies, who did not want me to be king.

Spiritual Principle

God is patient, but His patience has an end.

VIII. NOT WORTHY

Matthew 22:8 — The Banquet Is Ready

“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited were not worthy.’”

The king's feast would not be canceled.

The wedding banquet is ready.

But **those I invited were not worthy.**

They were not unworthy because they were sinners.

Everyone is a sinner.

They were unworthy because they **refused** the invitation.

They showed by their choices that they did not want the king or his son.

Cross References

Matthew 10:37

> Those who love their father or mother more than they love Me are not worthy to be My followers.

Luke 14:24

> I tell you, none of those whom I invited first will eat with me.

Revelation 3:4

> But you have a few there in Sardis who have kept their clothes clean, and they will walk with Me and wear white clothes, because they are worthy.

Spiritual Principle

Rejecting God's invitation shows we do not value what He offers.

IX. INVITE ANYONE YOU FIND

Matthew 22:9 — The Street Corners

“So go to the street corners and invite anyone you find.”

Now the king sent his servants somewhere new.

Go to the street corners.

These were the places where roads left the city.

Where travelers, strangers, and the poor gathered.

Invite anyone you find.

No one was excluded.

This is a picture of the gospel going to everyone.

Sinners.

Outcasts.

Gentiles.

Anyone who would come.

Cross References

Luke 14:21

> Go at once into the streets and alleys of the town, and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.

Luke 14:23

> Go out to the roads and country lanes, and tell the people there to come so my house will be full.

Isaiah 55:1

> All you who are thirsty, come and drink. Those of you who do not have money, come, buy and eat!

Spiritual Principle

God's invitation is open to everyone.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When the honored guests refused, the King opened His doors to the whole world.

X. BOTH GOOD AND BAD

Matthew 22:10 — The Hall Was Filled

“So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.”

The servants obeyed.

They **gathered all the people they could find.**

Both good and bad.

God's invitation goes out to all kinds of people.

Moral people and immoral people.

Religious people and irreligious people.

No one comes because they are good enough.

They come because they are invited.

And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

God's house will be full.

Cross References

Matthew 13:47

> Also, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was put into the lake and caught many different kinds of fish.

Matthew 13:30

> Let the weeds and the wheat grow together until the harvest time.

Matthew 25:10

> The bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast.

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom will be filled with people from every background.

XI. NO WEDDING CLOTHES

Matthew 22:11 — The King Saw Him

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes.”

The king came in to see the guests.

He looked at each one.

He noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes.

Some believe that in royal weddings, the king provided clothing for the guests.

If so, this man had refused what the king freely offered.

He wanted to come to the feast on his own terms.

In the Bible, clothing is often a picture of righteousness.

Isaiah spoke of being clothed with garments of salvation.

Revelation describes fine linen as the righteous acts of God's people.

To be ready for God's feast, we must be clothed in the righteousness God gives through Jesus.

Cross References

Isaiah 61:10

> The LORD makes me very happy. All that I am rejoices in my God. He has covered me with clothes of salvation and wrapped me with a coat of goodness.

Revelation 19:8

> Fine linen, bright and clean, was given to her to wear. (The fine linen means the good things done by God's holy people.)

Zephaniah 1:8

> On the day of the LORD's sacrifice, I will punish the officers and the king's sons and all who wear foreign clothes.

Spiritual Principle

We must come to God on His terms, clothed in the righteousness He provides.

XII. HE WAS SPEECHLESS

Matthew 22:12 — How Did You Get In?

“He asked, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ The man was speechless.”

The king spoke kindly.

“Friend.”

Then he asked:

“How did you get in here without wedding clothes?”

The man was speechless.

He had no excuse.

No answer.

He knew he was wrong.

On the day of judgment, no one will have an excuse before God.

Cross References

Job 40:4

> I am not worthy. I cannot answer You anything, so I will put my hand over my mouth.

Romans 3:19

> We know that the law's commands are for those who have the law. This stops all excuses and brings the whole world under God's judgment.

Matthew 25:12

> But the bridegroom answered, “I tell you the truth, I don't know you.”

Spiritual Warning

No one will have an excuse before God on the day of judgment.

XIII. THROWN OUTSIDE

Matthew 22:13 — Into the Darkness

“Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

The king gave a terrible order.

Tie him hand and foot.

Throw him outside, into the darkness.

Inside, the wedding hall was bright and full of joy.

Outside was darkness.

Where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This is one of Jesus' descriptions of hell.

It is sorrow, regret, and separation from God's joy.

Cross References

Matthew 8:12

> But those people who should have the kingdom will be thrown outside into the darkness, where people will cry and grind their teeth with pain.

Matthew 25:30

> Throw that useless servant outside into the darkness, where people will cry and grind their teeth with pain.

Jude 1:13

> They are like wandering stars. A place in the blackest darkness has been kept for them forever.

Spiritual Warning

Being near the feast is not the same as being ready for the feast.

XIV. MANY ARE CALLED

Matthew 22:14 — But Few Are Chosen

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Jesus summed up the parable.

Many are called.

God's invitation goes out to many people.

But few are chosen.

Not everyone who hears the invitation truly responds.

Some refuse.

Some ignore it.

Some try to come on their own terms.

Those who are **chosen** are those who receive God's invitation and come on His terms, clothed in His righteousness.

God's call and our response go together.

Cross References

Romans 8:30

> God planned for them to be like His Son, and those He planned to be like His Son, He also called.

Revelation 17:14

> With Him will be His called, chosen, and faithful followers.

2 Peter 1:10

> My brothers and sisters, try hard to be certain that you really are called and chosen by God.

Spiritual Principle

God's invitation is wide, but each person must truly respond.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The invitation is free, but it is not cheap; we must come clothed in what the King provides.

XV. A PLAN TO TRAP JESUS

Matthew 22:15 — In His Words

“Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap Jesus in His words.”

The parables had exposed the Pharisees.

So **they went out** and **laid plans.**

Their goal was **to trap Jesus in His words.**

They wanted Him to say something that would get Him in trouble with the people or with Rome.

Cross References

Mark 12:13

> Later, the Jewish leaders sent some Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to trap Him in saying something wrong.

Luke 11:53

> When Jesus left, the teachers of the law and the Pharisees began to cause Him a lot of trouble, asking Him questions about many things.

Psalm 56:5

> All day long they twist my words. All their evil plans are against me.

Spiritual Warning

Those who oppose truth often try to trap the truth-teller.

XVI. THE HERODIANS

Matthew 22:16 — Flattery

“They sent their disciples to Him along with the Herodians. ‘Teacher,’ they said, ‘we know that You are a man of integrity and that You teach the way of God in truth. You aren't swayed by others because You pay no attention to who they are.’”

The Pharisees sent **their disciples** along with **the Herodians.**

The **Herodians** supported Herod's family and Roman rule.

The **Pharisees** resented Roman rule.

These two groups were usually enemies.

But they joined together against Jesus.

They began with flattery.

“We know that You are a man of integrity.”

“You teach the way of God in truth.”

“You aren't swayed by others.”

Everything they said was true.

But they did not believe it.

They were using kind words to set a trap.

Cross References

Mark 3:6

> Then the Pharisees left and began making plans with the Herodians about a way to kill Jesus.

Mark 12:14

> They came to Him and said, “Teacher, we know that You are an honest man. You are not afraid of what other people think about You.”

Luke 20:21

> So the spies asked Jesus, “Teacher, we know that what You say and teach is true. You pay no attention to who people are, and You always teach the truth about God's way.”

Spiritual Warning

Flattery is often a trap in disguise.

XVII. TAXES TO CAESAR

Matthew 22:17 — Is It Right or Not?

“Tell us then, what is Your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?”

Here was the trap.

Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?

This tax was paid directly to the Roman emperor.

Many Jews hated it.

It reminded them that they were ruled by foreigners.

If Jesus said **yes**, the people would turn against Him for supporting Rome.

If Jesus said **no**, the Herodians could report Him to the Romans as a rebel.

It seemed like there was no way out.

Cross References

Luke 20:22

> Tell us, is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?

Romans 13:7

> Pay everyone what you owe. If you owe any kind of tax, pay it.

Luke 23:2

> They began to accuse Jesus, saying, “We caught this man telling things that were confusing our people. He says we should not pay taxes to Caesar.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' wisdom can answer every trap the enemy sets.

XVIII. YOU HYPOCRITES

Matthew 22:18 — Knowing Their Evil Intent

“But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, ‘You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap Me?’”

Jesus **knew their evil intent.**

Their flattery did not fool Him.

“You hypocrites.”

They pretended to be sincere.

But they were actors.

“Why are you trying to trap Me?”

Jesus exposed their plan.

Cross References

Mark 12:15

> But knowing what these men were really trying to do, Jesus said to them, “Why are you trying to trap Me?”

Luke 20:23

> But Jesus, knowing they were trying to trick Him, said...

John 2:25

He did not need anyone to tell Him about people, because He knew what was in people's minds.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus sees through every mask.

XIX. SHOW ME THE COIN

Matthew 22:19 — A Denarius

“Show Me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought Him a denarius,

Jesus asked for **the coin used for paying the tax.**

They brought Him a denarius.

Notice that Jesus did not have one.

But they did.

The very people who claimed to be troubled by Roman taxes were carrying Roman coins.

Cross References

Mark 12:16

They gave Jesus a coin.

Luke 20:24

Show Me a coin.

Matthew 20:2

The man agreed to pay the workers one silver coin for working that day.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus uses simple, everyday things to reveal deep truths.

XX. WHOSE IMAGE?

Matthew 22:20 — And Whose Inscription?

“and He asked them, ‘Whose image is this? And whose inscription?’”

Jesus asked two questions.

“Whose image is this?”

“And whose inscription?”

The denarius had the face of the Roman emperor, **Tiberius Caesar.**

The words on it said something like:

“Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus.”

The coin bore Caesar's image.

It belonged to Caesar.

But Jesus was also pointing to something deeper.

Human beings are made **in the image of God.**

Cross References

Genesis 1:27

> So God created human beings in His image. In the image of God He created them.

Mark 12:16

> Jesus asked, “Whose image and name are on the coin?”

Luke 20:24

> Whose image and name are on it?

Spiritual Principle

What bears an image belongs to the one whose image it bears.

XXI. GIVE TO CAESAR AND TO GOD

Matthew 22:21 — What Is Caesar's and What Is God's

“‘Caesar's,’ they replied. Then He said to them, ‘Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.’”

They answered:

“Caesar's.”

Then Jesus gave one of the wisest answers ever spoken.

“Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's.”

The coin has Caesar's image.

Give it back to him.

It is right to pay taxes and honor earthly authorities.

“And to God what is God's.”

You bear God's image.

So give yourself to God.

Caesar can have the coin.

But God must have your heart, your life, your whole self.

Cross References

Romans 13:1

> Everyone must obey the people who rule over them. All authority comes from God.

1 Peter 2:17

> Show respect for all people. Love the brothers and sisters of God's family. Respect God. Honor the king.

Mark 12:17

> Then Jesus said to them, “Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and give to God the things that are God's.”

Spiritual Principle

Honor earthly authority, but give your ultimate loyalty to God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The coin bears Caesar's image, so give it to Caesar; you bear God's image, so give yourself to God.

XXII. THEY WERE AMAZED

Matthew 22:22 — They Went Away

“When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left Him and went away.”

They were amazed.

They had no answer.

Jesus had escaped their trap.

And He had taught them a deep truth.

So they left Him and went away.

They were amazed, but they did not believe.

They walked away.

Cross References

Luke 20:26

> So they were not able to trap Jesus in anything He said in front of the people. And being amazed at His answer, they became silent.

John 7:46

> The guards answered, “No one ever spoke the way this man speaks!”

Acts 4:13

> The leaders saw that Peter and John were not afraid to speak... They were amazed.

Spiritual Warning

Being amazed at Jesus is not the same as following Jesus.

XXIII. THE SADDUCEES

Matthew 22:23 — No Resurrection

“That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him with a question.”

That same day, another group came.

The Sadducees.

They were wealthy and powerful.

Many of the priests, including the high priest, were Sadducees.

They accepted only the first five books of the Bible as fully authoritative.

And they **said there is no resurrection.**

They also did not believe in angels or spirits.

They came with a question meant to make the resurrection look foolish.

Cross References

Acts 23:8

> The Sadducees believe that people will not rise from the dead and that there are no angels or spirits. But the Pharisees believe in them all.

Mark 12:18

> Then some Sadducees came to Jesus. Sadducees believe that people will not rise from the dead.

Luke 20:27

> Some Sadducees, who believed people would not rise from the dead, came to Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Some people use questions to mock the truth instead of seeking it.

XXIV. MOSES' LAW

Matthew 22:24 — Raise Up Offspring

“‘Teacher,’ they said, ‘Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him.’”

The Sadducees quoted Moses.

The law said that if a man died without children, his brother should marry the widow.

Their first son would carry on the dead man's name.

This was to protect the widow and keep the family line alive.

Ruth and Boaz are an example of this kind of marriage.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 25:5

> If two brothers are living together and one of them dies without having a son, his widow must not marry someone outside her husband's family. Her husband's brother must marry her.

Genesis 38:8

> Then Judah said to Onan, “Go and have physical relations with your dead brother's wife. You must do this to give your brother descendants.”

Ruth 4:5

> Boaz said, “When you buy the land from Naomi, you must also marry Ruth, the Moabite, the dead man's wife. That way, the land will stay in the dead man's name.”

Spiritual Principle

God's law cared for widows and families.

XXV. SEVEN BROTHERS

Matthew 22:25 — The First One Died

“Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother.”

The Sadducees told a story.

Seven brothers.

The first one married and died.

He had no children.

So **he left his wife to his brother.**

This story may have been made up.

It was meant to make the resurrection look ridiculous.

Cross References

Ruth 4:10

> I am also taking Ruth, the Moabite who was the wife of Mahlon, as my wife. I am doing this so her dead husband's property will stay in his name.

Genesis 38:9

> But Onan knew that the children would not belong to him.

Mark 12:20

> There were seven brothers. The first brother married and died, leaving no children.

Spiritual Principle

God's truth is not threatened by clever stories.

XXVI. DOWN TO THE SEVENTH

Matthew 22:26 — The Same Thing Happened

“The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh.”

The story continued.

The second brother married her and died.

The third too.

All the way **to the seventh.**

Seven brothers.

One wife.

No children.

Cross References

Mark 12:21

> So the second brother married the widow, but he also died and had no children. The same thing happened with the third brother.

Luke 20:31

> And the third brother married her. The same thing happened with all seven brothers. They died and had no children.

Mark 12:22

> All seven brothers married her and died, and none of the brothers had any children.

Spiritual Principle

Absurd questions often come from a refusal to believe.

XXVII. FINALLY THE WOMAN DIED

Matthew 22:27 — The End of the Story

“Finally, the woman died.”

Finally, the woman died.

Death comes to everyone.

The story ends with everyone in the grave.

For the Sadducees, that was the end.

There was nothing after death.

Cross References

Luke 20:32

> Finally, the woman died too.

Ecclesiastes 9:3

> This is what is wrong with everything that happens here on earth: everyone has the same end.

Job 30:23

> I know You will bring me down to death, to the place where all living people must go.

Spiritual Principle

Death is certain, but it is not the end.

XXVIII. WHOSE WIFE WILL SHE BE?

Matthew 22:28 — At the Resurrection

“Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?”

Here was their trick question.

At the resurrection, whose wife will she be?

All of them were married to her.

They thought this proved the resurrection was foolish.

If people rise from the dead, this woman would have seven husbands.

It would be a mess.

So, they argued, there must be no resurrection.

Cross References

Mark 12:23

> Since all seven brothers had married her, when people rise from the dead, whose wife will she be?

Luke 20:33

> Since all seven brothers had married her, whose wife will she be when people rise from the dead?

1 Corinthians 15:35

> But someone may ask, “How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have?”

Spiritual Principle

We cannot understand heaven by thinking only in earthly terms.

XXIX. YOU ARE IN ERROR

Matthew 22:29 — The Scriptures and the Power of God

“Jesus replied, ‘You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.’”

Jesus answered directly.

“You are in error.”

They were wrong.

And Jesus told them why.

“You do not know the Scriptures.”

They read the Scriptures, but they did not understand them.

“Or the power of God.”

They could not imagine how God could raise the dead and make a new kind of life.

They made God too small.

Cross References

Mark 12:24

> Jesus answered, “Why don't you understand? Don't you know what the Scriptures say, and don't you know about the power of God?”

John 20:9

> They did not yet understand from the Scriptures that Jesus must rise from the dead.

Luke 24:25

> Then Jesus said to them, “You are foolish and slow to believe everything the prophets said.”

Spiritual Principle

Error comes from not knowing God's Word and not trusting God's power.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Most wrong ideas about God come from a small view of Scripture or a small view of His power.

XXX. LIKE THE ANGELS

Matthew 22:30 — Neither Marry nor Are Given in Marriage

“At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.”

Jesus explained.

At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage.

Life after the resurrection is not just a continuation of life on earth.

It is a new kind of life.

Marriage is a wonderful gift for this life.

But in the resurrection, there will be no need for new marriages.

No one will die, so there will be no need to have children to carry on a family name.

They will be like the angels in heaven.

This does not mean people become angels.

It means they will be like angels in this way: they will not marry and they will not die.

Also notice that Jesus mentioned angels.

The Sadducees did not believe in angels.

Jesus answered that error too.

Cross References

Mark 12:25

> When people rise from the dead, they will not marry, nor will they be given to someone to marry. They will be like the angels in heaven.

Luke 20:36

> In that life they are like angels and cannot die. They are children of God, because they have been raised from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:42

> It is the same with the dead who are raised to life. The body that is planted will ruin and decay, but it is raised to a life that cannot be destroyed.

Spiritual Principle

The resurrection life will be far greater than anything we know now.

XXXI. HAVE YOU NOT READ?

Matthew 22:31 — What God Said to You

“But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you,”

Jesus now proved the resurrection from Scripture.

He chose a passage from Exodus.

The Sadducees accepted the books of Moses.

So Jesus used their own Scriptures.

Have you not read what God said to you?

Notice the words **to you.**

God's Word was not just for people long ago.

It was spoken to them.

And it is spoken to us.

Cross References

Mark 12:26

> Surely you have read what God said about people rising from the dead. In the book in which Moses wrote about the burning bush...

Luke 20:37

Even Moses clearly showed that the dead are raised to life. When he wrote about the burning bush...

Exodus 3:2

There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire coming out of a bush.

Spiritual Principle

God's Word speaks to every generation.

XXXII. THE GOD OF THE LIVING

Matthew 22:32 — Not the God of the Dead

“‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”

Jesus quoted God's words to Moses at the burning bush.

“I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

Notice the word **am.**

God did not say, **“I was their God.”**

He said, **“I am.”**

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been dead for hundreds of years when God spoke to Moses.

Yet God was still their God.

That means they were still alive to Him.

He is not the God of the dead but of the living.

God's relationship with His people does not end at death.

And one day, He will raise their bodies too.

Cross References

Exodus 3:6

I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Mark 12:27

God is the God of the living, not the dead. You Sadducees are very wrong.

Luke 20:38

> God is the God of the living, not the dead, because all people are alive to Him.

Spiritual Principle

Those who belong to God are alive to Him forever.

Key Truth

Death cannot break the relationship between God and His people.

XXXIII. ASTONISHED AT HIS TEACHING

Matthew 22:33 — The Crowds Heard

“When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.”

The crowds were listening.

They were astonished.

Jesus had answered the Sadducees using one small word in a passage they knew well.

No one had ever seen it this way.

Cross References

Matthew 7:28

> When Jesus finished saying these things, the people were amazed at His teaching.

Mark 1:22

> The people were amazed at His teaching, because He taught like a person who had authority.

Luke 4:32

> They were amazed at His teaching, because He spoke with authority.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus reveals depths in Scripture that no one else can see.

XXXIV. THE PHARISEES GATHERED

Matthew 22:34 — The Sadducees Silenced

“Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.”

The Pharisees heard that Jesus **had silenced the Sadducees.**

The word **silenced** means **muzzled.**

The Pharisees disagreed with the Sadducees about the resurrection.

They may have been pleased that Jesus defeated them.

But they still opposed Jesus.

So **they got together** to try again.

Cross References

Mark 12:28

> One of the teachers of the law came and heard Jesus arguing with the Sadducees. Seeing that Jesus gave good answers to their questions, he asked Jesus...

Acts 23:7

> When Paul said this, there was an argument between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the group was divided.

Psalm 2:2

> The kings of the earth prepare to fight, and their leaders make plans together against the LORD and His appointed one.

Spiritual Warning

Opposition to Jesus keeps finding new ways to attack.

XXXV. AN EXPERT IN THE LAW

Matthew 22:35 — Testing Jesus

“One of them, an expert in the law, tested Him with this question:”

One of them, an **expert in the law**, came forward.

He was a scholar who studied God's law in detail.

He **tested** Jesus.

Mark tells us that this man was impressed by Jesus' answer to the Sadducees.

And after hearing Jesus' answer, he responded wisely.

Jesus told him he was **not far from the kingdom of God.**

Cross References

Luke 10:25

> Then an expert on the law stood up to test Jesus, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to get life forever?”

Luke 11:54

> They were trying to catch Him saying something wrong.

Mark 10:2

> Some Pharisees came to Jesus and tried to trick Him.

Spiritual Principle

Even a testing question can lead to life-changing truth.

XXXVI. THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

Matthew 22:36 — Which Is the Greatest?

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

The expert asked:

“Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jewish teachers counted 613 commands in the Law of Moses.

They often debated which were the most important.

This was a real question.

But it was also a test.

Any answer Jesus gave could be argued with.

Cross References

Mark 12:28

> He asked Jesus, “Which of the commands is most important?”

Luke 10:25

> Teacher, what must I do to get life forever?

Micah 6:8

> The LORD has told you what is good. He has told you what He wants from you: Do what is right to other people. Love being kind to others. And live humbly, trusting your God.

Spiritual Principle

God's law has a heart, and Jesus reveals it.

XXXVII. LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

Matthew 22:37 — With All Your Heart, Soul, and Mind

“Jesus replied: ‘“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”’”

Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:5.

This was part of the **Shema**, the prayer every faithful Jew said twice a day.

“Love the Lord your God.”

The greatest command is not a rule.

It is a relationship.

It is love.

With all your heart.

Your desires and emotions.

With all your soul.

Your life and your inner being.

With all your mind.

Your thoughts and understanding.

God does not want part of us.

He wants all of us.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 6:5

> Love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

Mark 12:30

> Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.

Luke 10:27

> The man answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.”

Spiritual Principle

God wants our whole selves, not just part of us.

Application

Loving God with all of yourself means:

- **Heart** — desiring Him above everything.
- **Soul** — giving Him your whole life.
- **Mind** — thinking about Him and learning His Word.
- **Strength** — serving Him with your energy.

XXXVIII. THE FIRST AND GREATEST

Matthew 22:38 — The Greatest Commandment

“This is the first and greatest commandment.”

This is the first and greatest commandment.

Loving God comes first.

Every other command flows from this one.

If we love God with all our heart, we will want to obey Him in everything else.

This command also connects to the first of the Ten Commandments:

“You shall have no other gods before Me.”

Cross References

Mark 12:29

> Jesus answered, “The most important command is this: ‘Listen, people of Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord.’”

Exodus 20:3

> You must not have any other gods except Me.

1 Corinthians 8:6

> But for us there is only one God, our Father. All things came from Him, and we live for Him.

Spiritual Principle

Love for God is the foundation of everything else.

XXXIX. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Matthew 22:39 — The Second Is Like It

“And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

The expert asked for one commandment.

Jesus gave two.

The second is like it.

Loving God and loving people cannot be separated.

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Jesus quoted Leviticus 19:18.

We naturally care for ourselves.

We feed ourselves.

We protect ourselves.

We want good things for ourselves.

Jesus calls us to want the same for others.

Cross References

Leviticus 19:18

> Love your neighbor as you love yourself. I am the LORD.

Romans 13:9

> All these commands are really only one rule: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.”

Galatians 5:14

> The whole law is made complete in this one command: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.”

Spiritual Principle

Love for God is shown in love for others.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You cannot love God with all your heart and ignore your neighbor's need.

XL. ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

Matthew 22:40 — Hang on These Two

“All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

All the Law and the Prophets means the whole Old Testament.

Hang on these two commandments.

Like a door hangs on its hinges.

Every command in God's Word is a way of loving God or loving others.

Without love, obedience becomes empty rule-keeping.

Cross References

Romans 13:10

> Love never hurts a neighbor, so loving is obeying all the law.

1 Timothy 1:5

> The purpose of this command is for people to have love, a love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and true faith.

James 2:8

> This royal law is found in the Scriptures: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” If you obey this law, you are doing right.

Spiritual Principle

Love is the heart of all of God's commands.

XLI. JESUS ASKS A QUESTION

Matthew 22:41 — While the Pharisees Were Gathered

“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,”

Jesus had answered every question.

Now **Jesus asked them** a question.

While the Pharisees were gathered together.

They had gathered to trap Him.

Now He would turn the tables.

Cross References

Mark 12:35

> As Jesus was teaching in the Temple, He asked, “Why do the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David?”

Luke 20:41

> Then Jesus said to them, “Why do people say that the Christ is the son of David?”

Isaiah 11:1

> A new branch will grow from the stump of Jesse's family.

Spiritual Principle

The most important question is not what we ask Jesus, but what He asks us.

XLII. WHOSE SON IS THE CHRIST?

Matthew 22:42 — The Son of David

“What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He?” “The son of David,” they replied.

Jesus asked:

“What do you think about the Christ?”

“Whose son is He?”

This is the most important question anyone can answer.

The Pharisees answered correctly.

“The son of David.”

God had promised David that one of his descendants would rule forever.

Everyone knew the Messiah would come from David's family.

Cross References

2 Samuel 7:12

> When you die and join your ancestors, I will make one of your sons the next king. He will be one of your own sons.

Isaiah 9:7

> His power as king will grow, and there will be peace without end. He will rule as king on David's throne.

Romans 1:3

> The good news is about God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. As a man, He was born from the family of David.

Spiritual Principle

What we think about Jesus is the most important thing about us.

XLIII. DAVID CALLS HIM LORD

Matthew 22:43 — Speaking by the Spirit

“He said to them, ‘How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls Him “Lord”? For he says,’”

Jesus asked a deeper question.

How is it then that David... calls Him “Lord”?

Notice that Jesus said David spoke **by the Spirit.**

David's words in the psalm were inspired by God.

In that culture, a father would never call his son **“lord.”**

A son honored his father, not the other way around.

So why would David call his own descendant **Lord**?

Cross References

Mark 12:36

> David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, said...

Acts 2:34

> David was not the one who went up to heaven, but he said, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit by Me at My right side.’”

2 Samuel 23:2

> The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me. His word was on my tongue.

Spiritual Principle

Scripture was written by people who were moved by the Holy Spirit.

XLIV. THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD

Matthew 22:44 — Sit at My Right Hand

“‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put Your enemies under Your feet.”’”

Jesus quoted Psalm 110:1.

This is the Old Testament verse quoted most often in the New Testament.

The Lord — God the Father.

Said to my Lord — the Messiah, whom David calls his Lord.

“Sit at my right hand.”

The place of highest honor and power.

“Until I put Your enemies under Your feet.”

The Messiah would rule over all His enemies.

Cross References

Psalm 110:1

> The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit by Me at My right side until I put Your enemies under Your control.”

Acts 2:34

> David was not the one who went up to heaven, but he said, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit by Me at My right side.’”

Hebrews 1:13

> And God never said this to an angel: “Sit by Me at My right side until I put Your enemies under Your control.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus reigns at the Father's right hand.

XLV. HOW CAN HE BE HIS SON?

Matthew 22:45 — David Calls Him Lord

“If then David calls Him ‘Lord,’ how can He be his son?”

Here was the question no one could answer.

If David calls Him Lord, how can He be his son?

The answer is that the Messiah is both.

He is **David's son** because He was born into David's family as a man.

He is **David's Lord** because He is God.

Jesus is fully human and fully divine.

He is the Root and the Offspring of David.

Cross References

Mark 12:37

> David himself calls the Christ “Lord,” so how can the Christ be his son? The large crowd listened to Jesus with pleasure.

Luke 20:44

> David calls the Christ “Lord,” so how can the Christ be his son?

Revelation 22:16

> I am the descendant from the family of David, and I am the bright morning star.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is both the Son of David and the Lord of David.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus came from David's family tree, but He is also the One who planted it.

XLVI. NO ONE DARED TO ASK

Matthew 22:46 — No More Questions

“No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask Him any more questions.”

No one could say a word in reply.

The experts were silent.

From that day on no one dared to ask Him any more questions.

They had tried to trap Him.

Pharisees.

Herodians.

Sadducees.

Experts in the law.

And every time, Jesus answered with perfect wisdom.

Now they gave up asking.

But they did not give up their plan to kill Him.

Cross References

Mark 12:34

> And after that, no one was brave enough to ask Jesus any more questions.

Luke 20:40

> No one was brave enough to ask Him another question.

Luke 14:6

> They could not answer Him.

Spiritual Principle

No one can out-argue the wisdom of God.

Key Truth

They could silence their questions, but they could not silence the truth.

XLVII. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 22

1. God Invites Many, but Few Accept

The parable of the wedding feast shows God's call to salvation.

Only those who are prepared and clothed in Christ's righteousness are accepted.

Principle:

The invitation is free, but we must come on God's terms.

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2. Earthly and Heavenly Responsibilities

We are to honor earthly authorities while giving God our ultimate loyalty.

Principle:

Give Caesar the coin, but give God yourself.

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3. God Is the God of the Living

The resurrection is real, and life with Him goes beyond earthly institutions like marriage.

Principle:

Death is not the end for those who belong to God.

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4. The Greatest Commandment Is Love

Loving God with all that we are and loving others as ourselves sums up all of God's law.

Principle:

Love God fully, and love others truly.

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5. Jesus Is Greater Than David

As both David's son and David's Lord, He is the promised Messiah and King.

Principle:

Jesus is fully human and fully God.

XLVIII. FOUR QUESTIONS IN THE TEMPLE

Question 1 — About Taxes (Verses 15–22)

Asked by: Pharisees and Herodians.

The trap: Support Rome or oppose it.

Jesus' answer: Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

Question 2 — About the Resurrection (Verses 23–33)

Asked by: Sadducees.

The trap: Make the resurrection look foolish.

Jesus' answer: You do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.

Question 3 — About the Greatest Commandment (Verses 34–40)

Asked by: An expert in the law.

The test: Choose one command above the others.

Jesus' answer: Love God and love your neighbor.

Question 4 — About the Christ (Verses 41–46)

Asked by: Jesus.

The question: Whose son is the Christ?

The answer: He is both David's son and David's Lord.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus answered every question perfectly, and then asked the one question that matters most.

XLIX. RESPONSES TO THE KING'S INVITATION

The parable of the wedding feast shows different responses to God's invitation.

Those Who Refused

They simply would not come.

Those Who Ignored It

They went to their fields and businesses.

Those Who Attacked the Messengers

They killed the king's servants.

Those Who Came Without Wedding Clothes

They wanted the feast on their own terms.

Those Who Came and Were Ready

They accepted the invitation and came on the king's terms.

Key Truth

Everyone who hears the gospel responds in one of these ways.

L. WHAT MATTHEW 22 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 22 presents Jesus as:

The King's Son

The wedding feast is held in His honor.

The Wise Teacher

He answered every trap.

The One Who Sees Hearts

He knew their evil intent.

The Defender of Scripture

He showed the Sadducees what God's Word really says.

The Revealer of God's Power

He taught the truth of the resurrection.

The Teacher of Love

He summed up the law in love.

The Son of David

Born into David's family.

The Lord of David

Seated at God's right hand.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who answers every question is the Answer to the most important question of all.

LI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What does the wedding banquet represent?

It represents God's kingdom and the joyful celebration of His Son, Jesus.

Question 2

Who were the guests who refused to come?

They represent Israel's religious leaders and all who reject God's invitation.

Question 3

What did the king do after the first guests refused?

He sent his servants to invite anyone they could find, both good and bad.

Question 4

What do the wedding clothes represent?

They represent the righteousness God provides through Jesus.

We must come to God on His terms, not our own.

Question 5

What does “many are called, but few are chosen” mean?

God's invitation goes out to many, but not everyone truly responds and comes on His terms.

Question 6

What was the trap in the question about taxes?

If Jesus said yes, the people would turn against Him.

If He said no, the Romans could arrest Him as a rebel.

Question 7

What did Jesus mean by “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's”?

Pay taxes and honor earthly authority, but give your whole self to God, because you bear His image.

Question 8

What did the Sadducees believe?

They did not believe in the resurrection, angels, or spirits.

Question 9

Why were the Sadducees wrong?

Jesus said they did not know the Scriptures or the power of God.

Question 10

What will life be like in the resurrection?

People will not marry or die.

They will be like the angels in that way.

Question 11

How did Jesus prove the resurrection from Exodus 3:6?

God said, **“I am the God of Abraham,”** not **“I was.”**

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still alive to God.

Question 12

What is the greatest commandment?

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

Question 13

What is the second commandment?

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Question 14

How can the Christ be both David's son and David's Lord?

He was born into David's family as a man, and He is God.

He is fully human and fully divine.

Question 15

What should Matthew 22 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 22 should cause believers to live:

- Accepting God's invitation with joy.
- Not letting busyness keep them from God.
- Inviting others to the King's feast.
- Clothed in Christ's righteousness.
- Honoring earthly authorities.

- Giving their whole selves to God.
- Confident in the resurrection.
- Trusting God's Word and His power.
- Loving God with all their heart, soul, and mind.
- Loving their neighbors as themselves.
- Worshiping Jesus as Lord.

LII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 22 asks several important questions.

Have I Accepted the King's Invitation?

Is Anything in My Life More Important to Me Than God's Invitation?

Am I Inviting Others to the Feast?

Am I Trying to Come to God on My Own Terms?

Am I Clothed in Christ's Righteousness?

Do I Honor the Authorities God Has Placed Over Me?

Have I Given God What Is His — My Whole Self?

Do I Believe in the Resurrection?

Is My View of God's Power Too Small?

Do I Love God with All My Heart, Soul, and Mind?

Do I Love My Neighbor as Myself?

What Do I Think About the Christ?

LIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Bearing His Image”

When Jesus held up the coin, He asked:

“Whose image is this?”

The answer was Caesar.

So the coin belonged to Caesar.

But there was a deeper question hidden in Jesus' words.

Whose image do **you** bear?

The answer is God.

Every human being is made in the image of God.

So every human being belongs to God.

Caesar can have the coin.

But God must have the person.

This creates a powerful principle.

We often give God a part of our lives.

Some time.

Some money.

Some attention.

But Jesus calls us to give God what bears His image.

Ourselves.

All of ourselves.

With all our heart, soul, and mind.

Principle:

The coin bears Caesar's image and belongs to Caesar; you bear God's image and belong to God.

LIV. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 22 takes place in the temple courts during the last week of Jesus' life.

It begins with an invitation.

A king prepares a wedding feast for his son.

Some guests refuse.

Some ignore the invitation.

Some kill the messengers.

So the king opens his doors to everyone.

But even then, one man tries to come on his own terms.

Then Jesus' enemies try to trap Him.

They ask about taxes.

They ask about the resurrection.

They ask about the greatest commandment.

And every time, Jesus answers with perfect wisdom.

Give to God what is God's.

God is the God of the living.

Love God with everything.

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Then Jesus asks His own question.

“Whose son is the Christ?”

And no one can answer.

Matthew 22 therefore reminds us:

God's invitation is open to all.

But we must come on His terms.

We bear God's image and belong to Him.

Death is not the end.

Love is the heart of God's law.

And Jesus is both David's son and David's Lord.

The story of Matthew 22 does not end with:

Empty seats at the feast.

Clever traps.

Or silenced enemies.

It ends with:

The Son of David.

Seated at God's right hand.

Ruling until all His enemies are under His feet.

The same invitation still stands:

Come to the feast.

Come on His terms.

Give God yourself.

Trust His power.

Love Him with everything.

Love your neighbor.

Worship Jesus as Lord.

And until He returns:

Keep accepting His invitation.

Keep loving Him.

Keep loving others.

Keep worshiping Him as Lord.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for inviting us to the wedding feast of Your Son.

Thank You that You have prepared everything.

Thank You that Your invitation goes out to everyone, both good and bad.

Forgive us for the times we have ignored Your invitation.

Keep us from letting work, money, or busyness keep us from You.

Help us invite others to Your feast.

Clothe us in the righteousness of Jesus.

Keep us from trying to come to You on our own terms.

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your perfect wisdom.

Help us honor the authorities You have placed over us.

And help us give You what bears Your image — our whole selves.

Thank You that You are the God of the living.

Thank You for the hope of the resurrection.

Forgive us for having a small view of Your Word and Your power.

Teach us to love You with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind.

Teach us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Let love be at the center of all our obedience.

Lord Jesus, we confess that You are the Son of David and the Lord of David.

You are fully human and fully God.

You sit at the Father's right hand.

We worship You as our Lord.

Reign in our hearts until the day every enemy is under Your feet.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’” — Matthew 22:37

Central Truth

God invites all people to the wedding feast of His Son, calls them to give Him their whole hearts in love, and reveals Jesus as the living Lord who is both the Son of David and the Lord of David.

Matthew 22 in One Sentence

Jesus tells of a king's wedding feast that many refuse, answers every trap set by His enemies about taxes, the resurrection, and the greatest commandment, teaches that we must give ourselves to God and love Him and our neighbor fully, and reveals that the Christ is both David's son and David's Lord.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 23 — Woes Against Hypocrisy and the Lament for Jerusalem

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 22 ended with silence.

No one could answer Jesus.

And from that day on, no one dared to ask Him any more questions.

Now in Matthew Chapter 23, Jesus speaks.

He speaks to the crowds.

He speaks to His disciples.

And He speaks directly to the teachers of the law and the Pharisees.

This is the last public teaching of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew.

It takes place in the temple courts during the last week before His death.

Jesus begins with a warning.

The religious leaders teach God's law.

But they do not live it.

They place heavy loads on others.

They do everything to be seen.

They love honor, titles, and the best seats.

Jesus tells His followers to be different.

“The greatest among you will be your servant.”

Then Jesus speaks seven times with the word **“Woe.”**

Each woe is a solemn warning.

Each one exposes a different kind of religious hypocrisy.

They shut the door of the kingdom.

They twist the meaning of oaths.

They tithe their spices but neglect justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

They clean the outside of the cup but leave the inside filthy.

They are like whitewashed tombs.

They honor dead prophets while planning to kill the living Messiah.

But the chapter does not end in anger.

It ends in tears.

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.”

These words show the heart of Jesus.

His warnings are strong because His love is strong.

It is important to read this chapter carefully.

Jesus is not condemning the Jewish people as a whole.

Jesus Himself was Jewish.

So were His disciples and the crowds who listened to Him gladly.

His words are aimed at hypocritical religious leaders who were leading people away from God.

And His words are a warning to every religious person in every age — including us.

Matthew 23 therefore shows two great truths:

God hates religious hypocrisy because it hides a corrupt heart behind a holy appearance.

And:

Even in judgment, the heart of Jesus longs to gather people to Himself.

The central truth of Matthew 23 is:

Jesus warns against religion that is outward, proud, and empty, calls His followers to humble service and true righteousness from the heart, and weeps over those who refuse His love.

I. JESUS SPEAKS TO THE CROWDS

Matthew 23:1 — To the Crowds and to His Disciples

“Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples,”

Then Jesus spoke.

The religious leaders had run out of questions.

Now Jesus had something to say to everyone.

To the crowds.

The ordinary people needed to know whom to follow.

And to His disciples.

His followers needed to learn what kind of leaders they must become.

Soon they would lead the church.

They must not lead like the Pharisees.

Cross References

Matthew 5:1

> When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a hill and sat down. His followers came to Him.

Mark 12:37

> The large crowd enjoyed listening to Jesus.

Luke 20:45

> While all the people were listening, Jesus said to His followers,

Spiritual Principle

Jesus warns His people so they will not follow the wrong example.

II. MOSES' SEAT

Matthew 23:2 — Teachers of the Law

“saying: ‘The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.’”

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees.

The teachers of the law were experts who studied and explained the Scriptures.

Many of them were Pharisees.

The Pharisees were a group known for strict obedience to the law and to their traditions.

Sit in Moses' seat.

To sit in Moses' seat meant to have the role of teaching God's law to the people.

In the synagogues, teachers sat down to teach.

Moses had received God's law at Mount Sinai.

These men claimed to pass that law on to the people.

Cross References

Nehemiah 8:1

> All the people gathered together in the open area in front of the Water Gate. They asked Ezra the teacher of the law to bring out the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel.

Deuteronomy 17:10

> You must do what they tell you at the place the LORD will choose. Be careful to do everything they teach you.

Malachi 2:7

> A priest should guard knowledge. People should look to him to learn God's teaching, because he is the messenger of the LORD who commands armies.

Spiritual Principle

Teaching God's Word is a great responsibility.

III. THEY DO NOT PRACTICE WHAT THEY PREACH

Matthew 23:3 — Do What They Tell You

“So you must be careful to do what they tell you, but do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.”

Do what they tell you.

When they read and taught the law of Moses, the people should obey it.

God's Word was still God's Word, even when it came from an imperfect teacher.

Jesus did not mean that every human tradition they taught must be obeyed.

In Matthew 15, He had already rejected traditions that cancel God's commands.

But do not do what they do.

Their teaching was better than their lives.

For they do not practice what they preach.

This is the heart of hypocrisy.

A hypocrite says one thing and does another.

Cross References

Romans 2:21

> You teach others, so why don't you teach yourself? You tell people not to steal, but do you steal?

Titus 1:16

> They say they know God, but the things they do show they reject Him. They are hateful and disobedient and not fit to do anything good.

Ezekiel 33:31

> My people come to you as they usually do and sit in front of you to hear your words. But they do not do what you say. With their mouths they say they love Me, but their hearts are greedy for selfish gain.

Spiritual Principle

Our lives must match the truth we teach.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to know the Bible well and still not obey it.

IV. HEAVY LOADS

Matthew 23:4 — Not Willing to Lift a Finger

“They tie up heavy, burdensome loads and put them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.”

They tie up heavy, burdensome loads.

The Pharisees added many rules to God's law.

They told people exactly how to keep the Sabbath, how to wash, how to tithe, and much more.

Religion became a crushing weight.

And put them on people's shoulders.

Ordinary people felt they could never measure up.

But they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

They gave no help.

They showed no compassion.

How different this is from Jesus.

Jesus said, **“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest... My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

Cross References

Luke 11:46

> Jesus said, “How terrible for you experts in the law! You load people down with heavy burdens they can hardly carry, but you will not lift one finger to help them.”

Acts 15:10

> So why are you now testing God by putting a heavy load on the necks of the believers? Neither our ancestors nor we have been able to carry it.

Isaiah 10:27

> On that day the heavy load will be taken off your shoulders, and the yoke will be lifted from your neck.

Spiritual Principle

False religion adds burdens; Jesus lifts them.

V. DONE FOR PEOPLE TO SEE

Matthew 23:5 — Wide Phylacteries and Long Tassels

“Everything they do is done for people to see: they make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long.”

Everything they do is done for people to see.

Their religion was a performance.

They wanted an audience.

Phylacteries were small leather boxes holding verses of Scripture.

Jewish men tied them on the forehead and arm during prayer.

This came from God's command to keep His words as a sign on their hands and foreheads.

They make their phylacteries wide.

Bigger boxes made them look more devoted.

The tassels on their garments long.

God had commanded tassels on clothing to remind Israel of His commands.

The Gospels suggest that Jesus Himself wore them.

But the Pharisees made theirs longer to look more holy.

The problem was not the phylacteries or the tassels.

The problem was the heart that wanted to be noticed.

Cross References

Numbers 15:38

> Tell the Israelites: For all time to come, you must sew tassels on the corners of your clothes, with a blue cord on each tassel.

Deuteronomy 6:8

> Tie them on your hands as a sign, and wear them on your foreheads to remind you.

Matthew 6:1

> Be careful not to do your good deeds in front of people just so they will see you. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

Spiritual Principle

God looks for devotion, not display.

VI. THE PLACE OF HONOR

Matthew 23:6 — The Most Important Seats

“They love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues.”

They love the place of honor at banquets.

At a feast, the most important guests sat closest to the host.

And the most important seats in the synagogues.

In the synagogue, the most important seats faced the people.

Everyone could see who sat there.

The key word is **love.**

They loved being important.

They loved being seen as better than others.

Cross References

Luke 14:7

> Jesus noticed how the guests were choosing the best seats at the table. So He told them a story.

Mark 12:39

> They love the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts.

Proverbs 25:6

> Do not try to make yourself look important in front of the king. Do not take a place among great people.

Spiritual Principle

A heart that loves honor cannot fully love God.

VII. GREETINGS AND TITLES

Matthew 23:7 — Called ‘Rabbi’

“They love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by others.”

They love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces.

The marketplace was a busy public place.

They loved it when people bowed or greeted them with honor where everyone could see.

And to be called ‘Rabbi’ by others.

Rabbi means **“my teacher”** or **“my great one.”**

It was a title of great respect.

They loved the title more than they loved the people they were supposed to teach.

Cross References

Mark 12:38

> As Jesus taught, He said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in long robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces.”

Luke 11:43

> How terrible for you Pharisees! You love the most important seats in the synagogues and being greeted with respect in the marketplaces.

James 2:3

> Suppose you pay special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here is a good seat for you,” but you say to the poor man, “Stand over there,” or “Sit on the floor by my feet.”

Spiritual Principle

Titles mean nothing to God if the heart is proud.

VIII. ONE TEACHER

Matthew 23:8 — You Are All Brothers and Sisters

“But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers and sisters.”

But you.

Jesus now turns to His disciples.

They must be different.

You are not to be called ‘Rabbi.’

They must not seek titles that lift them above others.

For you have one Teacher.

That Teacher is Christ.

Every human teacher is only a student pointing others to the true Teacher.

And you are all brothers and sisters.

In God's family, no one stands above the others.

We are all equal before God.

We all need His grace.

Cross References

John 13:13

> You call Me “Teacher” and “Lord,” and you are right, because that is what I am.

1 Corinthians 8:6

> For us there is only one God, the Father. All things came from Him, and we live for Him. And there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ. All things came through Him, and we live through Him.

John 3:2

> Nicodemus came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know You are a teacher who has come from God. No one could do the signs You are doing unless God were with him.”

Spiritual Principle

In Christ's family, there is one Teacher and many brothers and sisters.

IX. ONE FATHER

Matthew 23:9 — He Is in Heaven

“Do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and He is in heaven.”

Do not call anyone on earth ‘father.’

The Jewish people honored great teachers of the past by calling them **“father.”**

It meant the person was a source of spiritual life and authority.

For you have one Father, and He is in heaven.

God alone is the source of spiritual life.

His Word alone has final authority.

Christians have understood this verse in different ways.

Many believers understand Jesus to be forbidding religious titles that give a human being the honor and authority that belong only to God.

In this view, the word itself is not wrong — Paul even calls himself a **father** to the Corinthians — but the spirit of pride and dependence on a man is wrong.

Some believers take the words more literally and avoid using **“father”** as a religious title at all.

Other traditions use the title for spiritual leaders, seeing it as an expression of care for God's family, not a claim to replace God.

All agree on Jesus' main point:

No human leader may take God's place.

Cross References

Malachi 2:10

> Don't we all have one Father? Didn't one God create us? Then why do we break faith with one another?

Ephesians 4:6

> There is one God and Father of all. He is over all, through all, and in all.

1 Corinthians 4:15

> You may have ten thousand teachers in Christ, but you do not have many fathers. I became your father in Christ Jesus through the good news.

Spiritual Principle

No human being can take the place of our Father in heaven.

X. ONE MASTER

Matthew 23:10 — The Christ

“Nor are you to be called ‘masters,’ for you have one Master, the Christ.”

Nor are you to be called ‘masters.’

The word means a guide or instructor.

It refers to someone who leads others in the right way.

For you have one Master, the Christ.

Jesus calls Himself **the Christ** — the promised Messiah.

He is the only true Guide.

In Matthew 23:8–10 Jesus names three titles:

- Rabbi — Teacher
- Father
- Master

And He points to three persons:

- One Teacher — Christ

- One Father — in heaven
- One Master — the Christ

Every title of spiritual honor points upward to God.

Cross References

Colossians 4:1

> Masters, give your slaves what is right and fair. Remember that you also have a Master in heaven.

James 3:1

> My brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers. You know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

Malachi 1:6

> A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due Me? If I am a master, where is the respect due Me? says the LORD who commands armies.

Spiritual Principle

Christ alone is the Master of His people.

XI. THE GREATEST IS A SERVANT

Matthew 23:11 — Your Servant

“The greatest among you will be your servant.”

The greatest among you.

The disciples had argued about who was the greatest.

Jesus had answered this before.

Now He says it again.

Will be your servant.

In God's kingdom, greatness is measured by service.

The Pharisees wanted to be served.

Jesus came to serve.

Just days later, He would wash His disciples' feet.

And then He would give His life on the cross.

Cross References

Matthew 20:27

> Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave.

Mark 9:35

> Jesus sat down and called the twelve. He said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be last of all and the servant of all.”

John 13:14

> I am your Lord and Teacher, and I have washed your feet. So you also should wash one another's feet.

Spiritual Principle

True greatness is found in humble service.

XII. HUMBLED AND EXALTED

Matthew 23:12 — God Turns Things Upside Down

“For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Those who exalt themselves.

These are people who lift themselves up.

They seek honor.

They want to be first.

Will be humbled.

God will bring them down.

And those who humble themselves.

These are people who bow low before God and serve others.

Will be exalted.

God Himself will lift them up.

This is one of the great laws of God's kingdom.

Jesus Himself is the greatest example.

He humbled Himself to death on a cross.

So God exalted Him to the highest place.

Cross References

Luke 14:11

> All who make themselves important will be made humble, and those who make themselves humble will be made important.

Proverbs 29:23

> Pride will bring a person down, but a humble spirit will gain honor.

James 4:10

> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Spiritual Principle

The way up in God's kingdom is down.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If you lift yourself up, God will bring you down; if you bow down, God will lift you up.

XIII. THE FIRST WOE — SHUTTING THE DOOR

Matthew 23:13 — You Shut the Door

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.”

Woe to you.

Woe is a cry of sorrow and a warning of judgment.

It is the opposite of **blessed.**

In Matthew 5, Jesus began His teaching with blessings.

Now, near the end, He speaks woes.

You hypocrites!

A **hypocrite** was an actor who wore a mask on stage.

They were acting a part.

Their outward life did not match their inner life.

You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces.

They should have opened the door to God.

Instead, they slammed it shut.

They rejected Jesus and turned others away from Him.

You yourselves do not enter.

They refused to come to Jesus.

Nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

They threatened anyone who believed in Him.

Cross References

Luke 11:52

> How terrible for you experts in the law! You have taken away the key that opens the door to knowledge. You yourselves did not go in, and you stopped those who were trying to go in.

John 9:22

> His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. The leaders had already agreed that anyone who said Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.

Acts 4:18

> Then they called the apostles in again and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Religious leaders should open the door to Christ, not close it.

Spiritual Warning

The worst thing a person can do is not only refuse Christ, but keep others from Him.

XIV. DEVOURING WIDOWS' HOUSES

Matthew 23:14 — Long Prayers for a Show

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You devour widows' houses and for a show make long prayers. Therefore you will be punished most severely.”

A Note on This Verse

Matthew 23:14 does not appear in the oldest Greek manuscripts of Matthew.

For this reason, many modern Bibles place it in a footnote.

Other Bibles, including those based on later manuscripts, keep it in the text.

The same words are found without question in **Mark 12:40** and **Luke 20:47.**

So what this verse teaches is true Scripture, even if it was first written by Mark and Luke rather than Matthew.

You devour widows' houses.

Widows were among the most helpless people in that society.

God had commanded special care for them.

But these leaders took advantage of them.

They may have taken their money or property through unfair dealings.

And for a show make long prayers.

They covered their greed with religious words.

Therefore you will be punished most severely.

The more a person knows, the greater the judgment for abusing that knowledge.

Cross References

Mark 12:40

> They take widows' houses away from them, and they make long prayers to show off. These men will be punished more severely.

Luke 20:47

> They take away widows' homes and make long prayers so people will see them. They will be punished all the more.

Isaiah 10:2

> They keep the poor from getting justice and take away the rights of the needy among My people. They take from widows and rob orphans.

Spiritual Principle

God defends the helpless and judges those who use religion to take advantage of them.

XV. THE SECOND WOE — FALSE CONVERTS

Matthew 23:15 — Twice as Much a Child of Hell

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.”

You travel over land and sea to win a single convert.

They worked hard to bring people into their way of religion.

Their zeal looked admirable.

And when you have succeeded.

The problem was not their effort.

The problem was what they turned people into.

You make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.

A **child of hell** means someone whose life belongs to hell.

They brought people into rules and pride, not into a relationship with God.

New converts are often more zealous than their teachers.

So they became even more proud and legalistic than the ones who taught them.

Cross References

Galatians 4:17

> Those people are eager to win you over, but not for good. They want to cut you off from us so you will be eager to follow them.

Acts 13:10

> Paul said, “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of lies and tricks. Will you never stop twisting the straight ways of the Lord?”

Acts 15:1

> Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and began teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised as Moses taught, you cannot be saved.”

Spiritual Principle

Zeal without truth leads people in the wrong direction.

XVI. THE THIRD WOE — BLIND GUIDES

Matthew 23:16 — Swearing by the Temple

“Woe to you, blind guides! You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.’”

Woe to you, blind guides!

A guide is supposed to see the way.

But these guides were blind.

They led others into the ditch.

If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing.

People made promises by swearing an oath.

The Pharisees made rules about which oaths counted and which did not.

But anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.

They created loopholes.

A person could make a promise that sounded serious, then break it on a technicality.

This was a clever way to lie.

Cross References

Matthew 15:14

> Leave them alone. They are blind guides. If a blind person leads another blind person, both will fall into a pit.

Exodus 20:7

> You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD will not let anyone go unpunished who misuses His name.

Leviticus 19:12

> Do not make a false promise using My name. That would make the name of your God unholy. I am the LORD.

Spiritual Principle

God sees through every loophole we make to avoid keeping our word.

XVII. WHICH IS GREATER?

Matthew 23:17 — The Gold or the Temple

“You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred?”

You blind fools!

Their reasoning made no sense.

Which is greater: the gold, or the temple?

They valued the gold more.

That showed what they really loved.

The temple that makes the gold sacred.

The gold was only holy because it belonged to God's temple.

The temple was holy because God's presence was there.

They had turned things upside down.

Cross References

Exodus 30:29

> Set them apart as holy, and they will be most holy. Whatever touches them will become holy.

Haggai 2:8

> The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, says the LORD who commands armies.

1 Kings 9:3

> The LORD said to him: “I have heard your prayer. I have made this temple you built holy. I have put My name there forever. My eyes and My heart will always be there.”

Spiritual Principle

When we love money more than God, our thinking becomes twisted.

XVIII. SWEARING BY THE ALTAR

Matthew 23:18 — The Gift on the Altar

“You also say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.’”

If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing.

The altar was where sacrifices were offered to God.

But anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound.

Again, they made the gift more important than the altar.

Again, they created a way to escape their promises.

Cross References

Exodus 29:37

> For seven days make the altar ready and set it apart as holy. Then the altar will be most holy, and whatever touches it will become holy.

Matthew 5:24

> Leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and make peace with your brother or sister. Then come back and offer your gift.

Numbers 18:9

> Part of the most holy offerings that are not burned up will belong to you. This includes all the gifts the people bring to Me.

Spiritual Principle

Man-made rules can hide dishonest hearts.

XIX. THE ALTAR MAKES THE GIFT SACRED

Matthew 23:19 — Which Is Greater?

“You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred?”

Which is greater?

Jesus asks the same kind of question again.

The altar that makes the gift sacred.

A gift became holy when it was placed on God's altar.

The altar was set apart for God.

The gift was holy because of the altar, not the other way around.

They focused on the things they could see and count.

They forgot the God to whom everything belonged.

Cross References

Leviticus 8:11

> He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar seven times. He poured oil on the altar and all its tools to make them holy.

Ezekiel 43:26

> For seven days they must make the altar pure and clean. That is how they will set it apart for God.

1 Kings 8:64

> On that same day the king set apart the middle of the courtyard in front of the LORD's temple, because the bronze altar was too small to hold all the offerings.

Spiritual Principle

What we give is holy only because of the God to whom we give it.

XX. EVERYTHING ON IT

Matthew 23:20 — By the Altar and Everything on It

“Therefore anyone who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it.”

Anyone who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it.

Jesus removes the loophole.

Every oath is connected to God.

You cannot separate the altar from the gifts.

You cannot separate your promise from God.

Earlier, Jesus taught:

“Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’”

A follower of Jesus does not need special words to be honest.

His word should always be true.

Cross References

Matthew 5:34

> But I tell you, do not make any promise with an oath at all. Do not swear by heaven, because it is God's throne.

James 5:12

> Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so you will not be judged.

Zechariah 5:4

> The LORD who commands armies says, “I will send this curse out. It will enter the house of the thief and the house of anyone who swears falsely by My name.”

Spiritual Principle

Every promise we make is made in the presence of God.

XXI. THE ONE WHO DWELLS IN IT

Matthew 23:21 — Swearing by the Temple

“And anyone who swears by the temple swears by it and by the One who dwells in it.”

Anyone who swears by the temple.

The temple was not just a building.

Swears by it and by the One who dwells in it.

The temple was holy because God chose to live there among His people.

To swear by the temple was to swear by God Himself.

The Pharisees thought they could leave God out of their promises.

Jesus shows them they cannot.

Cross References

1 Kings 8:13

> I have built a wonderful temple for You, a place for You to live forever.

Psalm 26:8

> LORD, I love the house where You live, the place where Your glory dwells.

Ezekiel 43:7

> He said to me: “Son of man, this is the place of My throne. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever.”

Spiritual Principle

We can never leave God out of our words.

XXII. GOD'S THRONE

Matthew 23:22 — The One Who Sits on It

“And anyone who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the One who sits on it.”

Anyone who swears by heaven.

Some people swore by heaven, thinking it was safer than using God's name.

Swears by God's throne.

Heaven is the throne of God.

And by the One who sits on it.

There is no escaping God.

Every oath, every promise, every word is spoken before the King of heaven.

This third woe teaches a simple truth:

Honesty is not about the words we use, but about the God before whom we speak.

Cross References

Isaiah 66:1

> This is what the LORD says: “Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. So where is the house you will build for Me?”

Psalm 103:19

> The LORD has set up His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over everything.

Acts 7:49

> Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. What kind of house will you build for Me? says the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

All of life is lived before the throne of God.

XXIII. THE FOURTH WOE — THE WEIGHTIER MATTERS

Matthew 23:23 — Justice, Mercy, and Faithfulness

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill, and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.”

You give a tenth of your spices.

The law commanded Israel to give a tenth of their crops to God.

The Pharisees were so careful that they even counted out tiny garden herbs.

Mint, dill, and cumin.

These were small plants used for flavor.

Imagine counting out ten leaves of mint and giving one to God.

But you have neglected the more important matters of the law.

They were careful about little things.

But they ignored the big things.

Justice — treating people fairly and rightly.

Mercy — showing kindness and compassion.

Faithfulness — being loyal and trustworthy toward God and others.

You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

Jesus did not say tithing was wrong.

He said they should do both.

But the heart of God's law is justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

Cross References

Micah 6:8

> He has shown you what is good. And what does the LORD want from you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

Luke 11:42

> How terrible for you Pharisees! You give God a tenth of your mint, rue, and every other garden plant. But you ignore justice and the love of God. You should have done these things without leaving the others undone.

Hosea 6:6

> I want mercy, not sacrifice. I want you to know God more than I want burnt offerings.

Spiritual Principle

God cares most about justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do the small things faithfully, but never let the small things crowd out the great things.

XXIV. STRAINING OUT A GNAT

Matthew 23:24 — Swallowing a Camel

“You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.”

You strain out a gnat.

A gnat was the smallest unclean creature.

Some Pharisees poured their drinks through a cloth to make sure they did not swallow one.

But swallow a camel.

A camel was one of the largest unclean animals.

Jesus uses humor to make His point.

They were so careful about tiny details that they missed enormous sins.

They worried about a bug in the cup.

But they swallowed injustice, greed, and pride whole.

Cross References

Leviticus 11:4

> There are some animals that chew the cud or have split hooves, but you must not eat them. The camel chews the cud but does not have split hooves, so it is unclean for you.

Leviticus 11:23

> But all other flying insects that have four legs are to be hated by you as unclean.

Isaiah 5:20

> How terrible for those who call evil good and good evil, who make darkness light and light darkness, who make bitter sweet and sweet bitter.

Spiritual Principle

Being careful about small things does not excuse ignoring great sins.

XXV. THE FIFTH WOE — THE OUTSIDE OF THE CUP

Matthew 23:25 — Full of Greed and Self-Indulgence

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.”

You clean the outside of the cup and dish.

The Pharisees had many rules about washing dishes.

They wanted to be ceremonially clean.

But inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Jesus is speaking about their hearts.

On the outside they looked pure.

On the inside they were full of greed — taking from others.

And full of **self-indulgence** — living only to please themselves.

Imagine a cup that is shiny on the outside but filthy on the inside.

No one would want to drink from it.

Cross References

Luke 11:39

> The Lord said to him, “You Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and evil.”

Mark 7:4

> When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. They also follow many other rules, like washing cups, pitchers, and bronze pots.

Titus 1:15

> To those who are pure, all things are pure. But to those who are corrupt and do not believe, nothing is pure. Their minds and their consciences are corrupted.

Spiritual Principle

A clean outside cannot hide a dirty heart from God.

XXVI. CLEAN THE INSIDE FIRST

Matthew 23:26 — Then the Outside Will Be Clean

“Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside will also be clean.”

First clean the inside.

Jesus gives the right order.

Start with the heart.

And then the outside will also be clean.

When the heart is changed, the life will change.

Good behavior flows out of a clean heart.

But good behavior can never make a dirty heart clean.

Only God can do that.

That is why David prayed, **“Create in me a clean heart, O God.”**

Cross References

Psalm 51:10

> Create a pure heart in me, O God, and give me a new and faithful spirit.

1 Samuel 16:7

> The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outside, but the LORD looks at the heart.

Mark 7:15

> Nothing that goes into a person from outside can make them unclean. It is what comes out of a person that makes them unclean.

Spiritual Principle

God changes us from the inside out.

Key Truth

Religion works from the outside in; God works from the inside out.

XXVII. THE SIXTH WOE — WHITEWASHED TOMBS

Matthew 23:27 — Beautiful on the Outside

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.”

You are like whitewashed tombs.

In Israel, tombs were often painted white with lime.

This warned people so they would not touch a grave by accident.

Touching a grave made a person ceremonially unclean.

This was especially important at Passover, when crowds of pilgrims filled Jerusalem.

Which look beautiful on the outside.

In the sunlight, the white tombs looked clean and bright.

But inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.

Inside was death and decay.

The Pharisees looked holy.

But inside they were spiritually dead.

Cross References

Luke 11:44

> How terrible for you! You are like unmarked graves. People walk over them without knowing it.

Acts 23:3

> Then Paul said to him, “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me by the law, yet you break the law by ordering them to strike me!”

Numbers 19:16

> Anyone out in the open who touches someone killed with a sword, or someone who died naturally, or a human bone, or a grave, will be unclean for seven days.

Spiritual Principle

Outward beauty cannot cover inward death.

XXVIII. HYPOCRISY AND WICKEDNESS

Matthew 23:28 — Righteous on the Outside

“In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.”

On the outside you appear to people as righteous.

People admired them.

People thought they were the holiest men in Israel.

But on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Hypocrisy — pretending to be something they were not.

Wickedness — the Greek word means **lawlessness.**

This is shocking.

The men who were most careful about the law were, in their hearts, lawless.

They kept the rules but broke God's law of love.

Cross References

Isaiah 29:13

> The Lord says: “These people come near to Me with their words and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. Their worship is based only on rules made by people.”

Galatians 6:3

> If anyone thinks he is important when he is really nothing, he is fooling himself.

Romans 2:28

> A person is not a Jew because of how they look on the outside. And true circumcision is not just something done to the body.

Spiritual Principle

People see the outside; God sees what we really are.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to fool everyone except God.

XXIX. THE SEVENTH WOE — TOMBS FOR THE PROPHETS

Matthew 23:29 — Decorating the Graves

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous.”

You build tombs for the prophets.

They built monuments to honor the prophets of the past.

And decorate the graves of the righteous.

They made the graves beautiful.

It looked like great respect.

But it was easy to honor dead prophets.

Dead prophets could no longer rebuke them.

The real test was how they treated God's messengers who were alive.

And right in front of them stood the greatest Prophet of all.

Cross References

Luke 11:47

> How terrible for you! You build tombs for the prophets, but it was your ancestors who killed them.

Acts 7:52

> Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who told ahead of time about the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered Him.

Jeremiah 2:30

> I punished your people, but it did no good. They would not accept correction. Your own swords have destroyed your prophets like a hungry lion.

Spiritual Principle

It is easy to honor God's messengers of the past and reject His Word today.

XXX. "WE WOULD NOT HAVE DONE IT"

Matthew 23:30 — If We Had Lived Back Then

“And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’”

If we had lived in the days of our ancestors.

They looked back and judged earlier generations.

We would not have taken part.

They were sure they would have been better.

They would have listened to Isaiah.

They would have protected Jeremiah.

But they were already planning to kill Jesus.

This is a common human weakness.

We are quick to judge others for sins we think we would never commit.

Cross References

2 Chronicles 36:16

> But they made fun of God's messengers, hated His words, and laughed at His prophets. Finally the LORD's anger rose against His people, and nothing could stop it.

Nehemiah 9:26

> But they disobeyed and rebelled against You. They turned their backs on Your law. They killed Your prophets, who had warned them to turn back to You. They did terrible things that insulted You.

Acts 7:51

> You stubborn people! Your hearts and ears are closed to God. You are just like your ancestors. You always fight against the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Principle

Pride says, “I would never do that.” Humility says, “Lord, keep me from it.”

XXXI. TESTIFYING AGAINST THEMSELVES

Matthew 23:31 — Descendants of Those Who Murdered

“So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets.”

You testify against yourselves.

Their own words condemned them.

That you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets.

They called these men **“our ancestors.”**

Jesus says they were not only related by family.

They were related in spirit.

They had the same hard hearts toward God's messengers.

Cross References

1 Thessalonians 2:15

> They killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and they also drove us out. They do not please God, and they are against all people.

Jeremiah 26:23

They brought Uriah out of Egypt and took him to King Jehoiakim. The king had him killed with a sword, and his body was thrown into the burial place of the common people.

1 Kings 19:10

Elijah answered, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God who commands armies. The Israelites have rejected Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

Spiritual Principle

We show whose children we are by how we treat God's Word.

XXXII. FILL UP THE MEASURE

Matthew 23:32 — Finish What Your Ancestors Started

“Go ahead, then, and finish what your ancestors started!”

Go ahead, then.

These are words of solemn warning.

Jesus knew what they were about to do.

Finish what your ancestors started.

Their ancestors had killed the prophets.

Now these leaders would kill the Son of God.

In the Bible, sin is sometimes pictured as filling a cup.

When the cup is full, judgment comes.

God is patient for a long time.

But His patience has an end.

Cross References

Genesis 15:16

In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, because the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.

1 Thessalonians 2:16

> They try to stop us from speaking to the Gentiles so they can be saved. In this way they keep adding to their sins until they reach the limit. And now God's anger has finally come upon them.

Daniel 8:23

> In the last part of their rule, when the rebels have become as wicked as they can be, a fierce king will rise up. He will be a master of trickery.

Spiritual Principle

God's patience is great, but it is not endless.

XXXIII. SNAKES AND VIPERS

Matthew 23:33 — How Will You Escape?

“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?”

You snakes! You brood of vipers!

John the Baptist had used these same words for the Pharisees and Sadducees.

A **viper** is a poisonous snake.

Brood means a family of young snakes.

Jesus points back to the serpent in the Garden of Eden.

Their words looked holy, but their hearts carried deadly poison.

How will you escape being condemned to hell?

These are some of the strongest words Jesus ever spoke.

He spoke them not out of hatred, but out of truth and love.

Unless they repented, there would be no escape.

Cross References

Matthew 3:7

> When John saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You snakes! Who warned you to run away from the anger that is coming?”

Luke 3:7

> John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You snakes! Who warned you to run from the coming anger?”

Psalm 58:4

> Their poison is like the poison of a snake. They are like a cobra that closes its ears.

Spiritual Principle

The same Jesus who invites sinners also warns them of judgment.

XXXIV. PROPHETS, WISE MEN, AND TEACHERS

Matthew 23:34 — I Am Sending You

“Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.”

I am sending you.

Jesus speaks with the authority of God.

In the Old Testament, God sent the prophets.

Now Jesus says, **“I am sending.”**

Prophets and wise men and teachers.

These are the apostles and early Christian messengers.

Some of them you will kill and crucify.

Stephen would be stoned.

James would be put to death with a sword.

Others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.

The book of Acts records the apostles being beaten.

Paul, before he became a believer, chased Christians from city to city.

Even after rejecting Jesus, they would still receive more messengers.

God kept giving them chances.

Cross References

Luke 11:49

> That is why God in His wisdom said, “I will send them prophets and apostles. Some of them they will kill, and others they will persecute.”

Acts 5:40

> They called the apostles in and had them beaten. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and they let them go.

Acts 22:19

> I said, “Lord, these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to put in prison and beat those who believed in You.”

Spiritual Principle

God keeps sending messengers, even to those who reject Him.

XXXV. ALL THE RIGHTEOUS BLOOD

Matthew 23:35 — From Abel to Zechariah

“And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.”

All the righteous blood that has been shed on earth.

This generation would bear the guilt of a long history of rejecting God's messengers.

From the blood of righteous Abel.

Abel was the first person murdered in the Bible.

His story is in Genesis, the first book of the Hebrew Bible.

To the blood of Zechariah.

Who Was This Zechariah?

Bible students have understood this name in different ways.

Many believe this is Zechariah son of Jehoiada, who was stoned in the temple courtyard in 2 Chronicles 24.

In the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles is usually placed as the last book.

So **“from Abel to Zechariah”** would mean **“from the first book to the last”** — every martyr in the Old Testament.

In this view, **“son of Berekiah”** may refer to a grandfather or an earlier ancestor, since **“son”** could mean descendant.

Others believe this is the prophet Zechariah, who wrote the book of Zechariah.

He is called **“the son of Berekiah”** in Zechariah 1:1.

The Old Testament does not record how he died, but some Jewish tradition says he was killed.

Still others suggest a different Zechariah known to Jesus' listeners.

Whichever view is correct, the main point is clear:

God remembers every drop of innocent blood.

Between the temple and the altar.

Murder was done in the very place where people came to worship God.

Cross References

Genesis 4:10

> The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood is crying out to Me from the ground.”

2 Chronicles 24:21

> But they plotted against him. By order of the king, they stoned him to death in the courtyard of the LORD's temple.

Luke 11:51

> From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the temple. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for all of it.

Spiritual Principle

God sees and remembers the suffering of His faithful servants.

XXXVI. THIS GENERATION

Matthew 23:36 — All This Will Come

“Truly I tell you, all this will come on this generation.”

Truly I tell you.

Jesus speaks with solemn certainty.

All this will come on this generation.

Jesus is speaking to the people of His own day.

About forty years later, in A.D. 70, Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and the temple.

Many Christians see this as the fulfillment of Jesus' warning.

Jesus will speak more about this in Matthew 24.

This warning does not mean that God blames all Jewish people for all time.

Jesus spoke to a particular generation that rejected Him at a particular moment.

And even then, God's offer of mercy remained open.

On the day of Pentecost, thousands in Jerusalem repented and believed.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 32:5

> They have acted in a corrupt way toward Him. Because of their sin, they are no longer His children. They are a twisted and crooked generation.

Luke 11:50

> So this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world.

Matthew 24:34

> Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have happened.

Spiritual Principle

God's warnings always come true.

XXXVII. JERUSALEM, JERUSALEM

Matthew 23:37 — As a Hen Gathers Her Chicks

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.”

Jerusalem, Jerusalem.

The tone changes.

The woes give way to weeping.

Jesus repeats the name, as someone does when grieving over a loved one.

You who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you.

Jerusalem was the city of God.

But it had a history of rejecting God's messengers.

How often I have longed to gather your children together.

Here is the heart of Jesus.

He did not want to judge them.

He wanted to save them.

As a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

When danger comes, a mother hen spreads her wings.

Her chicks run under them for safety.

Jesus would soon give His life to shelter His people from judgment.

And you were not willing.

These are some of the saddest words in the Bible.

God's love was offered.

But it was refused.

Cross References

Luke 13:34

> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you kill the prophets and stone those God sends to you! How often I have wanted to gather your children together, like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you would not let Me!

Psalm 91:4

> He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find safety. His faithfulness will be your shield and protection.

Jeremiah 26:15

> But know this for sure: if you put me to death, you will bring the guilt of innocent blood on yourselves, on this city, and on all who live in it. The LORD truly sent me to you to speak all these words for you to hear.

Spiritual Principle

The heart of Jesus longs to gather and protect those who run from Him.

Key Truth

Behind every warning of Jesus is a heart that longs to save.

XXXVIII. YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT DESOLATE

Matthew 23:38 — Left to You

“Look, your house is left to you desolate.”

Your house.

This most likely means the temple, and perhaps the city of Jerusalem as well.

Notice that Jesus does not say **“My Father's house.”**

He says **“your house.”**

Is left to you desolate.

Desolate means empty and abandoned.

In the days of Ezekiel, the glory of the LORD left the temple before it was destroyed.

Now the Lord Himself was about to walk out of the temple.

At the start of Matthew 24, Jesus walks out of the temple.

A temple without God's presence is only an empty building.

Cross References

Jeremiah 22:5

> But if you do not obey these commands, I swear by Myself, says the LORD, that this palace will become a pile of ruins.

Jeremiah 12:7

> I have left My house. I have abandoned My inheritance. I have given the people I love into the hands of their enemies.

Ezekiel 10:18

> Then the glory of the LORD left the doorway of the temple and stopped above the cherubim.

Spiritual Principle

A house of worship without God's presence is empty.

XXXIX. UNTIL YOU SAY "BLESSED"

Matthew 23:39 — He Who Comes in the Name of the Lord

“For I tell you, you will not see Me again until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

You will not see Me again.

This was the end of Jesus' public teaching in the temple.

They would not see Him teaching there again.

Until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’

These words are from Psalm 118.

The crowds had shouted them just days before, when Jesus entered Jerusalem.

Bible students understand this promise in different ways.

Many believe it looks ahead to a future day when the people of Israel will turn to Jesus and welcome Him as Messiah at His return.

Zechariah spoke of a day when they would look on the One they had pierced and mourn.

Paul wrote that a time is coming when **“all Israel will be saved.”**

Others believe it means that when Jesus returns, all people, including those who rejected Him, will have to acknowledge who He is.

Still others see it as an open invitation — whenever anyone welcomes Jesus as the One sent from God, they will see Him.

In every view, the chapter ends not with a closed door, but with hope.

The door of mercy is still open to those who welcome Him.

Cross References

Psalm 118:26

> Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you.

Matthew 21:9

> The crowds going ahead of Him and those following Him shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Zechariah 12:10

> I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the family of David and the people of Jerusalem. They will look on Me, the One they have pierced. They will mourn for Him as someone mourns for an only child.

Spiritual Principle

Even after judgment, God holds out the hope of welcoming His Son.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The last word of Jesus to Jerusalem was not “Woe,” but “Blessed.”

XL. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 23

1. True Greatness Is Found in Humility

God calls us to serve, not to exalt ourselves.

The Pharisees loved seats, titles, and honor.

Jesus calls His followers to be servants.

Principle:

The greatest in God's kingdom is the one who serves.

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2. Religious Hypocrisy Is Dangerous

Outward appearances mean nothing if the heart is corrupt.

A clean cup, a white tomb, and a wide phylactery cannot hide a heart from God.

Principle:

God judges the heart, not the appearance.

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3. God Values Justice, Mercy, and Faithfulness

These are weightier matters than outward rituals.

Small acts of obedience matter, but they must never replace love for God and people.

Principle:

Do not strain out the gnat and swallow the camel.

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4. Judgment Comes to the Unrepentant

Those who reject God's messengers will be held accountable.

God's patience is long, but it is not endless.

Principle:

Rejecting God's Word brings God's judgment.

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5. God Longs to Gather His People

Even in judgment, His heart is full of mercy and compassion.

Jesus wept over the city that would reject Him.

Principle:

The arms of Jesus are open wide, like wings, to all who will come.

XLI. THE SEVEN WOES

Jesus pronounced seven woes against religious hypocrisy.

Each one is a warning to religious people in every age.

Woe 1 — Shutting the Door (Verse 13)

They kept others from entering God's kingdom.

Warning: Do not stand between people and Jesus.

Woe 2 — Making False Converts (Verse 15)

They worked hard to bring people into empty religion.

Warning: Make disciples of Jesus, not followers of rules.

Woe 3 — Twisting Oaths (Verses 16–22)

They made loopholes so they could break their promises.

Warning: Let your word be true, because you always speak before God.

Woe 4 — Neglecting the Weightier Matters (Verses 23–24)

They counted spices but ignored justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

Warning: Do not major on minor things.

Woe 5 — Cleaning the Outside Only (Verses 25–26)

They looked clean but were full of greed.

Warning: Let God clean your heart first.

Woe 6 — Whitewashed Tombs (Verses 27–28)

They looked alive but were spiritually dead.

Warning: Do not pretend to be what you are not.

Woe 7 — Honoring Dead Prophets (Verses 29–36)

They honored the prophets of the past while rejecting God's Messenger in the present.

Warning: Obey God's Word today, not just admire it from the past.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Every woe Jesus spoke to the Pharisees is a mirror He holds up to us.

XLII. THE OUTSIDE AND THE INSIDE

Matthew 23 shows a contrast between what people see and what God sees.

What People Saw

- Wide phylacteries
- Long tassels
- Important seats
- Honored titles
- Long prayers
- Careful tithing

- Clean cups
- White tombs
- Beautiful monuments

What God Saw

- Pride
- Love of honor
- Heavy burdens on others
- Greed
- Self-indulgence
- Dishonesty
- Lack of mercy
- Spiritual death
- Hatred of God's messengers

What God Wants

- A humble heart
- A servant's attitude
- An honest word
- Justice
- Mercy
- Faithfulness
- A clean heart
- A welcome for His Son

Key Truth

God is not impressed by what we show; He is concerned with who we are.

XLIII. WHAT MATTHEW 23 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 23 reveals many truths about Jesus.

The One Teacher

He alone is the true Teacher of God's people.

The One Master

He is the Christ, the only Guide and Leader of His church.

The Servant King

He teaches that the greatest is the servant — and He lived it.

The Searcher of Hearts

He sees past every outward appearance to the heart.

The Righteous Judge

He speaks woes with divine authority.

The Sender of Messengers

He says, **“I am sending you prophets,”** speaking as God speaks.

The Prophet Who Was Rejected

He knew He would be treated like the prophets before Him.

The Compassionate Savior

He longs to gather His people like a hen gathers her chicks.

The Coming Lord

One day He will be welcomed with the words, **“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”**

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who spoke the woes is the same Jesus who wept over the city.

XLIV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What did it mean to “sit in Moses' seat”?

It meant having the role of teaching God's law to the people.

Question 2

Why did Jesus tell the people to do what the Pharisees taught but not what they did?

Because when they taught God's law, it was true, but their lives did not match their teaching.

Question 3

What heavy loads did the Pharisees put on people?

They added many man-made rules to God's law, making religion a crushing burden, and did nothing to help.

Question 4

What were phylacteries and tassels?

Phylacteries were small boxes holding Scripture verses worn on the forehead and arm. Tassels were reminders of God's commands sewn onto clothing.

Question 5

Why did Jesus tell His disciples not to be called “Rabbi,” “father,” or “master”?

Because they have one Teacher, one Father, and one Master. No human leader should take the honor that belongs to God.

Question 6

Who is the greatest in God's kingdom?

The one who serves others.

Question 7

What does the word “hypocrite” mean?

It first meant an actor wearing a mask. It describes someone who pretends to be something they are not.

Question 8

What is unusual about Matthew 23:14?

It does not appear in the oldest Greek manuscripts of Matthew, but the same words are found in Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47.

Question 9

What was wrong with the Pharisees' rules about oaths?

They created loopholes so people could make promises and then break them. Jesus taught that every promise is made before God.

Question 10

What are the “more important matters of the law”?

Justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

Question 11

What did Jesus mean by straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel?

They were very careful about tiny details but ignored enormous sins.

Question 12

Why did Jesus compare the Pharisees to whitewashed tombs?

Because they looked beautiful and holy on the outside but were spiritually dead on the inside.

Question 13

Why was building tombs for the prophets hypocritical?

They honored prophets who were dead while rejecting and planning to kill Jesus, the greatest Messenger of God.

Question 14

What picture did Jesus use to show His love for Jerusalem?

A hen gathering her chicks under her wings to protect them.

Question 15

What should Matthew 23 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 23 should cause believers to live:

- Practicing what they preach.
- Lifting burdens instead of adding them.
- Doing good for God, not for an audience.
- Seeking to serve, not to be honored.
- Keeping their word.

- Practicing justice, mercy, and faithfulness.
- Letting God clean their hearts first.
- Being honest about who they really are.
- Welcoming God's Word today.
- Sharing the compassionate heart of Jesus.

XLV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 23 asks several important questions.

Do I Practice What I Preach?

Do I Put Heavy Burdens on Others, or Do I Help Carry Them?

Am I Doing Good Things So People Will Notice Me?

Do I Love Titles, Honor, or the Best Seats?

Am I Willing to Be a Servant?

Am I Making Disciples of Jesus or Followers of My Own Opinions?

Is My Word Always True?

Have I Neglected Justice, Mercy, or Faithfulness?

Am I Majoring on Minor Things?

Is the Inside of My Life as Clean as the Outside?

Am I Pretending to Be Something I Am Not?

Do I Honor God's Word in the Past but Resist It Today?

Have I Run to Jesus for Shelter Under His Wings?

XLVI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Clean the Inside of the Cup”

Jesus said:

“First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside will also be clean.”

Most people try to fix their lives from the outside in.

They change their habits.

They change their words.

They change their appearance.

But the heart stays the same.

That is religion without God.

Jesus teaches the opposite order.

First the inside.

Then the outside.

First the heart.

Then the hands.

We cannot clean our own hearts.

Only God can.

That is why we come to Jesus.

He forgives our sin.

He gives us a new heart.

He fills us with His Spirit.

And then, from a clean heart, a clean life begins to flow.

Principle:

God does not polish the outside of the cup; He makes the inside new.

XLVII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 23 is the last public teaching of Jesus in the temple.

It begins with a warning.

The teachers of the law sat in Moses' seat.

But they did not practice what they preached.

They loved honor.

They loved titles.

They loved being seen.

Jesus calls His followers to a different way.

One Teacher.

One Father.

One Master.

And all of us brothers and sisters.

The greatest is the servant.

The humble will be lifted up.

Then Jesus speaks seven woes.

They shut the door of the kingdom.

They made converts to empty religion.

They twisted their promises.

They tithed spices but ignored justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

They cleaned the outside of the cup.

They were like whitewashed tombs.

They honored dead prophets while rejecting the living Messiah.

These woes are not only about the Pharisees.

They are about the danger that lives in every religious heart.

Any of us can become a Pharisee.

We can go to church, read the Bible, pray, and give — and still have a proud and empty heart.

But the chapter does not end with woe.

It ends with tears.

“How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.”

Jesus is not looking for actors.

He is looking for children to gather.

So today:

Stop performing.

Start serving.

Let Jesus clean your heart.

Practice justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

Keep your word.

Run to Jesus and find shelter under His wings.

And until He returns:

Welcome Him with the words, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that You see our hearts.

Thank You that nothing is hidden from You.

Forgive us for the times we have said one thing and done another.

Forgive us for doing good things just to be seen.

Forgive us for loving honor more than we love You.

Keep us from putting heavy burdens on others.

Teach us to help carry them instead.

Lord Jesus, You are our one Teacher, our one Master.

Father, You are our one Father in heaven.

Help us to see ourselves as brothers and sisters in Your family.

Make us servants, as You were a servant.

Help us to keep our word, knowing we always speak before Your throne.

Teach us to practice justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

Keep us from straining out gnats and swallowing camels.

Clean the inside of our hearts.

Make us new from the inside out.

Keep us from being like whitewashed tombs.

Give us the courage to obey Your Word today, not only to admire it.

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for Your tender heart.

Thank You for longing to gather us under Your wings.

Today we come.

We run to You for shelter.

We welcome You as the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill, and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.” — Matthew 23:23

Central Truth

Jesus warns against religion that is outward, proud, and empty, calls His followers to humble service and true righteousness from the heart, and weeps over those who refuse His love.

Matthew 23 in One Sentence

Jesus warns the crowds and His disciples against the hypocrisy of the religious leaders, calls His followers to humble service under one Teacher, one Father, and one Master, pronounces seven woes against religion that is clean on the outside but corrupt within, and grieves over Jerusalem, longing to gather her children like a hen gathers her chicks.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 24 — Signs of the End and the Coming of the Son of Man

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 23 ended with Jesus weeping over Jerusalem.

“Look, your house is left to you desolate.”

Now in Matthew Chapter 24, Jesus walks out of the temple.

His disciples point to the beautiful buildings.

But Jesus tells them something shocking.

“Not one stone here will be left on another.”

Later, on the Mount of Olives, the disciples ask Him two questions:

When will this happen?

And:

What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the world?

Jesus answers with one of the longest teachings in the Gospels.

It continues through Matthew 25.

It is often called **the Olivet Discourse**, because Jesus gave it on the Mount of Olives.

In Matthew 24, Jesus speaks about:

- False messiahs and deception
- Wars, famines, and earthquakes
- Persecution and falling away
- The gospel preached to all nations
- The abomination of desolation
- A time of great tribulation
- The visible coming of the Son of Man
- The lesson of the fig tree
- Being watchful and ready

It is important to say something at the beginning.

Sincere Christians have understood parts of this chapter in different ways.

Some believe most of it was fulfilled when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Some believe most of it describes events still in the future, just before Christ returns.

Many believe it speaks of both — the near event of A.D. 70 as a picture of the final event at the end of the age.

This study will explain these views fairly where they differ.

But on the most important truths, all Bible-believing Christians agree:

Jesus is coming again.

No one knows the day or the hour.

We must not be deceived.

We must stand firm.

We must be ready.

Jesus did not give this teaching to satisfy our curiosity.

He gave it to prepare our hearts.

Matthew 24 therefore shows two great truths:

The world and everything in it will pass away, but the words of Jesus will never pass away.

And:

Jesus will come again visibly and gloriously, so His followers must live faithful and ready every day.

The central truth of Matthew 24 is:

Jesus warns His followers of deception, hardship, and judgment, promises His certain and glorious return, and calls them to endure faithfully and live ready at all times.

I. THE BEAUTIFUL BUILDINGS

Matthew 24:1 — As Jesus Left the Temple

“As Jesus left the temple, His disciples came to show Him the beautiful buildings.”

As Jesus left the temple.

This is a serious moment.

In Matthew 23, Jesus said, **“Your house is left to you desolate.”**

Now He walks out.

His disciples came to show Him the beautiful buildings.

The temple in Jesus' day was rebuilt and greatly expanded by King Herod the Great.

The work went on for many years.

Some of its stones were enormous.

Parts of the temple were covered with gold and white marble.

In the sunlight it shone brightly.

It was one of the most impressive buildings in the ancient world.

The disciples were amazed.

Cross References

1 Kings 6:22

So he covered the whole inside of the temple with gold. He also covered the altar in the inner room with gold.

Mark 13:1

As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of His followers said to Him, “Look, Teacher! What huge stones and wonderful buildings!”

Haggai 2:9

The glory of this new temple will be greater than the glory of the old one, says the LORD who commands armies. And in this place I will give peace.

Spiritual Principle

People are impressed by buildings; God is looking for hearts.

II. NOT ONE STONE

Matthew 24:2 — Every One Will Be Thrown Down

“But He told them, ‘Do you see all these things? Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.’”

Do you see all these things?

Jesus did not deny that the buildings were beautiful.

But He saw what was coming.

Not one stone here will be left on another.

This must have shocked the disciples.

The temple seemed permanent.

It was the center of Jewish worship.

Every one will be thrown down.

About forty years later, in A.D. 70, the Roman army under Titus destroyed Jerusalem.

The temple was burned and torn down.

The Jewish historian Josephus, who lived at that time, described the terrible destruction.

Jesus' words came true exactly.

Cross References

Mark 13:2

> Jesus answered, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left on another. Every one will be torn down.”

Luke 19:44

> They will smash you to the ground, you and the children inside your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time when God came to you.

Micah 3:12

> So because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field. Jerusalem will become a pile of rubble, and the temple hill will be covered with brush.

Spiritual Principle

Everything built by human hands will one day fall.

III. TWO QUESTIONS

Matthew 24:3 — On the Mount of Olives

“Later, as Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came privately and asked, ‘Tell us, when will this happen? What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the world?’”

As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives.

The Mount of Olives is a hill just east of Jerusalem.

From there, a person could look across the valley at the temple.

Jesus sat down, as teachers did when they taught.

The disciples came privately.

This teaching was for His followers.

Tell us, when will this happen?

This question is about the destruction of the temple.

What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the world?

This question is about the return of Jesus and the end of the age.

The disciples probably thought these events would all happen together.

Jesus' answer speaks about both.

Part of the challenge of this chapter is knowing which verses speak about which event.

The end of the world can also be translated **the end of the age.**

Cross References

Zechariah 14:4

> On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives will split in two from east to west.

Mark 13:4

> Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?

Acts 1:12

> Then the apostles went back to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, which is about half a mile from the city.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus welcomes our questions, but He answers in the way that helps us most.

IV. DO NOT BE DECEIVED

Matthew 24:4 — Be Careful

“Jesus answered, ‘Be careful that no one deceives you.’”

Jesus answered.

The disciples asked **when.**

Jesus first tells them **how to live.**

Be careful that no one deceives you.

This is the first warning in the whole teaching.

The greatest danger of the last days is not war or famine.

It is deception.

Jesus will warn about deception again and again in this chapter.

Cross References

Mark 13:5

> Jesus said to them: “Be careful that no one fools you.”

Ephesians 5:6

> Do not let anyone fool you with empty words. Because of these things, God's anger comes on those who disobey.

2 Thessalonians 2:3

> Don't let anyone fool you in any way. That day will not come until the turning away from God happens and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the one who is doomed to destruction.

Spiritual Principle

The first duty of a believer in the last days is to guard against deception.

V. MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME

Matthew 24:5 — Claiming to Be the Messiah

“For many will come in My name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and they will deceive many.”

Many will come in My name.

They will use the name of Christ.

They will sound religious.

Claiming, ‘I am the Messiah.’

In the years before A.D. 70, several men rose up claiming to be deliverers sent by God.

Throughout history, many others have made the same claim.

And they will deceive many.

Many people will be fooled.

That is why we must know the real Jesus from the Scriptures.

The best way to recognize a fake is to know the real thing well.

Cross References

Mark 13:6

> Many will come in My name, saying, “I am He,” and they will fool many people.

1 John 2:18

> Dear children, this is the last hour. You have heard that the antichrist is coming. Even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

Jeremiah 14:14

> Then the LORD said to me, “The prophets are telling lies in My name. I did not send them or command them or speak to them. They are telling you false visions, worthless predictions, and ideas from their own minds.”

Spiritual Principle

Knowing the true Christ protects us from false christs.

VI. WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS

Matthew 24:6 — Don't Be Alarmed

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but don't be alarmed. These things must happen, but the end is still to come.”

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars.

Wars will happen.

News of wars will spread.

But don't be alarmed.

Jesus does not want His people to live in panic.

These things must happen.

They are part of life in a fallen world.

They do not take God by surprise.

But the end is still to come.

Wars are not, by themselves, the sign that the end has arrived.

Many people in history have looked at wars and said, **“This must be the end.”**

Jesus says, **“Not yet.”**

Cross References

Mark 13:7

> When you hear about wars and rumors of wars, don't be afraid. These things must happen, but the end is still to come.

Daniel 11:44

> But news from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will go out with great anger to destroy many.

2 Kings 19:7

> Listen! I will put a spirit in him so that when he hears a certain report, he will go back to his own country. There I will have him killed with a sword.

Spiritual Principle

God's people can stay calm in a troubled world because God is still in control.

VII. FAMINES, DISEASES, AND EARTHQUAKES

Matthew 24:7 — Nation Against Nation

“Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines, diseases, and earthquakes in many places.”

Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

Conflict between peoples and governments will continue.

There will be famines.

Hunger and food shortages.

Diseases.

Sickness spreading among people.

And earthquakes in many places.

Natural disasters across the world.

These things have happened in every generation since Jesus spoke.

They remind us that the world is broken.

They remind us that this world is not our final home.

Cross References

Mark 13:8

> Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in different places, and there will be famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

Luke 21:11

> There will be great earthquakes, famines, and diseases in many places. There will be terrible events and great signs from heaven.

2 Chronicles 15:6

> One nation was crushing another and one city another, because God was troubling them with every kind of distress.

Spiritual Principle

The troubles of this world remind us that it is passing away.

VIII. THE BEGINNING OF BIRTH PAINS

Matthew 24:8 — Only the Beginning

“All these are only the beginning of birth pains.”

All these are only the beginning.

These troubles are not the end.

They are the start.

Of birth pains.

This is a powerful picture.

Birth pains are painful.

They grow stronger and closer together over time.

But they lead to something good — a new life.

In the same way, the troubles of this world point toward something new.

God will bring a new heaven and a new earth.

The pain is real, but it is not meaningless.

Cross References

1 Thessalonians 5:3

> While people are saying, “Everything is peaceful and safe,” destruction will come on them suddenly, like labor pains on a pregnant woman. They will not escape.

Isaiah 13:8

> Terror will seize them, and pain and agony will grip them. They will twist in pain like a woman giving birth.

Jeremiah 4:31

> I hear a cry like a woman in labor, a groan like a woman giving birth to her first child.

Spiritual Principle

The pains of this age are leading to the birth of God's new world.

Key Truth

Birth pains hurt, but they mean new life is coming.

IX. HATED BECAUSE OF MY NAME

Matthew 24:9 — Persecuted and Killed

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and killed. You will be hated by all nations because of My name.”

Then you will be handed over.

Jesus speaks directly to His disciples.

To be persecuted and killed.

This came true.

According to the New Testament and early church history, most of the apostles suffered greatly, and many died for their faith.

You will be hated by all nations.

Christians would be hated not only by one people, but around the world.

Because of My name.

The reason for the hatred is Jesus Himself.

Even today, in many countries, believers suffer for following Christ.

Cross References

Mark 13:9

> Be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and beaten in the synagogues. Because of Me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.

John 15:20

> Remember what I told you: A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you too.

Luke 21:12

> But before all this happens, they will arrest you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of My name.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus may cost us everything, but He is worth it.

X. MANY WILL TURN AWAY

Matthew 24:10 — Betrayal and Hatred

“At that time many will turn away from the faith, betray one another, and hate one another.”

Many will turn away from the faith.

When following Jesus becomes costly, some will give up.

Jesus warned of this in the parable of the sower.

Some receive the word with joy, but fall away when trouble comes.

Betray one another.

Some will even hand over other believers to save themselves.

And hate one another.

Love will turn to hatred.

This is one of the saddest parts of persecution.

The pain often comes not only from outside the church, but from within.

Cross References

Mark 13:12

> Brother will hand over brother to be killed, and a father his child. Children will turn against their parents and have them put to death.

2 Timothy 3:4

> They will betray their friends. They will be reckless and proud. They will love pleasure more than they love God.

1 John 2:19

> They left us, but they never really belonged to us. If they had belonged to us, they would have stayed with us. Their leaving showed that none of them belonged to us.

Spiritual Principle

Hard times reveal whose faith is real.

XI. FALSE PROPHETS

Matthew 24:11 — Deceiving Many

“Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.”

Many false prophets will rise up.

Not only false messiahs, but false prophets.

They claim to speak for God.

But they do not.

And deceive many.

For the second time, Jesus says **“deceive many.”**

False teaching is one of Satan's main weapons.

That is why believers must test every message by the Word of God.

Cross References

2 Peter 2:1

> There were false prophets among the people in the past, and there will be false teachers among you too. They will secretly bring in destructive teachings and even deny the Master who bought them.

1 John 4:1

> Dear friends, do not believe every spirit. Test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Jeremiah 23:16

> This is what the LORD who commands armies says: “Do not listen to what the prophets are saying to you. They fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.”

Spiritual Principle

Test every message by the Word of God.

XII. LOVE GROWS COLD

Matthew 24:12 — The Increase of Wickedness

“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of many will grow cold.”

Because of the increase of wickedness.

Wickedness means lawlessness — living as if God's commands do not matter.

The love of many will grow cold.

When sin increases, love decreases.

Love for God fades.

Love for others fades.

People become selfish, hard, and uncaring.

This is a warning for believers.

It is possible to keep going to church while your love for God grows cold.

Jesus said to the church in Ephesus, **“You have left your first love.”**

Cross References

2 Timothy 3:13

> Evil people and fakes will go from bad to worse, fooling others and being fooled themselves.

Daniel 12:4

> But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of this book until the time of the end. Many will go here and there, and knowledge will increase.

Revelation 2:4

> But I have this against you: You have left the love you had at first.

Spiritual Principle

Guard your heart so that your love for God does not grow cold.

Spiritual Warning

Cold love is often the first sign of a drifting heart.

XIII. STAND FIRM TO THE END

Matthew 24:13 — Will Be Saved

“But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

But.

In the middle of all the bad news, Jesus gives a promise.

The one who stands firm.

This means to remain faithful.

To keep trusting Jesus.

To keep following Him, even when it is hard.

To the end.

To the end of life, or to the end of the age.

Will be saved.

Endurance does not earn salvation.

Salvation is a gift of God's grace.

But true faith keeps going.

God gives His people the strength to endure.

Those who are truly His will hold on — because He is holding on to them.

Cross References

Mark 13:13

> Everyone will hate you because of Me. But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

Hebrews 3:14

> We share in Christ if we hold firmly to the end the confidence we had at first.

Revelation 2:10

> Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. Be faithful, even if you have to die, and I will give you life as your crown of victory.

Spiritual Principle

True faith keeps going to the end.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

It is not how you start the race that matters most, but how you finish.

XIV. THE GOSPEL TO ALL NATIONS

Matthew 24:14 — Then the End Will Come

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

This gospel of the kingdom.

The good news that God's King, Jesus, has come to save.

Will be preached in the whole world.

Even while there is persecution, the gospel will spread.

Persecution cannot stop it.

As a testimony to all nations.

Every people group will hear about Jesus.

And then the end will come.

God's plan has a goal.

The end will not come until the gospel has gone out.

Some believe this was partly fulfilled in the first century, when the gospel spread across the Roman world.

Paul wrote that it had been preached **“to every creature under heaven.”**

Others believe it points to the worldwide mission of the church that continues today.

Either way, the mission of the church is clear:

Take the good news to the whole world.

Cross References

Mark 13:10

> And the good news must first be preached to all nations.

Romans 10:18

> But I ask, did they not hear? Of course they did: “Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

Colossians 1:23

> This is the good news that you heard. It has been preached to every creature under heaven, and I, Paul, have become a servant of it.

Spiritual Principle

While we wait for the end, we must work to spread the good news.

Key Truth

Bad news fills the world, but the good news will reach the world.

XV. THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

Matthew 24:15 — Spoken of by Daniel

“So when you see standing in the holy place the abomination of desolation spoken of through the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand),”

When you see.

Now Jesus gives a specific sign.

The abomination of desolation.

An **abomination** is something disgusting to God, often connected with idol worship.

Desolation means destruction and emptiness.

So this is **a horrible thing that brings destruction.**

Standing in the holy place.

This refers to the temple area.

Spoken of through the prophet Daniel.

Daniel spoke about this three times.

Let the reader understand.

This is a call to pay close attention.

What Is the Abomination of Desolation?

Christians have understood this in different ways.

First, a past example.

Many believe Daniel's words were first fulfilled in 167 B.C.

A Greek king named Antiochus IV Epiphanes set up an altar to a pagan god in the temple and sacrificed unclean animals there.

Jewish people remembered this as a terrible desecration.

But Jesus speaks of the abomination as still to come.

Second, the Roman destruction in A.D. 70.

Many believe Jesus was speaking of the Roman armies who surrounded Jerusalem and defiled and destroyed the temple.

Luke's Gospel says, **“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that its desolation is near.”**

Third, a future event.

Many believe this also points to a future time when a final enemy of God — often called the Antichrist or the man of lawlessness — will set himself up in God's place.

Paul wrote of one who **“sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”**

Many Bible students believe Jesus' words have both a near fulfillment in A.D. 70 and a final fulfillment at the end of the age.

All agree on this:

God knows the future, and He warns His people before trouble comes.

Cross References

Daniel 9:27

> He will make a firm agreement with many for one “seven.” In the middle of that “seven” he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up a horrible thing that causes destruction, until the end that has been decided is poured out on him.

Daniel 11:31

> His armed forces will rise up to make the temple fortress unholy. They will stop the daily sacrifice and set up the horrible thing that causes destruction.

Daniel 12:11

> From the time the daily sacrifice is stopped and the horrible thing that causes destruction is set up, there will be 1,290 days.

Spiritual Principle

God's Word prepares His people for what is coming.

XVI. FLEE TO THE MOUNTAINS

Matthew 24:16 — Those in Judea

“then let those in Judea flee to the mountains.”

Let those in Judea.

Judea was the region around Jerusalem.

This instruction was very practical and very local.

Flee to the mountains.

When the sign appears, do not stay and fight.

Run.

The mountains offered hiding places and safety.

Early church tradition says that before Jerusalem was destroyed, the Christians of the city remembered Jesus' warning and fled to a town called Pella, across the Jordan River.

Whether or not every detail of that tradition is exact, Jesus' warning was meant to save lives.

Cross References

Mark 13:14

> When you see “the horrible thing that causes destruction” standing where it does not belong — let the reader understand — then those in Judea must run away to the mountains.

Luke 21:21

> Then those in Judea must run to the mountains. Those in the city must get out, and those in the country must not go into the city.

Genesis 19:17

> As soon as they had brought them out, one of the angels said, “Run for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the valley! Run to the mountains, or you will be destroyed!”

Spiritual Principle

Obeying Jesus' warnings brings safety.

XVII. DO NOT GO BACK

Matthew 24:17 — On the Housetop

“Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house.”

Let no one on the housetop.

Houses in Israel had flat roofs.

People used them to rest, pray, and work.

Often stairs went up the outside of the house.

Go down to take anything out of the house.

There would be no time to pack.

No time to save possessions.

Run immediately.

Like Lot's family leaving Sodom, they must not look back.

Cross References

Mark 13:15

> No one on the roof of his house should go down or go inside to take anything out.

Luke 17:31

> On that day, no one who is on the roof should go down to get his things in the house. And no one in the field should go back for anything.

Genesis 19:26

> But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

Spiritual Principle

Possessions are not worth more than your life.

XVIII. NOT EVEN A CLOAK

Matthew 24:18 — The One in the Field

“Let no one in the field go back to get a cloak.”

Let no one in the field.

A worker might leave his cloak at the edge of the field while he worked.

Go back to get a cloak.

A cloak was important.

It kept a person warm at night.

But even that was not worth going back for.

The danger would come so fast that there would be no time to turn around.

Cross References

Mark 13:16

> No one in the field should go back to get his coat.

Luke 9:62

> Jesus said, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and then looks back is fit for service in God's kingdom.”

Philippians 3:13

> Brothers and sisters, I do not think I have reached the goal yet. But one thing I do: I forget what is behind and reach forward to what is ahead.

Spiritual Principle

When God says go, do not look back.

XIX. HARD DAYS FOR MOTHERS

Matthew 24:19 — Pregnant and Nursing Women

“How terrible it will be for pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days!”

How terrible it will be.

Jesus expresses deep sorrow.

For pregnant women and nursing mothers.

They would find it hardest to run.

They would suffer most in hunger and danger.

Jesus cared about those who would suffer.

His heart is tender toward the weak and helpless.

Even on the way to the cross, He said to the women of Jerusalem, **“Weep for yourselves and for your children.”**

Cross References

Mark 13:17

> How terrible it will be in those days for women who are pregnant and for those nursing babies!

Luke 23:29

> For the time is coming when people will say, “Blessed are the women who could not have children, the wombs that never gave birth and the breasts that never nursed!”

Hosea 13:16

> The people of Samaria must bear their guilt because they have rebelled against their God. They will be killed in war, and even their little children and pregnant women will not be spared.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus sees and cares about those who suffer most.

XX. PRAY ABOUT THE TIMING

Matthew 24:20 — Not in Winter or on the Sabbath

“Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.”

Pray.

Even in a time of judgment, prayer matters.

God hears.

That your flight will not take place in winter.

In winter, roads were muddy, rivers were high, and the weather was cold.

Running would be much harder.

Or on the Sabbath.

On the Sabbath, the city gates might be closed.

Travel was limited.

Many Jewish believers would not want to break the Sabbath.

Help might be hard to find.

Jesus teaches His followers to pray even about the details of hard times.

Cross References

Mark 13:18

> Pray that this will not happen in winter.

Exodus 20:10

> But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On that day you must not do any work.

Nehemiah 13:19

> When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut. They were not to be opened until the Sabbath was over.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer matters, even in the darkest times.

XXI. GREAT TRIBULATION

Matthew 24:21 — Unequaled Distress

“For then there will be great tribulation, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.”

There will be great tribulation.

Tribulation means great pressure, distress, and suffering.

Unequaled from the beginning of the world until now.

This will be a time of extreme suffering.

And never to be equaled again.

How Do Christians Understand This?

Some believe this describes the siege and fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Josephus described terrible famine, violence, and the deaths of a very great number of people.

For the Jewish nation, it was a catastrophe.

Others believe it describes a final period of trouble before Christ returns, often called **the Great Tribulation.**

They point out that Jesus says it will never be equaled, and that Daniel 12:1 links it with the time of the end.

Many believe A.D. 70 was a real fulfillment that also points forward to a final time of trouble.

In every view, Jesus is warning His people so they will not lose hope when suffering comes.

Cross References

Mark 13:19

> Those days will be a time of suffering unlike anything since God created the world until now, and nothing like it will ever happen again.

Daniel 12:1

> There will be a time of trouble like none that has happened since nations began. But at that time your people, everyone whose name is written in the book, will be rescued.

Joel 2:2

> It will be a day of darkness and gloom. Nothing like it has ever happened before, and nothing like it will happen again for many generations.

Spiritual Principle

Even the worst suffering is not outside God's control.

XXII. THOSE DAYS SHORTENED

Matthew 24:22 — For the Sake of the Elect

“If those days had not been shortened, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened.”

If those days had not been shortened, no one would survive.

The suffering would be so great that, if it went on, no one would live through it.

But for the sake of the elect.

The elect are God's chosen people — those who belong to Him.

Those days will be shortened.

God limits suffering.

He sets its boundaries.

He cares for His people even in the worst of times.

Just as God was willing to spare Sodom for the sake of a few righteous people, He shows mercy for the sake of His own.

Cross References

Mark 13:20

> If the Lord had not shortened those days, no one would survive. But because of the people He has chosen, He has shortened them.

Isaiah 65:8

> This is what the LORD says: “When juice is still found in a bunch of grapes, people say, ‘Don't destroy it; there is still something good in it.’ I will do the same for My servants. I will not destroy them all.”

Genesis 18:26

> The LORD said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”

Spiritual Principle

God sets limits on the suffering of His people.

Key Truth

Suffering has an end date, and God holds the calendar.

XXIII. DO NOT BELIEVE IT

Matthew 24:23 — Here Is the Christ!

“At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There He is!’ do not believe it.”

At that time.

In the middle of great trouble, people look for a rescuer.

That is when false messiahs find followers.

If anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’

Someone will claim Christ has come secretly.

Or, ‘There He is!’

Do not believe it.

Jesus' command is simple and clear.

When Jesus returns, no one will need to tell you where He is.

Cross References

Mark 13:21

> At that time if anyone says to you, “Look, here is the Christ!” or “Look, there He is!” do not believe it.

Luke 17:23

> People will tell you, “There He is!” or “Here He is!” Do not run after them.

Jeremiah 29:8

> This is what the LORD who commands armies says: Do not let the prophets and fortune-tellers among you fool you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have.

Spiritual Principle

Do not believe every claim about Jesus; believe what Jesus said.

XXIV. GREAT SIGNS AND WONDERS

Matthew 24:24 — Even the Elect, If Possible

“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive— even the elect, if that were possible.”

False messiahs and false prophets will appear.

Again Jesus warns of deception.

And perform great signs and wonders.

This is important.

Not every miracle comes from God.

Satan can do signs to deceive.

Miracles alone do not prove that a message is true.

The message must agree with God's Word.

To deceive—even the elect, if that were possible.

The deception will be powerful.

But the words **if that were possible** give hope.

God keeps His own.

Cross References

Mark 13:22

> False christs and false prophets will appear and do signs and miracles to fool even God's chosen people, if that were possible.

2 Thessalonians 2:9

> The coming of the lawless one will be the work of Satan. He will use all kinds of power, signs, and false wonders.

Deuteronomy 13:1

> A prophet, or someone who tells the future through dreams, may come among you and announce a sign or a wonder.

Spiritual Principle

Signs and wonders must be tested by the truth of God's Word.

Spiritual Warning

A miracle does not prove a message is from God.

XXV. I HAVE TOLD YOU AHEAD OF TIME

Matthew 24:25 — See

“See, I have told you ahead of time.”

See.

Pay attention.

I have told you ahead of time.

Jesus warns before trouble comes.

When it comes, His people will not be surprised.

Their faith will be made stronger, not weaker.

Because they will remember:

Jesus told us this would happen.

Cross References

John 14:29

> I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.

John 13:19

> I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it happens you will believe that I am He.

Isaiah 46:10

> From the beginning I tell what will happen in the end. From long ago I tell things that have not yet happened. I say, “My plan will stand, and I will do all that I please.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus prepares His people before trouble comes.

XXVI. NOT IN THE WILDERNESS OR THE INNER ROOMS

Matthew 24:26 — Do Not Go Out

“So if anyone tells you, ‘He is out in the wilderness,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.”

He is out in the wilderness.

Some false leaders gathered followers in the desert.

They promised that God's deliverance would begin there.

Do not go out.

Here He is in the inner rooms.

Others claimed Christ was hidden in a secret place.

Only a few special people knew where He was.

Do not believe it.

The return of Jesus will not be secret.

It will not be hidden.

It will not need to be announced by a special group.

Cross References

Jeremiah 23:21

> I did not send these prophets, but they ran with their message. I did not speak to them, but they prophesied anyway.

Deuteronomy 13:3

> You must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love Him with all your heart and all your soul.

Deuteronomy 18:22

> If what a prophet says in the name of the LORD does not happen or come true, that message is not from the LORD. That prophet has spoken out of pride. Do not be afraid of him.

Spiritual Principle

The return of Christ will not be a secret known only to a few.

XXVII. LIKE LIGHTNING

Matthew 24:27 — From East to West

“For as lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”

As lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west.

Lightning is sudden.

Lightning is bright.

Lightning lights up the whole sky.

No one has to point it out.

Everyone sees it.

So will be the coming of the Son of Man.

When Jesus returns, it will be sudden, visible, and unmistakable.

No one will have to ask, **“Is that Him?”**

Cross References

Luke 17:24

> The Son of Man in His day will be like lightning that flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other.

Zechariah 9:14

> Then the LORD will appear over them. His arrow will flash like lightning. The Lord GOD will blow the trumpet and march in the storms of the south.

Habakkuk 3:11

> The sun and moon stood still in the sky at the flash of Your flying arrows and the shining of Your bright spear.

Spiritual Principle

When Jesus returns, the whole world will know it.

Key Truth

You will not need a news report to know that Jesus has come.

XXVIII. WHERE THE VULTURES GATHER

Matthew 24:28 — A Dead Body

“Wherever there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather.”

Wherever there is a dead body.

This sounds like a strange saying.

It was probably a common proverb.

There the vultures will gather.

When vultures circle in the sky, everyone knows there is a dead body below.

It is impossible to miss.

Bible students understand Jesus' point in different ways.

Many believe the meaning is that judgment will come wherever there is spiritual death, as surely as vultures come to a dead body.

Some believe it points to the Roman armies, whose battle flags carried an eagle, gathering around a spiritually dead Jerusalem. The same Greek word can mean eagle or vulture.

Others believe it simply means that the coming of Christ will be as obvious as vultures circling in the sky.

In every view, the point is the same:

Christ's coming and His judgment will be certain and unmistakable.

Cross References

Luke 17:37

> “Where, Lord?” they asked. Jesus answered, “Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather.”

Job 39:30

> Its young ones feast on blood. Where there are dead bodies, there it is.

Habakkuk 1:8

> Their horses are faster than leopards and fiercer than wolves at dusk. They fly like a vulture swooping down to eat.

Spiritual Principle

Judgment always finds what is spiritually dead.

XXIX. SUN, MOON, AND STARS

Matthew 24:29 — The Heavenly Powers Shaken

“Immediately after the distress of those days: ‘The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly powers will be shaken.’”

Immediately after the distress of those days.

After the tribulation, something greater happens.

The sun will be darkened.

The moon will not give its light.

The stars will fall from the sky.

The heavenly powers will be shaken.

These words come from the Old Testament prophets.

How Do Christians Understand This?

Many believe these are literal events in the sky that will happen when Christ returns.

The whole universe will be shaken at His coming.

Others believe this is prophetic picture language.

The prophets used these same words when God judged nations like Babylon and Edom.

In that view, it means the powers of this world are falling and God is acting in judgment.

Some believe both are true: the language describes God's judgment, and at the end it will also be fulfilled in the heavens themselves.

In every view, the meaning is clear:

When Jesus comes, everything that seemed solid will be shaken.

Cross References

Isaiah 13:10

> The stars in the sky and their groups will not give their light. The rising sun will be dark, and the moon will not shine.

Joel 2:31

> The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn red like blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.

Isaiah 34:4

> All the stars in the sky will melt away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll. All the stars will fall like dry leaves from a vine, like shriveled figs from a fig tree.

Spiritual Principle

Everything that can be shaken will be shaken, but Christ's kingdom cannot be shaken.

XXX. ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN

Matthew 24:30 — With Power and Great Glory

“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven. All the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven.

Jesus does not say exactly what this sign is.

Many believe the sign is simply the Son of Man Himself appearing in glory.

All the peoples of the earth will mourn.

Those who rejected Him will mourn in sorrow and fear.

Zechariah spoke of people mourning when they look on **the One they have pierced.**

When they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven.

This comes from Daniel 7.

Daniel saw **one like a son of man** coming with the clouds of heaven to receive an everlasting kingdom.

Son of Man was the title Jesus used for Himself more than any other.

Clouds in the Bible often show the presence and glory of God.

With power and great glory.

The first time, Jesus came in weakness — a baby in a manger.

The second time, He will come in power and glory.

The first time, He came to save.

The second time, He will come to reign and to judge.

Cross References

Daniel 7:13

> In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was One like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence.

Zechariah 12:10

> I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the family of David and the people of Jerusalem. They will look on Me, the One they have pierced. They will mourn for Him as someone mourns for an only child.

Revelation 1:7

> Look, He is coming with the clouds! Every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him. And all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. Yes, it will be so. Amen.

Spiritual Principle

The Jesus who came in humility will return in glory.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The first time He came to a manger; the next time He will come on the clouds.

XXXI. THE TRUMPET CALL

Matthew 24:31 — Gathering His Chosen Ones

“And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”

He will send His angels.

The angels belong to Jesus.

They obey His command.

With a loud trumpet call.

In the Bible, trumpets announced God's presence, called people together, and signaled great events.

Paul wrote that the Lord will come down from heaven **with the trumpet call of God.**

They will gather His chosen ones.

This is wonderful news.

Jesus will not forget a single one of His people.

From the four winds.

From north, south, east, and west.

From one end of the heavens to the other.

No matter where they are, He will bring them home.

Cross References

1 Thessalonians 4:16

> The Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the chief angel, and with the trumpet call of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Isaiah 27:13

> On that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who were lost in Assyria and those who were sent away to Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.

Deuteronomy 30:4

> Even if you have been scattered to the farthest land under heaven, the LORD your God will gather you from there and bring you back.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus will gather every one of His people to Himself.

Key Truth

No believer will be forgotten when the trumpet sounds.

XXXII. THE FIG TREE

Matthew 24:32 — Summer Is Near

“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know summer is near.”

Learn this lesson from the fig tree.

Jesus uses a simple picture from nature.

As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out.

In Israel, many trees stay green all year.

But the fig tree loses its leaves in winter.

When new leaves appear, it is a clear sign of change.

You know summer is near.

You do not need a calendar.

You can read the signs.

Cross References

Mark 13:28

> Learn this lesson from the fig tree: When its branches become tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.

Luke 21:29

> He told them this story: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees.”

Song of Solomon 2:13

> The fig tree is forming its early fruit, and the blossoming vines give off their sweet smell. Get up, my love, my beautiful one, and come with me.

Spiritual Principle

God gives signs so His people can be ready.

XXXIII. RIGHT AT THE DOOR

Matthew 24:33 — It Is Near

“In the same way, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.”

When you see all these things.

The signs Jesus described.

You know that it is near.

It may mean the event, or it may mean **He** — the Son of Man.

Right at the door.

Close enough to knock.

Close enough to walk in.

Believers are to live with a sense that the Lord is near.

Cross References

Mark 13:29

> In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door.

James 5:9

> Brothers and sisters, don't complain against one another, or you will be judged. Look, the Judge is standing at the door!

Revelation 3:20

> Look! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with Me.

Spiritual Principle

Live as if the Lord is standing at the door.

XXXIV. THIS GENERATION

Matthew 24:34 — Until All These Things Have Happened

“Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.”

Truly I tell you.

Jesus speaks with solemn certainty.

This generation will certainly not pass away.

Until all these things have happened.

This is one of the most discussed verses in the chapter.

How Do Christians Understand “This Generation”?

First view: the people living in Jesus' day.

Many believe **this generation** means the people Jesus was speaking to.

In Matthew 23:36, Jesus used the same words for the people of His day.

In this view, **all these things** refers to the signs leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, which happened about forty years later.

Second view: the generation that sees the final signs.

Others believe Jesus means the generation alive when the final signs begin.

That generation will see everything fulfilled, right up to His return.

Third view: a kind of people.

Some believe **generation** here means a kind of people — either the Jewish people, who will be preserved until the end, or the human race in its rebellion against God.

Faithful Christians hold each of these views.

What is certain is this:

Jesus' words came true in A.D. 70, and His words about His return will come true just as surely.

Cross References

Mark 13:30

> Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have happened.

Matthew 16:28

> Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

Psalm 102:18

> Let this be written for a future generation, so that people not yet born will praise the LORD.

Spiritual Principle

Every word Jesus speaks will come to pass.

XXXV. MY WORDS WILL NEVER PASS AWAY

Matthew 24:35 — Heaven and Earth Will Pass Away

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.”

Heaven and earth will pass away.

The sky above us seems permanent.

The ground beneath us seems solid.

But one day, they will pass away.

But My words will never pass away.

This is an amazing claim.

Isaiah said that **the word of our God** stands forever.

Jesus says **My words** will never pass away.

Jesus speaks of His own words the way the prophets spoke of God's Word.

The temple fell.

Empires fell.

Heaven and earth will fall.

But the words of Jesus stand forever.

Cross References

Mark 13:31

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.

Isaiah 40:8

The grass dries up and the flowers fall, but the word of our God lasts forever.

Psalm 119:89

Your word, LORD, lasts forever. It stands firm in the heavens.

Spiritual Principle

The words of Jesus are the most certain thing in the universe.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Build your life on the words of Jesus, because they will outlast everything else.

XXXVI. NO ONE KNOWS THE DAY OR HOUR

Matthew 24:36 — Only the Father

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

But about that day or hour.

The day of Jesus' return.

No one knows.

No prophet.

No preacher.

No date-setter.

Throughout history, many people have predicted the date of Christ's return.

Every one of them has been wrong.

Not even the angels in heaven.

Nor the Son.

This is a deep mystery.

Jesus is fully God.

But He also became fully human.

As a man on earth, He chose to live in dependence on the Father.

He did not use His divine knowledge in every way.

Christians have explained this in different ways, but all agree that Jesus is truly God and that He humbly submitted to the Father's plan.

But only the Father.

The timing belongs to God alone.

Our job is not to know when.

Our job is to be ready.

Cross References

Mark 13:32

> But no one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Acts 1:7

> He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority.”

Zechariah 14:7

> It will be a unique day, a day known only to the LORD, with no difference between day and night. When evening comes, there will be light.

Spiritual Principle

God has not told us when, so that we will always be ready.

Spiritual Warning

Anyone who sets a date for Christ's return is going beyond what Jesus said.

XXXVII. AS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH

Matthew 24:37 — The Coming of the Son of Man

“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”

As it was in the days of Noah.

Jesus compares His coming to the flood.

In Noah's day, the world was full of wickedness.

God warned the people.

Noah built the ark and preached righteousness.

God waited patiently.

So it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

The world will be carrying on as usual.

And then, suddenly, the end will come.

Cross References

Genesis 6:5

> The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth. Every thought in their hearts was evil all the time.

Luke 17:26

> Just as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man.

1 Peter 3:20

> They disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water.

Spiritual Principle

God's patience gives time to repent, but it will not last forever.

XXXVIII. EATING AND DRINKING

Matthew 24:38 — Up to the Day Noah Entered the Ark

“For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark.”

Eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage.

These things are not sinful in themselves.

They are normal parts of life.

The problem was that people lived as if God did not exist.

They were busy with daily life and ignored God's warning.

Up to the day Noah entered the ark.

Life went on as normal — right up to the last moment.

Then the door was shut.

Cross References

Genesis 7:7

> Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood.

Luke 17:27

> People were eating, drinking, marrying, and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

Isaiah 22:13

> But instead there is joy and celebration, eating meat and drinking wine. “Let us eat and drink,” you say, “for tomorrow we die!”

Spiritual Principle

The greatest danger is living a normal life while ignoring God.

XXXIX. THEY KNEW NOTHING

Matthew 24:39 — Until the Flood Came

“They knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”

They knew nothing about what would happen.

They had been warned.

But they did not believe.

So they did not understand.

Until the flood came and took them all away.

The judgment was sudden and complete.

That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

Jesus' return will catch the unprepared by surprise.

But it does not have to catch you by surprise.

God has given His warning.

And God has provided an ark — Jesus Christ.

Cross References

Genesis 7:23

> Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

2 Peter 3:6

> By water the world of that time was flooded and destroyed.

Job 22:16

> They were carried off before their time. Their foundations were washed away by a flood.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the ark of safety for all who come to Him.

XL. ONE TAKEN, ONE LEFT

Matthew 24:40 — Two Men in the Field

“Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.”

Two men will be in the field.

They are doing the same work.

They look the same on the outside.

One will be taken and the other left.

Christ's coming will separate people.

How Do Christians Understand “Taken” and “Left”?

Some believe taken means taken to be with Christ.

They connect this with Paul's words that believers will be **caught up** to meet the Lord in the air.

Others believe taken means taken away in judgment.

In the verse just before, the flood **took them all away.**

In that view, the one **left** is like Noah — left safe after the judgment passes.

Both views agree on the main point:

When Christ returns, there will be a sudden and final separation, and every person must be ready.

Cross References

Luke 17:36

> Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.

Zechariah 13:8

> In the whole land, says the LORD, two-thirds will be struck down and die, but one-third will be left in it.

1 Thessalonians 4:17

> After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

A Note on Luke 17:36

Luke 17:36 is not found in the oldest manuscripts of Luke. The same words appear without question here in Matthew 24:40.

Spiritual Principle

People who live side by side may have very different eternal destinies.

XLI. TWO WOMEN AT THE MILL

Matthew 24:41 — Grinding Grain

“Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and the other left.”

Two women will be grinding at the mill.

Grinding grain was daily work.

Two women would sit facing each other and turn a hand mill together.

They were as close as two people could be.

One will be taken and the other left.

Even people who work side by side, every day, may not share the same destiny.

No one can be saved by being close to a believer.

Each person must belong to Christ personally.

Cross References

Luke 17:35

> Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left.

Exodus 11:5

> Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave woman at her hand mill.

Isaiah 47:2

> Take millstones and grind flour. Take off your veil.

Spiritual Principle

Each person must be ready for Christ's return personally.

XLII. KEEP WATCH

Matthew 24:42 — You Do Not Know the Day

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.”

Therefore keep watch.

This is the main application of the whole chapter.

Keep watch means to stay awake and alert.

It means living ready.

Because you do not know on what day.

Since we do not know, we must always be ready.

Your Lord will come.

Notice the word **your.**

He is not only **the** Lord.

For His followers, He is **your** Lord.

His coming is not a threat to them.

It is the day they have been waiting for.

Cross References

Mark 13:35

> So keep watch, because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back — whether in the evening, at midnight, when the rooster crows, or at dawn.

1 Thessalonians 5:6

> So then, let us not be like others who are asleep. Let us stay awake and be clear-minded.

Revelation 16:15

> Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes on, so that he will not go naked and be shamed.

Spiritual Principle

Not knowing when Jesus will come is the reason to be ready always.

XLIII. LIKE A THIEF

Matthew 24:43 — The Owner of the House

“But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and not allowed his house to be broken into.”

If the owner of the house had known.

No thief tells you when he is coming.

He would have kept watch.

If you knew, you would stay awake.

You would lock the doors.

And not allowed his house to be broken into.

Jesus is not saying He is like a thief in character.

He is saying His coming will be unexpected, like a thief's.

The only way to be ready for an unexpected visitor is to be ready all the time.

Cross References

Luke 12:39

> But understand this: If the owner of the house had known what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.

1 Thessalonians 5:2

> For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

2 Peter 3:10

> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar.

Spiritual Principle

The only way to be ready for an unexpected day is to be ready every day.

XLIV. BE READY

Matthew 24:44 — At an Hour You Do Not Expect

“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.”

So you also must be ready.

Ready with a heart that belongs to Jesus.

Ready with a life that is faithful to Him.

Ready with nothing to hide.

Because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.

Jesus does not say the hour that no one expects.

He says **when you do not expect Him.**

Even believers can be caught off guard.

That is why readiness is not a one-time decision.

It is a daily way of life.

Cross References

Luke 12:40

> You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.

Mark 13:33

> Be on guard! Stay alert! You do not know when that time will come.

Revelation 3:3

> But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

Spiritual Principle

Readiness is not a moment; it is a way of life.

Key Truth

The question is not, “When is He coming?” but, “Am I ready if He comes today?”

XLV. THE FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT

Matthew 24:45 — Giving Food at the Proper Time

“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the household to give food at the proper time?”

Who then is the faithful and wise servant?

Jesus now tells a parable to show what readiness looks like.

Faithful — he can be trusted.

Wise — he understands what matters.

Whom the master has put in charge of the household.

He has been given responsibility over others.

To give food at the proper time.

His job is to care for the other servants.

Readiness does not mean sitting and staring at the sky.

It means faithfully doing the work the Master has given us.

For church leaders, this means feeding God's people with His Word.

For every believer, it means serving others faithfully.

Cross References

Luke 12:42

> The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager whom the master puts in charge of his servants, to give them their share of food at the right time?”

1 Corinthians 4:2

Those who have been trusted with something must prove to be faithful.

Titus 1:7

A church leader manages God's household, so he must be without blame. He must not be proud, quick-tempered, a heavy drinker, violent, or greedy for money.

Spiritual Principle

Being ready means being faithful in the work Jesus has given us.

XLVI. BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT

Matthew 24:46 — Found Doing So

“Blessed is that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.”

Blessed is that servant.

Happy.

Honored.

Rewarded.

Whose master finds him doing so.

Doing what?

Doing exactly what he was told to do.

Feeding the household.

Serving faithfully.

When he returns.

The master did not tell him when he would come back.

But whenever he came, the servant was found faithful.

Cross References

Luke 12:43

It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns.

Luke 12:37

> It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, have them sit at the table, and come and wait on them.

Proverbs 27:18

> The one who takes care of a fig tree will eat its fruit, and the one who looks after his master will be honored.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus wants to find us faithfully at work when He returns.

XLVII. IN CHARGE OF ALL HIS POSSESSIONS

Matthew 24:47 — The Reward of Faithfulness

“Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.”

Truly I tell you.

This is a sure promise.

He will put him in charge of all his possessions.

The reward for faithfulness is greater responsibility.

Like Joseph, who was faithful in Potiphar's house and later became ruler over all Egypt.

Faithful service now leads to greater service in God's kingdom.

Cross References

Luke 12:44

> Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

Genesis 39:4

> Joseph found favor in his master's eyes and became his helper. Potiphar put him in charge of his house and trusted him with everything he owned.

Psalm 105:21

> He made Joseph master of his household and ruler over everything he owned.

Spiritual Principle

God rewards faithfulness with greater opportunity to serve.

XLVIII. "MY MASTER IS STAYING AWAY"

Matthew 24:48 — The Wicked Servant

“But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’”

But suppose that servant is wicked.

Now Jesus describes the opposite kind of servant.

And says to himself.

The problem begins in his heart.

My master is staying away a long time.

He thinks the master's delay means the master is not coming.

Or at least not coming soon.

So he decides he has plenty of time.

Peter warned that in the last days people would mock, saying, **“Where is the promise of His coming?”**

But God's delay is not forgetfulness.

It is patience.

Cross References

Luke 12:45

> But suppose the servant says to himself, “My master is taking a long time to come back,” and he begins to beat the other servants.

2 Peter 3:4

> They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ He promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”

Habakkuk 2:3

> The vision is for a set time. Though it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come; it will not be late.

Spiritual Principle

God's delay is patience, not forgetfulness.

XLIX. ABUSING THE MASTER'S TRUST

Matthew 24:49 — Beating His Fellow Servants

“and he begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards.”

He begins to beat his fellow servants.

Instead of feeding them, he hurts them.

Instead of serving them, he rules over them harshly.

And to eat and drink with drunkards.

Instead of caring for others, he lives for himself.

This is what happens when people stop believing the Master is coming back.

They become cruel to others.

They become careless with their own lives.

Cross References

Isaiah 56:12

> “Come,” each one cries, “let me get wine! Let us drink our fill of beer! And tomorrow will be like today, or even far better.”

Ephesians 5:18

> Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to wild living. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:7

> Those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.

Spiritual Principle

Forgetting that Jesus is coming leads to careless and cruel living.

L. AN UNEXPECTED DAY

Matthew 24:50 — When He Does Not Expect Him

“The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.”

The master of that servant will come.

The master's delay did not cancel his return.

On a day when he does not expect him.

The servant thought he had more time.

He was wrong.

And at an hour he is not aware of.

There was no warning.

No chance to clean up the mess.

Cross References

Luke 12:46

> The master of that servant will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not know.

Proverbs 29:1

> A person who keeps being stubborn after many warnings will suddenly be destroyed, with no way to recover.

Jeremiah 51:8

> Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken. Cry for her!

Spiritual Principle

Do not assume you have more time to get ready.

LI. A PLACE WITH THE HYPOCRITES

Matthew 24:51 — Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth

“He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

He will cut him to pieces.

These are severe words.

They describe the seriousness of judgment.

And assign him a place with the hypocrites.

He claimed to be the master's servant.

But his life proved otherwise.

He belonged with the hypocrites Jesus warned against in Matthew 23.

Where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus uses these words several times in Matthew to describe final judgment.

Weeping — deep sorrow.

Gnashing of teeth — anguish and regret.

Jesus says this not to frighten us into despair, but to wake us up while there is still time.

Cross References

Matthew 8:12

> But those who should have had the kingdom will be thrown outside into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 13:50

> And they will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Psalm 37:9

> Evil people will be destroyed, but those who hope in the LORD will receive the land.

Spiritual Principle

How we live while we wait shows whether we truly belong to the Master.

LII. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 24

1. The Temple Was Temporary, but Christ's Word Is Eternal

All human structures will fall, but His promises remain.

The temple fell in A.D. 70, just as Jesus said.

Principle:

Stones fall, but the words of Jesus stand forever.

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2. The Last Days Will Bring Deception and Chaos

Wars, disasters, and false prophets will multiply.

Jesus' first warning was, **“Be careful that no one deceives you.”**

Principle:

Know the true Christ so you will not be fooled by false ones.

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3. Endurance Is Required

Those who remain faithful to Christ until the end will be saved.

Love may grow cold in many, but true faith keeps going.

Principle:

Finish the race faithfully.

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4. The Gospel Must Go to All Nations

The end will not come until the message reaches the world.

While we wait, we must work.

Principle:

The mission of the church is to take the good news to everyone.

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5. Christ's Return Will Be Visible and Unmistakable

Like lightning across the sky, no one will miss it.

It will not be secret, hidden, or announced by a special few.

Principle:

When Jesus comes, the whole world will see Him.

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6. No One Knows the Day or Hour

We must live ready at all times.

God has hidden the date so that we will always be watching.

Principle:

Do not try to know when; make sure you are ready.

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7. Faithful Service Will Be Rewarded

Christ will honor those who are watchful and obedient when He returns.

Principle:

Be found faithfully doing the Master's work when He comes.

LIII. HOW CHRISTIANS UNDERSTAND MATTHEW 24

Sincere, Bible-believing Christians understand this chapter in different ways.

Here are the main approaches, explained simply.

The Past Fulfillment View

Most of Matthew 24 — especially verses 4–34 — was fulfilled in the first century, ending with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70.

This view takes **“this generation”** in verse 34 to mean the people of Jesus' day.

Most who hold this view still believe in the future, bodily return of Christ, which they often see in verses 36–51.

The Future Fulfillment View

Most of Matthew 24 describes events still to come at the end of the age.

This view sees a future Great Tribulation, a future abomination of desolation, and a future Antichrist before Christ returns.

Some in this view also connect verses 40–41 with the rapture of believers.

The Double Fulfillment View

Many believe Jesus' words have both a near and a final fulfillment.

The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 really fulfilled His warnings.

But it was also a preview and pattern of the final trouble and judgment at the end of the age.

The prophets often spoke this way, with a near event pointing to a greater one.

What All Agree On

- Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple, and it happened.
- Deception is a great danger for believers.
- Believers must endure suffering faithfully.
- The gospel must go to the nations.
- Jesus will return visibly, personally, and in glory.
- No one knows the day or the hour.
- Every believer must be watchful, faithful, and ready.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

We may differ on the timeline, but we must agree on the command: be ready.

LIV. HOW TO LIVE READY

Jesus gave many commands in Matthew 24.

Together they show what it means to be ready.

Do Not Be Deceived (Verses 4, 11, 23–26)

Know the true Christ through His Word.

Do Not Be Alarmed (Verse 6)

Trust that God is in control.

Stand Firm (Verse 13)

Keep following Jesus, even when it is hard.

Spread the Gospel (Verse 14)

Take the good news to the nations.

Obey His Warnings (Verses 15–20)

When Jesus says go, go.

Pray (Verse 20)

Bring even the hard times to God.

Learn the Signs (Verses 32–33)

Live aware that the Lord is near.

Trust His Words (Verse 35)

Build your life on what will never pass away.

Keep Watch (Verse 42)

Stay spiritually awake.

Be Ready (Verse 44)

Live every day as if He might come today.

Be Faithful (Verses 45–47)

Keep doing the work He gave you.

Key Truth

Being ready is not about watching the news; it is about watching your heart.

LV. WHAT MATTHEW 24 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 24 reveals many truths about Jesus.

The True Prophet

He predicted the destruction of the temple, and it came true.

The Knower of the Future

He told His disciples what would happen before it happened.

The Shepherd Who Warns

He warned His followers so they would not be deceived.

The Lord of the Mission

He promised that His gospel would reach all nations.

The Protector of His People

He shortens days of trouble for the sake of His chosen ones.

The Son of Man

He is the One Daniel saw coming on the clouds of heaven.

The Coming King

He will return with power and great glory.

The Lord of the Angels

He will send His angels to gather His people.

The Eternal Word

His words will never pass away.

The Humble Son

He submitted to the Father, even about the day and the hour.

The Returning Master

He will reward His faithful servants and judge the unfaithful.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who walked out of the temple will one day come back on the clouds.

LVI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What did Jesus say would happen to the temple?

He said not one stone would be left on another. This happened when the Romans destroyed the temple in A.D. 70.

Question 2

What two questions did the disciples ask Jesus?

When would the temple be destroyed, and what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age?

Question 3

What was Jesus' first warning in His answer?

“Be careful that no one deceives you.”

Question 4

Why did Jesus call wars, famines, and earthquakes “the beginning of birth pains”?

Because they are painful but are not the end. Like birth pains, they point toward something new that God will bring.

Question 5

What happens to the love of many when wickedness increases?

It grows cold.

Question 6

Who will be saved, according to verse 13?

The one who stands firm to the end.

Question 7

What must happen before the end comes?

The gospel of the kingdom must be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations.

Question 8

What is the abomination of desolation?

It is a horrible, unholy thing that brings destruction to the holy place. Christians see it fulfilled in the Roman destruction of the temple, in a future enemy of God, or in both.

Question 9

Why should we not believe someone who says Christ is in the wilderness or in a secret room?

Because Jesus' return will be like lightning — sudden, visible, and seen by all.

Question 10

Do miracles prove that a message is from God?

No. False prophets can perform signs and wonders. Every message must be tested by God's Word.

Question 11

What will happen when the Son of Man comes on the clouds?

All the peoples of the earth will see Him, and He will send His angels to gather His chosen ones from all over the world.

Question 12

What will never pass away?

The words of Jesus.

Question 13

Who knows the day and hour of Jesus' return?

Only the Father.

Question 14

How will the days before Jesus' return be like the days of Noah?

People will go on with normal life, ignoring God's warning, until judgment comes suddenly.

Question 15

What is the difference between the faithful servant and the wicked servant?

The faithful servant keeps doing his master's work while he waits. The wicked servant thinks his master is delayed, mistreats others, and lives carelessly.

Question 16

What should Matthew 24 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 24 should cause believers to live:

- Watchful against deception.
- Calm in a troubled world.
- Faithful in suffering.
- Loving, not cold-hearted.
- Sharing the gospel with the nations.
- Trusting the words of Jesus.
- Not trying to set dates.
- Ready every day.
- Faithful in their work for the Lord.
- Kind to others while they wait.
- Looking forward to Christ's glorious return.

LVII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 24 asks several important questions.

Am I More Impressed by Buildings Than by Jesus?

Am I Building My Life on Things That Will Pass Away?

Do I Know the Real Jesus Well Enough to Recognize a False One?

Am I Living in Fear or in Faith?

Is My Love for God Growing Warmer or Colder?

Will I Stand Firm If Following Jesus Becomes Costly?

Am I Helping the Gospel Reach the Nations?

Do I Test What I Hear by God's Word?

Do I Believe Jesus Is Really Coming Again?

Am I Spending More Time Guessing When Than Getting Ready?

Am I Living Like the People in Noah's Day?

Am I in the Ark — Do I Truly Belong to Jesus?

If Jesus Came Today, Would He Find Me Faithful?

LVIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Stones Fall, His Words Stand”

Matthew 24 begins with stones.

The disciples pointed to the temple.

The stones were huge.

The buildings were beautiful.

They seemed permanent.

But Jesus said:

“Not one stone here will be left on another.”

And it happened.

Matthew 24 also has a promise in the middle.

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.”

This is the lesson.

Everything we can see will one day fall.

Buildings.

Nations.

Bank accounts.

Careers.

Even the sky and the earth.

But the words of Jesus will stand forever.

So the wise person builds on what lasts.

Not on stones, but on the Savior.

Not on what we can see, but on what He has said.

Principle:

Do not build your life on stones that will fall; build it on the words that will never pass away.

LIX. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 24 begins with Jesus leaving the temple.

The disciples admired the buildings.

Jesus said they would be destroyed.

And about forty years later, they were.

On the Mount of Olives, Jesus told His disciples what was coming.

Deception.

Wars.

Famines.

Earthquakes.

Persecution.

Falling away.

Cold love.

False prophets.

Great tribulation.

But He also gave them promises.

The one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

The gospel will reach all nations.

God will shorten the days for the sake of His people.

The Son of Man will come on the clouds with power and great glory.

His angels will gather His chosen ones from the ends of the earth.

And His words will never pass away.

Jesus did not tell us the day or the hour.

He told us something better.

He told us how to be ready.

Like Noah, trust God's warning and enter the ark.

Like the faithful servant, keep doing the Master's work.

Do not say, **“My master is staying away a long time.”**

Live as if He could come today.

Because He could.

So today:

Do not be deceived.

Do not be afraid.

Do not let your love grow cold.

Stand firm.

Share the gospel.

Keep watch.

Be faithful.

And until He returns:

Be ready.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that You hold the future in Your hands.

Thank You that nothing takes You by surprise.

Forgive us for being more impressed by buildings than by Your Son.

Forgive us for building our lives on things that will pass away.

Lord Jesus, thank You for warning us before trouble comes.

Keep us from being deceived.

Help us know You so well through Your Word that we can recognize every false christ and false prophet.

When we hear of wars and disasters, keep us from fear.

Remind us that You are still in control.

When following You becomes costly, give us the strength to stand firm to the end.

Keep our love for You from growing cold.

Use us to carry the good news of Your kingdom to all nations.

Thank You for the promise that You are coming again.

Thank You that You will come on the clouds with power and great glory.

Thank You that You will gather every one of Your people.

Thank You that Your words will never pass away.

Help us not to waste time guessing the day or the hour.

Instead, help us to be ready every day.

Keep us from living like the people in Noah's day.

Keep us safe in You, our ark of salvation.

Find us faithful, doing Your work, when You return.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.” — Matthew 24:44

Central Truth

Jesus warns His followers of deception, hardship, and judgment, promises His certain and glorious return, and calls them to endure faithfully and live ready at all times.

Matthew 24 in One Sentence

Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple, warns His disciples of deception, persecution, and great distress, promises that He will return visibly on the clouds with power and great glory to gather His people, and calls every believer to keep watch, stay faithful, and be ready, because no one knows the day or the hour.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 25 — The Ten Virgins, the Talents, and the Final Judgment

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 24 ended with a warning.

“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.”

Jesus told of a faithful servant and a wicked servant.

One was ready when the master returned.

The other was not.

Matthew Chapter 25 continues the same teaching on the Mount of Olives.

Jesus is still answering the question, **“What will be the sign of Your coming?”**

But now He tells three stories.

Each one shows what it means to be ready.

The Ten Bridesmaids teach us to be ready by being prepared.

Five were wise and brought extra oil.

Five were foolish and did not.

When the bridegroom came, the door was shut.

The Talents teach us to be ready by being faithful.

A master gave his servants money to use while he was away.

Two put it to work.

One buried it in the ground.

The Sheep and the Goats teach us to be ready by showing love.

When the Son of Man comes in glory, He will separate all people.

Those who cared for the hungry, the stranger, the sick, and the prisoner will hear, **“Come, you who are blessed by My Father.”**

Those who did not will hear, **“Depart from Me.”**

Together, these three stories answer one question:

What should we be doing while we wait for Jesus to return?

The answer is:

Keep your lamp burning.

Use what God has given you.

Love the least of these.

Matthew 25 therefore shows two great truths:

Readiness for Christ's return is personal, and no one can borrow it from someone else.

And:

True faith shows itself in faithful service and in love for people in need.

The central truth of Matthew 25 is:

Jesus calls His followers to be ready for His return by keeping their faith alive, faithfully using what He has entrusted to them, and serving Him by caring for the least of these, because the final judgment is certain.

I. TEN BRIDESMAIDS

Matthew 25:1 — Going Out to Meet the Bridegroom

“The kingdom of heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.”

The kingdom of heaven will be like.

Notice the word **will.**

Jesus is speaking about the future — the day of His return.

Ten bridesmaids.

These were young unmarried women, friends of the bride or groom.

Older translations call them **virgins.**

Who took their lamps.

These may have been small clay oil lamps or torches made of rags soaked in oil on the end of a stick.

And went out to meet the bridegroom.

In a Jewish wedding, the bridegroom came to bring his bride to the wedding feast.

Often this happened in the evening.

Friends with lamps joined the joyful procession.

Then everyone went in to the banquet.

In this parable:

- **The bridegroom** is Jesus.
- **His coming** is His return.
- **The bridesmaids** are people who say they are waiting for Him.
- **The wedding banquet** is the joy of God's kingdom.

Cross References

Psalm 45:14

> In beautiful clothes she is led to the king. Her bridesmaids follow behind her and are brought to you.

Song of Solomon 3:11

> Come out, young women of Zion, and look at King Solomon. He is wearing the crown his mother placed on him on his wedding day, the day his heart was full of joy.

Revelation 19:7

> Let us be glad and full of joy and give Him glory! The wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the Bridegroom, and His coming will be a day of great joy for those who are ready.

II. WISE AND FOOLISH

Matthew 25:2 — Five and Five

“Five of them were wise, and five were foolish.”

Five of them were wise.

In the Bible, being wise means more than being smart.

It means living with God in mind.

It means thinking ahead.

And five were foolish.

A fool in the Bible is not someone who lacks intelligence.

It is someone who lives without thinking about God or the future.

On the outside, all ten looked the same.

All ten had lamps.

All ten were waiting.

All ten were invited.

But there was a difference no one could see — yet.

Cross References

Proverbs 9:1

> Wisdom has built her house. She has set up its seven pillars.

Proverbs 14:1

> A wise woman builds up her home, but a foolish woman tears hers down with her own hands.

Ecclesiastes 2:14

> The wise person can see where he is going, but the fool walks in the dark.

Spiritual Principle

People may look alike on the outside but be very different in their readiness for Christ.

III. NO EXTRA OIL

Matthew 25:3 — The Foolish Ones

“The foolish ones took their lamps but brought no extra oil.”

The foolish ones took their lamps.

They had the outward equipment.

They came to the right place.

They were waiting for the right person.

But brought no extra oil.

They thought they had enough.

They did not plan for a delay.

A lamp without oil is useless.

It looks like a lamp.

But it cannot give light.

What Does the Oil Represent?

Bible students understand the oil in different ways.

Many believe the oil pictures the Holy Spirit, since oil in the Bible is often connected with God's Spirit.

Others believe it pictures genuine faith — a real, living relationship with Christ.

Others believe it pictures a life of obedience and good works that shows true faith.

These views are closely connected.

The main point is clear:

Some people have the outward form of faith without the inner reality.

Cross References

Zechariah 4:6

> Then he said to me, “This is the message of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by strength and not by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD who commands armies.”

Leviticus 24:2

> Command the Israelites to bring you pure olive oil made from pressed olives for the lampstand, so the lamps can keep burning all the time.

1 Samuel 16:13

> So Samuel took the horn of oil and poured it on David's head in front of his brothers. From that day on, the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on David.

Spiritual Principle

An empty lamp may look fine until the moment it is needed.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to have the appearance of faith without the reality of faith.

IV. OIL IN JARS

Matthew 25:4 — The Wise Ones

“The wise ones brought oil in jars along with their lamps.”

The wise ones brought oil in jars.

They thought ahead.

They prepared for a long wait.

They did not assume the bridegroom would come quickly.

Along with their lamps.

They had both the lamp and the oil.

Both the outside and the inside.

Both the form and the reality.

Wisdom prepares for what is coming.

Cross References

1 Kings 17:14

> For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: “The jar of flour will not run out, and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the land.”

2 Kings 4:6

> When all the jars were full, she said to her son, “Bring me another one.” But he answered, “There are no more.” Then the oil stopped flowing.

Exodus 27:20

> Command the Israelites to bring you clear olive oil from pressed olives for the light, so the lamps will keep burning.

Spiritual Principle

Wise faith prepares for the long road.

V. THE BRIDEGROOM WAS DELAYED

Matthew 25:5 — They All Fell Asleep

“The bridegroom was delayed, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.”

The bridegroom was delayed.

This is an important detail.

Jesus is teaching that His return may take longer than people expect.

And they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

Notice the word **all.**

Both the wise and the foolish fell asleep.

Jesus does not blame them for sleeping.

The difference was not who stayed awake.

The difference was who was prepared.

When you are ready, you can rest in peace.

When you are not ready, sleep is dangerous.

Cross References

2 Peter 3:9

> The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some people think. Instead, He is patient with you. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to turn away from sin.

Song of Solomon 5:2

> I was asleep, but my heart was awake. Listen! My beloved is knocking.

James 5:8

> You also must be patient and stand strong, because the Lord's coming is near.

Spiritual Principle

The delay of Christ's coming tests whether our faith is real.

VI. AT MIDNIGHT

Matthew 25:6 — Here's the Bridegroom!

“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’”

At midnight.

The darkest part of the night.

The time when no one expects anything to happen.

The cry rang out.

Suddenly, the silence was broken.

Here's the bridegroom!

He has come at last!

Come out to meet him!

This was the moment they had been waiting for.

In the same way, Christ's return will be sudden.

There will be a cry.

And there will be no more time to prepare.

Cross References

Exodus 12:29

> At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn sons in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner in the dungeon.

Ruth 3:8

> In the middle of the night, the man woke up suddenly and turned over, and there was a woman lying at his feet!

Psalm 119:62

> At midnight I get up to thank You for Your fair and right laws.

Spiritual Principle

Christ will come at a time no one expects.

VII. TRIMMING THE LAMPS

Matthew 25:7 — All Woke Up

“Then all the bridesmaids woke up and trimmed their lamps.”

Then all the bridesmaids woke up.

All ten heard the cry.

All ten got up.

And trimmed their lamps.

They cut off the burned part of the wick and added oil so the flame would burn brightly.

For a moment, all ten looked the same again.

But the moment of truth had come.

Cross References

Exodus 30:7

> Aaron must burn sweet-smelling incense on the altar every morning when he takes care of the lamps.

Leviticus 24:4

> The lamps on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD must be kept burning all the time.

Romans 13:11

> Do this because you know what time it is. It is time to wake up from your sleep, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

Spiritual Principle

When Christ returns, what was hidden will be revealed.

VIII. OUR LAMPS ARE GOING OUT

Matthew 25:8 — Give Us Some of Your Oil

“The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’”

The foolish said to the wise.

Now the difference becomes clear.

Give us some of your oil.

They wanted to borrow what they did not have.

Our lamps are going out.

Their lamps flickered and began to die.

They may have had a little oil — enough to look ready — but not enough to last.

Their faith looked real until the critical moment.

Cross References

1 Samuel 3:3

> The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the LORD's house, where the ark of God was.

Proverbs 13:9

> The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out.

Job 18:5

> Yes, the lamp of the wicked is put out. The flame of his fire stops burning.

Spiritual Principle

A faith that is only on the surface will not last in the critical hour.

IX. GO BUY SOME FOR YOURSELVES

Matthew 25:9 — Not Enough for Both

“But the wise replied, ‘No, there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go buy some for yourselves.’”

But the wise replied, ‘No.’

This may sound unkind.

But Jesus is teaching an important truth.

There may not be enough for both us and you.

Some things cannot be shared.

Instead, go buy some for yourselves.

Readiness for Christ cannot be borrowed.

You cannot live on your parents' faith.

You cannot depend on your pastor's faith.

You cannot borrow your spouse's relationship with God.

Each person must belong to Christ personally.

Cross References

Ezekiel 14:14

> Even if these three men — Noah, Daniel, and Job — were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, says the Lord GOD.

Psalm 49:7

> No one can pay the price to save the life of another person or pay God for him.

Galatians 6:5

> For each person must carry his own load.

Spiritual Principle

No one can be ready for Christ on someone else's faith.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You can share the gospel with others, but you cannot share your readiness with them.

X. THE DOOR WAS SHUT

Matthew 25:10 — The Bridegroom Arrived

“While they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The ones who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was shut.”

While they were on their way to buy the oil.

They tried to get ready at the last minute.

But it was too late.

The bridegroom arrived.

The ones who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet.

The wise went in to joy and celebration.

And the door was shut.

These are some of the most solemn words in the Bible.

In Noah's day, God shut the door of the ark.

Those inside were safe.

Those outside were lost.

Today the door of God's mercy is open.

But one day it will be shut.

Cross References

Genesis 7:16

> The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

Luke 13:25

> Once the owner of the house gets up and shuts the door, you will stand outside knocking and saying, “Sir, open the door for us.” But he will answer, “I don't know you or where you come from.”

Isaiah 26:20

> Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you. Hide for a little while until His anger has passed.

Spiritual Principle

The door of opportunity is open now, but it will not stay open forever.

Key Truth

Today is the day to get ready, because tomorrow the door may be shut.

XI. LORD, LORD, OPEN THE DOOR

Matthew 25:11 — The Others Came Later

“Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’”

Later the others also came.

They finally arrived.

But too late.

Lord, Lord.

They used the right words.

They called him **Lord.**

They even repeated it.

Open the door for us!

They wanted to come in.

But wanting is not the same as being ready.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned that not everyone who says **“Lord, Lord”** will enter the kingdom.

Cross References

Matthew 7:21

> Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Luke 6:46

> Why do you call Me “Lord, Lord,” and do not do what I say?

Proverbs 1:28

> Then they will call to me, but I will not answer. They will look for me, but they will not find me.

Spiritual Principle

Saying the right words is not the same as knowing the Lord.

XII. I DON'T KNOW YOU

Matthew 25:12 — Truly I Tell You

“But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don't know you.’”

Truly I tell you.

The answer is serious and final.

I don't know you.

This does not mean the bridegroom had never seen them.

It means he had no relationship with them.

They were not part of his circle.

They did not belong to him.

The most important question is not, **“Do I know about Jesus?”**

It is, **“Does Jesus know me as His own?”**

Cross References

Matthew 7:23

> Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Get away from Me, you who do evil!”

Luke 13:27

> But he will reply, “I don't know you or where you come from. Get away from me, all you who do evil!”

2 Timothy 2:19

> But God's strong foundation stands firm, with these words written on it: “The Lord knows those who belong to Him.”

Spiritual Principle

What matters most is whether Jesus knows us as His own.

XIII. KEEP WATCH

Matthew 25:13 — The Day or the Hour

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”

Therefore keep watch.

This is the lesson of the parable.

Because you do not know the day or the hour.

Jesus repeats what He said in Matthew 24.

Keep watch does not mean never sleeping.

All ten bridesmaids slept.

It means being prepared at all times, so that whenever He comes, you are ready.

Cross References

1 Peter 5:8

> Be alert and think clearly. Your enemy the devil walks around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to eat.

Mark 13:37

> What I say to you, I say to everyone: Keep watch!

Luke 21:36

> Always be watchful, and pray that you will be strong enough to escape all that is going to happen, and that you will be able to stand before the Son of Man.

Spiritual Principle

Keeping watch means being ready, not being anxious.

XIV. A MAN GOING ON A JOURNEY

Matthew 25:14 — Entrusted with His Wealth

“The kingdom of heaven is like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them.”

The kingdom of heaven is like a man going on a journey.

Now Jesus tells a second story.

The man represents Jesus.

His journey represents the time between Jesus' going away and His return.

Who called his servants.

These are His followers.

And entrusted his wealth to them.

Entrusted means he put it in their care.

The wealth was not theirs.

It still belonged to the master.

They were only managers.

Everything we have — our time, our abilities, our money, our opportunities, the gospel itself — belongs to God.

We are only managers of what He has given.

Cross References

Luke 19:13

> So he called ten of his servants and gave each one a sum of money. “Use this money to do business until I come back,” he said.

Mark 13:34

> It is like a man going on a trip. He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his own work. He tells the one at the door to keep watch.

Proverbs 27:23

> Make sure you know how your flocks are doing. Pay close attention to your herds.

Spiritual Principle

Everything we have belongs to God; we are only His managers.

XV. EACH ACCORDING TO HIS ABILITY

Matthew 25:15 — Five, Two, and One

“To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two, and to another one—each according to his ability. Then he left on his journey.”

Five bags of gold, to another two, and to another one.

The Greek word here is **talent.**

A talent was not a skill, but a large amount of money.

It was worth many years of wages for an ordinary worker — some estimate about twenty years.

So even one bag of gold was a great deal of money.

Our English word **talent**, meaning a skill or ability, actually comes from this parable.

Each according to his ability.

The master knew his servants.

He did not give everyone the same amount.

But he gave each one what he could handle.

God does not give everyone the same gifts.

But He gives every believer something.

And He knows exactly what each one can do.

Then he left on his journey.

Now the servants were responsible.

Cross References

Romans 12:6

> We have different gifts, based on the grace God has given each of us.

1 Corinthians 12:11

> All these gifts are the work of one and the same Spirit. He gives them to each person, just as He decides.

1 Peter 4:10

> Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, faithfully managing God's grace in its many forms.

Spiritual Principle

God gives different gifts to different people, but He gives every believer something to use for Him.

XVI. PUT TO WORK AT ONCE

Matthew 25:16 — Gained Five More

“The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five more.”

Went at once.

He did not delay.

He did not wait for a better time.

And put his money to work.

He took a risk.

He used what he was given.

And gained five more.

His faithfulness doubled his master's money.

When we use what God gives us, it grows.

Cross References

Luke 19:16

> The first one came and said, “Sir, your money has earned ten times as much.”

Proverbs 13:11

> Money gained dishonestly disappears, but money gathered little by little grows.

2 Corinthians 9:6

> Remember this: Whoever plants only a few seeds will harvest only a little, and whoever plants many seeds will harvest a lot.

Spiritual Principle

What we use for God grows; what we hold back is wasted.

XVII. TWO MORE

Matthew 25:17 — The Second Servant

“So also, the one with two bags gained two more.”

So also, the one with two bags.

He had less than the first servant.

But he did not complain.

He did not compare.

Gained two more.

He doubled what he was given, just like the first servant.

His gain was smaller in amount.

But it was the same in faithfulness.

God does not measure success by how much we have.

He measures it by how faithful we are with what we have.

Cross References

Luke 19:18

> The second came and said, “Sir, your money has earned five times as much.”

Proverbs 11:24

> One person gives freely, yet gains even more. Another holds back what he should give and ends up poor.

Proverbs 11:25

> A generous person will do well. Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

Spiritual Principle

God measures faithfulness, not size.

XVIII. HIDDEN IN THE GROUND

Matthew 25:18 — The Third Servant

“But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.”

But the man who had received one bag.

He had the least.

But even one bag of gold was a great deal of money.

Went off, dug a hole in the ground.

In those days, burying money was a common way to keep it safe.

And hid his master's money.

Notice — it was **his master's money.**

He did not lose it.

He did not steal it.

He did not waste it on sin.

He simply did nothing with it.

Sometimes the sin is not doing wrong.

Sometimes the sin is doing nothing.

Cross References

Luke 19:20

> Then another servant came and said, “Sir, here is your money. I kept it wrapped up in a piece of cloth.”

Proverbs 26:15

> A lazy person puts his hand in the dish, but he is too tired to bring it back to his mouth.

Ecclesiastes 11:4

> Whoever watches the wind will never plant, and whoever looks at the clouds will never harvest.

Spiritual Principle

Doing nothing with what God has given is not safe; it is unfaithful.

Spiritual Warning

The danger is not only misusing our gifts, but burying them.

XIX. SETTLING ACCOUNTS

Matthew 25:19 — After a Long Time

“After a long time the master returned and settled accounts with them.”

After a long time.

Again Jesus hints that His return may be delayed.

The master returned.

But he did return.

And settled accounts with them.

Each servant had to give a report.

Every believer will one day stand before Christ and give an account of what they did with what He gave them.

This is not about earning salvation.

It is about faithfulness as His servants.

Cross References

Luke 19:15

> But he was made king and came back home. Then he sent for the servants he had given the money to, to find out what they had gained with it.

Romans 14:12

> So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

Hebrews 4:13

> Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of the One we must answer to.

Spiritual Principle

One day every servant will give an account to the Master.

XX. FIVE MORE

Matthew 25:20 — I Have Gained Five More

“The one who had received five bags brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’”

The one who had received five bags.

He came first.

Brought the other five.

He had something to show.

You entrusted me.

He remembered that it all came from the master.

He did not boast about himself.

See, I have gained five more.

He was glad to report.

He was not afraid of the master's return.

He was looking forward to it.

Cross References

2 Corinthians 5:10

> For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. Each of us will receive what we deserve for the good or bad things we did while living in this body.

Proverbs 3:9

> Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the first part of all your crops.

1 Corinthians 3:14

> If what a person has built survives, he will receive a reward.

Spiritual Principle

Faithful servants look forward to the Master's return.

XXI. WELL DONE

Matthew 25:21 — Share Your Master's Happiness

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!’”

Well done.

These are the words every believer longs to hear.

Good and faithful servant!

Good — he had a right heart.

Faithful — he could be trusted.

You have been faithful with a few things.

Five bags of gold was a huge sum.

But to the master, it was only **a few things.**

Everything we do on earth is small compared to what God has prepared.

I will put you in charge of many things.

The reward for faithfulness is greater responsibility in God's kingdom.

Come and share your master's happiness!

The greatest reward is not the responsibility.

It is the joy of being with the Master.

Cross References

Luke 19:17

> “Well done, my good servant!” his master replied. “Because you have been faithful in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.”

Hebrews 6:10

> God is fair. He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him by helping His people and continuing to help them.

Revelation 3:21

> To the one who wins the victory, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I won the victory and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Spiritual Principle

The greatest reward of faithfulness is sharing in the joy of the Lord.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Live today for the words you want to hear on that day: “Well done.”

XXII. TWO MORE

Matthew 25:22 — The Second Report

“The one with two bags also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’”

The one with two bags also came.

He also came gladly.

You entrusted me with two bags of gold.

He did not say, **“You only gave me two.”**

He did not compare himself with the first servant.

See, I have gained two more.

He was faithful with what he had.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 15:58

> So, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your work for the Lord is not wasted.

Colossians 3:23

> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as if you were working for the Lord, not for people.

James 1:12

> Blessed is the one who keeps going when tested. After passing the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Spiritual Principle

Do not compare your gifts; be faithful with yours.

XXIII. THE SAME REWARD

Matthew 25:23 — Well Done, Again

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!’”

His master replied.

Notice something beautiful.

The words are exactly the same.

The servant with two bags received the same praise as the servant with five.

Well done, good and faithful servant!

The same honor.

I will put you in charge of many things.

The same reward.

Come and share your master's happiness!

The same joy.

God does not reward us for the size of our gifts.

He rewards us for our faithfulness.

Cross References

1 Chronicles 28:20

> David also said to his son Solomon, “Be strong and brave, and do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, because the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or leave you until all the work for the LORD's temple is finished.”

Proverbs 22:29

> Do you see someone who is skilled in his work? He will serve kings. He will not serve unimportant people.

Psalm 16:11

> You show me the path of life. In Your presence there is full joy. At Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Spiritual Principle

Equal faithfulness receives equal praise, no matter the size of the gift.

Key Truth

God does not ask you to do what someone else can do; He asks you to be faithful with what He gave you.

XXIV. "I KNEW THAT YOU ARE A HARD MAN"

Matthew 25:24 — The Third Servant's Excuse

“Then the man who had received one bag came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.’”

Then the man who had received one bag came.

His report was very different.

I knew that you are a hard man.

He blamed the master.

He thought the master was harsh and demanding.

Harvesting where you have not sown.

He accused the master of taking what was not his.

But this was not true.

The master had been generous.

He had trusted this servant with a great deal of money.

The problem was not the master.

The problem was the servant's view of the master.

How we see God shapes how we serve God.

Cross References

Luke 19:21

> I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take what you did not put in, and you harvest what you did not plant.

John 4:37

> So the saying is true: “One person plants and another harvests.”

Job 31:8

> Then let others eat what I have planted, and let my crops be pulled up by the roots.

Spiritual Principle

A wrong view of God leads to a wrong way of living.

XXV. I WAS AFRAID

Matthew 25:25 — Here Is What Belongs to You

“So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.”

So I was afraid.

Fear froze him.

He was so afraid of failing that he did nothing at all.

And went out and hid your gold in the ground.

He thought he was being careful.

But he was being unfaithful.

See, here is what belongs to you.

He gave back exactly what he received.

Nothing lost.

Nothing gained.

He thought that was good enough.

It was not.

God does not want us to live in fear.

He wants us to live in faith and love.

Cross References

Proverbs 29:25

> Being afraid of people is a trap, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

2 Timothy 1:7

> For God did not give us a spirit of fear. He gave us a spirit of power, love, and self-control.

1 John 4:18

> There is no fear in love. Perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears has not been made perfect in love.

Spiritual Principle

Fear buries what faith would use.

XXVI. WICKED AND LAZY

Matthew 25:26 — You Knew

“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! You knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed.’”

You wicked, lazy servant!

The master saw through the excuse.

Wicked — his heart was wrong toward the master.

Lazy — he did not want to work.

His fear was really an excuse for laziness.

You knew that I harvest where I have not sown.

The master does not agree that he is harsh.

He is saying, **“If that is what you believed, then your own words condemn you.”**

Cross References

Luke 19:22

> His master replied, “I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in and harvesting what I did not plant.”

Proverbs 6:6

> Go to the ant, you lazy person! Watch what it does and become wise.

Proverbs 20:4

> A lazy person does not plow in the fall season. So at harvest time he looks for a crop but finds nothing.

Spiritual Principle

Excuses do not hide unfaithfulness from God.

XXVII. AT LEAST THE BANK

Matthew 25:27 — With Interest

“You should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.”

You should have put my money on deposit with the bankers.

Even the smallest effort would have been better than nothing.

So that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

The master was not asking for a huge profit.

He was asking for faithfulness.

Even a little faithfulness would have been rewarded.

Cross References

Luke 19:23

> Then why didn't you put my money in the bank? When I came back, I could have collected it with interest.

Proverbs 22:7

> The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is a slave to the lender.

Ecclesiastes 11:1

> Send your bread out on the waters, because after many days you will find it again.

Spiritual Principle

Even small faithfulness is better than doing nothing.

XXVIII. GIVE IT TO THE ONE WHO HAS TEN

Matthew 25:28 — Take It from Him

“So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten.”

Take the bag of gold from him.

He lost what he refused to use.

And give it to the one who has ten.

It was given to the one who had proven most faithful.

God gives more to those who use what He gives.

Cross References

Luke 19:24

> Then he said to those standing by, “Take his money away from him and give it to the one who has ten.”

Proverbs 13:22

> A good person leaves an inheritance for his grandchildren, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.

Job 27:17

> What he stores up, the righteous will wear, and the innocent will divide his silver.

Spiritual Principle

What we refuse to use for God, we will lose.

XXIX. WHOEVER HAS WILL BE GIVEN MORE

Matthew 25:29 — Use It or Lose It

“For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.”

Whoever has will be given more.

This is a law of God's kingdom.

Those who use what God gives them receive more.

And they will have an abundance.

Whoever does not have.

Those who do not use what God gives them.

Even what they have will be taken from them.

This is true of spiritual gifts.

It is true of opportunities.

It is true of the truth we hear.

If we use it, it grows.

If we ignore it, we lose it.

Cross References

Mark 4:25

> Whoever has will be given more. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.

Luke 8:18

> So be careful how you listen. Whoever has will be given more. Whoever does not have, even what they think they have will be taken from them.

Luke 19:26

> He replied, “I tell you that everyone who has will be given more. But the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.”

Spiritual Principle

Use what God gives you, and He will give you more.

XXX. THE WORTHLESS SERVANT

Matthew 25:30 — Outside into the Darkness

“And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

That worthless servant.

He was useless to the master.

He produced nothing.

Outside, into the darkness.

Away from the light and joy of the master's house.

Where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus uses these words again to describe final judgment.

This shows that the third servant was never truly the master's servant at heart.

He did not know the master.

He did not love the master.

He did not trust the master.

His buried gold revealed his empty heart.

Cross References

Matthew 22:13

> Then the king told the attendants, “Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

2 Peter 2:17

> These people are like springs with no water and mists blown by a storm. The deepest darkness is kept for them.

Job 18:18

> He is driven from light into darkness and chased out of the world.

Spiritual Principle

How we use what God gives us reveals whether we truly know Him.

XXXI. THE SON OF MAN ON HIS THRONE

Matthew 25:31 — In His Glory

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne.”

When the Son of Man comes.

Now Jesus stops using parables.

He speaks directly about the final judgment.

Notice that He does not say **if.**

He says **when.**

In His glory.

Not as a baby in a manger.

Not as a man on a cross.

But in His full glory.

And all the angels with Him.

All of heaven will come with Him.

He will sit on His glorious throne.

The One who was judged by men will be the Judge of all.

In just a few days, Jesus would stand before Pilate.

But one day, all people will stand before Him.

Cross References

Daniel 7:14

> He was given authority, glory, and a kingdom. All peoples, nations, and people of every language worshiped Him. His rule will last forever and will never pass away. His kingdom will never be destroyed.

Matthew 16:27

> For the Son of Man is going to come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will reward each person for what they have done.

Zechariah 14:5

> Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with Him.

Spiritual Principle

The One who was judged on earth will be the Judge of all the earth.

XXXII. ALL NATIONS GATHERED

Matthew 25:32 — Sheep and Goats

“All nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”

All nations will be gathered before Him.

No one will be missing.

Every person of every nation will stand before Christ.

He will separate the people one from another.

The judgment is personal.

Each person is judged as an individual.

As a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

In Israel, sheep and goats often grazed together during the day.

In the evening, the shepherd separated them.

From a distance, they could look alike.

But the shepherd knew the difference.

In the same way, Jesus knows who truly belongs to Him.

Cross References

Ezekiel 34:17

> As for you, My flock, this is what the Lord GOD says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats.

Joel 3:2

> I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will judge them for what they did to My people Israel.

Ezekiel 20:38

> I will remove from you those who rebel and turn against Me.

Spiritual Principle

The Good Shepherd knows exactly who belongs to Him.

XXXIII. RIGHT AND LEFT

Matthew 25:33 — The Place of Honor

“He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.”

He will put the sheep on His right.

In the Bible, the right hand is the place of honor and blessing.

Jesus Himself is seated at the Father's right hand.

And the goats on His left.

The left side here is the place of rejection.

There are only two groups.

There is no third place.

No one will be in between.

Cross References

Ezekiel 34:20

> So this is what the Lord GOD says to them: I Myself will judge between the fat sheep and the thin sheep.

Psalm 110:1

> The LORD said to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

Ecclesiastes 10:2

> The heart of the wise leads to the right, but the heart of the fool leads to the left.

Spiritual Principle

At the final judgment there will be only two groups of people.

XXXIV. COME, YOU WHO ARE BLESSED

Matthew 25:34 — Inherit the Kingdom

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by My Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’”

Then the King will say.

The Son of Man is now called **the King.**

Jesus is the King of God's kingdom.

Come.

What a wonderful word!

Throughout His ministry, Jesus said, **“Come to Me.”**

And at the end He says it again.

You who are blessed by My Father.

Their blessing comes from God.

They did not earn it.

Inherit the kingdom.

An inheritance is not earned.

It is received because you belong to the family.

Prepared for you since the creation of the world.

Before the world began, God planned to share His kingdom with His people.

This was always God's plan.

Cross References

Ephesians 1:4

> Even before He made the world, God chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes.

1 Peter 1:20

> He was chosen before the world was made, but He was revealed in these last times for your sake.

Revelation 13:8

> All who live on the earth will worship the beast — all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was killed from the creation of the world.

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom is an inheritance prepared for His children before the world began.

XXXV. HUNGRY, THIRSTY, A STRANGER

Matthew 25:35 — You Gave Me Something

“For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited Me in,”

For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat.

Jesus speaks as if He Himself had been hungry.

I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink.

I was a stranger and you invited Me in.

A stranger was a traveler or foreigner far from home.

In that culture, welcoming strangers was an important act of kindness.

These are simple acts.

Food.

Water.

A place to stay.

Nothing spectacular.

But Jesus noticed every one.

Cross References

Isaiah 58:7

> Share your food with the hungry, and give the poor and homeless a place to stay. When you see someone without clothes, give them clothes. Do not turn away from your own family.

Ezekiel 18:7

> He does not take advantage of anyone. He gives his food to the hungry and gives clothes to those who have none.

Leviticus 19:34

> Treat the foreigner living among you like someone born among you. Love him as you love yourself, because you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Spiritual Principle

Simple acts of kindness matter deeply to Jesus.

XXXVI. CLOTHED, VISITED, CARED FOR

Matthew 25:36 — Sick and in Prison

“I needed clothes and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you came to visit Me.”

I needed clothes and you clothed Me.

I was sick and you looked after Me.

In those days there were few doctors or hospitals.

Caring for the sick was hard and sometimes dangerous.

I was in prison and you came to visit Me.

In ancient prisons, prisoners often depended on friends and family to bring them food.

Visiting a prisoner could also be shameful or risky.

Early Christians were known for caring for those in prison, especially believers jailed for their faith.

Jesus names six needs:

- Hunger
- Thirst
- Loneliness as a stranger
- Lack of clothing
- Sickness
- Imprisonment

And six responses of love.

Cross References

Hebrews 13:3

> Remember those in prison as if you were in prison with them. Remember those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

James 1:27

> Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to care for orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep yourself from being polluted by the world.

Deuteronomy 24:13

> Return his coat to him by sunset so he can sleep in it. Then he will bless you, and the LORD your God will see it as a righteous act.

Spiritual Principle

Love goes to the places where people are hurting.

XXXVII. "LORD, WHEN DID WE SEE YOU?"

Matthew 25:37 — The Righteous Answer

“Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink?’”

Then the righteous will answer Him.

They are called **the righteous.**

They have been made right with God.

Lord, when did we see You hungry?

They are surprised.

They do not remember serving Jesus.

They were not keeping a list of their good deeds.

They were not trying to earn a reward.

They simply loved people because God had changed their hearts.

True kindness is often so natural to a believer that they do not even notice it.

Cross References

Psalm 41:1

> Blessed is the one who cares for the weak. The LORD rescues him in times of trouble.

Proverbs 19:17

> Whoever is kind to the poor is lending to the LORD, and the LORD will pay him back for what he has done.

Isaiah 58:10

> If you give yourself to help the hungry and meet the needs of those who are suffering, then your light will shine in the darkness, and your darkness will become as bright as noon.

Spiritual Principle

True love does not keep score.

XXXVIII. A STRANGER, NEEDING CLOTHES

Matthew 25:38 — When Did We?

“When did we see You a stranger and invite You in, or needing clothes and clothe You?”

When did we see You a stranger?

They had welcomed strangers.

But they never imagined they were welcoming Jesus.

Or needing clothes and clothe You?

Abraham once welcomed three strangers, not knowing at first that the LORD was visiting him.

Hebrews says some people have welcomed angels without knowing it.

When we welcome people in need, we welcome far more than we realize.

Cross References

Genesis 18:3

> He said, “My lord, if I have found favor with you, please do not pass by your servant.”

Hebrews 13:2

> Do not forget to welcome strangers. By doing this, some people have welcomed angels without knowing it.

3 John 1:5

> Dear friend, you are being faithful in what you do for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you.

Spiritual Principle

When we welcome people in need, we may be welcoming more than we know.

XXXIX. SICK OR IN PRISON

Matthew 25:39 — When Did We Visit You?

“When did we see You sick or in prison and go to visit You?”

When did we see You sick or in prison?

They remembered visiting the sick.

They remembered visiting prisoners.

But they did not know it was Jesus.

And go to visit You?

These are places most people avoid.

Hospitals.

Prisons.

Places of pain and shame.

But these are the very places where Jesus is found.

Jesus Himself said He came **to proclaim freedom for the prisoners.**

Cross References

Psalm 41:3

> The LORD will strengthen him on his sickbed and bring him back to health.

Isaiah 61:1

> The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to announce freedom to the captives, and to set prisoners free.

Psalm 142:7

> Bring me out of my prison so that I may praise Your name.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is found in the places the world avoids.

XL. THE LEAST OF THESE

Matthew 25:40 — You Did It for Me

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me.’”

Truly I tell you.

The King gives the answer.

Whatever you did for one of the least of these.

The least — the smallest, the weakest, the most overlooked.

Brothers and sisters of Mine.

Jesus calls them His family.

You did for Me.

This is one of the most amazing statements in the Bible.

Jesus so closely identifies with the needy that serving them is serving Him.

When Saul persecuted Christians, Jesus said, **“Why are you persecuting Me?”**

Who Are “the Least of These Brothers and Sisters”?

Bible students understand this phrase in two main ways.

Many believe it refers especially to Jesus' followers — fellow believers, and particularly His messengers who suffer for the gospel.

Elsewhere in Matthew, Jesus calls His disciples **“My brothers.”**

In Matthew 10, He said that whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of His little ones will be rewarded.

Many others believe it refers to all people in need, whether believers or not.

They point out that Scripture teaches love for the poor, the stranger, and the hurting everywhere.

Both views agree on this:

How we treat people in need shows whether we truly love Jesus.

And all of Scripture calls believers to care for the needy, both inside and outside the church.

Cross References

Proverbs 14:31

> Whoever mistreats the poor insults their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

Zechariah 2:8

> For this is what the LORD who commands armies says: “Whoever touches you touches the apple of His eye.”

Acts 9:4

> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

Spiritual Principle

What we do for the least of these, we do for Jesus.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Look for Jesus in the face of the person in need.

XLI. DEPART FROM ME

Matthew 25:41 — The Eternal Fire

“Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

Then He will say to those on His left.

Now the King turns to the goats.

Depart from Me.

To those on the right He said, **“Come.”**

To those on the left He says, **“Depart.”**

The greatest blessing is to be with Jesus.

The greatest loss is to be sent away from Him.

You who are cursed.

Notice that Jesus does not say **“cursed by My Father.”**

He said **“blessed by My Father”** to the sheep.

The curse comes from their own rejection of God.

Into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Hell was **prepared for the devil and his angels.**

It was not made for people.

The kingdom was prepared for people **since the creation of the world.**

God's desire is for people to be in His kingdom.

Those who go to the eternal fire go there because they rejected Him.

Cross References

Revelation 20:10

> And the devil, who had fooled them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Psalm 6:8

> Get away from me, all you who do evil, for the LORD has heard my crying.

Jude 1:6

> And the angels who did not stay in their places of authority but left their proper home — He has kept them in darkness, bound with everlasting chains, for judgment on the great Day.

Spiritual Principle

The kingdom was prepared for people; hell was prepared for the devil.

Spiritual Warning

To be sent away from Jesus is the greatest loss anyone can suffer.

XLII. YOU GAVE ME NOTHING

Matthew 25:42 — Hungry and Thirsty

“For I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink,”

I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat.

I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink.

Notice that these people are not condemned for doing terrible crimes.

They are condemned for what they did **not** do.

They saw need and walked past it.

They had food and did not share it.

God judged Sodom not only for its sexual sin, but also because it did not help the poor and needy.

Cross References

Ezekiel 16:49

> This was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were proud, had more than enough food, and lived without worry. But they did not help the poor and needy.

Isaiah 58:3

> “Why have we fasted,” they say, “and You have not seen it?” Yet on the day of your fasting, you do whatever you please and mistreat all your workers.

Amos 6:6

> You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph.

Spiritual Principle

Ignoring people in need is a sin in God's eyes.

XLIII. YOU DID NOT

Matthew 25:43 — Stranger, Naked, Sick, in Prison

“I was a stranger and you did not invite Me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe Me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after Me.”

I was a stranger and you did not invite Me in.

I needed clothes and you did not clothe Me.

I was sick and in prison and you did not look after Me.

The list is the same as before.

But this time, every answer is **“you did not.”**

The goats had the same opportunities as the sheep.

They saw the same needs.

But they did nothing.

Cross References

Job 22:7

> You gave no water to the weary, and you held back food from the hungry.

Job 31:19

> If I have seen anyone dying because they had no clothes, or a needy person without a coat.

Deuteronomy 15:7

> If there is a poor person among your people in any of the towns in the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your poor brother.

Spiritual Principle

Every need we see is an opportunity God gives us to love.

XLIV. "WHEN DID WE NOT HELP YOU?"

Matthew 25:44 — The Goats Answer

“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help You?’”

They also will answer.

They are just as surprised as the sheep.

Lord, when did we see You?

They call Him **Lord.**

They seem to say, **“If we had known it was You, we would have helped!”**

But that is exactly the point.

They were willing to help someone important.

They were not willing to help someone who seemed unimportant.

True love does not first ask, **“Who is this person?”**

It asks, **“What does this person need?”**

Cross References

Proverbs 21:13

> Whoever closes his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry out and not be answered.

James 2:16

> If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; stay warm and eat well,” but does nothing to meet their physical needs, what good is that?

1 John 3:17

> If anyone has enough to live on and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no pity, how can the love of God be in that person?

Spiritual Principle

Love does not wait to find out if a person is important.

XLV. YOU DID NOT DO IT FOR ME

Matthew 25:45 — The Least of These

“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me.’”

Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these.

Every time they turned away from someone in need...

You did not do for Me.

...they turned away from Jesus.

This is a sobering truth.

We cannot say we love Jesus while ignoring the people He loves.

John wrote that if we do not love the brother we can see, we cannot love God whom we have not seen.

Cross References

Zechariah 7:10

> Do not mistreat widows, orphans, foreigners, or the poor. Do not plan evil against each other in your hearts.

Matthew 18:5

> And whoever welcomes one such child in My name welcomes Me.

Malachi 3:5

> “So I will come to put you on trial. I will quickly testify against those who cheat workers of their pay, who mistreat widows and orphans, and who turn away foreigners, and who do not fear Me,” says the LORD who commands armies.

Spiritual Principle

Turning away from people in need is turning away from Jesus.

XLVI. ETERNAL PUNISHMENT AND ETERNAL LIFE

Matthew 25:46 — Two Destinies

“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Then they will go away to eternal punishment.

The judgment is final.

But the righteous to eternal life.

Notice that the same word **eternal** describes both destinies.

Both are real.

Both are lasting.

These are some of the most serious words Jesus ever spoke.

He did not say them to frighten people for no reason.

He said them because He loves people and wants them to be ready.

Are We Saved by Good Works?

Some people read this passage and think we are saved by doing good deeds.

But the rest of the New Testament teaches that we are saved by God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, not by our works.

So how do we understand this passage?

The sheep were not saved because they did good works.

They did good works because they had been saved.

Their kindness showed that they truly belonged to the King.

Their love was the fruit of a changed heart.

The goats' lack of love showed that they never truly knew Him.

As James wrote, **faith without works is dead.**

True faith always shows itself in love.

Cross References

Daniel 12:2

> Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will wake up. Some will wake to everlasting life, and others to shame and everlasting disgrace.

John 5:29

> And they will come out. Those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be judged.

Revelation 20:15

> Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Spiritual Principle

Every person will spend eternity in one of two places.

Key Truth

We are not saved by our love, but our love shows that we are saved.

XLVII. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 25

1. Be Ready for Christ's Return

Like the wise bridesmaids, we must keep our lamps filled with oil — faith and obedience.

Readiness cannot be borrowed, and it cannot be gained at the last minute.

Principle:

Keep your lamp full, because the Bridegroom is coming.

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2. Use What God Has Entrusted to You

Whether great or small, our talents must be invested for His glory.

Burying what God has given is unfaithfulness.

Principle:

Do not bury what God gave you to use.

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3. Faithfulness Leads to Reward

Those who serve well with little will be entrusted with much more.

The servant with two bags heard the same **“Well done”** as the servant with five.

Principle:

God rewards faithfulness, not the size of the gift.

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4. Christ Identifies with the Needy

What we do for others, we do for Him.

Jesus is found among the hungry, the stranger, the sick, and the prisoner.

Principle:

Serving the least of these is serving the King.

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5. Final Judgment Is Certain

The sheep will inherit eternal life, while the goats face eternal separation from God.

There are only two groups and two destinies.

Principle:

Live today in light of eternity.

XLVIII. THREE PICTURES OF READINESS

Matthew 25 gives three pictures of what it means to be ready for Christ's return.

The Ten Bridesmaids — Ready in Heart (Verses 1–13)

Readiness means having real faith, not just the outward form.

Question: Is my lamp full?

The Talents — Ready in Service (Verses 14–30)

Readiness means faithfully using what God has given.

Question: Am I using my gifts for the Master?

The Sheep and the Goats — Ready in Love (Verses 31–46)

Readiness means loving and serving people in need.

Question: Am I caring for the least of these?

What the Three Stories Share

- In each story, a person returns or arrives — the Bridegroom, the Master, the King.
- In each story, there are two groups — the wise and the foolish, the faithful and the lazy, the sheep and the goats.
- In each story, the two groups look alike at first.
- In each story, the difference is revealed at the moment of His coming.
- In each story, one group enters into joy, and the other is shut out.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Being ready means a full heart, busy hands, and a loving life.

XLIX. WHAT MATTHEW 25 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 25 reveals many truths about Jesus.

The Bridegroom

He is coming for His people to bring them to the great wedding feast.

The One Who Knows His Own

He knows who truly belongs to Him.

The Master Who Entrusts

He gives His servants gifts and opportunities to use while He is away.

The Generous Lord

He rewards faithfulness with joy and greater responsibility.

The Returning Lord

He may seem delayed, but He will certainly come.

The Son of Man in Glory

He will come with all His angels and sit on His glorious throne.

The Good Shepherd

He separates His sheep from the goats.

The King

He welcomes His people into the kingdom prepared for them.

The Friend of the Needy

He so identifies with the least of these that serving them is serving Him.

The Judge of All Nations

Every person will stand before Him.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Bridegroom who is coming for us is already among us in the least of these.

L. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Whom do the bridegroom and the bridesmaids represent?

The bridegroom represents Jesus. The bridesmaids represent people who say they are waiting for Him.

Question 2

What was the difference between the wise and foolish bridesmaids?

The wise brought extra oil and were prepared. The foolish brought no extra oil and were not ready when the bridegroom came.

Question 3

What might the oil represent?

Many see it as the Holy Spirit, genuine faith, or a life of obedience — the inner reality of a true relationship with Christ.

Question 4

Why didn't the wise bridesmaids share their oil?

Because readiness for Christ cannot be borrowed. Each person must belong to Him personally.

Question 5

What happened when the foolish bridesmaids returned?

The door was shut, and the bridegroom said, “I don't know you.”

Question 6

What was a talent?

A very large sum of money, worth many years of wages for an ordinary worker.

Question 7

Why did the master give different amounts to each servant?

He gave to each according to his ability.

Question 8

What did the first two servants do?

They put the money to work at once and doubled it.

Question 9

Why did the servant with two bags receive the same praise as the servant with five?

Because God rewards faithfulness, not the size of the gift.

Question 10

Why did the third servant bury his money?

He said he was afraid because he thought the master was a hard man. But the master called him wicked and lazy.

Question 11

What does “whoever has will be given more” mean?

Those who use what God gives them will receive more. Those who do not will lose even what they have.

Question 12

How will the Son of Man separate the people?

As a shepherd separates sheep from goats — the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.

Question 13

What six needs did Jesus mention?

Hunger, thirst, being a stranger, needing clothes, sickness, and imprisonment.

Question 14

Why were both the sheep and the goats surprised?

The sheep did not realize they had served Jesus. The goats did not realize they had refused Him.

Question 15

Does this passage teach that we are saved by good works?

No. We are saved by grace through faith. But true faith shows itself in love and good works, which are the evidence of a changed heart.

Question 16

What should Matthew 25 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 25 should cause believers to live:

- With real faith, not just outward religion.
- Personally ready for Christ's return.
- Patient when His coming seems delayed.
- Using every gift God has given them.
- Free from fear and excuses.
- Faithful in small things.
- Not comparing themselves with others.
- Caring for the hungry and thirsty.
- Welcoming strangers.
- Visiting the sick and those in prison.
- Living in light of eternity.

LI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 25 asks several important questions.

Is My Lamp Full or Only Looking Full?

Am I Depending on Someone Else's Faith?

Am I Ready If the Bridegroom Comes Tonight?

Does Jesus Know Me as His Own?

What Gifts Has God Entrusted to Me?

Am I Using Them or Burying Them?

Am I Comparing My Gifts with Others?

Is Fear Keeping Me from Serving God?

What Do I Believe About God's Character?

Who Are the “Least of These” in My Life?

When Did I Last Feed, Welcome, Clothe, or Visit Someone in Need?

Would Jesus Say to Me, “Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant”?

LII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Faithful with a Few Things”

Twice in Matthew 25, the master says:

“You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.”

Many people think they have nothing important to give God.

They say:

“I am not a preacher.”

“I don't have much money.”

“I don't have special talents.”

But Jesus is not looking for greatness.

He is looking for faithfulness.

A cup of water.

A plate of food.

A warm coat.

A visit to a hospital.

A letter to a prisoner.

A prayer for a friend.

These are **a few things.**

But to Jesus, they are everything.

The servant with five bags and the servant with two bags heard the same words.

Only the servant who did nothing was rejected.

God does not ask you to do everything.

He asks you to do something with what He has given you.

Principle:

Be faithful with a few things today, and God will trust you with many things in His kingdom.

LIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 25 continues Jesus' teaching on the Mount of Olives.

He has told His disciples that He is coming again.

Now He shows them how to be ready.

First, the ten bridesmaids.

All had lamps.

All were waiting.

All fell asleep.

But only five had oil.

When the cry came at midnight, the foolish could not borrow what they lacked.

The door was shut.

Second, the talents.

A master entrusted his wealth to his servants.

Two put it to work and heard, **“Well done.”**

One buried it and was called **wicked and lazy.**

Third, the sheep and the goats.

The King will sit on His glorious throne.

All nations will stand before Him.

He will welcome those who cared for the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick, and the prisoner.

And He will say, **“You did it for Me.”**

Three stories.

One message.

Be ready.

Ready in heart.

Ready in service.

Ready in love.

So today:

Keep your lamp full.

Use what God has given you.

Do not be afraid.

Be faithful in little things.

Look for Jesus in the least of these.

Feed the hungry.

Welcome the stranger.

Visit the sick and the prisoner.

And until He returns:

Live so that on that day you will hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the promise that Jesus is coming again.

Thank You for inviting us to the wedding feast of Your Son.

Lord Jesus, You are the Bridegroom.

Keep our lamps full.

Fill us with Your Spirit.

Keep our faith real, not just outward.

Forgive us for depending on the faith of others.

Help us to know You personally, so that You will know us as Your own.

When Your coming seems delayed, keep us patient and prepared.

Thank You for every gift You have entrusted to us.

Forgive us for the times we have buried what You gave us.

Forgive us for letting fear and excuses keep us from serving You.

Help us not to compare ourselves with others.

Make us faithful with a few things.

Lord, open our eyes to see You in the least of these.

Give us hearts that care for the hungry and the thirsty.

Help us welcome the stranger.

Help us clothe those in need.

Lead us to visit the sick and those in prison.

Thank You that we are saved by Your grace, not by our works.

Now let Your grace overflow from our hearts into lives of love.

On the day You sit on Your glorious throne, may we hear Your voice say:

“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

“Come, you who are blessed by My Father.”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me.’” — Matthew 25:40

Central Truth

Jesus calls His followers to be ready for His return by keeping their faith alive, faithfully using what He has entrusted to them, and serving Him by caring for the least of these, because the final judgment is certain.

Matthew 25 in One Sentence

Jesus teaches through the wise and foolish bridesmaids, the faithful and lazy servants, and the separation of the sheep and the goats that His followers must be ready for His return with real faith, faithful service, and love for the least of these, because He will come in glory to judge all nations and welcome His own into the kingdom.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 26 — The Plot, the Passover, the Garden, and the Betrayal

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapters 24 and 25 recorded Jesus' great teaching on the Mount of Olives.

He spoke about His return in glory.

He spoke about the final judgment, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne.

Now in Matthew Chapter 26, everything changes.

The teaching is finished.

The suffering begins.

The One who will sit on the throne of glory must first be betrayed, arrested, and condemned.

Matthew 26 is one of the longest chapters in the Gospel.

It moves through some of the most important events in all of history:

- **The plot** — the religious leaders plan to kill Jesus.
- **The anointing** — a woman pours costly perfume on Jesus' head.
- **The betrayal** — Judas agrees to hand Jesus over for thirty pieces of silver.
- **The Passover** — Jesus eats His last meal with His disciples and gives them the Lord's Supper.
- **The warning** — Jesus predicts that all will fall away and Peter will deny Him.
- **The garden** — Jesus prays in agony in Gethsemane.
- **The arrest** — Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss.
- **The trial** — Jesus stands before the high priest and the council.
- **The denial** — Peter denies Jesus three times.

In this chapter we see the very best and the very worst of the human heart.

We see a woman's beautiful devotion.

We see a disciple's cold betrayal.

We see friends who fall asleep.

We see a leader who denies his Lord.

And in the middle of it all, we see Jesus.

Calm.

Obedient.

Faithful.

Fully in control, even as He is handed over.

It is important to read this chapter carefully.

The plot against Jesus was led by certain religious leaders of that time.

It was not the act of the Jewish people as a whole.

Jesus' first followers were Jewish, and the New Testament teaches that Jesus gave His life willingly, for the sins of the whole world — including ours.

Matthew 26 therefore shows two great truths:

Jesus went to the cross willingly, in perfect obedience to His Father's will.

And:

Even when His followers failed Him, Jesus remained faithful to God's plan of salvation.

The central truth of Matthew 26 is:

Jesus, knowing everything that would happen, willingly gave Himself up to betrayal, arrest, and condemnation, offering His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins and submitting to the Father's will, even when His closest followers failed Him.

I. WHEN JESUS HAD FINISHED

Matthew 26:1 — All These Things

“When Jesus had finished saying all these things, He told His disciples,”

When Jesus had finished saying all these things.

Matthew uses words like these at the end of each of Jesus' five great teachings in his Gospel.

But this time he says **all these things.**

Jesus' public teaching ministry was complete.

Now His work of suffering would begin.

He told His disciples.

Jesus did not walk blindly into death.

He told His disciples ahead of time.

He had already told them several times that He would suffer, die, and rise again.

Cross References

Matthew 16:21

> From that time on, Jesus began to explain to His followers that He must go to Jerusalem. There He would suffer many things from the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law. He would be killed and then be raised to life on the third day.

Matthew 20:18

> We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the leading priests and the teachers of the law. They will sentence Him to death.

John 13:1

> It was just before the Passover festival. Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. He had loved His own people who were in the world, and now He showed them the full extent of His love.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus finished His teaching so that He could finish His saving work.

II. THE PASSOVER IS TWO DAYS AWAY

Matthew 26:2 — Handed Over to Be Crucified

“You know that the Passover is just two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

The Passover is just two days away.

The Passover was the great yearly festival when Israel remembered how God rescued them from slavery in Egypt.

On the first Passover, each family killed a lamb and put its blood on the doorframes of their house.

When God's judgment passed through Egypt, He **passed over** every house covered by the blood.

And the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.

Jesus connects His death with the Passover.

This is not an accident.

Jesus is the true Passover Lamb.

John the Baptist had called Him **“the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”**

Notice also that Jesus told His disciples **when** He would be crucified.

The religious leaders were planning to wait until after the festival.

But Jesus knew it would happen at the Passover.

God's timing, not man's, would decide the day.

Cross References

Exodus 12:6

> Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month. Then all the people of Israel must kill the animals at twilight.

John 1:29

> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Mark 14:1

> The Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away. The leading priests and the teachers of the law were looking for a sneaky way to arrest Jesus and kill Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the true Passover Lamb, whose blood saves us from judgment.

III. THE PALACE OF CAIAPHAS

Matthew 26:3 — The Leaders Gather

“Then the chief priests, the elders of the people, and the teachers of the law gathered in the palace of Caiaphas the high priest.”

The chief priests, the elders of the people, and the teachers of the law.

These were the leaders of the Jewish council, called the Sanhedrin.

Gathered in the palace of Caiaphas the high priest.

Caiaphas was the high priest from about A.D. 18 to 36.

He was the son-in-law of Annas, an earlier high priest who still had great influence.

Earlier, after Jesus raised Lazarus, Caiaphas had said it was better for one man to die than for the whole nation to perish.

He did not understand that he was speaking a deep truth about Jesus' death.

Cross References

Psalm 2:2

> The kings of the earth get ready to fight, and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against His Anointed One.

John 11:49

> One of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said, “You don't know anything at all!”

Luke 22:2

> The leading priests and the teachers of the law were looking for a way to get rid of Jesus, because they were afraid of the people.

Spiritual Principle

People may plot against God's Son, but God's plan cannot be stopped.

IV. A SECRET PLOT

Matthew 26:4 — Arrest Him Secretly

“They plotted together how they might arrest Jesus secretly and kill Him.”

They plotted together.

This was not a sudden decision.

They had been planning for some time.

How they might arrest Jesus secretly.

They could not arrest Him openly.

Too many people loved Him.

So they planned to do it in secret, using trickery.

And kill Him.

Their goal was clear.

The religious leaders of God's people were planning to murder God's Son.

Cross References

Psalm 31:13

> I hear many people whispering. There is terror all around me. They plot together against me and plan to take my life.

John 11:53

> So from that day on they made plans to kill Jesus.

Isaiah 53:8

> He was taken away by unfair judgment and punishment. Who could have imagined what would happen to Him? He was cut off from the land of the living. He was punished for the sins of My people.

Spiritual Principle

Evil works in secret, but nothing is hidden from God.

V. NOT DURING THE FESTIVAL

Matthew 26:5 — The People May Riot

“But they said, ‘Not during the festival, or the people may riot.’”

Not during the festival.

During the Passover, Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims from all over the world.

Many of them had heard Jesus teach.

Many had seen His miracles.

Or the people may riot.

The leaders were afraid of the crowds.

So they planned to wait until after the festival.

But God had a different plan.

Jesus would die during the Passover festival, the very time when Israel remembered the blood of the lamb.

The leaders made their plans.

But God was in control of the timing.

Cross References

Mark 14:2

> “But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

Luke 22:2

> The leading priests and the teachers of the law were looking for a way to get rid of Jesus, because they were afraid of the people.

Acts 4:27

> It is true that Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city. They plotted against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed.

Spiritual Principle

Human beings make plans, but God decides the timing.

VI. IN BETHANY

Matthew 26:6 — At the Home of Simon the Leper

“While Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper,”

While Jesus was in Bethany.

Bethany was a small village about two miles from Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives.

Jesus stayed there during the last week of His life.

It was the hometown of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

At the home of Simon the leper.

We know nothing else about Simon.

He was probably a man Jesus had healed of leprosy.

Otherwise, he could not have hosted guests.

He was still known by his old name — **the leper.**

In the house of a healed leper, Jesus was honored.

In the palace of the high priest, Jesus was plotted against.

Cross References

John 12:1

> Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived. Jesus had raised him from the dead.

John 11:1

> A man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village where Mary and her sister Martha lived.

Luke 7:36

> One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to eat with him. So He went to the Pharisee's house and took His place at the table.

Spiritual Principle

Those who have been touched by Jesus' grace are the ones who welcome Him most gladly.

VII. AN ALABASTER JAR

Matthew 26:7 — Poured on His Head

“a woman came to Him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on His head as He reclined at the table.”

A woman came to Him.

Matthew does not give her name.

John's Gospel tells us that this was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

With an alabaster jar.

Alabaster was a beautiful, smooth stone used for precious things.

Of very expensive perfume.

Mark and John tell us it was worth about a year's wages.

It may have been her most valuable possession.

Which she poured on His head.

In Israel, kings were anointed by pouring oil on their heads.

Without knowing it fully, she was honoring Jesus as King.

As He reclined at the table.

At special meals, people reclined on cushions around a low table.

Luke 7 tells of another woman who anointed Jesus' feet at the house of a Pharisee.

Most Bible students believe that was a different event, earlier in Jesus' ministry.

Cross References

John 12:3

> Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, a very expensive perfume. She poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the sweet smell of the perfume.

Luke 7:38

> She stood behind Him at His feet, crying. She began to wet His feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and poured perfume on them.

Song of Solomon 1:12

> While the king was at his table, my perfume gave off its sweet smell.

Spiritual Principle

True love for Jesus gives Him our very best.

VIII. "WHY THIS WASTE?"

Matthew 26:8 — The Disciples Were Upset

“When the disciples saw this, they were upset and said, ‘Why this waste?’”

When the disciples saw this, they were upset.

They were angry.

They thought she had done something foolish.

Why this waste?

To them, the perfume was wasted.

To Jesus, it was worship.

John's Gospel tells us that Judas led the complaint.

But Matthew shows that the other disciples joined in.

Sometimes people who love Jesus less criticize those who love Him more.

Nothing given to Jesus out of love is ever wasted.

Cross References

John 12:4

> But one of His followers, Judas Iscariot, who was later going to betray Him, objected.

Mark 14:4

> Some of the people there were angry and said to one another, “Why waste this perfume?”

John 12:5

> “Why wasn't this perfume sold? The money could have been given to the poor. It was worth a year's pay.”

Spiritual Principle

Nothing given to Jesus in love is ever wasted.

IX. GIVEN TO THE POOR

Matthew 26:9 — Sold for a High Price

“This perfume could have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor.”

This perfume could have been sold for a high price.

This was true.

It was worth a great deal.

And the money given to the poor.

This sounded good.

Caring for the poor is important to God.

Jesus had just taught that whatever we do for the least of these, we do for Him.

But John tells us that Judas did not really care about the poor.

He was a thief who stole from the money bag.

Sometimes a selfish heart hides behind good-sounding words.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 15:11

> There will always be poor people in the land. So I command you to be generous to your fellow Israelites who are poor and in need in your land.

Mark 14:5

> “It could have been sold for more than a year's pay, and the money given to the poor.” And they scolded her harshly.

1 John 3:17

> If anyone has enough to live on and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no pity, how can the love of God be in that person?

Spiritual Principle

God looks at the heart behind our words.

X. A BEAUTIFUL THING

Matthew 26:10 — Why Are You Bothering Her?

“Aware of this, Jesus said, ‘Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing for Me.’”

Aware of this.

Jesus knew what they were saying.

Why are you bothering this woman?

Jesus defended her.

When others criticized her, Jesus stood up for her.

She has done a beautiful thing for Me.

Beautiful means good, lovely, and fitting.

The disciples saw waste.

Jesus saw beauty.

What matters is not what others think of our worship.

What matters is what Jesus thinks.

Cross References

Mark 14:6

> “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to Me.”

John 12:7

> “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was meant for her to save this perfume for the day of My burial.”

Ecclesiastes 3:11

> He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also put eternity into the hearts of people.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus defends and delights in those who worship Him with all their heart.

XI. YOU WILL NOT ALWAYS HAVE ME

Matthew 26:11 — The Poor You Will Always Have

“The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have Me.”

The poor you will always have with you.

Jesus was not saying the poor do not matter.

He was quoting the idea of Deuteronomy 15, which commands God's people to be generous to the poor.

There would always be opportunities to help the poor.

But you will not always have Me.

Jesus would soon be gone.

This woman had one opportunity to honor Him in this way.

And she took it.

There is a time for everything.

Some opportunities come only once.

Cross References

John 12:8

> You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have Me.

Mark 14:7

> The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have Me.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

> There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.

Spiritual Principle

Some opportunities to honor Jesus come only once.

XII. PREPARED FOR BURIAL

Matthew 26:12 — Poured on My Body

“When she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial.”

When she poured this perfume on My body.

In those days, bodies were prepared for burial with perfumes and spices.

She did it to prepare Me for burial.

She may not have understood everything.

But she seemed to sense what the disciples did not.

Jesus was going to die.

Again and again, Jesus had told the disciples He would die.

They did not understand.

But this woman listened.

Her act of love was a prophecy of His death.

Cross References

John 12:7

> “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was meant for her to save this perfume for the day of My burial.”

Mark 14:8

> She did what she could. She poured perfume on My body ahead of time to prepare for My burial.

John 19:39

> Nicodemus came with Joseph. He was the man who had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought about seventy-five pounds of a mixture of myrrh and aloes.

Spiritual Principle

Those who sit at Jesus' feet often understand what others miss.

XIII. IN MEMORY OF HER

Matthew 26:13 — Wherever This Gospel Is Preached

“Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”

Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world.

Jesus knew that the gospel would go to the whole world.

And He knew it would be connected with His death and burial.

What she has done will also be told in memory of her.

This promise has come true.

Two thousand years later, we are still telling her story.

Kings and emperors have been forgotten.

But this woman's love is remembered.

Jesus never forgets what we do for Him.

Cross References

Mark 14:9

> Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.

Mark 16:15

> He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to everyone.”

Psalm 112:6

> Surely the righteous will never be shaken. They will be remembered forever.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus never forgets an act of love done for Him.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

What the world calls a waste, Jesus calls beautiful — and He remembers it forever.

XIV. ONE OF THE TWELVE

Matthew 26:14 — Judas Iscariot

“Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests”

Then.

Right after the woman's beautiful act of love.

The contrast is striking.

She gave Jesus her most precious possession.

Judas sold Jesus for money.

One of the Twelve.

This is the most shocking part.

Judas was not an enemy from outside.

He was one of Jesus' chosen apostles.

He had heard Jesus' teaching.

He had seen His miracles.

He had been sent out to preach.

The one called Judas Iscariot.

Iscariot may mean **“man from Kerioth,”** a town in Judea.

Went to the chief priests.

He went on his own.

No one forced him.

Luke and John tell us that Satan entered Judas.

But Judas was still responsible for his choice.

Cross References

Mark 14:10

> Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the leading priests to hand Jesus over to them.

Luke 22:3

> Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.

John 13:2

> The evening meal was being served. The devil had already put the idea into the heart of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Being close to Jesus is not the same as belonging to Jesus.

Spiritual Warning

A person can be surrounded by spiritual things and still have a heart far from God.

XV. THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER

Matthew 26:15 — What Will You Give Me?

“and asked, ‘What will you give me if I deliver Him to you?’ So they counted out thirty pieces of silver.”

What will you give me?

Judas' question shows what was in his heart.

He was thinking about himself.

If I deliver Him to you.

The leaders needed a way to arrest Jesus secretly.

Judas offered them exactly that.

So they counted out thirty pieces of silver.

In the law of Moses, thirty pieces of silver was the price paid when a slave was killed.

The prophet Zechariah spoke of being valued at **thirty pieces of silver** — an insulting price.

The Son of God was sold for the price of a slave.

Cross References

Zechariah 11:12

> I told them, “If you think it is right, give me my pay. But if not, keep it.” So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.

Exodus 21:32

> If the bull gores a male or female slave, the owner must pay thirty pieces of silver to the slave's master, and the bull must be stoned to death.

Mark 14:11

> They were very happy to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for a chance to hand Jesus over.

Spiritual Principle

Nothing in this world is worth trading Jesus for.

XVI. WATCHING FOR THE RIGHT TIME

Matthew 26:16 — To Hand Jesus Over

“From then on, Judas watched for the right time to hand Jesus over.”

From then on.

The decision was made.

Judas watched for the right time.

He looked for a moment when Jesus would be away from the crowds.

To hand Jesus over.

Every day, Judas walked with Jesus.

He ate with Him.

He listened to Him.

But all the while, he was looking for a chance to betray Him.

This is what love of money can do to a heart.

Cross References

Luke 22:6

> He agreed, and he watched for a chance to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.

John 13:27

> As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.”

Proverbs 1:19

> This is what happens to everyone who is greedy for money. Greed takes away the life of those who have it.

Spiritual Principle

Greed can turn a follower into a betrayer.

XVII. PREPARING THE PASSOVER

Matthew 26:17 — The First Day of Unleavened Bread

“On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Where do You want us to make preparations for You to eat the Passover?’”

The first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread.

The Passover was followed by a seven-day festival.

During this time, Israel ate bread made without yeast.

This reminded them that they left Egypt in such a hurry that their bread had no time to rise.

The Passover lambs were sacrificed at the temple on the afternoon before the Passover meal.

Where do You want us to make preparations?

Preparing the Passover was a big job.

The lamb had to be sacrificed at the temple.

The room had to be arranged.

The bread, wine, and bitter herbs had to be ready.

Cross References

Exodus 12:15

> For seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. On the first day, remove all yeast from your houses.

Mark 14:12

> On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was the custom to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' followers asked Him, “Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?”

Luke 22:7

> Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.

Spiritual Principle

God's people prepare to remember His great acts of salvation.

XVIII. MY APPOINTED TIME IS NEAR

Matthew 26:18 — At Your House

“He replied, ‘Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, “The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with My disciples at your house.”’”

Go into the city to a certain man.

Jesus does not name the man.

This may have been to keep the location secret from Judas, so that Jesus could finish the meal before His arrest.

The Teacher says.

The man seems to have known Jesus.

My appointed time is near.

Earlier, Jesus had said, **“My time has not yet come.”**

Now He says, **“My appointed time is near.”**

This is the hour the Father had planned.

I am going to celebrate the Passover with My disciples at your house.

Jesus wanted to share this last meal with His closest friends.

Cross References

Mark 14:14

> Say to the owner of the house he enters, “The Teacher asks: Where is My guest room, where I may eat the Passover with My followers?”

John 7:6

> Therefore Jesus told them, “My time is not yet here. For you, any time is right.”

John 7:30

> At this they tried to seize Him, but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus moved according to the Father's timetable, not man's.

XIX. THEY DID AS JESUS DIRECTED

Matthew 26:19 — Preparing the Passover

“So the disciples did as Jesus directed them and prepared the Passover.”

So the disciples did as Jesus directed them.

They obeyed.

Everything happened just as Jesus said.

And prepared the Passover.

They got the room ready.

They prepared the food.

In the same way, the Israelites in Egypt did exactly what the LORD commanded Moses.

When we follow Jesus' directions, we find everything just as He said.

Cross References

Mark 14:16

> The followers left, went into the city, and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

Luke 22:13

> They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

Exodus 12:28

> The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.

Spiritual Principle

When we obey Jesus, we find that His word is always true.

XX. RECLINING WITH THE TWELVE

Matthew 26:20 — When Evening Came

“When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve.”

When evening came.

The Passover meal was eaten at night.

Jesus was reclining at the table.

They lay on couches or cushions, leaning on one elbow, around a low table.

With the Twelve.

His closest followers were with Him.

This was the last meal Jesus would eat with them before His death.

John tells us that during this meal Jesus washed their feet.

Cross References

Mark 14:17

> When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve.

Luke 22:14

> When the hour came, Jesus and His apostles took their places at the table.

John 13:23

> One of His followers, the one Jesus loved, was leaning back against Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus desires close fellowship with His followers.

XXI. ONE OF YOU WILL BETRAY ME

Matthew 26:21 — While They Were Eating

“And while they were eating, He said, ‘Truly I tell you, one of you will betray Me.’”

While they were eating.

In the middle of a sacred meal.

In a moment of friendship.

Truly I tell you, one of you will betray Me.

Jesus knew.

He had always known.

And yet He had loved Judas.

He had chosen him.

He had washed his feet.

Even now, Jesus was giving Judas a chance to turn back.

Cross References

Mark 14:18

> While they were at the table eating, He said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray Me — one who is eating with Me.”

John 13:21

> After He had said this, Jesus was deeply troubled in spirit. He said, “Truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray Me.”

John 6:70

> Then Jesus replied, “Didn't I choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows every heart, and still He offers grace.

XXII. "SURELY NOT I, LORD?"

Matthew 26:22 — One After Another

“They were very sad and began to say to Him one after another, ‘Surely You don't mean me, Lord?’”

They were very sad.

They were deeply hurt by Jesus' words.

And began to say to Him one after another.

Each disciple asked.

Surely You don't mean me, Lord?

They did not point fingers at each other.

Each one looked at his own heart.

This is the right response.

When we hear a warning from God's Word, the first question should be, **“Lord, is it I?”**

Cross References

Mark 14:19

They were very sad. One by one they said to Him, “Surely You don't mean me?”

John 13:22

His followers stared at one another. They had no idea which of them He meant.

Luke 22:23

They began to ask one another which of them would do this.

Spiritual Principle

When God's Word warns us, we should first examine our own hearts.

XXIII. DIPPED IN THE BOWL

Matthew 26:23 — The One Who Will Betray Me

“Jesus replied, ‘The one who has dipped his hand in the bowl with Me will betray Me.’”

The one who has dipped his hand in the bowl with Me.

At the Passover meal, people dipped bread and herbs into a shared bowl of sauce.

This was a sign of close friendship.

To eat from the same bowl was to be trusted.

Will betray Me.

The betrayal would come from someone very close.

David wrote of the pain of being betrayed by a close friend.

Jesus felt that same pain.

Cross References

John 13:26

Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, He gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

Mark 14:20

“It is one of the Twelve,” He replied, “one who dips bread into the bowl with Me.”

Psalm 55:13

But it is you, someone like me, my friend, my close companion.

Spiritual Principle

The deepest wounds often come from those closest to us — and Jesus understands.

XXIV. BETTER NEVER TO HAVE BEEN BORN

Matthew 26:24 — Just As It Is Written

“The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man—it would be better for him if he had never been born.”

The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him.

Jesus' death was part of God's plan.

The Scriptures had foretold it.

But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man.

God's plan does not take away human responsibility.

Judas chose to betray Jesus.

He would be held accountable.

It would be better for him if he had never been born.

These are terrible words.

They show how serious Judas' sin was.

This verse teaches two truths side by side:

God is in control of all things.

And people are responsible for their choices.

The Bible does not explain fully how both are true, but it clearly teaches both.

Cross References

Psalm 41:9

> Even my close friend, someone I trusted, someone who shared my bread, has turned against me.

Luke 22:22

> The Son of Man will go as it has been decided. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays Him!

Acts 1:16

> Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to come true that the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David about Judas. Judas guided those who arrested Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

God's sovereign plan never removes human responsibility.

XXV. "SURELY NOT I, RABBI?"

Matthew 26:25 — You Have Said So

“Then Judas, the one who would betray Him, said, ‘Surely You don't mean me, Rabbi?’ Jesus answered, ‘You have said so.’”

Then Judas, the one who would betray Him.

Judas asked the same question as the others.

Surely You don't mean me, Rabbi?

Notice a small but important difference.

The other disciples called Jesus **“Lord.”**

Judas called Him **“Rabbi”** — Teacher.

Judas never calls Jesus **“Lord”** in Matthew's Gospel.

Jesus answered, ‘You have said so.’

This was a way of saying **“Yes.”**

Jesus exposed Judas without shouting.

Without anger.

Quietly.

Even now, Judas could have repented.

But he did not.

Cross References

Mark 14:21

> The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.

John 13:30

> As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

1 John 2:19

> They left us, but they never really belonged to us. If they had belonged to us, they would have stayed with us. Their leaving showed that none of them belonged to us.

Spiritual Principle

Calling Jesus “Teacher” is not the same as following Him as Lord.

XXVI. THIS IS MY BODY

Matthew 26:26 — Take and Eat

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is My body.’”

While they were eating.

In the middle of the Passover meal, Jesus did something new.

Jesus took bread.

This was the flat, unleavened bread of the Passover.

And when He had given thanks.

Jesus thanked the Father — even on the night He was betrayed.

He broke it.

The broken bread pictured His body, which would be broken on the cross.

And gave it to His disciples.

Jesus gives Himself to His people.

Take and eat; this is My body.

In the Passover, the bread reminded Israel of their escape from Egypt.

Now Jesus gives the bread a new meaning.

It points to His own body, given for us.

This was the beginning of what Christians call **the Lord's Supper**, **Communion**, or **the Eucharist.**

How Do Christians Understand “This Is My Body”?

Christians have understood these words in different ways.

Some believe the bread truly becomes the body of Christ.

Some believe Christ is truly present in, with, and under the bread, while it remains bread.

Some believe Christ is spiritually present to believers as they eat in faith.

Some believe the bread is a symbol and memorial that helps us remember His sacrifice.

All Christians agree on this:

Jesus gave His body for us, and He commanded His people to remember Him in this meal.

Cross References

Exodus 12:8

> That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast.

1 Corinthians 11:24

> And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you. Do this in memory of Me.”

Luke 22:19

> And He took bread, gave thanks, and broke it. He gave it to them, saying, “This is My body given for you. Do this in memory of Me.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus gave His body so that we could receive life.

XXVII. DRINK FROM IT, ALL OF YOU

Matthew 26:27 — He Took a Cup

“Then He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you.’”

Then He took a cup.

During the Passover meal, several cups of wine were shared.

And when He had given thanks.

Again, Jesus gave thanks.

The Greek word for giving thanks is the source of the word **Eucharist.**

He gave it to them.

Drink from it, all of you.

Jesus offered the cup to every disciple.

Even to Peter, who would deny Him.

Even to the others, who would run away.

What He was about to give was for all who would come to Him.

Cross References

Exodus 24:8

> Then Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you according to all these words.”

1 Corinthians 11:25

> In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, in memory of Me.”

Luke 22:20

> In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus offers His grace to all His followers, even those who will fail Him.

XXVIII. THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

Matthew 26:28 — For the Forgiveness of Sins

“This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

This is My blood of the covenant.

A **covenant** is a solemn agreement or promise between God and His people.

At Mount Sinai, Moses sprinkled the blood of sacrifices on the people to seal God's covenant with Israel.

Now Jesus says His own blood seals a covenant.

Jeremiah had promised a **new covenant**, when God would write His law on people's hearts and remember their sins no more.

Jesus was bringing that new covenant.

Which is poured out.

His blood would be poured out on the cross.

For many.

Isaiah 53 said that the Servant of the LORD would bear the sin of many.

For the forgiveness of sins.

This is why Jesus died.

Not as a victim of bad men only.

But as the sacrifice for our sins.

Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

Jesus' blood is enough to wash away every sin.

Cross References

Hebrews 9:22

> In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be made clean with blood. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

Jeremiah 31:31

> “The days are coming,” says the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.”

Isaiah 53:12

> He gave up His life and died, and He was counted among the sinners. He carried the sin of many and prayed for those who did wrong.

Spiritual Principle

The blood of Jesus brings forgiveness and a new relationship with God.

Key Truth

The cup of the Lord's Supper tells us that our sins can be completely forgiven.

XXIX. NEW IN MY FATHER'S KINGDOM

Matthew 26:29 — The Fruit of the Vine

“I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine again until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.”

I will not drink from this fruit of the vine again.

This was Jesus' last meal before His death.

Until that day.

Jesus looks beyond the cross.

When I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.

This is a promise.

Jesus will share a meal with His people again.

In the kingdom of God.

At the great wedding supper of the Lamb.

The Lord's Supper looks back to the cross.

But it also looks forward to the feast to come.

Paul wrote that whenever we eat the bread and drink the cup, we proclaim the Lord's death **until He comes.**

Cross References

Luke 22:18

> For I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.

Mark 14:25

> Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

Revelation 19:9

> Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who have been invited to the wedding meal of the Lamb!”

Spiritual Principle

The Lord's Supper looks back to the cross and forward to the kingdom.

XXX. THEY SANG A HYMN

Matthew 26:30 — To the Mount of Olives

“When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”

When they had sung a hymn.

At the end of the Passover meal, Jewish families sang psalms of praise, often Psalms 115 to 118.

These psalms are part of what is called **the Hallel**, meaning **praise.**

Psalm 118 says, **“Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; His love endures forever.”**

It also says, **“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”**

Imagine Jesus singing these words, knowing He was about to be rejected and crucified.

They went out to the Mount of Olives.

They walked out of the city in the dark, across the Kidron Valley, to the hill east of Jerusalem.

Jesus went toward the place of His arrest — singing.

Cross References

Mark 14:26

> When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Psalm 118:1

> Give thanks to the LORD, because He is good. His faithful love lasts forever.

Zechariah 14:4

> On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus faced His suffering with worship on His lips.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When the darkest hour comes, sing — because God is still good.

XXXI. STRIKE THE SHEPHERD

Matthew 26:31 — You Will All Fall Away

“Then Jesus told them, ‘This very night you will all fall away on account of Me, for it is written: “I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”’”

This very night.

Not someday.

Tonight.

You will all fall away on account of Me.

Fall away means to stumble.

To be tripped up.

To lose courage.

Not just Judas.

All of them.

For it is written.

Jesus quotes Zechariah 13:7.

I will strike the Shepherd.

God Himself would allow the Shepherd to be struck.

Jesus' death was part of God's plan.

And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.

When the Shepherd was arrested, His sheep would run away in fear.

Cross References

Zechariah 13:7

> “Wake up, sword, against My Shepherd, against the man who is close to Me!” says the LORD who commands armies. “Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”

Mark 14:27

> Jesus told them, “You will all fall away, for it is written: ‘I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’”

John 16:32

> A time is coming, and in fact has come, when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave Me all alone. Yet I am not alone, because My Father is with Me.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows our weakness before we fail.

XXXII. I WILL GO AHEAD OF YOU

Matthew 26:32 — After I Have Risen

“But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

But.

Right after the bad news, Jesus gives good news.

After I have risen.

Jesus was certain of His resurrection.

I will go ahead of you into Galilee.

Like a shepherd who goes ahead of his sheep.

They would scatter.

But He would gather them again.

Their failure would not be the end of the story.

Jesus was already planning to meet them after they failed.

Cross References

Mark 14:28

> But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.

Matthew 28:7

> Then go quickly and tell His followers: “He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him.”

Matthew 28:16

> Then the eleven followers went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus plans our restoration even before we fall.

Key Truth

Our failure is never bigger than His faithfulness.

XXXIII. "I NEVER WILL"

Matthew 26:33 — Peter's Boast

“Peter replied, ‘Even if all fall away on account of You, I never will.’”

Peter replied.

Peter loved Jesus.

He meant what he said.

Even if all fall away on account of You.

Peter compared himself with the others.

He thought he was stronger than they were.

I never will.

Peter trusted in his own strength.

He did not believe Jesus' warning.

Pride says, **“I could never do that.”**

Humility says, **“Lord, keep me, because I am weak.”**

Cross References

Mark 14:29

> Peter said, “Even if all fall away, I will not.”

Luke 22:33

> But he replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with You to prison and to death.”

John 13:37

> Peter asked, “Lord, why can't I follow You now? I will give my life for You.”

Spiritual Principle

Self-confidence is dangerous when it ignores God's warning.

XXXIV. BEFORE THE ROOSTER CROWS

Matthew 26:34 — Three Times

“Jesus answered, ‘Truly I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times.’”

Truly I tell you.

Jesus answers Peter's boast with a solemn warning.

This very night.

Within hours.

Before the rooster crows.

Roosters often crowed in the early morning hours, before dawn.

You will disown Me three times.

Disown means to deny knowing someone.

Peter would not just stumble once.

He would deny Jesus three times.

Jesus knew every detail.

And still He loved Peter.

Cross References

Mark 14:30

> “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “today — yes, tonight — before the rooster crows twice, you yourself will disown Me three times.”

Luke 22:34

> Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know Me.”

John 13:38

> Then Jesus answered, “Will you really give your life for Me? Truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows the worst about us and loves us still.

XXXV. "EVEN IF I HAVE TO DIE"

Matthew 26:35 — All the Others Said the Same

“But Peter declared, ‘Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You.’ And all the other disciples said the same.”

But Peter declared.

Peter argued with Jesus.

Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You.

Peter was sincere.

He truly thought he would die for Jesus.

And one day, he would.

But not yet.

Not in his own strength.

And all the other disciples said the same.

They all promised loyalty.

They all failed that same night.

Our good intentions are not enough.

We need God's strength.

Cross References

Mark 14:31

> But Peter said even more strongly, “Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You.” And all the others said the same.

John 11:16

> Then Thomas, also called Didymus, said to the rest of the followers, “Let us also go, so that we may die with Him.”

Proverbs 28:26

> Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe.

Spiritual Principle

Good intentions are not enough; we need God's strength.

XXXVI. GETHSEMANE

Matthew 26:36 — Sit Here While I Pray

“Then Jesus went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to them, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’”

Then Jesus went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane.

Gethsemane means **oil press.**

It was a garden of olive trees on the Mount of Olives.

John tells us Jesus often went there with His disciples.

That is how Judas knew where to find Him.

Olives were crushed in an oil press to make oil.

In this place, Jesus would be pressed down with sorrow.

Sit here while I go over there and pray.

In His hour of greatest need, Jesus turned to prayer.

Cross References

Mark 14:32

> They went to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus said to His followers, “Sit here while I pray.”

Luke 22:40

> When He reached the place, He said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.”

John 18:1

> When He had finished praying, Jesus left with His followers and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and He and His followers went into it.

Spiritual Principle

In the hour of greatest pressure, go to prayer.

XXXVII. DEEPLY TROUBLED

Matthew 26:37 — Peter, James, and John

“He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with Him, and He began to be deeply troubled and sorrowful.”

He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee.

The sons of Zebedee were James and John.

These three had seen Jesus' glory on the mountain of transfiguration.

Now they would see His agony in the garden.

And He began to be deeply troubled and sorrowful.

Jesus was fully God.

But He was also fully human.

He felt real sorrow.

Real distress.

Real anguish.

He was not pretending.

He knew what was coming — the cross, and bearing the sins of the world.

Cross References

Mark 14:33

> He took Peter, James, and John along with Him, and He began to be deeply troubled and upset.

Matthew 17:1

> After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John the brother of James with Him. He led them up a high mountain by themselves.

John 12:27

> Now My soul is troubled. What shall I say? “Father, save Me from this hour”? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows what deep sorrow feels like.

XXXVIII. OVERWHELMED WITH SORROW

Matthew 26:38 — Keep Watch with Me

“He said to them, ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with Me.’”

My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow.

Jesus opened His heart to His friends.

He did not hide His pain.

To the point of death.

The sorrow was so heavy it felt like it could kill Him.

Stay here and keep watch with Me.

Jesus wanted His friends near Him.

He asked them to stay awake and pray.

Even the Son of God wanted the support of His friends in His darkest hour.

It is not weakness to ask others to pray with us.

Cross References

Mark 14:34

> “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” He said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”

Psalm 42:5

> Why, my soul, are you so sad? Why are you so upset inside me? Put your hope in God, because I will praise Him again — my Savior and my God.

Jonah 4:9

> But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?” “It is,” he said. “And I'm so angry I wish I were dead.”

Spiritual Principle

It is right to share our burdens and ask others to pray with us.

XXXIX. NOT AS I WILL

Matthew 26:39 — Let This Cup Be Taken from Me

“Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.’”

Going a little farther.

Jesus went a short distance from them.

He fell with His face to the ground.

The posture of deep humility and great distress.

My Father.

Even in agony, Jesus prayed to God as His Father.

Mark tells us He said **“Abba”** — a warm, close word for father.

If it is possible, let this cup be taken from Me.

In the Old Testament, **the cup** often pictured God's anger against sin.

Jesus was about to drink that cup.

He would take the judgment our sins deserved.

He shrank from it in horror.

But He did not run from it.

Yet not as I will, but as You will.

This is the greatest prayer of surrender ever prayed.

Jesus wanted what the Father wanted.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam said **“My will.”**

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said **“Your will.”**

Cross References

Mark 14:36

> “Abba, Father,” He said, “everything is possible for You. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I want, but what You want.”

Luke 22:42

> “Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me. Yet not My will, but Yours be done.”

John 5:30

> By Myself I can do nothing. I judge only as I hear, and My judgment is fair, because I do not try to please Myself but the One who sent Me.

Spiritual Principle

True prayer ends with surrender: not my will, but Yours.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

In one garden, Adam chose his own will; in another garden, Jesus chose the Father's will.

XL. ONE HOUR

Matthew 26:40 — Found Them Sleeping

“Then He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. ‘Couldn't you men keep watch with Me for one hour?’ He asked Peter.”

Then He returned to His disciples.

Jesus came back for comfort and support.

And found them sleeping.

They were tired.

It was late.

They had eaten a big meal.

Luke tells us they were **exhausted from sorrow.**

Couldn't you men keep watch with Me for one hour?

Jesus spoke to Peter.

The same Peter who had said, **“I will never disown You.”**

He could not even stay awake for one hour.

Cross References

Mark 14:37

> Then He returned to His followers and found them sleeping. “Simon,” He said to Peter, “are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour?”

Luke 22:45

> When He rose from prayer and went back to the followers, He found them asleep, worn out from sadness.

1 Peter 5:8

> Be alert and think clearly. Your enemy the devil walks around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to eat.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual strength is lost when we fall asleep in prayer.

XLI. WATCH AND PRAY

Matthew 26:41 — The Spirit Is Willing

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Watch and pray.

These two go together.

Watch — be alert to danger.

Pray — depend on God's strength.

So that you will not fall into temptation.

Temptation was coming that very night.

Prayer was their protection.

Peter did not pray.

And Peter fell.

The spirit is willing.

In their hearts, the disciples wanted to be faithful.

But the flesh is weak.

Their human strength was not enough.

This is true of every believer.

We want to do right.

But without God's help, we fail.

That is why we must pray.

Cross References

Mark 14:38

> Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.

Galatians 5:17

> For the flesh wants what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit wants what is against the flesh. They fight against each other, so you do not do what you want.

Romans 7:18

> I know that nothing good lives in me — that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is good, but I cannot do it.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer is the believer's strength against temptation.

Key Truth

Prayerlessness leads to weakness; prayer leads to victory.

XLII. YOUR WILL BE DONE

Matthew 26:42 — The Second Prayer

“He went away a second time and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may Your will be done.’”

He went away a second time and prayed.

Jesus kept praying.

My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it.

The first prayer said, **“If it is possible.”**

Now Jesus seems to accept that there is no other way.

If people are to be saved, He must drink the cup.

May Your will be done.

These are the same words Jesus taught His disciples in the Lord's Prayer.

Now He prays them in agony.

He is not only teaching surrender.

He is living it.

Cross References

Mark 14:39

> Once more He went away and prayed the same thing.

Luke 22:43

> An angel from heaven appeared to Him and gave Him strength.

Hebrews 5:7

> While Jesus lived on earth, He offered up prayers and requests with loud cries and tears to the One who could save Him from death. He was heard because of His reverent submission.

A Note on Luke 22:43–44

Luke 22:43–44, which tells of the angel who strengthened Jesus and His sweat like drops of blood, is not found in some of the early manuscripts of Luke. It is found in many others, and many Bibles include it with a note.

Spiritual Principle

Surrender to God's will may need to be prayed again and again.

XLIII. THEIR EYES WERE HEAVY

Matthew 26:43 — Sleeping Again

“When He came back, He again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy.”

When He came back, He again found them sleeping.

For the second time, they failed.

Because their eyes were heavy.

Matthew gives a gentle explanation.

They were truly tired.

Mark adds that **they did not know what to say to Him.**

They were ashamed.

How human they were.

And how patient Jesus was with them.

Cross References

Mark 14:40

> When He came back, He again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to Him.

Luke 9:32

> Peter and his companions were very sleepy. But when they became fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him.

Romans 13:11

> Do this because you know what time it is. It is time to wake up from your sleep, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is patient with our weakness, but He calls us to wake up.

XLIV. THE THIRD TIME

Matthew 26:44 — Saying the Same Thing

“So He left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.”

So He left them.

Jesus did not wake them again.

And went away once more and prayed the third time.

Three times Jesus prayed.

Paul also prayed three times about his thorn in the flesh.

Saying the same thing.

Jesus repeated His prayer.

This is not the empty repetition Jesus warned against.

It is persistent, heartfelt prayer from a heart in great need.

By the end of the third prayer, Jesus was ready.

The struggle was over.

He rose with peace and strength to face the cross.

Cross References

Mark 14:41

> Returning the third time, He said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come.”

2 Corinthians 12:8

> Three times I begged the Lord to take it away from me.

Luke 22:44

> And being in anguish, He prayed even harder, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

Spiritual Principle

Keep praying until you are ready to obey.

XLV. THE HOUR HAS COME

Matthew 26:45 — Into the Hands of Sinners

“Then He returned to the disciples and said, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.’”

Are you still sleeping and resting?

The time for watching was over.

They had missed their chance to pray.

Look, the hour has come.

Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus spoke of **“My hour.”**

Now it had arrived.

And the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.

The sinless One was handed over to sinful men.

This was the purpose for which He came.

Cross References

Mark 14:42

Get up! Let us go! Here comes My betrayer!

John 12:23

Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”

Luke 22:53

Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on Me. But this is your hour — when darkness rules.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus faced His hour with courage, because He had prayed.

XLVI. RISE, LET US GO

Matthew 26:46 — Here Comes My Betrayer

“Rise, let us go! Here comes My betrayer!”

Rise, let us go!

Jesus did not run away.

He did not hide.

He went out to meet His enemies.

Here comes My betrayer!

Jesus could see the torches.

He knew Judas was coming.

John tells us Jesus knew **everything that was going to happen to Him.**

And He went forward anyway.

The prayer in the garden gave Him strength to face the cross.

Cross References

John 18:2

Judas, who betrayed Him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with His followers.

John 18:4

> Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to Him. So He went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?”

John 14:31

> But the world must learn that I love the Father and do exactly what My Father has commanded Me. Come now; let us leave.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus went willingly to the cross.

Key Truth

No one took Jesus' life from Him; He laid it down.

XLVII. JUDAS ARRIVES

Matthew 26:47 — With Swords and Clubs

“While He was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people.”

While He was still speaking.

Everything happened just as Jesus said.

Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived.

Matthew again reminds us: **one of the Twelve.**

The betrayer was a friend.

With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs.

John tells us it included Roman soldiers and temple guards.

They came as if to capture a dangerous criminal.

Sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

The religious leaders were behind the arrest.

They came with weapons to arrest the Prince of Peace.

Cross References

Mark 14:43

> Just as He was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

Luke 22:47

> While He was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He came near to Jesus to kiss Him.

John 18:3

> So Judas came to the garden, guiding a group of soldiers and some officials from the leading priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons.

Spiritual Principle

The forces of darkness come with weapons, but Jesus comes with surrender to God.

XLVIII. THE SIGNAL

Matthew 26:48 — The One I Kiss

“Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: ‘The one I kiss is the man; arrest Him.’”

Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them.

It was dark.

The soldiers might not know which man was Jesus.

The one I kiss is the man.

A kiss was a common greeting between a student and his teacher.

It was a sign of respect and love.

Judas turned a sign of love into a sign of betrayal.

Arrest Him.

Just as Joab once kissed Amasa and then killed him, Judas would kiss Jesus and hand Him over to death.

Cross References

Mark 14:44

> Now the betrayer had given them a signal: “The one I kiss is the man. Arrest Him and lead Him away under guard.”

2 Samuel 20:9

> Joab said to Amasa, “How are you, my brother?” Then Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.

Proverbs 27:6

> Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy gives many kisses.

Spiritual Principle

A false show of love is one of the cruelest forms of betrayal.

XLIX. "GREETINGS, RABBI!"

Matthew 26:49 — And Kissed Him

“Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him.”

Going at once to Jesus.

Judas did not hesitate.

Greetings, Rabbi!

Again, Judas calls Jesus **Rabbi**, not **Lord.**

And kissed Him.

The Greek word suggests a warm or repeated kiss.

It was an act of open hypocrisy.

Luke records Jesus' response: **“Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”**

Cross References

Mark 14:45

> Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed Him.

Luke 22:48

> But Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

Psalm 55:21

> His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart. His words are softer than oil, yet they are drawn swords.

Spiritual Principle

Outward affection means nothing if the heart is false.

L. "FRIEND, DO WHAT YOU CAME FOR"

Matthew 26:50 — They Seized Jesus

“Jesus replied, ‘Friend, do what you came for.’ Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus, and arrested Him.”

Friend.

Even now, Jesus called Judas **friend.**

What grace!

Jesus did not curse him.

He did not strike him.

He gave him one last word of kindness.

Do what you came for.

Jesus was in control.

He was not a helpless victim.

He allowed what was happening.

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus, and arrested Him.

The One who calmed storms and raised the dead let Himself be tied up like a criminal.

Cross References

Mark 14:46

> The men seized Jesus and arrested Him.

John 18:12

> Then the soldiers, their commander, and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They tied Him up.

Luke 22:52

> Then Jesus said to the leading priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders who had come for Him, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus showed grace even to the one who betrayed Him.

LI. A SWORD IS DRAWN

Matthew 26:51 — The Servant's Ear

“With that, one of Jesus' companions drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.”

One of Jesus' companions drew his sword.

John tells us it was Peter.

Peter was trying to keep his promise to fight for Jesus.

And struck the servant of the high priest.

John tells us the servant's name was Malchus.

Cutting off his ear.

Peter may have been aiming for his head.

Luke, the doctor, tells us that Jesus touched the man's ear and healed him.

Even while being arrested, Jesus was healing His enemies.

Cross References

Mark 14:47

> Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

John 18:10

> Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

Luke 22:51

> But Jesus answered, “No more of this!” And He touched the man's ear and healed him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' kingdom does not advance by the sword.

LII. PUT YOUR SWORD BACK

Matthew 26:52 — All Who Draw the Sword

“‘Put your sword back in its place,’ Jesus said to him, ‘for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.’”

Put your sword back in its place.

Jesus stopped Peter.

Peter wanted to fight.

Jesus wanted to obey the Father.

For all who draw the sword will die by the sword.

Violence leads to more violence.

Jesus' kingdom would not be built by force.

It would be built by His death and resurrection.

Christians have discussed how this verse applies to government, police, self-defense, and war.

But in this moment, Jesus' meaning was clear:

His disciples must not use violence to defend Him or His mission.

Cross References

John 18:11

> Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?”

Genesis 9:6

> Whoever sheds human blood, by humans his blood will be shed, because God made human beings in His own image.

Revelation 13:10

> If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness from God's people.

Spiritual Principle

God's work is not done by human force but by faithful obedience.

LIII. TWELVE LEGIONS OF ANGELS

Matthew 26:53 — I Could Call on My Father

“Do you think I cannot call on My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”

Do you think I cannot call on My Father?

Jesus did not need Peter's sword.

More than twelve legions of angels.

A Roman legion had about six thousand soldiers.

Twelve legions would be more than seventy thousand angels.

In the Old Testament, one angel destroyed a huge Assyrian army in a single night.

Jesus had all the power of heaven available to Him.

He was not arrested because He was weak.

He was arrested because He chose to be.

Cross References

2 Kings 6:17

> And Elisha prayed, “LORD, open his eyes so he may see.” Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Psalm 91:11

> For He will command His angels to protect you wherever you go.

Matthew 4:11

> Then the devil left Him, and angels came and took care of Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus had all power, yet He chose to lay down His life.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

It was not the soldiers who held Jesus, but His love for us and His obedience to the Father.

LIV. THE SCRIPTURES MUST BE FULFILLED

Matthew 26:54 — It Must Happen This Way

“But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?”

But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled?

If Jesus called the angels, He would not go to the cross.

And if He did not go to the cross, the Scriptures would not be fulfilled.

That say it must happen this way.

Isaiah said the Servant would be led like a lamb to the slaughter.

He would be counted among the lawbreakers.

Jesus chose to fulfill God's Word, even though it meant suffering.

Cross References

Luke 22:37

> It is written: “He was counted among the lawbreakers.” And I tell you that this must be fulfilled in Me. Yes, what is written about Me is coming true.

Isaiah 53:7

> He was treated badly and made to suffer, but He did not open His mouth. He was led like a lamb to be killed. Like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, He did not open His mouth.

John 19:28

> Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus valued fulfilling God's Word more than escaping suffering.

LV. AM I LEADING A REBELLION?

Matthew 26:55 — Every Day in the Temple

“In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, ‘Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture Me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest Me.’”

Am I leading a rebellion?

They treated Him like a dangerous outlaw.

But He was a peaceful teacher.

That you have come out with swords and clubs to capture Me?

Jesus pointed out how foolish and cowardly this was.

Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching.

He had taught openly, in public.

And you did not arrest Me.

They were afraid of the crowds.

So they came at night, in secret.

Their actions showed they knew they were doing wrong.

Cross References

Mark 14:48

> “Am I leading a rebellion,” said Jesus, “that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture Me?”

Mark 14:49

> Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

John 18:20

> “I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus replied. “I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret.”

Spiritual Principle

Truth works in the light; evil hides in the dark.

LVI. ALL THE DISCIPLES FLED

Matthew 26:56 — The Prophets Fulfilled

“But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted Him and fled.

But this has all taken place.

Nothing was out of control.

That the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.

Every detail was part of God's plan.

Then all the disciples deserted Him and fled.

Just as Jesus said.

All of them.

Peter, who said he would die with Jesus.

James and John, who said they could drink His cup.

They all ran away.

I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.

Jesus was left alone.

He faced His enemies without His friends.

He went to the cross alone, so that we would never have to be alone.

Cross References

Mark 14:50

> Then everyone deserted Him and ran away.

Zechariah 13:7

> Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. I will turn My hand against the little ones.

John 16:32

> A time is coming, and in fact has come, when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave Me all alone. Yet I am not alone, because My Father is with Me.

Spiritual Principle

When everyone else fails, Jesus remains faithful.

Key Truth

Jesus was left alone so that we would never be left alone.

LVII. BEFORE CAIAPHAS

Matthew 26:57 — Taken to the High Priest

“Those who had arrested Jesus took Him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled.”

Those who had arrested Jesus took Him to Caiaphas the high priest.

John tells us they first took Jesus to Annas, Caiaphas' father-in-law.

Then He was sent to Caiaphas.

Where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled.

The leaders were waiting.

It was the middle of the night.

This hearing was hurried and held in the dark.

Its outcome had been decided before it began.

Cross References

Mark 14:53

> They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of the law came together.

John 18:24

> Then Annas sent Him, still tied up, to Caiaphas the high priest.

Psalm 27:12

> Do not hand me over to my enemies, because false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence.

Spiritual Principle

The Judge of all the earth allowed Himself to be judged unfairly.

LVIII. PETER FOLLOWED AT A DISTANCE

Matthew 26:58 — In the High Priest's Courtyard

“But Peter followed Him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.”

But Peter followed Him.

Peter had run away.

But he came back.

He still loved Jesus.

At a distance.

Close enough to see.

Far enough to stay safe.

Right up to the courtyard of the high priest.

John tells us another disciple who knew the high priest helped Peter get in.

He entered and sat down with the guards.

Peter sat with the very people who had arrested Jesus.

He warmed himself at their fire.

To see the outcome.

Following Jesus at a distance is dangerous.

It puts us in the company of those who do not love Him.

Cross References

Mark 14:54

> Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

Luke 22:55

> When some there had started a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them.

John 18:16

> But Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other follower, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there, and brought Peter in.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus at a distance leads to danger.

LIX. LOOKING FOR FALSE EVIDENCE

Matthew 26:59 — The Whole Sanhedrin

“The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so they could put Him to death.”

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin.

The Sanhedrin was the highest Jewish council.

It was made up of about seventy members and the high priest.

It was supposed to protect justice.

Were looking for false evidence against Jesus.

They were not looking for the truth.

They had already decided what they wanted.

So they could put Him to death.

The trial was not about whether Jesus was guilty.

It was about finding a reason to kill Him.

Cross References

Mark 14:55

> The leading priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put Him to death, but they did not find any.

Psalm 37:32

> The wicked watch for the righteous and look for a way to kill them.

Psalm 35:11

> Cruel witnesses come forward. They question me about things I know nothing about.

Spiritual Principle

When the heart has already decided against Jesus, it will look for any excuse.

LX. MANY FALSE WITNESSES

Matthew 26:60 — But They Found None

“But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward”

But they did not find any.

They could not find any real evidence.

Jesus was innocent.

Though many false witnesses came forward.

Many people were willing to lie.

But Mark tells us their stories did not agree.

Finally two came forward.

The law of Moses required at least two witnesses to agree before a person could be condemned.

Even with all their efforts, they could barely meet this requirement.

Cross References

Mark 14:57

> Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against Him.

Deuteronomy 19:15

> One witness is not enough to convict anyone of a crime or offense. A matter must be proven by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Proverbs 19:5

> A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever tells lies will not escape.

Spiritual Principle

Lies cannot prove the guilt of the innocent.

LXI. DESTROY THE TEMPLE

Matthew 26:61 — Rebuild It in Three Days

“and declared, ‘This man said, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.”’”

This man said.

They did not even use His name.

I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.

Jesus had said something like this at the beginning of His ministry.

But He said, **“Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”**

He was not talking about the building.

John tells us He was talking about **His body.**

The witnesses twisted His words.

Ironically, their charge pointed to the truth.

They would destroy His body.

And in three days He would rise again.

Cross References

John 2:19

> Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

Mark 14:58

> We heard Him say, “I will destroy this temple made with human hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.”

Acts 6:14

> For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.

Spiritual Principle

People may twist Jesus' words, but God will fulfill them.

LXII. "ARE YOU NOT GOING TO ANSWER?"

Matthew 26:62 — The High Priest Stood Up

“Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, ‘Are You not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against You?’”

Then the high priest stood up.

Caiaphas was frustrated.

The case was falling apart.

Are You not going to answer?

He wanted Jesus to defend Himself.

Perhaps He would say something they could use.

What is this testimony?

But the testimony was false and confused.

It did not deserve an answer.

Cross References

Mark 14:60

> Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are You not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against You?”

Isaiah 53:7

> He was treated badly and made to suffer, but He did not open His mouth. He was led like a lamb to be killed. Like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, He did not open His mouth.

John 19:9

> He went back inside the palace. “Where do You come from?” he asked Jesus. But Jesus gave him no answer.

Spiritual Principle

Sometimes silence is the strongest answer to false accusations.

LXIII. JESUS REMAINED SILENT

Matthew 26:63 — Under Oath by the Living God

“But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to Him, ‘I charge You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Messiah, the Son of God.’”

But Jesus remained silent.

He did not defend Himself against lies.

Just as Isaiah said, He was like a lamb before its shearers.

I charge You under oath by the living God.

Caiaphas put Jesus under a solemn oath.

Now Jesus was required to answer.

Tell us if You are the Messiah, the Son of God.

This was the real question.

Not the temple.

Not the witnesses.

Who is Jesus?

This is still the most important question in the world.

Cross References

Psalm 39:9

> I was silent. I would not open my mouth, because You are the One who has done this.

Mark 14:61

> But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked Him, “Are You the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

Psalm 38:13

> I am like a deaf man who cannot hear, like a man who cannot speak and does not open his mouth.

Spiritual Principle

The most important question anyone can answer is, “Who is Jesus?”

LXIV. AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MIGHTY ONE

Matthew 26:64 — Coming on the Clouds

“‘You have said so,’ Jesus replied. ‘But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.’”

You have said so.

This means **yes.**

Mark records Jesus' answer as **“I am.”**

Jesus openly declared that He is the Messiah, the Son of God.

But I say to all of you.

Now Jesus speaks with authority.

The prisoner becomes the Judge.

From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One.

Jesus combines two Old Testament passages.

Psalm 110 speaks of the Lord seated at God's right hand.

Daniel 7 speaks of one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven to receive an everlasting kingdom.

And coming on the clouds of heaven.

Jesus was saying:

“Today you are judging Me. But one day I will judge you.”

Cross References

Daniel 7:13

> In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was One like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence.

Psalm 110:1

> The LORD said to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

Mark 14:62

> “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Spiritual Principle

The One who stood on trial will one day sit as Judge.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus was silent about the lies, but He spoke clearly about who He is.

LXV. "HE HAS SPOKEN BLASPHEMY!"

Matthew 26:65 — The High Priest Tore His Clothes

“Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy.’”

Then the high priest tore his clothes.

Tearing clothes was a sign of grief or horror.

The high priest did this to show that he had heard something terrible.

He has spoken blasphemy!

Blasphemy means speaking against God or claiming for yourself what belongs only to God.

Caiaphas understood that Jesus was claiming to share God's throne and power.

If Jesus were not the Son of God, it would be blasphemy.

But Jesus was telling the truth.

Why do we need any more witnesses?

They no longer needed false witnesses.

They would condemn Jesus for telling the truth about Himself.

Cross References

Leviticus 21:10

> The high priest, the one among his brothers who has had the anointing oil poured on his head, must not let his hair hang loose or tear his clothes.

Mark 14:63

> The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked.

John 19:7

> The Jewish leaders insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law He must die, because He claimed to be the Son of God.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was condemned for telling the truth about who He is.

LXVI. WORTHY OF DEATH

Matthew 26:66 — What Do You Think?

“What do you think?” “He is worthy of death,” they answered.

What do you think?

Caiaphas asked the council for their verdict.

He is worthy of death.

They condemned the only perfectly innocent man who ever lived.

The law of Moses said that whoever blasphemed the name of the LORD must be put to death.

They applied this law to the very One who gave the law.

Like the false trial of Naboth, this was injustice dressed up as justice.

But in God's plan, the Innocent One was condemned so that the guilty could go free.

Cross References

Leviticus 24:16

> Anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD must be put to death. The whole community must stone that person.

1 Kings 21:13

> Then two worthless men came and sat facing Naboth. They brought charges against him in front of the people, saying, “Naboth has cursed both God and the king.” So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death.

Mark 14:64

> “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?” They all condemned Him as worthy of death.

Spiritual Principle

The Innocent One was condemned so that the guilty could be set free.

LXVII. SPIT AND STRUCK

Matthew 26:67 — They Struck Him with Their Fists

“Then they spit in His face and struck Him with their fists. Others slapped Him”

Then they spit in His face.

In that culture, spitting in someone's face was one of the worst insults.

And struck Him with their fists.

Others slapped Him.

These were respected religious leaders and their servants.

And they were beating a prisoner who could not fight back.

Isaiah had written:

“I let them beat My back... I did not turn My face away when they mocked Me and spit on Me.”

Jesus endured all of it.

For us.

Cross References

Isaiah 50:6

> I let them beat My back. I let them pull out the hair of My beard. I did not turn My face away when they mocked Me and spit on Me.

Mark 14:65

> Then some began to spit at Him. They blindfolded Him, struck Him with their fists, and said, “Prophesy!” And the guards took Him and beat Him.

Job 30:10

> They hate me and stay far away from me. They do not hold back from spitting in my face.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus accepted shame so that we could receive honor.

LXVIII. "WHO HIT YOU?"

Matthew 26:68 — Prophesy to Us

“and said, ‘Prophesy to us, Messiah. Who hit You?’”

Prophesy to us, Messiah.

They mocked Him.

They called Him **Messiah** as an insult.

Who hit You?

Luke and Mark tell us they blindfolded Him.

Then they hit Him and asked Him to guess who did it.

It was a cruel game.

But here is the irony:

Jesus had just prophesied three things — that all would fall away, that Peter would deny Him, and that He would be handed over.

At that very moment, out in the courtyard, His prophecy about Peter was coming true.

Cross References

Luke 22:64

> They blindfolded Him and demanded, “Prophesy! Who hit You?”

Micah 5:1

> They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod.

Job 16:10

> People open their mouths to make fun of me. They strike my cheek to shame me. They join together against me.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus endured mocking in silence, trusting His Father.

LXIX. A SERVANT GIRL

Matthew 26:69 — You Were with Jesus

“Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. ‘You also were with Jesus of Galilee,’ she said.”

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard.

While Jesus was being questioned inside, Peter was being questioned outside.

And a servant girl came to him.

Not a soldier.

Not a priest.

Just a servant girl.

She had no power over him.

You also were with Jesus of Galilee.

It was a simple statement.

It was even true.

It was the perfect opportunity for Peter to say, **“Yes, I am His follower.”**

Cross References

Mark 14:66

> While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by.

Luke 22:56

> A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, “This man was with Him.”

John 18:17

> “You aren't one of this man's followers too, are you?” asked the girl at the door. He replied, “I am not.”

Spiritual Principle

The greatest tests of faith often come in small moments.

LXX. THE FIRST DENIAL

Matthew 26:70 — I Don't Know What You're Talking About

“But he denied it before them all. ‘I don't know what you're talking about,’ he said.”

But he denied it before them all.

In front of everyone.

I don't know what you're talking about.

Peter pretended not to understand.

He acted confused.

This was the same Peter who said, **“Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You.”**

Only a few hours later, he could not admit he knew Jesus to a servant girl.

Cross References

Mark 14:68

> But he denied it. “I don't know or understand what you're talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway.

Luke 22:57

> But he denied it. “Woman, I don't know Him,” he said.

John 13:38

> Then Jesus answered, “Will you really give your life for Me? Truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times!”

Spiritual Principle

Fear can make us deny what we love most.

LXXI. AT THE GATEWAY

Matthew 26:71 — Another Servant Girl

“Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, ‘This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.’”

Then he went out to the gateway.

Peter moved away from the fire.

He tried to get away from attention.

Where another servant girl saw him.

He could not escape.

And said to the people there.

This time she spoke to the crowd.

This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.

Now the pressure grew.

More people were listening.

Cross References

Mark 14:69

> When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.”

Luke 22:58

> A little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” “Man, I am not!” Peter replied.

John 18:25

> Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, “You aren't one of His followers too, are you?” He denied it, saying, “I am not.”

Spiritual Principle

Running from one test does not keep the next one from coming.

LXXII. THE SECOND DENIAL

Matthew 26:72 — With an Oath

“He denied it again, with an oath: ‘I don't know the man!’”

He denied it again.

The second denial.

With an oath.

This time Peter swore an oath.

He used God's name to support a lie.

Jesus had taught, **“Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’”**

I don't know the man!

Peter would not even say Jesus' name.

The man.

The One he had called **“the Messiah, the Son of the living God”** was now just **“the man.”**

Sin often grows worse when we do not stop it.

Cross References

Mark 14:70

> Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”

John 18:26

> One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, “Didn't I see you with Him in the garden?”

1 Timothy 1:13

> Even though I was once a man who spoke against God, persecuted His people, and was violent, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.

Spiritual Principle

One sin left unchecked often leads to a greater one.

LXXIII. "YOUR ACCENT GIVES YOU AWAY"

Matthew 26:73 — Surely You Are One of Them

“After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, ‘Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.’”

After a little while.

Luke tells us it was about an hour later.

Those standing there went up to Peter.

Now a group surrounded him.

Surely you are one of them.

Your accent gives you away.

People from Galilee spoke with a different accent than people in Jerusalem.

In the days of the judges, the men of Gilead identified their enemies by how they said the word **“Shibboleth.”**

Peter's words showed where he came from.

He could hide his loyalty, but not his voice.

Cross References

Luke 22:59

> About an hour later another man insisted, “Certainly this fellow was with Him, because he is a Galilean.”

Judges 12:6

> They said, “All right, say ‘Shibboleth.’” If he said, “Sibboleth,” because he could not say the word correctly, they grabbed him and killed him at the crossings of the Jordan.

Acts 2:7

> Utterly amazed, they asked, “Aren't all these people who are speaking Galileans?”

Spiritual Principle

A true follower of Jesus cannot hide forever who he belongs to.

LXXIV. THE ROOSTER CROWED

Matthew 26:74 — The Third Denial

“Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, ‘I don't know the man!’ Immediately a rooster crowed.”

Then he began to call down curses.

Peter called down curses on himself if he was lying.

And he swore to them.

Again he took an oath.

I don't know the man!

The third denial.

It was the strongest of all.

Immediately a rooster crowed.

At that exact moment.

Just as Jesus had said.

Luke tells us that at that moment, Jesus turned and looked at Peter.

Cross References

Mark 14:71

> He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don't know this man you're talking about.”

Luke 22:60

> Peter replied, “Man, I don't know what you're talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed.

John 18:27

> Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

Spiritual Principle

God's Word always comes true, even when it exposes our failure.

LXXV. HE WEPT BITTERLY

Matthew 26:75 — Peter Remembered

“Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: ‘Before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times.’ And he went outside and wept bitterly.”

Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken.

The rooster's cry reminded him.

Jesus had told him.

Jesus had warned him.

And Peter had not listened.

Before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times.

And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Peter's heart was broken.

His tears were tears of true sorrow.

This is the difference between Peter and Judas.

Both failed Jesus terribly.

Judas was filled with regret, but did not turn back to Jesus.

Peter wept, repented, and was restored.

After the resurrection, Jesus would ask Peter three times, **“Do you love Me?”**

Three denials would be answered with three declarations of love.

And Peter would become a great leader of the church.

Peter's failure was not the end of his story.

Cross References

Luke 22:61

> The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown Me three times.”

Isaiah 22:4

> So I said, “Turn away from me. Let me weep bitterly. Do not try to comfort me.”

Psalm 51:17

> The sacrifice You want is a broken spirit. You will not reject a heart that is broken and sorry for sin, O God.

Spiritual Principle

Broken-hearted repentance opens the door to restoration.

Key Truth

Peter's tears were not the end of his story — they were the beginning of his restoration.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Failure is not final when it leads you back to Jesus.

LXXVI. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 26

1. Jesus Faced Betrayal and Suffering with Submission to the Father's Will

In the garden, Jesus prayed, **“Not as I will, but as You will.”**

He was betrayed, arrested, and condemned — and He accepted it all as the Father's plan.

Principle:

True obedience says “Your will be done,” even when it hurts.

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2. True Worship Costs Something

The woman poured out perfume worth about a year's wages.

Others called it a waste.

Jesus called it beautiful.

Principle:

Give Jesus your best, no matter what others think.

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3. The Lord's Supper Reminds Us of Christ's Body and Blood Given for Us

The bread speaks of His body.

The cup speaks of His blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

Principle:

Every time we share the Lord's Supper, we remember His sacrifice and look forward to His return.

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4. Prayer Is the Believer's Strength Against Temptation

Jesus prayed and stood firm.

The disciples slept and fell.

Principle:

Watch and pray, because the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

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5. Even When His Followers Failed, Jesus Remained Faithful

Judas betrayed Him.

The disciples fled.

Peter denied Him.

But Jesus kept going toward the cross.

Principle:

Our faithfulness may fail, but His never does.

LXXVII. TWO FAILURES — JUDAS AND PETER

Matthew 26 tells of two disciples who failed Jesus on the same night.

Judas

- He was one of the Twelve.
- He betrayed Jesus for money.
- He planned his betrayal carefully.
- He called Jesus “Rabbi,” not “Lord.”
- He betrayed Jesus with a kiss.
- In Matthew 27, he is filled with regret, but he does not turn back to Jesus.

Peter

- He was one of the Twelve.
- He denied Jesus out of fear.
- He did not plan to fail; he was overcome by weakness.
- He loved Jesus, even when he failed Him.
- He denied Jesus with oaths and curses.
- He wept bitterly, repented, and was restored.

The Difference

Both men sinned terribly.

The difference was not the size of their sin.

The difference was what they did after they sinned.

Judas turned away in despair.

Peter turned back in repentance.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The question is not whether you have failed, but where you will go after you fail.

LXXVIII. THE PASSOVER AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus gave the Lord's Supper during the Passover meal.

The two are closely connected.

The Passover Looked Back to Egypt

- A lamb was sacrificed.
- Its blood protected the people from judgment.
- God brought His people out of slavery.
- The covenant was made at Mount Sinai with the blood of sacrifices.

The Lord's Supper Looks Back to the Cross

- Jesus is the Lamb of God.
- His blood protects us from judgment.
- God brings us out of slavery to sin.
- The new covenant is made with the blood of Jesus.

The Lord's Supper Also Looks Forward

- Jesus promised to drink it new with us in His Father's kingdom.
- Every time we share it, we proclaim His death until He comes.

Key Truth

The Passover was the shadow; Jesus is the reality.

LXXIX. WHAT MATTHEW 26 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 26 reveals many truths about Jesus.

The Lamb of God

He would die at Passover as the true Passover Lamb.

The Worthy One

He received the woman's costly worship as fitting and beautiful.

The One Who Knows All Things

He knew who would betray Him, that the disciples would scatter, and that Peter would deny Him.

The Giver of the New Covenant

He gave His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins.

The Singing Savior

He sang a hymn of praise on the way to His suffering.

The Good Shepherd

He was struck so that His sheep could be gathered again.

The Man of Sorrows

He was overwhelmed with sorrow in Gethsemane.

The Obedient Son

He prayed, **“Not as I will, but as You will.”**

The Willing Sacrifice

He could have called more than twelve legions of angels, but He chose the cross.

The Gracious Friend

He called Judas **“friend”** and healed the servant's ear.

The Silent Lamb

He did not answer false charges.

The Son of God

He declared that He is the Messiah, the Son of God.

The Coming Judge

He will sit at the right hand of the Mighty One and come on the clouds of heaven.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

On the night He was betrayed, Jesus was more in control than anyone in the room.

LXXX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why is it important that Jesus died at the time of the Passover?

Because Jesus is the true Passover Lamb, whose blood saves us from judgment.

Question 2

What did the woman in Bethany do, and why did the disciples object?

She poured very expensive perfume on Jesus' head. The disciples thought it was a waste and said it could have been sold for the poor.

Question 3

How did Jesus respond to her act?

He said she had done a beautiful thing, preparing His body for burial, and that her story would be told wherever the gospel is preached.

Question 4

For how much did Judas agree to betray Jesus, and what was significant about that amount?

Thirty pieces of silver — the price paid in the law of Moses for a slave who was killed.

Question 5

How did the other disciples respond when Jesus said one of them would betray Him?

Each one asked, “Surely You don't mean me, Lord?”

Question 6

What did Jesus say about the bread and the cup?

The bread is His body. The cup is His blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Question 7

What is the new covenant?

It is God's promise, foretold by Jeremiah, to forgive sins and give His people new hearts. It was made through the blood of Jesus.

Question 8

What did Jesus predict about the disciples and Peter?

All of them would fall away that night, and Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed.

Question 9

What does Gethsemane mean, and what happened there?

It means “oil press.” There Jesus prayed in deep sorrow, asking that the cup might pass, yet surrendering to the Father's will.

Question 10

What does “the cup” represent?

It pictures the suffering of the cross and the judgment for sin that Jesus would bear for us.

Question 11

Why did the disciples fall into temptation?

They slept instead of watching and praying. Their spirit was willing, but their flesh was weak.

Question 12

Why did Jesus tell Peter to put away his sword?

Because His kingdom does not advance by violence, and He was choosing to fulfill the Scriptures by going to the cross.

Question 13

How many angels could Jesus have called?

More than twelve legions — more than seventy thousand angels.

Question 14

Why was Jesus condemned by the Sanhedrin?

Because He declared that He is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that they would see Him at the right hand of God and coming on the clouds.

Question 15

What is the difference between Peter's failure and Judas' failure?

Both failed terribly, but Peter wept, repented, and was restored, while Judas did not turn back to Jesus.

Question 16

What should Matthew 26 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 26 should cause believers to live:

- Giving Jesus their very best in worship.
- Not criticizing the devotion of others.
- Guarding against the love of money.
- Examining their own hearts first.
- Remembering Christ's sacrifice in the Lord's Supper.
- Trusting God's strength, not their own.
- Watching and praying against temptation.
- Surrendering to the Father's will.
- Refusing to use force to advance God's kingdom.
- Standing up for Jesus, even in small moments.

- Returning to Jesus quickly after they fail.

LXXXI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 26 asks several important questions.

Am I Giving Jesus My Best or My Leftovers?

Do I Criticize Others Whose Love for Jesus Seems Extravagant?

Is There Anything I Love More Than Jesus?

When I Hear God's Warnings, Do I First Ask, “Lord, Is It I?”

Do I Call Jesus “Lord” or Only “Teacher”?

Do I Remember His Body and Blood with Gratitude?

Am I Trusting in My Own Strength or God's?

Am I Watching and Praying, or Sleeping Spiritually?

Can I Pray, “Not My Will, but Yours”?

Am I Following Jesus Closely or at a Distance?

Have I Ever Denied Jesus by My Words, Actions, or Silence?

When I Fail, Do I Run from Jesus or Back to Him?

LXXXII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Not My Will, but Yours”

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed three times.

Each time, He came to the same place:

“Not as I will, but as You will.”

This prayer changed history.

Because Jesus surrendered His will, the way of salvation was opened.

In the first garden, Adam said, in effect, **“My will be done.”**

And sin entered the world.

In the second garden, Jesus said, **“Your will be done.”**

And salvation came to the world.

Every believer will face a Gethsemane.

A moment when God's will and our will seem to pull in different directions.

A cup we would rather not drink.

In that moment, we can be like the sleeping disciples.

Or we can be like Jesus.

We can pray honestly.

We can tell the Father how we feel.

We can ask Him to take the cup away.

But in the end, we can surrender:

“Not my will, but Yours.”

Principle:

The greatest victory is won not when we get what we want, but when we want what God wants.

LXXXIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 26 begins with a plot and ends with tears.

The religious leaders planned to kill Jesus in secret.

A woman poured out her love on Him in public.

Judas sold Him for thirty pieces of silver.

At the Passover table, Jesus took bread and said, **“This is My body.”**

He took the cup and said, **“This is My blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”**

Then He sang a hymn and walked into the night.

In Gethsemane, He was overwhelmed with sorrow.

He fell on His face and prayed, **“Not as I will, but as You will.”**

His friends fell asleep.

Judas came with a kiss.

Peter drew a sword.

Jesus healed the wound and gave Himself up.

And all the disciples fled.

Before the council, Jesus stood silent against lies.

But when asked who He was, He declared the truth:

He is the Messiah, the Son of God, who will sit at God's right hand and come on the clouds of heaven.

They spit on Him and beat Him.

And outside in the courtyard, Peter denied Him three times.

The rooster crowed.

Peter wept bitterly.

In this chapter, everyone fails Jesus.

But Jesus never fails.

He keeps walking toward the cross — for them, and for us.

So today:

Give Jesus your best.

Remember His body and blood.

Watch and pray.

Surrender your will to the Father.

Follow Him closely, not at a distance.

Do not be ashamed of Him.

And if you have failed, come back to Him with a broken heart.

And until He returns:

Remember His death until He comes.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for sending Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

Thank You that He went to the cross willingly, in perfect obedience to You.

Lord Jesus, we want to love You like the woman in Bethany.

Help us give You our very best and not count the cost.

Keep us from loving money or anything else more than You.

When we hear Your warnings, help us look at our own hearts first.

Thank You for Your body, given for us.

Thank You for Your blood, poured out for the forgiveness of our sins.

Help us never take the Lord's Supper lightly.

Forgive us for trusting in our own strength.

Forgive us for sleeping when we should be praying.

Teach us to watch and pray, so that we will not fall into temptation.

When we face our own Gethsemane, help us pray as You prayed:

“Not my will, but Yours be done.”

Thank You for Your grace, even to those who betray and deny You.

Keep us from following You at a distance.

Give us courage to say, “I belong to Jesus,” even in small moments.

And when we fail, as Peter failed, bring us back to You with broken and repentant hearts.

Thank You that our failure is never greater than Your faithfulness.

We look forward to the day when we will share the feast with You, new, in Your Father's kingdom.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.’” — Matthew 26:39

Central Truth

Jesus, knowing everything that would happen, willingly gave Himself up to betrayal, arrest, and condemnation, offering His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins and submitting to the Father's will, even when His closest followers failed Him.

Matthew 26 in One Sentence

As the religious leaders plot His death, Jesus is anointed for burial, betrayed by Judas, gives His disciples the bread and cup of the new covenant, surrenders to the Father's will in Gethsemane, is arrested and condemned for declaring that He is the Son of God, and is denied three times by Peter, who weeps bitterly — yet Jesus remains faithful to God's plan of salvation.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 27 — Pilate's Trial, the Crucifixion, and the Burial of Jesus

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 26 ended in the dark.

Jesus had been arrested, condemned by the council, spit on, and beaten.

Peter had denied Him three times and gone out weeping.

Now in Matthew Chapter 27, the morning comes.

But it brings the darkest day in human history.

This chapter records:

- **The handing over** — the leaders bring Jesus to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.
- **The end of Judas** — filled with regret, he returns the silver and takes his own life.
- **The trial before Pilate** — Jesus stands silent as He is accused.
- **The choice** — the crowd chooses Barabbas instead of Jesus.
- **The mocking** — soldiers dress Jesus as a king and beat Him.
- **The crucifixion** — Jesus is nailed to a cross between two criminals.
- **The darkness** — for three hours, darkness covers the land.
- **The cry** — **"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"**
- **The death** — Jesus gives up His spirit.
- **The signs** — the temple curtain tears, the earth shakes, tombs open.
- **The burial** — Joseph of Arimathea lays Jesus in a new tomb.
- **The guard** — the tomb is sealed and guarded.

In this chapter, everyone seems to be against Jesus.

The religious leaders.

The Roman governor.

The soldiers.

The crowd.

Even the criminals beside Him.

And yet, in the middle of all this hatred, God is doing His greatest work of love.

The cross looks like defeat.

But it is the place of victory.

The cross looks like the end.

But it is the beginning of salvation for the whole world.

It is important to read this chapter carefully.

For centuries, some people wrongly blamed the Jewish people as a whole for Jesus' death.

That is not what the Bible teaches.

Jesus was handed over by certain leaders, condemned by a Roman governor, and crucified by Roman soldiers.

And the Bible teaches that Jesus laid down His life willingly, for the sins of the whole world.

In the deepest sense, **our sins** put Him there — and **His love** kept Him there.

Matthew 27 therefore shows two great truths:

Jesus, the innocent King, was condemned and crucified according to God's plan to save sinners.

And:

Through His death, Jesus opened the way for people to come to God.

The central truth of Matthew 27 is:

Jesus, the innocent Son of God and true King, was rejected, mocked, and crucified in fulfillment of Scripture, and through His death He opened the way to God for all who believe.

I. EARLY IN THE MORNING

Matthew 27:1 — Planning His Death

“Early in the morning, all the chief priests and elders planned to have Jesus put to death.”

Early in the morning.

The night trial was over.

Now the council met again at dawn.

Their rules seem to have required that serious decisions be made in the daytime.

This morning meeting made the night's decision official.

All the chief priests and elders.

The whole council agreed.

Planned to have Jesus put to death.

They had already decided that Jesus must die.

But under Roman rule, they did not have the power to carry out a death sentence themselves.

So they needed the Roman governor.

Cross References

Mark 15:1

> Very early in the morning, the leading priests, the elders, the teachers of the law, and the whole Sanhedrin made their plans. They tied Jesus up, led Him away, and handed Him over to Pilate.

Psalm 2:2

> The kings of the earth get ready to fight, and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against His Anointed One.

Luke 22:66

> At daybreak the council of the elders of the people met together. This included both the leading priests and the teachers of the law. Jesus was brought before them.

Spiritual Principle

Human plans against Jesus could not stop God's plan of salvation.

II. HANDED OVER TO PILATE

Matthew 27:2 — The Governor

“They tied Him up, led Him away, and handed Him over to the governor, Pontius Pilate.”

They tied Him up.

The One who set people free was tied up like a criminal.

Led Him away.

And handed Him over to the governor, Pontius Pilate.

Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from about A.D. 26 to 36.

He usually lived in Caesarea by the sea.

But during the Passover festival, he came to Jerusalem to keep order.

Jewish and Roman writers of that time describe him as a harsh ruler.

Now the Jewish leaders and the Roman ruler would work together to condemn Jesus.

Both Jews and Gentiles — all of humanity — had a part in rejecting Him.

Cross References

Acts 3:13

> The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, has given glory to His servant Jesus. You handed Him over to be killed, and you rejected Him in front of Pilate, even though Pilate had decided to let Him go.

John 18:28

> Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. It was early in the morning.

Luke 23:1

> Then the whole group got up and led Him off to Pilate.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was bound so that we could be set free.

III. JUDAS WAS FILLED WITH REGRET

Matthew 27:3 — Returning the Silver

“When Judas, who had betrayed Jesus, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was filled with regret. He returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and elders,”

When Judas saw that Jesus was condemned.

Perhaps Judas did not expect this.

Perhaps he thought Jesus would escape, as He had before.

Or perhaps he simply saw, at last, what he had done.

He was filled with regret.

Judas felt terrible.

But regret is not the same as repentance.

Paul wrote that there is a sorrow that leads to repentance and salvation, and there is a worldly sorrow that leads to death.

Judas felt worldly sorrow.

He was sorry for what he had done.

But he did not turn back to Jesus.

He returned the thirty silver coins.

The money he wanted so badly now meant nothing to him.

Sin promises much but leaves us empty.

Cross References

Zechariah 11:13

> Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter” — that handsome price they valued Me at! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter.

Acts 1:18

> With the payment he received for his evil act, Judas bought a field. There he fell headfirst, his body burst open, and all his insides spilled out.

2 Corinthians 7:10

> Sorrow that comes from God brings a change of heart that leads to salvation and leaves no regret. But the sorrow of the world brings death.

Spiritual Principle

Regret looks back at sin; repentance looks to God for mercy.

IV. "I HAVE SINNED"

Matthew 27:4 — Innocent Blood

“saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’ They replied, ‘What is that to us? That's your problem.’”

I have sinned.

Judas confessed his sin.

But he confessed it to the wrong people.

He went to the priests, not to God.

By betraying innocent blood.

Judas admitted that Jesus was innocent.

The very man who betrayed Jesus testified that He had done nothing wrong.

They replied, ‘What is that to us?’

The priests did not care.

They had used Judas.

Now they threw him away.

That's your problem.

These were the spiritual leaders of the nation.

A man came to them broken by guilt.

And they offered him no help, no mercy, no hope.

Sin's partners always abandon you in the end.

Cross References

Matthew 26:15

> And asked, “What will you give me if I deliver Him to you?” So they counted out thirty pieces of silver.

Deuteronomy 27:25

> “Cursed is anyone who accepts money to kill an innocent person.” Then all the people will say, “Amen!”

Proverbs 6:17

> Proud eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill innocent people.

Spiritual Principle

Even the betrayer testified that Jesus was innocent.

Spiritual Warning

Those who lead you into sin will not help you when the guilt comes.

V. THE DEATH OF JUDAS

Matthew 27:5 — He Threw the Coins into the Temple

“Judas threw the coins into the temple and went away and hanged himself.”

Judas threw the coins into the temple.

He could not stand to hold them any longer.

This fulfilled the picture in Zechariah 11, where the thirty pieces of silver were thrown into the house of the LORD.

And went away and hanged himself.

This is one of the saddest verses in the Bible.

Judas was overwhelmed by guilt and despair.

He did not believe there was any hope for him.

Acts 1:18 adds that he fell and his body burst open.

Many Bible students believe both accounts are true — that Judas hanged himself, and that his body later fell.

Like Ahithophel, who betrayed King David and then hanged himself, Judas ended his own life.

Here is the tragedy:

The same Jesus that Judas betrayed would soon die for the sins of the world.

If Judas had turned to Him, there was mercy even for him.

Peter also failed Jesus that night.

But Peter wept, turned back, and was restored.

Judas turned away from the only One who could help him.

Cross References

2 Samuel 17:23

> When Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and went home to his own town. He put his house in order and then hanged himself.

Acts 1:18

> With the payment he received for his evil act, Judas bought a field. There he fell headfirst, his body burst open, and all his insides spilled out.

1 Kings 16:18

> When Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the strong tower of the king's palace and set the palace on fire around himself. So he died.

Spiritual Principle

No sin is too great for God's mercy, but we must turn to Him to receive it.

Key Truth

Despair says, “There is no hope for me.” The cross says, “There is mercy for you.”

VI. BLOOD MONEY

Matthew 27:6 — Not Lawful for the Treasury

“The chief priests picked up the coins and said, ‘It's not lawful to put this money into the temple treasury; it's blood money.’”

The chief priests picked up the coins.

They had no problem paying the money.

Now they were careful about receiving it back.

It's not lawful to put this money into the temple treasury.

They were very careful about the rules.

It's blood money.

They admitted it was money paid for a man's death.

They paid the price of innocent blood.

But they would not put that money in the temple.

This is the same hypocrisy Jesus exposed in Matthew 23.

They strained out a gnat but swallowed a camel.

They worried about a rule for money but did not worry about condemning an innocent man.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 23:18

> You must not bring the pay of a prostitute or the price of a dog into the house of the LORD your God to pay any promise you made. The LORD your God hates them both.

Zechariah 11:13

> Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter” — that handsome price they valued Me at! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter.

Micah 3:11

> Her leaders judge for a bribe. Her priests teach for a price. Her prophets tell the future for money. Yet they lean on the LORD and say, “Isn't the LORD with us? No trouble will come to us.”

Spiritual Principle

Religious rules without a righteous heart are empty.

VII. THE POTTER'S FIELD

Matthew 27:7 — A Cemetery for Strangers

“So they decided to buy the potter's field as a cemetery for strangers.”

So they decided to buy the potter's field.

A potter's field was probably a place where potters dug clay.

The ground would have been useless for farming.

As a cemetery for strangers.

Foreigners who died in Jerusalem, far from their families, needed a place to be buried.

To this day, a cemetery for the poor or unknown is sometimes called **a potter's field.**

The money paid to betray Jesus was used to bury strangers.

In a way, it became a picture of grace.

Jesus' death would provide a resting place for those who are strangers and outsiders.

Cross References

Jeremiah 19:11

> And say to them, “This is what the LORD who commands armies says: I will smash this nation and this city just as this potter's jar is smashed and cannot be repaired. They will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room.”

Jeremiah 32:9

> So I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel, and I weighed out seventeen pieces of silver for him.

Jeremiah 18:2

> “Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you My message.”

Spiritual Principle

God can turn even the price of sin into a picture of His grace.

VIII. FIELD OF BLOOD

Matthew 27:8 — To This Day

“That's why it has been called ‘Field of Blood’ to this day.”

That's why it has been called ‘Field of Blood.’

The name reminded everyone of how the field was bought.

With the price of innocent blood.

Acts 1:19 tells us the people of Jerusalem called it **Akeldama**, which means **Field of Blood.**

To this day.

When Matthew wrote his Gospel, the name was still being used.

The field was a lasting reminder of Judas' betrayal.

Just as Abel's blood cried out from the ground, the blood of Jesus was remembered.

But Hebrews tells us that the blood of Jesus speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Abel's blood cried for justice.

Jesus' blood cries for mercy.

Cross References

Acts 1:19

> Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this. So they called that field Akeldama in their language, which means Field of Blood.

Jeremiah 19:6

> So watch out! The days are coming, says the LORD, when people will no longer call this place Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom. They will call it the Valley of Slaughter.

Genesis 4:10

> The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood is crying out to Me from the ground.”

Spiritual Principle

The blood of Jesus speaks a better word than the blood of Abel — a word of mercy.

IX. THE PRICE SET ON HIM

Matthew 27:9 — What the Prophet Spoke

“This fulfilled what the prophet spoke: that the thirty silver coins, the price set on Him by the people of Israel,”

This fulfilled what the prophet spoke.

Matthew sees this as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

A Note on This Prophecy

Most Greek manuscripts of Matthew name **Jeremiah** here.

The words about thirty pieces of silver and throwing them to the potter come mainly from **Zechariah 11:12–13.**

But Jeremiah also visited a potter's house, bought a field, and spoke about a potter's jar in the Valley of Ben Hinnom.

Many Bible students believe Matthew combined the words of both prophets and named Jeremiah, the more well-known prophet, as the main source.

This was a common way of quoting Scripture in Jewish teaching.

The thirty silver coins, the price set on Him.

In Zechariah, the shepherd sent by God was valued at thirty pieces of silver — an insulting price.

By the people of Israel.

The leaders of God's own people placed this low value on God's own Shepherd.

Cross References

Zechariah 11:12

> I told them, “If you think it is right, give me my pay. But if not, keep it.” So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.

Jeremiah 32:6

> Jeremiah said, “The LORD's message came to me.”

Jeremiah 18:3

> So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the potter's wheel.

Spiritual Principle

People may place a low value on Jesus, but God values Him above everything.

X. AS THE LORD DIRECTED

Matthew 27:10 — To Buy the Potter's Field

“would be used to buy the potter's field, just as the Lord directed.”

Would be used to buy the potter's field.

Every detail came true.

The thirty pieces.

Thrown into the temple.

Used to buy the potter's field.

Just as the Lord directed.

The priests thought they were making their own decision.

But God was directing history.

Even in this dark moment, God's Word was being fulfilled.

Cross References

Zechariah 11:13

> Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter” — that handsome price they valued Me at! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter.

Jeremiah 32:9

> So I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel, and I weighed out seventeen pieces of silver for him.

Jeremiah 19:2

> Go out to the Valley of Ben Hinnom, near the entrance of the Potsherd Gate. There announce the words I tell you.

Spiritual Principle

God's Word is fulfilled in even the smallest details.

XI. "ARE YOU THE KING OF THE JEWS?"

Matthew 27:11 — Jesus Before the Governor

“Jesus stood before the governor, and Pilate asked, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say so.’”

Jesus stood before the governor.

The King of kings stood before a Roman governor.

Are You the King of the Jews?

Before the Jewish council, the question was, **“Are You the Son of God?”**

Before Pilate, the question was about being a king.

To Rome, anyone who claimed to be a king was a threat to Caesar.

The leaders changed the charge to make Jesus look like a political rebel.

You say so.

This means **yes.**

But Jesus was not the kind of king Pilate feared.

John tells us Jesus said, **“My kingdom is not of this world.”**

Cross References

Mark 15:2

> “Are You the King of the Jews?” asked Pilate. “You have said so,” Jesus replied.

John 18:33

> Pilate then went back inside the palace, called for Jesus, and asked Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

Luke 23:3

> So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are You the King of the Jews?” “You have said so,” Jesus replied.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is truly the King, but His kingdom is not like the kingdoms of this world.

XII. HE GAVE NO ANSWER

Matthew 27:12 — Accused by the Leaders

“While the chief priests and elders accused Him, He gave no answer.”

While the chief priests and elders accused Him.

Luke tells us they accused Him of stirring up the nation, forbidding taxes to Caesar, and claiming to be a king.

These charges were false.

Jesus had told them to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar.

He gave no answer.

Jesus did not defend Himself.

Isaiah had said that the Servant would be like a lamb led to the slaughter, silent before its shearers.

Peter later wrote that when Jesus was insulted, He did not insult back.

He trusted Himself to God, who judges fairly.

Cross References

Isaiah 53:7

> He was treated badly and made to suffer, but He did not open His mouth. He was led like a lamb to be killed. Like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, He did not open His mouth.

Mark 15:3

> The leading priests accused Him of many things.

1 Peter 2:23

> When people insulted Him, He did not insult them back. When He suffered, He did not threaten. Instead, He trusted Himself to God, who judges fairly.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus trusted His Father to defend Him.

XIII. "DON'T YOU HEAR?"

Matthew 27:13 — Pilate's Question

“Pilate said, ‘Don't You hear the charges they bring against You?’”

Don't You hear the charges?

Pilate was surprised.

Most prisoners would argue and plead for their lives.

They bring against You.

The charges were serious.

They could lead to death.

Pilate seemed to want Jesus to defend Himself.

Pilate had power over Jesus' life — or so he thought.

John tells us Jesus said to him, **“You would have no power over Me if it were not given to you from above.”**

Cross References

Mark 15:4

> So again Pilate asked Him, “Aren't You going to answer? See how many things they are accusing You of.”

John 19:10

> “Do You refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don't You realize I have power either to free You or to crucify You?”

John 18:37

> “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to tell the truth. Everyone who loves the truth listens to Me.”

Spiritual Principle

Earthly rulers have only the power God allows them.

XIV. PILATE WAS AMAZED

Matthew 27:14 — Not a Single Word

“But Jesus did not reply—not even to a single charge—so Pilate was amazed.”

But Jesus did not reply.

Not even to a single charge.

Jesus' silence was complete.

So Pilate was amazed.

Pilate had seen many prisoners.

He had never seen anyone like this.

Calm.

Silent.

Without fear.

Jesus' silence was not weakness.

It was strength.

He was not trying to save Himself.

He had come to save us.

Cross References

Mark 15:5

But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

Psalm 38:14

I have become like a man who does not hear, whose mouth has no reply.

Isaiah 53:7

He was treated badly and made to suffer, but He did not open His mouth. He was led like a lamb to be killed. Like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, He did not open His mouth.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' silence before His accusers showed His willing surrender.

XV. THE FESTIVAL CUSTOM

Matthew 27:15 — Release One Prisoner

“It was the governor's custom at the festival to release one prisoner chosen by the crowd.”

It was the governor's custom at the festival.

At Passover, the governor would release one Jewish prisoner.

This was a way to win the goodwill of the people.

To release one prisoner chosen by the crowd.

Passover celebrated Israel's release from slavery in Egypt.

So releasing a prisoner fit the festival.

Pilate seems to have hoped this custom would give him a way to release Jesus.

Cross References

Mark 15:6

Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested.

John 18:39

But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release “the King of the Jews”?

Luke 23:17

Now he was required to release one prisoner to them at the festival.

A Note on Luke 23:17

Luke 23:17 is not found in some of the oldest manuscripts of Luke. The custom it describes is clearly taught here in Matthew 27:15 and in Mark 15:6.

Spiritual Principle

At the festival of freedom, the guilty would go free and the innocent would be condemned.

XVI. BARABBAS

Matthew 27:16 — A Well-Known Prisoner

“At that time they had a well-known prisoner named Barabbas.”

At that time they had a well-known prisoner.

He was famous — or rather, notorious.

Named Barabbas.

Mark and Luke tell us he had taken part in a violent uprising and had committed murder.

John calls him a rebel or robber.

His name may mean **“son of the father.”**

Some early manuscripts say his full name was **Jesus Barabbas.**

If so, the crowd had to choose between two men named Jesus.

One was a son of an earthly father who took life.

The other was the Son of the heavenly Father who came to give life.

Cross References

Mark 15:7

> A man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the uprising.

Luke 23:19

> Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an uprising in the city and for murder.

John 18:40

> They shouted back, “No, not Him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

Spiritual Principle

Every person must choose between the world's way and God's Son.

XVII. BARABBAS OR JESUS?

Matthew 27:17 — Pilate's Question

“Pilate asked the crowd, ‘Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Christ?’”

Which one do you want me to release to you?

Pilate put the choice before the crowd.

Barabbas.

A violent rebel and murderer.

Or Jesus who is called the Christ?

A man who healed the sick, fed the hungry, and taught the way of God.

Pilate probably thought the choice was easy.

Surely they would choose Jesus.

This is still the choice every person must make.

Peter later preached that the people **disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be released.**

Cross References

Mark 15:9

> “Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” asked Pilate.

John 18:38

> “What is truth?” Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against Him.”

Acts 3:14

> You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be released to you.

Spiritual Principle

What we do with Jesus is the most important choice we will ever make.

XVIII. OUT OF ENVY

Matthew 27:18 — Pilate Knew

“He knew they had handed Jesus over out of envy.”

He knew.

Pilate was not fooled.

They had handed Jesus over out of envy.

The leaders were jealous of Jesus.

The crowds followed Him.

People loved His teaching.

He had more authority than they did.

So they wanted Him gone.

Envy is a powerful and deadly sin.

It led Cain to kill Abel.

It led Joseph's brothers to sell him into slavery.

And it led the leaders to hand over Jesus to be crucified.

Cross References

Mark 15:10

> He knew it was out of envy that the leading priests had handed Jesus over to him.

Genesis 37:11

> His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Proverbs 27:4

> Anger is cruel and fury overwhelms, but who can stand before jealousy?

Spiritual Principle

Envy can lead people to terrible sin.

Spiritual Warning

Watch your heart when you feel jealous of someone God is using.

XIX. PILATE'S WIFE

Matthew 27:19 — That Righteous Man

“While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him a message: ‘Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I suffered much today in a dream because of Him.’”

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat.

He was about to make his decision.

His wife sent him a message.

Only Matthew records this.

Have nothing to do with that righteous man.

She called Jesus **righteous** — innocent and good.

A Gentile woman saw what the religious leaders refused to see.

For I suffered much today in a dream because of Him.

In the Bible, God sometimes warned people through dreams.

God warned Abimelech in a dream.

God gave Nebuchadnezzar dreams.

Now God gave Pilate a warning through his wife.

Pilate had every reason to release Jesus.

But he did not.

Cross References

Genesis 20:3

> But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, “You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken. She is a married woman.”

Job 33:15

> In a dream, in a vision at night, when deep sleep falls on people as they sleep in their beds.

Daniel 2:19

> During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven.

Spiritual Principle

God gives warnings, but each person must choose whether to listen.

XX. THE CROWD WAS PERSUADED

Matthew 27:20 — Ask for Barabbas

“But the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed.”

But the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd.

The leaders moved through the crowd.

They stirred them up.

They told them what to say.

To ask for Barabbas.

And to have Jesus killed.

A crowd can be easily led.

Many in this crowd may not have been the same people who welcomed Jesus on Palm Sunday.

But even so, crowds can change quickly.

People can be pushed to do what they would never do alone.

This is a warning about the power of influence.

Cross References

Mark 15:11

> But the leading priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.

Luke 23:18

> But the whole crowd shouted, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!”

Acts 13:28

> Though they found no proper reason for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have Him put to death.

Spiritual Principle

Be careful who you allow to shape your opinion of Jesus.

XXI. "BARABBAS"

Matthew 27:21 — The Crowd's Choice

“‘Which of the two do you want me to release to you?’ asked the governor. They answered, ‘Barabbas.’”

Which of the two?

Pilate asked again.

They answered, ‘Barabbas.’

They chose the guilty man.

They rejected the innocent One.

But here is the amazing truth of the gospel:

Barabbas went free because Jesus took his place.

Barabbas deserved to die.

Jesus did not.

Yet Jesus died, and Barabbas lived.

In a real sense, every believer is Barabbas.

We were guilty.

Jesus was innocent.

He took our place so we could go free.

Cross References

Mark 15:11

> But the leading priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.

Acts 3:14

> You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be released to you.

John 18:40

> They shouted back, “No, not Him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

Spiritual Principle

The guilty went free because the Innocent One took his place.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

We are all Barabbas — guilty, condemned, and set free because Jesus died in our place.

XXII. "CRUCIFY HIM!"

Matthew 27:22 — What Shall I Do with Jesus?

"'Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?' They all said, 'Crucify Him!'"

Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?

This is the most important question in the world.

Every person must answer it.

You cannot stay neutral about Jesus.

They all said, 'Crucify Him!'

Crucifixion was the most painful and shameful way the Romans put people to death.

It was used for slaves, rebels, and the worst criminals.

Roman citizens were usually not crucified.

The crowd wanted Jesus to die in the most humiliating way possible.

Cross References

Mark 15:13

> "Crucify Him!" they shouted.

Luke 23:21

> But they kept shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

John 19:15

> But they shouted, "Take Him away! Take Him away! Crucify Him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the leading priests answered.

Spiritual Principle

Every person must answer the question, "What will I do with Jesus?"

XXIII. "WHAT CRIME HAS HE COMMITTED?"

Matthew 27:23 — They Shouted All the Louder

“‘Why? What crime has He committed?’ asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, ‘Crucify Him!’”

Why? What crime has He committed?

Pilate asked a fair question.

No one could name a crime.

Jesus had done nothing wrong.

Isaiah said the Servant **had done no violence, and no lie was in His mouth.**

But they shouted all the louder.

They had no answer.

So they just shouted louder.

When people cannot answer the truth, they often try to drown it out.

Crucify Him!

Noise took the place of justice.

Cross References

Mark 15:14

> “Why? What crime has He committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify Him!”

Luke 23:23

> But they kept shouting loudly, demanding that He be crucified. And their shouts won out.

Isaiah 53:9

> He was given a grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death, even though He had done nothing violent and never spoke a lie.

Spiritual Principle

No one could name a single sin Jesus had committed.

XXIV. PILATE WASHED HIS HANDS

Matthew 27:24 — I Am Innocent of This Man's Blood

“Seeing that it was going nowhere and that a riot was starting, Pilate took water and washed his hands before the crowd. ‘I am innocent of this man's blood,’ he said. ‘See to it yourselves.’”

Seeing that it was going nowhere.

Pilate could not change the crowd's mind.

And that a riot was starting.

Pilate feared a riot.

A riot during Passover could cost him his position.

Pilate took water and washed his hands before the crowd.

In the law of Moses, the elders of a town washed their hands to declare that they were innocent of an unsolved murder.

Pilate used this public act to say, **“This is not my fault.”**

I am innocent of this man's blood.

But he was not innocent.

He had the power to release Jesus.

He knew Jesus was innocent.

And he chose to condemn Him anyway.

Water could not wash away his guilt.

To this day, people say **“I wash my hands of it”** when they try to avoid responsibility.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 21:6

> Then all the elders of the town nearest the body must wash their hands over the young cow whose neck was broken in the valley.

Psalm 26:6

> I wash my hands to show I am innocent, and I go around Your altar, LORD.

Matthew 27:4

> Saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” They replied, “What is that to us? That's your problem.”

Spiritual Principle

We cannot wash our hands of responsibility for what we do with Jesus.

Spiritual Warning

Knowing what is right and failing to do it out of fear is still sin.

XXV. "HIS BLOOD BE ON US"

Matthew 27:25 — The Crowd's Answer

“All the people answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children.’”

All the people answered.

All the people means the crowd gathered before Pilate that morning.

It does not mean every Jewish person in Jerusalem, in Israel, or in the world.

His blood be on us and on our children.

This was a way of saying, **“We take responsibility for His death.”**

The crowd spoke in anger, without understanding what they were saying.

How Should We Understand This Verse?

This verse must be read with great care.

Sadly, over many centuries, some people misused it to blame and persecute Jewish people.

That was a terrible sin, and it goes completely against the teaching of Jesus and the apostles.

Here is what the Bible teaches:

First, a crowd cannot place guilt on future generations.

Ezekiel 18 teaches that each person is responsible for his own sin, and children are not punished for the sins of their parents.

Second, Jesus prayed for forgiveness.

On the cross, Jesus prayed, **“Father, forgive them, because they don't know what they are doing.”**

Third, the Bible teaches that all people share responsibility for Jesus' death.

Jewish leaders and Gentile rulers worked together.

And in the deepest sense, Jesus died because of the sins of every person — including ours.

Fourth, God offered forgiveness to the very people who were there.

Just weeks later, on the day of Pentecost, Peter preached to the people of Jerusalem.

Thousands repented and believed.

The blood they called down in anger became the blood that washed away their sins.

That is the wonder of the gospel.

The blood of Jesus is not a curse.

It is the only cure for sin.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 19:10

> Do this so that innocent blood will not be shed in your land, which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and so that you will not be guilty of shedding blood.

Jeremiah 26:15

> But know this for sure: if you put me to death, you will bring the guilt of innocent blood on yourselves, on this city, and on all who live in it. The LORD truly sent me to you to speak all these words for you to hear.

Joshua 2:19

> If anyone goes out of your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head, and we will not be responsible. But if anyone in the house with you is harmed, his blood will be on our heads.

Spiritual Principle

The blood of Jesus is not a curse; it is the only cure for sin.

Key Truth

Every person needs the blood of Jesus to be upon them — not for judgment, but for forgiveness.

XXVI. FLOGGED AND HANDED OVER

Matthew 27:26 — Barabbas Released

“Then he released Barabbas to them; and after having Jesus flogged, he handed Him over to be crucified.”

Then he released Barabbas to them.

The guilty man walked free.

And after having Jesus flogged.

Roman flogging was brutal.

The whip had several leather straps with pieces of bone or metal tied to the ends.

It tore the skin and flesh.

Some prisoners died from flogging alone.

Isaiah wrote, **“By His wounds we are healed.”**

He handed Him over to be crucified.

Pilate gave the final order.

The Son of God was sentenced to die.

Cross References

Mark 15:15

> Pilate wanted to satisfy the crowd, so he released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus whipped, and then handed Him over to be crucified.

Isaiah 53:5

> But He was pierced for our sins. He was crushed for the evil we did. The punishment that brought us peace was put on Him, and by His wounds we are healed.

John 19:1

> Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him whipped.

Spiritual Principle

By His wounds we are healed.

XXVII. THE WHOLE COMPANY

Matthew 27:27 — Inside the Headquarters

“The governor's soldiers took Jesus into the headquarters and gathered the whole company around Him.”

The governor's soldiers took Jesus into the headquarters.

This was the governor's palace or military headquarters in Jerusalem.

It is called the **Praetorium.**

And gathered the whole company around Him.

A Roman company, or cohort, could have several hundred soldiers.

They surrounded Jesus.

Psalm 22 describes the Messiah surrounded by enemies like a pack of dogs.

Cross References

Mark 15:16

> The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace, that is, the governor's headquarters, and called together the whole company of soldiers.

John 19:2

> The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head. They put a purple robe on Him.

Psalm 22:16

> Dogs surround me. A gang of evil men circles around me. They have pierced my hands and my feet.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus faced the hatred of the world alone so that we would not have to.

XXVIII. A SCARLET ROBE

Matthew 27:28 — They Stripped Him

“They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him.”

They stripped Him.

They took away His clothes.

This was part of the shame.

And put a scarlet robe on Him.

This was probably a soldier's red cloak.

Mark and John call it **purple** — the color of royalty.

They dressed Jesus up as a pretend king.

They thought it was a joke.

But Jesus truly is the King.

Isaiah said He would be **hated and rejected by people.**

Cross References

Mark 15:17

> They put a purple robe on Him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on Him.

John 19:5

> When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!”

Isaiah 53:3

> He was hated and rejected by people. He was a man of suffering and familiar with pain. People turned their faces away from Him. He was hated, and we did not value Him.

Spiritual Principle

The world mocked Jesus as a false king, but He is the true King.

XXIX. A CROWN OF THORNS

Matthew 27:29 — "Hail, King of the Jews!"

“They twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on His head. They put a reed in His right hand, knelt before Him, and mocked, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’”

They twisted together a crown of thorns.

Kings wear crowns of gold.

Jesus was given a crown of thorns.

And set it on His head.

The thorns would have pierced His head and caused great pain.

Thorns first appeared in the Bible as part of the curse after Adam's sin.

Now Jesus wore the curse on His head.

He was taking the curse of sin upon Himself.

They put a reed in His right hand.

A king holds a scepter.

They gave Him a stick.

Knelt before Him.

They pretended to worship Him.

And mocked, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’

This was the greeting given to Caesar.

They meant it as a joke.

But one day every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Cross References

Genesis 3:18

> It will grow thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

John 19:3

> They went up to Him again and again, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they slapped Him in the face.

Isaiah 52:14

> Many were shocked when they saw Him. His appearance was so damaged that He no longer looked like a man. His form was so ruined that He hardly looked human.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus wore the crown of thorns so that we could receive the crown of life.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The soldiers mocked Him as King, but heaven crowns Him as King of kings.

XXX. THEY SPIT ON HIM

Matthew 27:30 — Struck on the Head

“They spit on Him, took the reed, and struck Him on the head.”

They spit on Him.

For the second time in a few hours, Jesus was spit on.

First by the council.

Now by the soldiers.

Took the reed, and struck Him on the head.

They hit Him again and again with the stick, driving the thorns deeper.

Isaiah foretold it:

He did not turn His face away from those who mocked and spit on Him.

Jesus could have stopped it with a word.

But He let it happen.

For us.

Cross References

Isaiah 50:6

> I let them beat My back. I let them pull out the hair of My beard. I did not turn My face away when they mocked Me and spit on Me.

Micah 5:1

> They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod.

Mark 15:19

> Again and again they struck Him on the head with a stick and spit on Him. Falling on their knees, they pretended to worship Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus endured shame so that we could be welcomed with honor.

XXXI. LED AWAY TO BE CRUCIFIED

Matthew 27:31 — His Own Clothes

“After they had mocked Him, they took off the robe, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.”

After they had mocked Him.

They finally grew tired of their cruel game.

They took off the robe.

Put His own clothes on Him.

Taking the robe off would have reopened the wounds from the flogging.

And led Him away to crucify Him.

Like a lamb led to the slaughter.

He did not resist.

He did not run.

He walked toward the cross.

Cross References

Isaiah 53:7

> He was treated badly and made to suffer, but He did not open His mouth. He was led like a lamb to be killed. Like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, He did not open His mouth.

Mark 15:20

> When they had mocked Him, they took off the purple robe and put His own clothes on Him. Then they led Him out to crucify Him.

John 19:16

> Finally Pilate handed Him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus walked willingly to the cross like a lamb led to the slaughter.

XXXII. SIMON OF CYRENE

Matthew 27:32 — Forced to Carry the Cross

“As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene named Simon, and forced him to carry Jesus' cross.”

As they were going out.

Crucifixions took place outside the city.

They met a man from Cyrene named Simon.

Cyrene was a city in North Africa, in what is now Libya.

Many Jewish people lived there.

Simon may have come to Jerusalem for the Passover.

And forced him to carry Jesus' cross.

Usually, the condemned man carried the crossbeam himself.

Jesus was so weak from the beating that He apparently could not carry it all the way.

Roman soldiers had the right to force people to carry loads for them.

Mark tells us Simon was **the father of Alexander and Rufus.**

This suggests that Simon's sons became well known in the early church.

A man who was forced to carry the cross may have come to believe in the One who died on it.

Jesus had said, **“Whoever wants to be My disciple must take up his cross and follow Me.”**

Simon literally did.

Cross References

Mark 15:21

> A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country. They forced him to carry the cross.

Luke 23:26

> As the soldiers led Him away, they grabbed Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country. They put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus.

Matthew 16:24

> Then Jesus said to His followers, “Whoever wants to be My follower must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Me.”

Spiritual Principle

An unexpected burden can become a doorway to knowing Jesus.

XXXIII. GOLGOTHA

Matthew 27:33 — The Place of the Skull

“They came to a place called Golgotha (which means ‘Place of the Skull’).”

They came to a place called Golgotha.

Golgotha is an Aramaic word.

In Latin it is **Calvaria**, which gives us the word **Calvary.**

Which means ‘Place of the Skull.’

It may have been called this because the hill looked like a skull, or because it was a place of death.

It was outside the city walls, near a road where many people would pass by.

The Romans wanted crucifixions to be seen as a warning.

Hebrews tells us that Jesus suffered **outside the city gate** to make His people holy through His own blood.

Cross References

Mark 15:22

> They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which means “the place of the skull.”

John 19:17

> Carrying His own cross, He went out to the place of the Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

Hebrews 13:12

> And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through His own blood.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus went outside the city to the place of death so that we could have life.

XXXIV. WINE MIXED WITH GALL

Matthew 27:34 — He Would Not Drink It

“They offered Jesus wine mixed with gall; but after tasting it, He would not drink it.”

They offered Jesus wine mixed with gall.

Gall was a bitter substance.

Mark says the wine was mixed with **myrrh.**

This drink may have been offered to dull the pain.

Psalm 69 says, **“They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.”**

But after tasting it, He would not drink it.

Jesus refused.

He chose to face the full suffering of the cross with a clear mind.

He would not take anything to lessen what He had come to endure.

Cross References

Psalm 69:21

> They put poison in my food and gave me sour wine when I was thirsty.

Mark 15:23

> Then they offered Him wine mixed with myrrh, but He did not take it.

Proverbs 31:6

> Give beer to those who are dying and wine to those who are in deep trouble.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus chose to bear the full weight of our suffering.

XXXV. THEY CRUCIFIED HIM

Matthew 27:35 — Dividing His Clothes

“When they had crucified Him, they divided His clothes by casting lots—fulfilling the Scripture.”

When they had crucified Him.

Matthew says it simply.

He does not describe every detail.

His first readers knew how horrible crucifixion was.

Nails were driven through the hands or wrists and feet.

The victim hung for hours, struggling to breathe.

It was a slow, agonizing death.

They divided His clothes by casting lots.

The soldiers who crucified a man often kept his clothing.

They threw lots — something like rolling dice — to decide who would get what.

Fulfilling the Scripture.

Psalm 22 was written about a thousand years before.

It says, **“They split up my clothes and throw dice for my robe.”**

While Jesus was dying for the world, the soldiers were gambling for His clothes.

Cross References

Psalm 22:18

> They divide my clothes among them and throw dice for my robe.

John 19:24

> “Let's not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let's decide by lot who will get it.” This happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

Mark 15:24

> And they crucified Him. Dividing up His clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

Spiritual Principle

Even the smallest details of the cross fulfilled God's Word.

XXXVI. KEEPING WATCH

Matthew 27:36 — They Sat Down

“Then they sat down and kept watch over Him there.”

Then they sat down.

For the soldiers, this was just a job.

And kept watch over Him there.

They guarded the cross to make sure no one rescued Him.

Psalm 22 says, **“People stare and gloat over me.”**

These same soldiers would soon see the earthquake and darkness.

And their commander would say, **“Truly this was the Son of God!”**

Sometimes people who watch the cross out of duty end up seeing its glory.

Cross References

Psalm 22:17

> I can count all my bones. People stare and look at me.

Mark 15:25

> It was nine in the morning when they crucified Him.

Matthew 27:54

> When the centurion and those guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that happened, they were terrified and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

Spiritual Principle

Those who look long at the cross may come to see who Jesus truly is.

XXXVII. THE KING OF THE JEWS

Matthew 27:37 — The Written Charge

“Above His head they placed the written charge against Him: ‘THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.’”

Above His head they placed the written charge against Him.

The Romans often posted a sign showing the crime of the person being crucified.

THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

John tells us it was written in three languages — Aramaic, Latin, and Greek.

Everyone could read it.

The leaders wanted Pilate to change it to say **“He said He was the King of the Jews.”**

Pilate refused.

Pilate meant it as an insult to the Jewish leaders.

But it was the truth.

The charge against Jesus was His true identity.

Cross References

John 19:19

> Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Mark 15:26

> The written notice of the charge against Him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Luke 23:38

> There was a written notice above Him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Spiritual Principle

The sign meant as mockery declared the truth: Jesus is King.

XXXVIII. BETWEEN TWO CRIMINALS

Matthew 27:38 — On His Right and Left

“Two criminals were crucified with Him, one on His right and one on His left.”

Two criminals were crucified with Him.

The word may mean robbers or rebels, like Barabbas.

One on His right and one on His left.

Jesus was placed in the middle, as if He were the worst of the three.

Just days before, James and John had asked to sit at Jesus' right and left in His kingdom.

Now the places at His right and left were crosses.

Isaiah said the Servant would be **counted among the lawbreakers.**

Jesus was numbered with sinners so that sinners could be numbered with the saints.

Cross References

Isaiah 53:12

> He gave up His life and died, and He was counted among the sinners. He carried the sin of many and prayed for those who did wrong.

Mark 15:27

> They crucified two rebels with Him, one on His right and one on His left.

Luke 23:33

> When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified Him there, along with the criminals — one on His right, the other on His left.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was counted among sinners so that sinners could be counted among God's people.

XXXIX. SHAKING THEIR HEADS

Matthew 27:39 — Those Who Passed By

“Those who passed by insulted Him, shaking their heads,”

Those who passed by.

The cross stood near a road.

People walking in and out of the city saw Him.

Insulted Him.

They mocked Him.

Shaking their heads.

This was a sign of scorn.

Psalm 22 says, **“Everyone who sees me makes fun of me and shakes their head.”**

Lamentations describes people shaking their heads at the ruin of Jerusalem.

The passers-by did not stop to think.

They mocked what they did not understand.

Cross References

Psalm 22:7

> Everyone who sees me makes fun of me. They insult me and shake their heads.

Psalm 109:25

> I am a joke to my accusers. When they see me, they shake their heads.

Lamentations 2:15

> All who pass by clap their hands at you. They hiss and shake their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem.

Spiritual Principle

People still pass by the cross without understanding what it means.

XL. "COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS!"

Matthew 27:40 — Save Yourself!

“saying, ‘You who said you would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days—save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross!’”

You who said you would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days.

They repeated the twisted charge from the trial.

Save Yourself!

This was the very thing Jesus would not do.

If He saved Himself, He could not save us.

If You are the Son of God.

These words sound like the devil's temptation in the wilderness.

“If You are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread.”

“If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down.”

Now, at the end, the same temptation comes again.

Come down from the cross!

Jesus could have come down.

But He stayed.

It was not the nails that held Him there.

It was His love.

Cross References

John 2:19

> Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

Psalm 22:8

> “He trusts in the LORD,” they say. “Let the LORD rescue him. Let Him save him, since He is pleased with him.”

Matthew 26:61

> And declared, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus would not save Himself, because He came to save us.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

It was not the nails that held Jesus to the cross; it was His love.

XLI. THE LEADERS MOCKED HIM

Matthew 27:41 — The Chief Priests, Teachers, and Elders

“In the same way the chief priests, teachers of the law, and elders mocked Him:”

In the same way.

Not only the passers-by.

The chief priests, teachers of the law, and elders.

The most respected religious leaders came out to watch.

Mocked Him.

They had gotten what they wanted.

Now they gloated.

These were men who knew the Scriptures.

They knew Psalm 22.

Yet they did not see that they were fulfilling it as they spoke.

Cross References

Psalm 22:6

> But I am a worm and not a man. People make fun of me and look down on me.

Job 12:4

> I have become a joke to my friends, though I called on God and He answered. I am righteous and without blame, yet I am laughed at.

Mark 15:31

> In the same way the leading priests and the teachers of the law mocked Him among themselves. “He saved others,” they said, “but He can't save Himself!”

Spiritual Principle

Knowing the Scriptures does not help us if we reject the One they point to.

XLII. "HE SAVED OTHERS"

Matthew 27:42 — He Can't Save Himself

“‘He saved others, but He can't save Himself. If He is the King of Israel, let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him.’”

He saved others.

They admitted that He had saved others.

He had healed the sick.

He had raised the dead.

But He can't save Himself.

They meant this as an insult.

But they spoke a deep truth.

He could not save others **and** save Himself.

To save us, He had to give Himself.

If He is the King of Israel, let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him.

But they would not have believed.

Later, He did something even greater than coming down from the cross.

He came out of the grave.

And they still did not believe.

Cross References

Psalm 22:8

> “He trusts in the LORD,” they say. “Let the LORD rescue him. Let Him save him, since He is pleased with him.”

Luke 23:35

> The people stood watching, and the rulers even made fun of Him. They said, “He saved others. Let Him save Himself if He is God's Messiah, the Chosen One.”

Mark 15:32

> “Let this Messiah, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, so that we may see and believe.” Those crucified with Him also insulted Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus could not save Himself and save us at the same time — so He chose us.

Key Truth

The mockers spoke the truth without knowing it: to save others, He would not save Himself.

XLIII. "HE TRUSTS IN GOD"

Matthew 27:43 — Let God Rescue Him

“He trusts in God; let God rescue Him now if He wants Him, for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

He trusts in God.

This was true.

Jesus trusted His Father completely.

Let God rescue Him now if He wants Him.

The leaders were almost quoting Psalm 22:8 word for word.

They were mocking Jesus with the very words of the psalm that described His suffering.

For He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’

They thought God's silence proved Jesus was a liar.

But God would answer — on the third day.

Cross References

Psalm 22:8

> “He trusts in the LORD,” they say. “Let the LORD rescue him. Let Him save him, since He is pleased with him.”

Psalm 71:11

> They say, “God has left him. Go after him and grab him, because no one will rescue him.”

Psalm 3:2

> Many people are saying about me, “God will not save him.”

Spiritual Principle

God's silence is not God's absence; He answers in His own time.

XLIV. THE CRIMINALS INSULTED HIM

Matthew 27:44 — Also Insulted Him

“The criminals who were crucified with Him also insulted Him.”

The criminals who were crucified with Him.

Even men dying beside Him joined in.

Also insulted Him.

Everyone turned against Jesus.

But Luke tells us more.

One of the criminals changed his mind.

He said, **“Jesus, don't forget me when You come as King.”**

And Jesus answered, **“Today you will be with Me in paradise.”**

Even at the last hour of his life, a man who had mocked Jesus found mercy.

It is never too late to turn to Jesus while there is breath.

Cross References

Luke 23:39

> One of the criminals who hung there threw insults at Him: “Aren't You the Messiah? Save Yourself and us!”

Luke 23:40

> But the other criminal scolded him. “Don't you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence?”

Romans 5:8

> But God shows His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Spiritual Principle

Christ died for sinners — even those who mocked Him.

XLV. DARKNESS OVER THE LAND

Matthew 27:45 — From Noon Until Three

“From noon until three in the afternoon, darkness came over all the land.”

From noon until three in the afternoon.

The middle of the day.

When the sun should be at its brightest.

Darkness came over all the land.

This was not a normal eclipse.

Passover was celebrated at the time of the full moon, and a solar eclipse cannot happen during a full moon.

This darkness was a sign from God.

In Egypt, before the first Passover, God sent darkness over the land.

Amos had prophesied, **“I will make the sun set at noon and make the earth dark in the middle of the day.”**

The darkness pictured God's judgment.

Jesus was bearing the judgment for the sins of the world.

Cross References

Amos 8:9

> “On that day,” says the Lord GOD, “I will make the sun go down at noon and make the earth dark in the middle of the day.”

Exodus 10:22

> So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all of Egypt for three days.

Luke 23:44

> It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

Spiritual Principle

At the cross, the light of the world entered the darkness of judgment for us.

XLVI. "MY GOD, MY GOD"

Matthew 27:46 — Why Have You Forsaken Me?

“About three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’—that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’”

About three o'clock.

The time of the afternoon sacrifice at the temple.

Jesus cried out in a loud voice.

This was not a whisper.

It was a cry of deep anguish.

Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?

These words are mostly Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke.

Matthew keeps the very sounds of Jesus' voice.

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

These are the first words of Psalm 22.

To **forsake** means to abandon or leave alone.

What Did Jesus Mean?

This is one of the deepest mysteries in the Bible.

Jesus is God the Son.

The Father and the Son are always one.

So how could Jesus be forsaken?

Christians have understood this cry in several ways that fit together.

First, Jesus was bearing our sin.

Paul wrote that God made Him who had no sin **to be sin for us.**

In some way we cannot fully understand, Jesus experienced the separation from God that sin brings — so that we would never have to.

Second, Jesus was praying Psalm 22.

Jewish people often referred to a whole psalm by quoting its first line.

Psalm 22 begins in deep suffering, but it ends in victory and praise.

By quoting it, Jesus pointed to the whole psalm — including its triumph.

Third, Jesus truly felt abandoned.

He was fully human.

His cry was real.

Even in His pain, He still called Him **“My God.”**

He did not stop trusting.

All of this shows us how great the cost of our salvation was.

Jesus was forsaken so that we would never be forsaken.

Cross References

Psalm 22:1

> My God, my God, why have You left me alone? Why are You so far from saving me, so far from my cries of pain?

Mark 15:34

> And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means “My God, My God, why have You left Me?”

Psalm 88:14

> Why, LORD, do You reject me and hide Your face from me?

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was forsaken so that we would never be forsaken.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The cry of the forsaken Son is the reason we can say, “My Father, You will never leave me.”

XLVII. "HE'S CALLING ELIJAH"

Matthew 27:47 — Some Misunderstood

“Some who were standing there said, ‘He's calling Elijah.’”

Some who were standing there.

Bystanders near the cross.

He's calling Elijah.

Eli sounds like **Elijah.**

Some misunderstood His words.

Others may have been mocking Him.

Many Jewish people believed Elijah would come in times of great need.

Malachi had prophesied that Elijah would come before the great day of the LORD.

Jesus had already taught that John the Baptist fulfilled that role.

They were waiting for Elijah.

But the One greater than Elijah was dying in front of them.

Cross References

Malachi 4:5

> Look! I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.

Mark 15:35

> When some of those standing near heard this, they said, “Listen, He's calling Elijah.”

Matthew 17:11

> Jesus replied, “It is true that Elijah comes and will make all things right again.”

Spiritual Principle

People often misunderstand the words of Jesus when they do not know Him.

XLVIII. SOUR WINE

Matthew 27:48 — A Sponge on a Reed

“Immediately one of them ran, took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to Jesus to drink.”

Immediately one of them ran.

Someone moved quickly.

Took a sponge, filled it with sour wine.

This was cheap, vinegar-like wine that soldiers and workers drank.

Put it on a reed, and offered it to Jesus to drink.

John tells us Jesus said, **“I am thirsty.”**

Psalm 69 says, **“They gave me vinegar for my thirst.”**

This may have been a small act of kindness.

Or it may have been meant to keep Him alive longer to see if Elijah would come.

Either way, it fulfilled Scripture.

Cross References

Psalm 69:20

> Insults have broken my heart and left me helpless. I looked for pity, but there was none. I looked for comforters, but I found no one.

John 19:29

> A jar of sour wine was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.

Mark 15:36

> Someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. “Now leave Him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take Him down,” he said.

Spiritual Principle

The One who gives living water was thirsty for us.

XLIX. "LET'S SEE IF ELIJAH COMES"

Matthew 27:49 — Wait

“Others said, ‘Wait, let's see if Elijah comes to save Him.’”

Others said, ‘Wait.’

They wanted to watch.

Let's see if Elijah comes to save Him.

They were curious, but not caring.

They treated His suffering like a show.

Elijah had once called down fire from heaven.

Elijah had been taken up in a whirlwind.

But Elijah would not come to save Jesus.

Because Jesus had not come to be saved.

He had come to save.

Cross References

Luke 23:36

> The soldiers also came up and mocked Him. They offered Him sour wine.

1 Kings 18:37

> Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that You, LORD, are God, and that You are turning their hearts back again.

2 Kings 2:11

> As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them. And Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus did not come to be rescued; He came to rescue.

L. HE GAVE UP HIS SPIRIT

Matthew 27:50 — A Loud Voice

“Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit.”

Jesus cried out again with a loud voice.

A dying man on a cross usually had little strength left.

But Jesus cried out loudly.

John tells us what He said: **“It is finished!”**

Luke tells us He also said: **“Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.”**

It is finished was a cry of victory.

The work of salvation was complete.

The debt was paid.

And gave up His spirit.

Jesus did not simply die.

He **gave up** His spirit.

His life was not taken from Him.

He laid it down.

Jesus had said, **“No one takes My life from Me. I give it up because I choose to.”**

Cross References

Luke 23:46

> Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” When He had said this, He breathed His last.

John 19:30

> When He had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

Psalm 31:5

> Into Your hands I commit my spirit. Rescue me, LORD, my faithful God.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus laid down His life; no one took it from Him.

Key Truth

“It is finished” means there is nothing left for us to pay.

LI. THE CURTAIN WAS TORN

Matthew 27:51 — From Top to Bottom

“At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.”

At that moment.

The very moment Jesus died.

The curtain of the temple was torn in two.

In the temple, a thick curtain separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

The Most Holy Place was where God's presence dwelt.

Only the high priest could go behind that curtain.

And only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, with the blood of a sacrifice.

The curtain said, **“Keep out. Sinful people cannot come near a holy God.”**

From top to bottom.

Not from bottom to top.

No human hand tore it.

God tore it, from heaven down.

Now the way into God's presence was open.

Hebrews tells us that Jesus opened **a new and living way** for us **through the curtain — that is, His body.**

The earth shook and the rocks split.

All of creation responded to the death of its Creator.

Cross References

Hebrews 10:20

> He opened a new and living way for us through the curtain, that is, through His body.

Exodus 26:33

> Hang the curtain from the clasps and put the ark of the covenant law behind the curtain. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

Nahum 1:6

> Who can stand up to His anger? Who can live through His burning anger? His fury pours out like fire. The rocks break apart before Him.

Spiritual Principle

Through the death of Jesus, the way to God is open to all who come through Him.

Key Truth

The curtain that said “Keep out” was torn by God to say “Come in.”

LII. TOMBS WERE OPENED

Matthew 27:52 — Holy People Raised

“Tombs were opened, and many holy people who had died were raised to life.”

Tombs were opened.

The earthquake broke open graves.

And many holy people who had died were raised to life.

Holy people means godly believers who had died.

Only Matthew records this event.

Jesus' death was already breaking the power of death.

Ezekiel had prophesied that God would open the graves of His people and bring them up.

Daniel had spoken of those who sleep in the dust waking up.

How Do Christians Understand This?

Bible students have understood this event in different ways.

Many believe these were real people who were truly raised to life, as a sign that Jesus' death and resurrection defeat death.

Some believe they were raised to a new, lasting life and later went to heaven with Christ.

Others believe they were raised like Lazarus and later died again.

Some Bible students believe Matthew is describing a real event in language that also points to the great resurrection at the end of the age.

All agree on the main point:

The death of Jesus is the death of death.

Cross References

Ezekiel 37:12

> So prophesy and say to them: This is what the Lord GOD says: My people, I will open your graves and bring you up from them. I will bring you back to the land of Israel.

Daniel 12:2

> Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will wake up. Some will wake to everlasting life, and others to shame and everlasting disgrace.

Isaiah 26:19

> But Your dead will live, LORD. Their bodies will rise. Let those who live in the dust wake up and shout for joy!

Spiritual Principle

The death of Jesus broke the power of death.

LIII. INTO THE HOLY CITY

Matthew 27:53 — After His Resurrection

“After Jesus' resurrection they came out of the tombs, went into the holy city, and appeared to many people.”

After Jesus' resurrection.

Matthew is careful about the timing.

The tombs opened when Jesus died.

But the raised saints came out after Jesus rose.

Jesus is **the firstfruits** — the first to rise to never-ending life.

Everything else follows Him.

They came out of the tombs.

Went into the holy city.

The holy city is Jerusalem.

And appeared to many people.

They were witnesses.

Their appearance was a sign that Jesus had truly conquered the grave.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 15:20

> But Christ has truly been raised from the dead. He is the first of all those who will rise.

Colossians 1:18

> And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might be first.

Matthew 28:6

> He is not here. He has risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay.

Spiritual Principle

Because Jesus rose, His people will rise too.

LIV. "TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD!"

Matthew 27:54 — The Centurion's Confession

“When the centurion and those guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that happened, they were terrified and said, ‘Truly this was the Son of God!’”

When the centurion and those guarding Jesus.

A **centurion** was a Roman officer in charge of about one hundred soldiers.

He was probably in charge of the crucifixion.

Saw the earthquake and all that happened.

The darkness.

The cry.

The way Jesus died.

The earthquake.

They were terrified.

And said, ‘Truly this was the Son of God!’

This is amazing.

The religious leaders mocked Jesus as a false Son of God.

But a Gentile soldier declared Him to be the true Son of God.

At His birth, Gentile wise men came to worship Him.

At His death, Gentile soldiers confessed Him.

The gospel was already reaching beyond Israel to the nations.

Cross References

Mark 15:39

> And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how He died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”

Luke 23:47

> The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, “Surely this was a righteous man.”

Psalm 2:7

> I will announce what the LORD has decided. He said to Me, “You are My Son. Today I have become Your Father.”

Spiritual Principle

The cross reveals who Jesus truly is to those who are willing to see.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A Roman soldier saw at the cross what the religious leaders refused to see.

LV. THE WOMEN WATCHED

Matthew 27:55 — From a Distance

“Many women were there watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for Him—”

Many women were there.

The male disciples had fled.

John was there, according to his Gospel.

But Matthew tells us that **many women** stayed.

Watching from a distance.

They could not get close.

But they would not leave.

They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for Him.

Luke tells us these women supported Jesus and His disciples with their own money.

They had served Him in life.

Now they stayed with Him in death.

Their faithful presence is a beautiful testimony.

Cross References

Luke 8:3

> Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support Jesus and His followers out of their own money.

Mark 15:40

> Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome.

Psalm 38:11

> My friends and companions stay away because of my sickness. My neighbors stand far away.

Spiritual Principle

Faithful love stays near Jesus even when others run away.

LVI. THEIR NAMES

Matthew 27:56 — Mary Magdalene and the Others

“among them Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.”

Mary Magdalene.

She was from Magdala, a town on the Sea of Galilee.

Luke tells us Jesus had freed her from seven demons.

She would be the first to see the risen Lord.

Mary the mother of James and Joses.

Another faithful follower.

And the mother of Zebedee's sons.

This was the mother of James and John.

Earlier, she had asked Jesus to let her sons sit at His right and left in His kingdom.

Now she saw who was at His right and left — two criminals.

She was learning what Jesus' kingdom was really like.

These women are named because they were witnesses.

They saw Jesus die.

They would see where He was buried.

And they would be the first to find the empty tomb.

Cross References

Luke 24:10

> It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.

John 19:25

> Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother, His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

Matthew 20:20

> Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons. She knelt down and asked a favor of Him.

Spiritual Principle

God honors faithful followers by making them witnesses of His greatest works.

LVII. JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

Matthew 27:57 — A Rich Man

“As evening approached, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who had become a disciple of Jesus,”

As evening approached.

The Sabbath began at sunset.

Bodies could not be left hanging on a cross on the Sabbath, especially during the festival.

There was little time.

A rich man from Arimathea.

Arimathea was a town in Judea.

Isaiah had prophesied that the Servant would be **with the rich in His death.**

Named Joseph.

Mark and Luke tell us he was a respected member of the council.

Luke says he had not agreed with their decision.

Who had become a disciple of Jesus.

John tells us he had been a secret disciple, because he feared the Jewish leaders.

But now, at the darkest moment, he stepped forward.

When the bold disciples ran away, the secret disciple became bold.

Cross References

Mark 15:43

> Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

Luke 23:50

> Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the council. He was a good and upright man.

Isaiah 53:9

> He was given a grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death, even though He had done nothing violent and never spoke a lie.

Spiritual Principle

The darkest moments can bring out courage in hidden followers of Jesus.

LVIII. ASKING FOR THE BODY

Matthew 27:58 — Pilate Gave It

“went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate ordered that it be given to him.”

Went to Pilate.

This took courage.

Going to the Roman governor to ask for the body of a man executed as **King of the Jews** could be dangerous.

It would also anger the council.

And asked for Jesus' body.

Often the bodies of crucified criminals were left on the cross or thrown into a common grave.

Joseph wanted to give Jesus an honorable burial.

The law of Moses said that a body hanging on a tree must not be left overnight.

Pilate ordered that it be given to him.

Mark tells us Pilate was surprised Jesus had died so quickly.

He checked with the centurion first.

Jesus' death was confirmed by Roman officials.

Cross References

Mark 15:45

> When he learned from the centurion that it was true, he gave the body to Joseph.

John 19:38

> Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Joseph was a follower of Jesus, but secretly, because he was afraid of the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away.

Deuteronomy 21:23

> You must not leave the body hanging on the pole overnight. Be sure to bury it that same day, because anyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse.

Spiritual Principle

True love for Jesus is willing to take risks for Him.

LIX. CLEAN LINEN

Matthew 27:59 — Wrapped the Body

“Joseph took the body, wrapped it in clean linen,”

Joseph took the body.

He took Jesus down from the cross.

Wrapped it in clean linen.

John tells us Nicodemus helped him.

Nicodemus brought about seventy-five pounds of spices.

They wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in strips of linen, following Jewish burial customs.

These two respected leaders, who had once followed Jesus in secret, now cared for His body with love.

Cross References

John 19:40

> Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was the Jewish way of burying a body.

Mark 15:46

> So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

Luke 23:53

> Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth, and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, where no one had yet been laid.

Spiritual Principle

Love for Jesus serves Him with tenderness and care.

LX. A NEW TOMB

Matthew 27:60 — The Large Stone

“and placed it in his own new tomb that had been cut in the rock. He rolled a large stone in front of the entrance and went away.”

And placed it in his own new tomb.

Joseph gave Jesus his own tomb.

It was **new** — no one had ever been buried there.

John tells us the tomb was in a garden near the place of crucifixion.

That had been cut in the rock.

Wealthy families had tombs carved into the rock.

This fulfilled Isaiah's words that the Servant would be **with the rich in His death.**

He rolled a large stone in front of the entrance.

Many tombs were closed with a large, round stone that rolled in a groove.

It would take several men to move it.

And went away.

The work was done.

Jesus was buried.

It seemed like the end.

But it was a borrowed tomb.

And He would only need it for three days.

Cross References

John 19:41

> At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden. In the garden was a new tomb, where no one had ever been laid.

Isaiah 53:9

> He was given a grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death, even though He had done nothing violent and never spoke a lie.

Matthew 28:2

> There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven. He went to the tomb, rolled back the stone, and sat on it.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was truly buried, so that His resurrection would be truly seen.

Key Truth

Jesus only borrowed the tomb — He gave it back in three days.

LXI. SITTING OPPOSITE THE TOMB

Matthew 27:61 — Mary Magdalene and the Other Mary

“Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.”

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.

The faithful women stayed to the very end.

Were sitting there opposite the tomb.

They watched where Jesus was laid.

This detail is important.

On Sunday morning, these same women would return to the same tomb.

They did not go to the wrong place.

They knew exactly where Jesus had been buried.

And they would find it empty.

Cross References

Mark 15:47

> Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where He was laid.

Luke 23:55

> The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how His body was laid in it.

Matthew 28:1

> After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

Spiritual Principle

Faithful love waits near Jesus, even when all seems lost.

LXII. THE DAY AFTER PREPARATION DAY

Matthew 27:62 — Back to Pilate

“The next day, the day after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate.”

The next day.

This was the Sabbath.

The day after Preparation Day.

Preparation Day was Friday, the day people prepared for the Sabbath.

The chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate.

The leaders who were so strict about the Sabbath went to a Gentile ruler on the Sabbath to make sure Jesus stayed in the grave.

They were more worried about Jesus' words than He seemed to be in the tomb.

Jesus had said that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so the Son of Man would be in the heart of the earth.

Cross References

John 19:31

> Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.

Mark 15:42

> It was Preparation Day, the day before the Sabbath. So as evening approached.

Matthew 12:40

> For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' enemies remembered His promise to rise better than His friends did.

LXIII. "THAT DECEIVER SAID"

Matthew 27:63 — After Three Days I Will Rise

“They said, ‘Sir, we remember that while He was alive that deceiver said, “After three days I will rise again.”’”

Sir, we remember.

The leaders remembered what Jesus said.

The disciples, it seems, had forgotten — or did not understand.

That deceiver.

They called Jesus a liar and a fraud.

After three days I will rise again.

Jesus had said this many times.

He had promised it plainly.

Hosea had written that **on the third day He will raise us up.**

They feared that this promise might come true — or that someone would claim it had.

Cross References

Jonah 1:17

> Now the LORD sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights.

Matthew 16:21

> From that time on, Jesus began to explain to His followers that He must go to Jerusalem. There He would suffer many things from the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law. He would be killed and then be raised to life on the third day.

Hosea 6:2

> After two days He will give us new life. On the third day He will raise us up, so that we may live in His presence.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' promise to rise was so clear that even His enemies remembered it.

LXIV. MAKE THE TOMB SECURE

Matthew 27:64 — The Last Deception

“So give orders to make the tomb secure until the third day. Otherwise His disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people He has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.”

So give orders to make the tomb secure.

They wanted Roman help.

Until the third day.

They knew the timing Jesus had given.

Otherwise His disciples may come and steal the body.

This was their fear.

But the disciples were hiding, afraid.

They were not planning anything.

And tell the people He has been raised from the dead.

This last deception will be worse than the first.

The **first deception**, they thought, was Jesus' claim to be the Messiah.

The **last deception** would be the claim that He rose.

In trying to prevent a lie, they actually provided evidence for the truth.

A guarded, sealed tomb would make the empty tomb impossible to explain away.

Cross References

Daniel 6:17

> A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation could not be changed.

Matthew 28:13

> Telling them, “You are to say, ‘His followers came during the night and stole Him away while we were asleep.’”

2 Peter 2:20

> If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and then get tangled up in it again and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning.

Spiritual Principle

Every effort to stop God's truth ends up confirming it.

LXV. "YOU HAVE A GUARD"

Matthew 27:65 — As Secure as You Can

“‘You have a guard,’ Pilate answered. ‘Go, make the tomb as secure as you can.’”

You have a guard.

This could mean, **“Take a guard of soldiers,”** or **“You have your own temple guard.”**

Either way, the tomb would be guarded.

Go, make the tomb as secure as you can.

Pilate may have been tired of dealing with them.

As secure as you can.

Human beings would do their very best to keep Jesus in the tomb.

But no human power could hold Him.

Cross References

Matthew 28:4

> The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

Matthew 28:11

> While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the leading priests everything that had happened.

Nehemiah 4:9

> But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

Spiritual Principle

Human power cannot stop the plans of God.

LXVI. SEALED AND GUARDED

Matthew 27:66 — The Stone Sealed

“So they went and secured the tomb by sealing the stone and posting a guard.”

So they went and secured the tomb.

By sealing the stone.

A cord was probably stretched across the stone and fastened with clay or wax stamped with an official seal.

If anyone moved the stone, the seal would be broken.

It was like Daniel's den of lions, sealed by the king.

And posting a guard.

Soldiers stood watch.

Now the tomb was:

- Closed with a large stone.
- Sealed with an official seal.
- Guarded by armed men.

Everything humanly possible had been done to keep Jesus in the grave.

And on the third day, none of it would matter.

Cross References

Daniel 6:17

> A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation could not be changed.

Matthew 28:2

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven. He went to the tomb, rolled back the stone, and sat on it.

Job 38:14

The earth takes shape like clay under a seal. Its features stand out like the folds of a robe.

Spiritual Principle

No stone, seal, or guard can keep the Son of God in the grave.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

They sealed the tomb to keep Jesus in; God would open it to let the world see He was gone.

LXVII. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 27

1. Jesus Is Innocent yet Condemned

Human courts failed, but God's plan of salvation moved forward.

Judas, Pilate, and Pilate's wife all said that Jesus was innocent.

And still He was crucified.

Principle:

The Innocent One was condemned so that the guilty could be set free.

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2. Regret Without Repentance Destroys

Judas felt remorse but did not turn to the mercy of God.

Peter failed too, but he turned back.

Principle:

Do not stop at regret — run to Jesus for mercy.

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3. Mocked King, True King

The crown of thorns and the sign over the cross proclaim the real identity of Jesus.

What the soldiers meant as a joke was the truth.

Principle:

The One they mocked as King is the King of kings.

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4. The Cross Fulfills Scripture

Even the dividing of His garments and the insults were foretold.

Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, and Zechariah 11 all came true.

Principle:

God's Word is fulfilled in every detail.

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5. His Death Opens the Way to God

The torn temple curtain shows direct access to the Father through Christ.

No more separation for those who come through Him.

Principle:

Through Jesus, the way to God is open.

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6. Witnesses Abound

A Roman centurion, many women, and the sealed tomb all confirm the truth of these events.

Jesus truly died.

Jesus was truly buried.

And the stage was set for the empty tomb.

Principle:

The death of Jesus is a fact witnessed by friends and enemies alike.

LXVIII. WHO SAID JESUS WAS INNOCENT?

In Matthew 27, many people testified — some without meaning to — that Jesus had done nothing wrong.

Judas (Verse 4)

“I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.”

Pilate (Verse 23)

“Why? What crime has He committed?”

Pilate's Wife (Verse 19)

“Have nothing to do with that righteous man.”

Pilate Again (Verse 24)

“I am innocent of this man's blood.”

The Centurion (Verse 54)

“Truly this was the Son of God!”

Isaiah, Long Before (Isaiah 53:9)

He had done nothing violent and never spoke a lie.

Key Truth

Only a sinless Savior could die for the sins of others.

LXIX. PSALM 22 AND THE CROSS

About a thousand years before Jesus, David wrote Psalm 22.

It reads like an eyewitness account of the crucifixion.

“My God, My God, why have You left me alone?” (Psalm 22:1)

Fulfilled in Matthew 27:46.

“They insult me and shake their heads.” (Psalm 22:7)

Fulfilled in Matthew 27:39.

“Let the LORD rescue him.” (Psalm 22:8)

Fulfilled in Matthew 27:43.

“A gang of evil men circles around me.” (Psalm 22:16)

Fulfilled in Matthew 27:27.

“They have pierced my hands and my feet.” (Psalm 22:16)

Fulfilled in Matthew 27:35.

“People stare and look at me.” (Psalm 22:17)

Fulfilled in Matthew 27:36.

“They divide my clothes among them and throw dice for my robe.” (Psalm 22:18)

Fulfilled in Matthew 27:35.

The Psalm Ends in Victory

Psalm 22 does not end in death.

It ends with praise, with the nations turning to the LORD, and with these words:

The LORD has done this.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The psalm that begins with “My God, why?” ends with “The LORD has done this.”

LXX. WHAT MATTHEW 27 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 27 reveals many truths about Jesus.

The Innocent One

No one could name a single crime He committed.

The Silent Lamb

He did not open His mouth before His accusers.

The Substitute

Barabbas went free because Jesus took his place.

The True King

He wore a crown of thorns, but He is the King of kings.

The Curse-Bearer

He wore thorns, the sign of the curse, and hung on a tree for us.

The Fulfiller of Scripture

Every detail of His death was foretold.

The Savior Who Would Not Save Himself

He stayed on the cross so that He could save us.

The Forsaken Son

He was forsaken so that we would never be forsaken.

The One Who Laid Down His Life

He gave up His spirit; no one took it from Him.

The Way to God

His death tore the curtain and opened the way to the Father.

The Conqueror of Death

At His death, tombs opened and the dead were raised.

The Son of God

Even a Roman soldier declared it.

The One Who Was Truly Buried

He was laid in a rich man's tomb, sealed and guarded.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

At the cross, the world saw its greatest crime and God's greatest love.

LXXI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the Jewish leaders bring Jesus to Pilate?

Under Roman rule, they did not have the power to carry out a death sentence themselves.

Question 2

What is the difference between Judas' regret and true repentance?

Judas was sorry for what he did, but he did not turn to God for mercy. True repentance turns to God and receives His forgiveness.

Question 3

What did the priests do with the thirty silver coins?

They used them to buy the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. It became known as the Field of Blood.

Question 4

What charge did the leaders bring before Pilate?

They presented Jesus as a political king — a threat to Caesar.

Question 5

Why was Pilate amazed?

Because Jesus did not answer a single charge against Him.

Question 6

Who was Barabbas, and why is his release important?

He was a well-known prisoner involved in a violent uprising and murder. He went free while Jesus died — a picture of Jesus taking the place of the guilty.

Question 7

What warning did Pilate's wife give him?

She told him to have nothing to do with that righteous man, because she had suffered in a dream about Him.

Question 8

Why did Pilate wash his hands?

To declare that he was not responsible for Jesus' death. But he was still responsible, because he had the power to release Jesus and did not.

Question 9

How should we understand the words “His blood be on us and on our children”?

They were spoken by an angry crowd that day. They do not place guilt on all Jewish people or future generations. All people share responsibility for Jesus' death, and His blood offers forgiveness to all who believe.

Question 10

What does the crown of thorns represent?

Thorns came from the curse after Adam's sin. Jesus wore the curse so that we could be set free from it.

Question 11

What Old Testament psalm is fulfilled again and again in this chapter?

Psalm 22.

Question 12

Why did Jesus not come down from the cross?

Because He came to save others. To save us, He would not save Himself.

Question 13

What did Jesus mean when He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

He was bearing our sin and the separation from God that sin brings. He was also praying Psalm 22, which ends in victory.

Question 14

What did the tearing of the temple curtain mean?

It showed that the way into God's presence was now open through the death of Jesus.

Question 15

What did the centurion say?

“Truly this was the Son of God!”

Question 16

Why did the leaders seal and guard the tomb?

They remembered Jesus' promise to rise after three days and wanted to keep the disciples from stealing the body.

Question 17

What should Matthew 27 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 27 should cause believers to live:

- Running to God for mercy when they sin.
- Refusing to go along with the crowd against Jesus.
- Taking responsibility rather than washing their hands.
- Grateful that Jesus took their place.
- Honoring Jesus as the true King.
- Trusting God's Word, which is fulfilled in every detail.
- Coming boldly to God through the opened way.
- Standing near Jesus, like the faithful women.
- Showing courage, like Joseph of Arimathea.
- Rejecting every kind of hatred or blame against the Jewish people.
- Confident that no stone or seal can stop God's plan.

LXXII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 27 asks several important questions.

Have I Turned to Jesus for Mercy, or Am I Stuck in Regret?

Am I Trying to Wash My Hands of Responsibility for My Sin?

What Will I Do with Jesus?

Am I Being Influenced by the Crowd Instead of by the Truth?

Do I See Myself as Barabbas — Guilty, but Set Free?

Do I Honor Jesus as King in My Life?

Have I Come Through the Torn Curtain into God's Presence?

When Others Run Away, Will I Stay Near Jesus?

Am I a Secret Follower Who Needs to Become Bold?

Do I Believe That Jesus' Death Really Paid for My Sins?

Am I Living Like Someone Who Knows the Tomb Will Be Empty?

A Word of Care

The story of Judas is very sad.

If you ever feel the kind of guilt or despair that makes you feel there is no way forward, please do not carry it alone.

Talk to a pastor, a trusted friend, or a counselor.

In the United States, you can call or text **988** at any time to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

The message of the cross is that there is always mercy and always hope in Jesus.

LXXIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Torn Curtain”

For hundreds of years, a curtain hung in the temple.

It was thick.

It was tall.

It separated sinful people from the presence of a holy God.

Only one man could go behind it.

Only one day a year.

Only with blood.

The message of the curtain was clear:

“You cannot come in.”

But at the moment Jesus died, God tore the curtain from top to bottom.

Not from bottom to top, as if man tore it.

But from top to bottom, because God did it.

And the message changed:

“Now you may come in.”

Through the body and blood of Jesus, the way is open.

Not just for priests.

Not just once a year.

But for anyone, at any time, who comes through Jesus.

You do not need to stand outside.

You do not need to be afraid.

You can come boldly to the throne of grace.

Principle:

God tore the curtain so that you could come home.

LXXIV. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 27 is the darkest chapter in the Gospel.

It begins with Jesus bound and handed over.

Judas, filled with regret, throws the silver into the temple and ends his life.

Pilate questions Jesus, but Jesus stands silent.

Pilate knows Jesus is innocent.

His wife warns him.

Still, he gives the crowd a choice — and they choose Barabbas.

Pilate washes his hands, but he cannot wash away his guilt.

The soldiers mock Jesus with a robe, a reed, and a crown of thorns.

They lead Him to Golgotha and nail Him to a cross.

Above His head, the sign reads: **THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

The crowds mock.

The leaders mock.

The criminals mock.

“He saved others, but He can't save Himself.”

Darkness covers the land.

Jesus cries, **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”**

Then He cries out again and gives up His spirit.

The curtain tears.

The earth shakes.

Tombs open.

A Roman soldier says, **“Truly this was the Son of God!”**

A rich man named Joseph lays the body in his own new tomb.

The faithful women watch.

And the tomb is sealed and guarded.

It looks like the end.

But it is not.

Because the One who died is the Son of God.

And the third day is coming.

So today:

Stand at the cross and see what your sin cost.

Stand at the cross and see how much you are loved.

Do not stop at regret — run to Jesus for mercy.

Do not wash your hands of Him — give Him your life.

Remember that you are Barabbas, set free because Jesus took your place.

Come boldly through the torn curtain into God's presence.

And until He returns:

Live as one who knows the tomb could not hold Him.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the cross.

Thank You for sending Your Son to die for us.

Lord Jesus, You were innocent, yet You were condemned.

You were silent before Your accusers.

You let the guilty go free and took their place.

We confess that we are Barabbas.

We deserved to die, but You died for us.

Thank You for wearing the crown of thorns.

Thank You for carrying the curse of our sin.

Thank You for not coming down from the cross, so that You could save us.

Thank You for being forsaken, so that we would never be forsaken.

Thank You for saying, “It is finished,” so that there is nothing left for us to pay.

Father, thank You for tearing the curtain.

Thank You that we can come into Your presence through Jesus.

Keep us from the kind of regret that turns away from You.

When we sin, help us run to You for mercy.

Keep us from washing our hands of responsibility.

Keep us from following the crowd against You.

Give us the faithful love of the women who stayed near the cross.

Give us the courage of Joseph, who stepped forward when others hid.

Remove from our hearts any hatred or blame toward others, and fill us with Your love for all people.

Thank You that no stone, no seal, and no guard could keep You in the grave.

We wait with hope for the third day.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.” — Matthew 27:51

Central Truth

Jesus, the innocent Son of God and true King, was rejected, mocked, and crucified in fulfillment of Scripture, and through His death He opened the way to God for all who believe.

Matthew 27 in One Sentence

Jesus is handed over to Pilate, rejected in favor of Barabbas, mocked as King, and crucified between two criminals; He cries out to God, gives up His spirit as the temple curtain is torn and a Roman soldier confesses Him as the Son of God, and is buried in a rich man's tomb that is sealed and guarded — but cannot hold Him.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 28 — The Resurrection and the Great Commission

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 27 ended at a tomb.

Jesus had been crucified.

His body had been wrapped in linen and laid in Joseph's new tomb.

A large stone covered the entrance.

The stone was sealed.

Soldiers stood guard.

The leaders were sure it was over.

The disciples were hiding in fear.

The women were grieving.

It seemed that death had won.

But Matthew Chapter 28 begins with a new day.

The first day of the week.

And everything changes.

There is an earthquake.

An angel rolls back the stone.

The guards fall down like dead men.

And the angel speaks the greatest news ever announced:

“He is not here; He has risen, just as He said!”

The women run with fear and joy.

Jesus Himself meets them.

The guards are paid to spread a lie.

And on a mountain in Galilee, the risen Jesus gives His followers their mission:

“Go and make disciples of all nations.”

And He gives them His promise:

“I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28 is a short chapter.

But it is the chapter that gives meaning to all the others.

Without the resurrection, the cross would be only a tragedy.

With the resurrection, the cross is the greatest victory in history.

Paul wrote that if Christ has not been raised, our faith is useless.

But Christ **has** been raised.

Matthew 28 therefore shows two great truths:

Jesus truly rose from the dead, just as He said.

And:

The risen Jesus, who has all authority, sends His followers into all the world and promises to be with them always.

The central truth of Matthew 28 is:

Jesus Christ rose from the dead in victory over sin and death, and with all authority in heaven and on earth, He sends His followers to make disciples of all nations, promising to be with them always.

I. AT DAWN ON THE FIRST DAY

Matthew 28:1 — The Women Went to the Tomb

“At dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.”

At dawn on the first day of the week.

The Sabbath was over.

It was early Sunday morning.

The sun was just beginning to rise.

This is why Christians have gathered for worship on Sunday, **the Lord's Day**, since the earliest days of the church.

Every Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.

These were the same women who watched Jesus die.

The same women who sat opposite the tomb when He was buried.

They were the last at the cross and the first at the tomb.

Went to see the tomb.

Mark and Luke tell us they brought spices to anoint His body.

They were not expecting a resurrection.

They came to mourn.

They came to serve a dead body.

But they would meet a living Lord.

Cross References

Mark 16:1

> When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they could go and anoint Jesus' body.

Luke 24:1

> Very early in the morning on the first day of the week, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

John 20:1

> Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the entrance.

Spiritual Principle

Those who stay faithful to Jesus in sorrow are the first to see His glory.

II. AN ANGEL ROLLED BACK THE STONE

Matthew 28:2 — A Violent Earthquake

“Suddenly there was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled back the stone, and sat on it.”

Suddenly there was a violent earthquake.

When Jesus died, the earth shook.

Now, at His resurrection, the earth shook again.

Creation trembled at both His death and His victory.

For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven.

God sent a messenger from heaven.

Rolled back the stone.

The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out.

Jesus had already risen.

The stone was rolled away to let the witnesses in.

And sat on it.

This is a wonderful picture.

The stone that was meant to keep Jesus in the grave became a seat for an angel.

The seal of Rome was broken.

The power of death was broken.

The angel sat on the stone as a sign of victory.

Cross References

Matthew 27:51

> At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.

Mark 16:4

> But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled away.

Luke 24:4

> While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.

Spiritual Principle

The stone was rolled away not to let Jesus out, but to let us see that He was gone.

Key Truth

The stone that sealed the grave became a seat of victory.

III. LIKE LIGHTNING

Matthew 28:3 — White as Snow

“His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow.”

His appearance was like lightning.

The angel shone with the brightness of heaven.

Daniel saw a heavenly messenger whose face was like lightning.

And his clothes were as white as snow.

White is the color of purity and glory.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus' clothes became dazzling white.

John saw the risen Jesus with hair as white as snow.

Heaven had come to the tomb.

Cross References

Daniel 10:6

> His body was like a precious stone, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like shining bronze, and his voice like the sound of a crowd.

Mark 9:3

> His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.

Revelation 1:14

> The hair on His head was white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like a blazing fire.

Spiritual Principle

The resurrection is the shining glory of heaven breaking into our world.

IV. LIKE DEAD MEN

Matthew 28:4 — The Guards Trembled

“The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men.”

The guards were so afraid.

These were trained soldiers.

They were not easily frightened.

But no soldier can stand before the power of heaven.

That they trembled.

And became like dead men.

What irony!

The guards were sent to watch a dead man.

But the dead man was alive.

And the guards became like dead men.

When Daniel saw his vision, his strength left him.

When John saw the risen Jesus, he fell at His feet as though dead.

The power of God turns everything upside down.

Cross References

Daniel 10:7

> I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision. The men with me did not see it, but they were so terrified that they ran away and hid.

Revelation 1:17

> When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though I were dead. Then He placed His right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.”

Matthew 17:6

> When the followers heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified.

Spiritual Principle

No human power can stand against the power of God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The guards came to watch a dead man, but the living Lord made them look like dead men.

V. DO NOT BE AFRAID

Matthew 28:5 — Looking for Jesus

“The angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.’”

The angel said to the women.

The guards trembled.

But the angel spoke gently to the women.

Do not be afraid.

These words are spoken again and again in the Bible when God or His messengers appear.

The angel told Gideon, **“Do not be afraid.”**

The angel told Zechariah, **“Do not be afraid.”**

The angel told the shepherds at Jesus' birth, **“Do not be afraid.”**

The same message that began the Gospel story now announces its victory.

The resurrection is terrifying to God's enemies.

But it is good news to those who love Jesus.

I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.

The angel knew their hearts.

They had come for Jesus.

And God honored them for it.

Cross References

Judges 6:23

> But the LORD said to him, “Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.”

Luke 1:13

> But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son, and you are to name him John.”

Luke 2:10

> But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.”

Spiritual Principle

The resurrection that terrifies God's enemies brings peace to God's people.

VI. HE HAS RISEN!

Matthew 28:6 — Just as He Said

“He is not here; He has risen, just as He said! Come, see the place where He lay.”

He is not here.

These may be the most wonderful words ever spoken at a grave.

At every other grave, people say, **“Here lies...”**

At Jesus' grave, the angel said, **“He is not here.”**

He has risen.

Jesus is alive.

Not as a ghost.

Not as a memory.

Not as an idea.

His body was raised to new, glorious, never-ending life.

Just as He said!

Jesus had told His disciples again and again that He would rise on the third day.

Every promise He made came true.

If He kept this promise, He will keep every other promise too.

Come, see the place where He lay.

The angel invited them to look.

The resurrection is not a fairy tale.

It is a fact that can be examined.

The tomb was empty.

The body was gone.

The grave clothes, John tells us, were still lying there.

Cross References

Mark 16:6

> “Don't be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.”

Isaiah 26:19

> But Your dead will live, LORD. Their bodies will rise. Let those who live in the dust wake up and shout for joy!

Psalm 16:10

> Because You will not leave me in the grave. You will not let Your faithful one rot in the grave.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus rose just as He said, so we can trust everything He says.

Key Truth

Every other grave says, “Here lies.” Jesus' grave says, “He is not here.”

VII. GO QUICKLY AND TELL

Matthew 28:7 — Going Ahead of You into Galilee

“Then go quickly and tell His disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him.’ Now I have told you.”

Then go quickly.

The good news cannot wait.

And tell His disciples.

The women became the first messengers of the resurrection.

In that culture, the testimony of women was often not taken seriously.

Yet God chose women to be the first witnesses.

This is one reason many people believe the account is true.

If someone were making up the story, they would not have chosen women as the first witnesses.

He has risen from the dead.

And is going ahead of you into Galilee.

On the night before He died, Jesus had promised, **“After I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”**

Even though the disciples had abandoned Him, He was still going to meet them.

There you will see Him.

Now I have told you.

The angel's message was complete.

Cross References

Mark 16:7

> But go, tell His followers and Peter, “He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you.”

Matthew 26:32

> But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.

John 21:1

> Afterward Jesus appeared again to His followers, by the Sea of Galilee.

Spiritual Principle

Those who meet the risen Christ are sent to tell others.

VIII. FEAR AND GREAT JOY

Matthew 28:8 — They Ran to Tell

“They hurried away from the tomb, filled with both fear and great joy, and ran to tell His disciples.”

They hurried away from the tomb.

They obeyed at once.

Filled with both fear and great joy.

Both feelings at once.

Fear — they had seen an angel and an empty tomb.

Great joy — Jesus was alive!

The resurrection is so wonderful that it fills the heart with awe and gladness at the same time.

And ran to tell His disciples.

They did not walk.

They ran.

Good news makes people run.

Cross References

Luke 24:9

> When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.

Mark 16:8

> Trembling and confused, the women went out and ran from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

John 20:18

> Mary Magdalene went to the followers with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that He had said these things to her.

Spiritual Principle

The good news of the resurrection is too wonderful to keep to ourselves.

IX. JESUS MET THEM

Matthew 28:9 — They Worshiped Him

“Suddenly Jesus met them. ‘Greetings,’ He said. They came to Him, clasped His feet, and worshiped Him.”

Suddenly Jesus met them.

While they were running to obey, Jesus Himself appeared.

Jesus meets those who are obeying Him.

Greetings.

A simple, ordinary greeting.

The risen Lord of the universe said, in effect, **“Good morning.”**

They came to Him, clasped His feet.

They held on to His feet.

This shows that Jesus was not a ghost.

He had a real body.

They could touch Him.

And worshiped Him.

They bowed down before Him.

Jesus did not stop them.

He accepted their worship, because He is God.

This was the right response to the risen Christ.

Cross References

John 20:14

> At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

Luke 24:39

> Look at My hands and My feet. It is I Myself! Touch Me and see. A ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.

1 Corinthians 15:6

> After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time. Most of them are still living, though some have died.

Spiritual Principle

The right response to the risen Jesus is worship.

X. TELL MY BROTHERS

Matthew 28:10 — They Will See Me

“Then Jesus said, ‘Do not be afraid. Go tell My brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.’”

Do not be afraid.

Jesus repeated the angel's words.

Go tell My brothers.

This is amazing.

Jesus called the disciples **My brothers.**

These were the men who had run away.

Peter had denied Him three times.

All of them had abandoned Him.

And yet Jesus did not call them **cowards** or **traitors.**

He called them **brothers.**

This is grace.

Psalm 22, the psalm of the cross, says, **“I will declare Your name to My brothers.”**

Hebrews says Jesus **is not ashamed to call them brothers.**

To go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.

Jesus wanted to meet them again.

The relationship was not broken.

It was being restored.

Cross References

John 20:17

> Jesus said, “Do not hold on to Me, for I have not yet gone up to the Father. Go instead to My brothers and tell them, ‘I am going up to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.’”

Psalm 22:22

> I will tell my brothers and sisters about Your name. I will praise You when Your people gather together.

Hebrews 2:11

> Both the One who makes people holy and those who are made holy belong to the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls failed followers His brothers and invites them back.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

After the resurrection, Jesus' first word for those who failed Him was not “traitors” but “brothers.”

XI. THE GUARDS REPORTED

Matthew 28:11 — Everything That Happened

“While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported everything that had happened to the chief priests.”

While the women were on their way.

Two groups were running from the tomb at the same time.

The women ran to tell the truth.

The guards ran to report to the leaders.

Some of the guards went into the city.

They went to the chief priests, not to Pilate.

This suggests they may have been the temple guard, or Roman soldiers assigned to help the priests.

And reported everything that had happened.

The guards told the truth.

The earthquake.

The angel.

The stone rolled away.

The empty tomb.

The leaders heard the evidence from their own guards.

Cross References

Matthew 27:65

> “You have a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you can.”

Matthew 27:66

> So they went and secured the tomb by sealing the stone and posting a guard.

John 11:47

> Then the leading priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. “What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man doing many signs.”

Spiritual Principle

Even the enemies of Jesus became witnesses to His resurrection.

XII. A LARGE SUM OF MONEY

Matthew 28:12 — The Leaders' Plan

“After the priests met with the elders and discussed it, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money,”

After the priests met with the elders and discussed it.

They heard the truth.

But instead of believing, they made a plan.

They gave the soldiers a large sum of money.

Money was used to start the plot against Jesus.

Now money was used to hide the truth about Him.

Thirty pieces of silver bought His betrayal.

A large sum of money tried to buy silence about His resurrection.

Cross References

Matthew 26:15

> And asked, “What will you give me if I deliver Him to you?” So they counted out thirty pieces of silver.

Matthew 27:6

> The chief priests picked up the coins and said, “It's not lawful to put this money into the temple treasury; it's blood money.”

Proverbs 17:23

> A wicked person secretly accepts a bribe to twist the way of justice.

Spiritual Principle

Money can buy a lie, but it cannot change the truth.

XIII. THE STOLEN BODY STORY

Matthew 28:13 — While We Were Asleep

“telling them, ‘You are to say, “His disciples came during the night and stole Him away while we were asleep.”’”

You are to say.

The leaders told the guards what to say.

His disciples came during the night and stole Him away.

This is exactly what the leaders had feared would be claimed.

Now they used it as their own explanation.

While we were asleep.

This story has serious problems.

First, if the guards were asleep, how could they know who took the body?

Second, Roman guards could be severely punished for sleeping on duty.

Third, the disciples were frightened and hiding.

They did not have the courage to fight past armed guards.

Fourth, the disciples later suffered and many died for saying Jesus was alive.

People do not give their lives for something they know is a lie.

Fifth, the guards had already reported the truth to the priests.

The stolen body story was a cover-up.

Cross References

Matthew 27:64

> So give orders to make the tomb secure until the third day. Otherwise His disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people He has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.

John 20:2

> So she came running to Simon Peter and the other follower, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put Him!”

Psalm 35:11

> Cruel witnesses come forward. They question me about things I know nothing about.

Spiritual Principle

The lies told against the resurrection only show how strong the truth is.

XIV. "WE WILL KEEP YOU OUT OF TROUBLE"

Matthew 28:14 — If the Governor Hears

“If the governor hears about this, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.”

If the governor hears about this.

The guards were afraid.

Failing at their duty could mean punishment, or even death.

We will satisfy him.

The leaders promised to handle Pilate — perhaps with more money or persuasion.

And keep you out of trouble.

The leaders who had pressured Pilate to crucify Jesus would now pressure him to ignore the empty tomb.

Lies often require more lies.

One cover-up leads to another.

Cross References

Matthew 27:24

> Seeing that it was going nowhere and that a riot was starting, Pilate took water and washed his hands before the crowd. “I am innocent of this man's blood,” he said. “See to it yourselves.”

John 19:12

> From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free. But the Jewish leaders kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king is against Caesar.”

Acts 4:27

> It is true that Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city. They plotted against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed.

Spiritual Principle

One lie usually needs another to protect it.

XV. TO THIS VERY DAY

Matthew 28:15 — The Story Spread

“So the soldiers took the money and did as they were told. This story has been spread among the Jews to this very day.”

So the soldiers took the money.

Money was more important to them than the truth.

And did as they were told.

They spread the lie.

This story has been spread among the Jews to this very day.

When Matthew wrote his Gospel, this story was still being told.

Matthew wanted his readers to know where it came from.

It is important to read these words fairly.

Matthew himself was Jewish.

So were Jesus, His disciples, and the first thousands of believers in Jerusalem.

Matthew is not speaking against the Jewish people.

He is explaining the source of one particular false story that was being told in his day.

And the same truth applies to every person in every nation:

Each of us must decide whether to believe the truth of the resurrection or a story that explains it away.

Cross References

Matthew 27:8

> That's why it has been called “Field of Blood” to this day.

Titus 1:14

> And will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth.

Acts 28:24

> Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.

Spiritual Principle

Every person must choose between the truth of the resurrection and the stories that deny it.

XVI. TO THE MOUNTAIN IN GALILEE

Matthew 28:16 — The Eleven Disciples

“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.”

Then the eleven disciples.

There had been twelve.

Now there were eleven.

Judas was gone.

The number reminds us of the betrayal.

But the eleven who remained were about to become the foundation of the church.

Went to Galilee.

They obeyed Jesus' instructions.

Galilee was where it all began.

Jesus had called them by the Sea of Galilee.

Now He would send them out from Galilee.

To the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

Mountains are important in Matthew's Gospel.

Jesus was tempted on a mountain.

He taught the Sermon on the Mount.

He was transfigured on a mountain.

He gave the Olivet Discourse on the Mount of Olives.

And now He would give the Great Commission on a mountain.

Like Moses receiving God's law on Mount Sinai, the disciples would receive their mission on a mountain.

Cross References

Exodus 24:12

> The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and stay here. I will give you the tablets of stone with the law and commands I have written for teaching the people.”

Matthew 5:1

> When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a hill and sat down. His followers came to Him.

Matthew 17:1

> After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John the brother of James with Him. He led them up a high mountain by themselves.

Spiritual Principle

When we go where Jesus tells us, we will meet Him there.

XVII. WORSHIP AND DOUBT

Matthew 28:17 — Some Still Doubted

“When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some still doubted.”

When they saw Him.

The risen Jesus appeared to them.

They worshiped Him.

They bowed down before Him, as the women had.

But some still doubted.

This is an honest detail.

Matthew does not hide it.

Even standing before the risen Jesus, some were unsure.

The Greek word means **to hesitate** or **to be of two minds.**

It may mean they were not sure what to do, or they struggled to believe what they were seeing.

Thomas had doubted until he saw Jesus' wounds.

Luke tells us some disciples could not believe **because of joy and amazement.**

Here is the encouraging part:

Jesus did not send the doubters away.

He came closer.

He spoke to all of them.

And He gave the Great Commission to the worshipers and the doubters alike.

Cross References

John 20:24

> Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, also called Didymus, was not with the followers when Jesus came.

Luke 24:41

> And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, He asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?”

Mark 16:14

> Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating. He scolded them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

A Note on Mark 16:14 and 16:15

Mark 16:9–20 is not found in the two oldest complete Greek manuscripts of Mark. It is found in many others, and most Bibles include it with a note. The truths in these verses are taught clearly elsewhere in Scripture, including here in Matthew 28.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus welcomes worshipers who still struggle with doubt.

Key Truth

Doubt does not disqualify you from following Jesus; it invites you to come closer to Him.

XVIII. ALL AUTHORITY

Matthew 28:18 — In Heaven and on Earth

“Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.’”

Jesus came to them.

Jesus moved toward them.

Toward the worshipers.

Toward the doubters.

All authority.

Not some.

Not most.

All.

In heaven and on earth.

Over angels and demons.

Over nations and rulers.

Over sickness and death.

Over every person and every place.

Has been given to Me.

The Father gave it to the Son.

Daniel had seen one like a son of man who was given **authority, glory, and a kingdom** that would never end.

Now Jesus says that this has happened.

In the wilderness, Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if He would bow down to him.

Jesus refused.

He took the way of the cross instead.

And now, through the cross and resurrection, He has received far more than Satan offered.

Cross References

Daniel 7:14

> He was given authority, glory, and a kingdom. All peoples, nations, and people of every language worshiped Him. His rule will last forever and will never pass away. His kingdom will never be destroyed.

John 3:35

> The Father loves the Son and has put everything in His hands.

Ephesians 1:22

> And God placed all things under His feet and made Him the head over everything for the church.

Spiritual Principle

The risen Jesus has all authority, so His people can go with confidence.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus refused the devil's shortcut to the kingdoms of the world and received all authority through the cross.

XIX. GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES

Matthew 28:19 — Of All Nations

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,”

Therefore.

Because Jesus has all authority.

His command rests on His authority.

Go.

The disciples were not to wait for people to come to them.

They were to go to the people.

The Greek suggests **“as you go”** or **“having gone.”**

Wherever life takes us, we are to make disciples.

And make disciples.

This is the main command.

Not just converts.

Disciples — learners and followers of Jesus who grow to be like Him.

Of all nations.

Earlier, Jesus had sent the disciples only to the lost sheep of Israel.

Now the mission goes to every people group in the world.

God's promise to Abraham — that all nations would be blessed through him — was being fulfilled.

Baptizing them.

Baptism is the public sign of becoming a follower of Jesus.

It pictures dying to the old life and rising to new life with Christ.

Christians practice baptism in different ways and understand some details of it differently.

But all agree that Jesus commanded it.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Notice the word **name** — singular.

Not **names**, but **name.**

One God.

Three Persons.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This is one of the clearest statements of the Trinity in the Bible.

Cross References

Mark 16:15

> He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to everyone.”

Luke 24:47

> And that turning away from sin for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 13:14

> May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Spiritual Principle

Every follower of Jesus is called to help make more followers of Jesus.

XX. I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS

Matthew 28:20 — To the Very End of the Age

“and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

And teaching them.

Making disciples does not end with baptism.

It continues with teaching.

To obey everything I have commanded you.

Not just to know Jesus' commands.

But to **obey** them.

And not just some commands.

Everything.

All the teaching we have studied in Matthew — the Sermon on the Mount, the parables, the warnings, the call to love God and neighbor.

And surely I am with you always.

This is the greatest promise in the Gospel.

At the beginning of Matthew, Jesus was called **Immanuel**, which means **“God with us.”**

Now, at the end, Jesus says, **“I am with you always.”**

The Gospel of Matthew begins and ends with God with us.

To the very end of the age.

Not just for a while.

Not only in good times.

Always.

Until the end of this age, when He returns in glory.

We do not go alone.

The One with all authority goes with us.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 31:6

> Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you. He will never leave you or abandon you.

Acts 1:8

> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. And you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Matthew 18:20

> For where two or three gather in My name, I am there with them.

Spiritual Principle

The One who sends us goes with us.

Key Truth

Matthew begins with “God with us” and ends with “I am with you always.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You will never go anywhere for Jesus where Jesus is not already with you.

XXI. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 28

1. The Resurrection Is Real

The empty tomb and eyewitnesses confirm that Jesus rose from the dead.

The women saw Him.

The guards reported it.

The disciples worshiped Him.

Principle:

Jesus is alive, just as He said.

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2. Fear Turned to Joy

Those who trusted Jesus saw sorrow replaced with hope.

The women came weeping and left running with joy.

Principle:

The resurrection turns mourning into joy.

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3. The Gospel Cannot Be Stopped

Though lies were spread, the truth of the resurrection spread across the world.

A stone, a seal, guards, and a bribe could not stop it.

Principle:

No lie can bury the truth of the risen Christ.

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4. The Great Commission

Every believer is called to go, make disciples, baptize, and teach obedience to Christ's commands.

This is not only for pastors or missionaries.

It is for all of Jesus' followers.

Principle:

Every disciple is called to make disciples.

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5. Jesus Is with Us Always

His presence and authority empower His people until the end of the age.

We never serve Him alone.

Principle:

The risen Christ goes with us wherever He sends us.

XXII. EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION IN MATTHEW 28

Matthew gives his readers many reasons to believe that Jesus truly rose from the dead.

The Empty Tomb (Verse 6)

The angel invited the women to see the place where He lay. The body was gone.

The Guards (Verses 4, 11)

Trained soldiers saw the angel, trembled, and reported what happened.

The Women Witnesses (Verses 1, 8–10)

The first witnesses were women — not the witnesses someone inventing a story in that culture would have chosen.

A Physical Body (Verse 9)

The women clasped His feet. He was not a ghost.

The Cover-Up (Verses 12–15)

The leaders did not deny the tomb was empty. They paid for a story to explain it.

The Changed Disciples (Verses 16–20)

Frightened men who ran away became bold witnesses who carried the message to the world.

Jesus' Own Words (Verse 6)

“Just as He said.” He predicted it, and it happened.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The enemies of Jesus could explain away the empty tomb, but they could never produce His body.

XXIII. THE GREAT COMMISSION

Jesus' final words in Matthew give His church its mission.

The Authority — “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.”

We go because Jesus rules over everything.

The Command — “Make disciples.”

Not just converts, but lifelong followers of Jesus.

The Method — “Go,” “baptizing,” “teaching.”

We go to people, welcome them into God's family, and teach them to obey Jesus.

The Scope — “All nations.”

Every people group, every language, every place on earth.

The Goal — “To obey everything I have commanded you.”

Changed lives that follow Jesus.

The Promise — “I am with you always.”

We never go alone.

Key Truth

The Great Commission begins with Christ's authority and ends with Christ's presence.

XXIV. WHAT MATTHEW 28 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 28 reveals many truths about Jesus.

The Risen Lord

He is alive, raised from the dead in a real body.

The Promise Keeper

He rose **“just as He said.”**

The Conqueror of Death

No stone, seal, or guard could hold Him.

The One Who Is Worshiped

The women and the disciples worshiped Him, and He accepted their worship.

The Gracious Brother

He called His failed disciples **“My brothers.”**

The Faithful Shepherd

He went ahead of His scattered sheep into Galilee to gather them again.

The Patient Lord

He came near to those who doubted.

The King with All Authority

All authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Him.

The Sender

He sends His people to all nations.

The Son in the Trinity

He shares the one name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Immanuel, God with Us

He is with His people always, to the end of the age.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The baby called Immanuel in Matthew 1 is the risen King who says “I am with you always” in Matthew 28.

XXV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

When did the women go to the tomb?

At dawn on the first day of the week — Sunday morning.

Question 2

Why was the stone rolled away?

Not to let Jesus out, but to let the witnesses see that the tomb was empty.

Question 3

What happened to the guards?

They were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men.

Question 4

What did the angel tell the women?

Do not be afraid. Jesus is not here; He has risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay, then go and tell His disciples.

Question 5

Why is it important that women were the first witnesses?

In that culture, women's testimony was often not taken seriously. If someone were inventing the story, they would not have chosen women. This points to the truthfulness of the account.

Question 6

What two feelings did the women have as they left the tomb?

Fear and great joy.

Question 7

How did the women respond when they met Jesus?

They clasped His feet and worshiped Him.

Question 8

What did Jesus call His disciples?

“My brothers” — even though they had abandoned Him.

Question 9

What story did the leaders pay the guards to tell?

That the disciples came at night and stole the body while the guards were asleep.

Question 10

What are some problems with the stolen body story?

Sleeping guards could not know who took the body; the disciples were afraid and hiding; and the disciples later suffered and died for saying Jesus was alive.

Question 11

What did some of the disciples do when they saw Jesus on the mountain?

They worshiped Him, but some still doubted.

Question 12

How much authority has been given to Jesus?

All authority in heaven and on earth.

Question 13

What is the main command of the Great Commission?

Make disciples of all nations.

Question 14

What does “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” teach?

It shows that there is one God (one name) in three Persons — the Trinity.

Question 15

What is the final promise of Matthew's Gospel?

“I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Question 16

What should Matthew 28 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 28 should cause believers to live:

- Confident that Jesus is alive.
- Trusting every promise He has made.
- Filled with joy, even in sorrow.
- Worshiping the risen Lord.
- Quick to share the good news.
- Grateful that Jesus welcomes back those who fail.
- Honest about their doubts, and bringing them to Jesus.
- Under the authority of Christ in every area of life.
- Making disciples wherever they go.
- Teaching others to obey Jesus.
- Never feeling alone, because Jesus is always with them.

XXVI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 28 asks several important questions.

Do I Truly Believe That Jesus Rose from the Dead?

Am I Looking for Jesus Among the Dead, or Do I Know Him as Living?

Has the Resurrection Turned My Fear into Joy?

Am I Quick to Tell Others That Jesus Is Alive?

Do I Worship the Risen Jesus?

Do I Believe Jesus Can Welcome Me Back When I Fail?

Have I Believed a Story That Explains Jesus Away?

Do I Bring My Doubts to Jesus?

Do I Live Under Jesus' Authority in Every Area of My Life?

Who Am I Helping to Become a Disciple of Jesus?

Am I Obeying Everything Jesus Commanded?

Do I Live as If Jesus Is Really with Me Always?

XXVII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Just as He Said”

The angel at the tomb said three powerful words:

“Just as He said.”

Jesus said He would be handed over.

He was.

Jesus said He would be crucified.

He was.

Jesus said He would rise on the third day.

He did.

Every word came true.

This means we can trust every other word Jesus has spoken.

He said, **“I will never leave you.”**

He said, **“I am with you always.”**

He said, **“I will come again.”**

He said, **“Since I live, you will live too.”**

If Jesus kept His promise to rise from the dead, He will keep every promise He has made to you.

The empty tomb is God's guarantee that the words of Jesus can be trusted.

Principle:

Because Jesus rose “just as He said,” every promise He has made will come true.

XXVIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 28 is the final chapter of the Gospel of Matthew.

It begins at dawn on the first day of the week.

Two grieving women walk to a tomb.

But heaven has already moved.

The earth shakes.

An angel rolls back the stone and sits on it.

The guards fall like dead men.

And the angel says:

“He is not here; He has risen, just as He said!”

The women run with fear and great joy.

Jesus meets them on the road.

They clasp His feet and worship Him.

He sends them to tell His **brothers.**

Meanwhile, the leaders pay the guards to spread a lie.

But a lie cannot bury the truth.

On a mountain in Galilee, the eleven disciples see the risen Lord.

Some worship.

Some doubt.

Jesus comes near to all of them.

He declares that all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Him.

And He sends them to make disciples of all nations.

Then He gives the promise that closes the Gospel:

“I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

The story that began with **Immanuel — God with us** ends with **I am with you always.**

So today:

Believe that Jesus is alive.

Let the resurrection turn your fear into joy.

Worship the risen Lord.

Bring your doubts to Him.

Go and tell others.

Make disciples.

Teach them to obey Jesus.

And never forget that He is with you.

And until He returns:

Live as a witness to the risen Christ, who is with you always.

XXIX. LOOKING BACK OVER THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

With Matthew 28, we have come to the end of the Gospel of Matthew.

Here is the story Matthew has told.

Jesus the Promised King (Matthew 1–4)

He is the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, born of a virgin, called Immanuel — God with us.

Jesus the Great Teacher (Matthew 5–7)

In the Sermon on the Mount, He taught the way of the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus the Powerful Healer (Matthew 8–9)

He healed the sick, calmed the storm, cast out demons, and forgave sins.

Jesus the Sender (Matthew 10)

He sent out His disciples with His message and His power.

Jesus the Rejected Messiah (Matthew 11–12)

Many refused to believe, even after seeing His mighty works.

Jesus the Teller of Kingdom Parables (Matthew 13)

He explained the kingdom through stories of seeds, weeds, treasure, and nets.

Jesus the Son of the Living God (Matthew 14–17)

He walked on water, fed thousands, was confessed by Peter, and was transfigured in glory.

Jesus the Teacher of His Community (Matthew 18–20)

He taught about humility, forgiveness, and servant leadership.

Jesus the King Who Comes to Jerusalem (Matthew 21–23)

He rode into the city, cleansed the temple, answered His opponents, and warned against hypocrisy.

Jesus the Coming Judge (Matthew 24–25)

He taught about His return and the final judgment.

Jesus the Suffering Savior (Matthew 26–27)

He was betrayed, condemned, crucified, and buried.

Jesus the Risen Lord (Matthew 28)

He rose from the dead, received all authority, sent His followers to the nations, and promised to be with them always.

The Message of Matthew in One Sentence

Jesus is the promised Messiah and King, the Son of God, who taught the way of the kingdom, died for the sins of His people, rose from the dead, and now sends His followers to make disciples of all nations, promising to be with them always.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the first day of the week.

Thank You for the empty tomb.

Thank You that Jesus is not here among the dead — He has risen, just as He said!

Lord Jesus, You are alive.

You have conquered sin and death.

No stone, no seal, and no guard could hold You.

Turn our fear into joy, as You did for the women at the tomb.

Help us to run and tell others that You are alive.

We bow before You and worship You, as they did.

Thank You for calling Your failed disciples “brothers.”

Thank You that You welcome us back when we fail.

When we doubt, come near to us as You came near to the disciples on the mountain.

Keep us from believing any story that explains You away.

Lord, all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to You.

We place our lives under Your authority.

Use us to make disciples wherever we go.

Help us to share the good news with our families, our neighbors, and the nations.

Teach us to obey everything You have commanded.

And thank You for Your promise:

“I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

We will never go anywhere You are not already with us.

Thank You for walking with us through the whole Gospel of Matthew.

Now send us out to live what we have learned.

Until You come again, keep us faithful, joyful, and ready.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Key Verse

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” — Matthew 28:19–20

Central Truth

Jesus Christ rose from the dead in victory over sin and death, and with all authority in heaven and on earth, He sends His followers to make disciples of all nations, promising to be with them always.

Matthew 28 in One Sentence

At dawn on the first day of the week, an angel announces to the women that Jesus has risen just as He said; Jesus meets them, the leaders pay the guards to spread a lie, and on a mountain in Galilee the risen Lord, with all authority in heaven and on earth, sends His disciples to make disciples of all nations and promises to be with them always.

EPILOGUE

THE KING STILL REIGNS

The Gospel Concludes, but the Kingdom Continues

THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew

By Dr. Paul Crawford

THE FINAL PAGE IS NOT THE END OF THE STORY

Every great earthly story eventually reaches its conclusion. Kingdoms rise and fall. Kings ascend their thrones and surrender their crowns. Mighty civilizations build monuments to their greatness, only to watch those monuments crumble beneath the relentless passage of time. Generations are born, live their appointed days, and disappear into the pages of history.

Yet there is one kingdom that will never fall, one throne that will never be overturned, and one King whose reign will never end.

That King is Jesus Christ.

As we arrive at the conclusion of this comprehensive journey through the Gospel of Matthew, we find ourselves standing before a truth more magnificent than anything human imagination could conceive: **the King who came into this world in humility, lived in perfect righteousness, suffered upon a Roman cross, and rose triumphantly from the grave now possesses all authority in heaven and on earth.**

Matthew's Gospel does not conclude with the defeat of a king, the collapse of a kingdom, or the fading memory of a religious teacher.

It concludes with victory.

It concludes with authority.

It concludes with a divine commission.

And it concludes with a promise that continues to strengthen the hearts of believers throughout the world.

Jesus declared:

“And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” — Matthew 28:20 (KJV)

These words are not merely a comforting conclusion to an ancient historical account. They are the enduring promise of the risen Christ to those who follow Him in fulfilling His commission.

The Gospel of Matthew closes, but the purposes of the King continue.

The earthly ministry recorded in Matthew has reached its conclusion, but the work entrusted to His disciples extends into every generation.

The King has ascended to heaven, but He has not abandoned His people.

His Word remains.

His authority stands.

His presence is promised.

And His kingdom continues toward its appointed fulfillment.

The final chapter of Matthew is therefore not an ending in the ordinary sense.

It is an invitation to participate in the continuing work of the risen King.

FROM BETHLEHEM TO THE EMPTY TOMB

What an extraordinary journey we have traveled through these twenty-eight chapters.

We began with a genealogy that might appear, to the casual reader, to be little more than a record of unfamiliar names. Yet within those names we discovered the faithfulness of God across generations.

Abraham received the promise.

David received the royal covenant.

The prophets announced the coming Messiah.

And in the fullness of God's appointed time, Jesus Christ entered human history.

Matthew introduced Him as the Son of David and the Son of Abraham, establishing from the opening verse that the birth of Jesus was inseparably connected to the promises of the Old Testament.

We witnessed the miraculous circumstances surrounding His birth.

We observed the obedience of Joseph, the fulfillment of prophecy, and the worship of the wise men who came seeking the newborn King.

We saw the hostility of Herod, whose fear of losing earthly power drove him toward terrible violence.

Even at the beginning of Matthew's narrative, the contrast was unmistakable.

Herod clung desperately to a temporary throne.

Jesus had come as the promised Messiah whose kingdom would endure.

We then followed Jesus into the wilderness, where He resisted the temptations of Satan through faithful obedience to the Word of God.

We listened as He began preaching the message that would characterize His ministry:

“Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” — Matthew 4:17 (KJV)

We stood among the multitudes as He taught with authority unlike that of the religious leaders.

We heard the blessings pronounced upon the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

We learned that the righteousness of the kingdom penetrates far beyond outward behavior and reaches into the motives and intentions of the heart.

We witnessed His authority over sickness, demonic oppression, storms, blindness, and death.

We watched Him touch those considered unclean, show compassion to the suffering, receive sinners, and confront the hypocrisy of those who valued religious appearances more than genuine obedience.

We heard His parables reveal the mysteries of the kingdom.

We listened as Peter confessed:

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” — Matthew 16:16 (KJV)

We witnessed the glory of the transfiguration.

We observed the growing opposition of the religious establishment.

We entered Jerusalem with the crowds who cried:

“Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” — Matthew 21:9 (KJV)

Then the atmosphere changed.

Praise gave way to plotting.

Public admiration gave way to rejection.

The betrayal of Judas, the anguish of Gethsemane, the unlawful accusations, the mocking soldiers, and the judgment of Pontius Pilate brought us face to face with the suffering of the Savior.

At Golgotha, the promised King was crucified.

Above His head stood the accusation:

“THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.” — Matthew 27:37 (KJV)

The world saw a condemned man.

Faith recognizes the crucified Messiah.

The soldiers saw an object of ridicule.

The Scriptures reveal the suffering Redeemer.

The religious authorities believed they had silenced Him.

Yet the purposes of God were not defeated.

Then came the glorious announcement that changed everything:

“He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.” — Matthew 28:6 (KJV)

The tomb was empty.

The Savior was alive.

The resurrection declared that death would not have the final word.

The King who had been crucified stood victorious.

And from that moment forward, the mission of His disciples would be shaped by the certainty of His resurrection and the authority of His command.

THE CROWN OF THORNS AND THE CROWN OF GLORY

Among the most profound images in the Gospel of Matthew is the crown of thorns placed upon the head of Jesus by the Roman soldiers.

It was an instrument of mockery.

The soldiers intended to humiliate a man accused of claiming kingship.

They clothed Him in a scarlet robe, placed a reed in His hand, bowed before Him in contempt, and mocked His royal identity.

Yet there is something deeply significant about the contrast between their actions and the truth of who Jesus was.

They mocked Him as a king because they did not understand the nature of His kingship.

They believed earthly power was demonstrated through military force, political authority, and the ability to inflict suffering upon others.

Jesus revealed a kingship of divine authority, perfect righteousness, and sacrificial love.

The One wearing the crown of thorns had willingly submitted to suffering in obedience to the Father.

His humility was not weakness.

His silence was not helplessness.

His suffering was not evidence that God's plan had failed.

He had already explained the purpose of His mission:

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” — Matthew 20:28 (KJV)

The King came to give His life.

The cross was not an accidental interruption in His ministry.

It was central to His redemptive work.

Through His sacrifice, the seriousness of human sin and the greatness of divine grace stand revealed.

The crown of thorns reminds us of the price of our redemption.

The resurrection reminds us of the victory of our Redeemer.

And the testimony of the New Testament directs our hope toward the final revelation of Christ's glory.

The One who was mocked will be universally acknowledged.

The One who was rejected will be revealed in majesty.

The One who suffered will reign in glory.

No crown fashioned by human hands can adequately represent His greatness.

For His kingdom is not established by the strength of mortal men, and His reign will not end when the kingdoms of this world pass away.

THE KINGDOM IS MORE THAN A SUBJECT TO STUDY

Throughout this commentary, we have carefully examined the teachings of Jesus concerning the kingdom of heaven.

We have considered its announcement, its spiritual demands, its mysteries, its righteousness, its warnings, and its future fulfillment.

We have studied the parables.

We have examined the prophecies.

We have explored the relationship between the promises of the Old Testament and their fulfillment in the person and work of Christ.

Yet we must guard against a subtle spiritual danger.

It is possible to become so interested in the study of the kingdom that we neglect our personal responsibility to obey the King.

We may understand the meaning of the parables while ignoring their warnings.

We may explain the Beatitudes while failing to demonstrate humility, mercy, and purity of heart.

We may debate the chronology of prophetic events while neglecting the clear commands of Jesus concerning love, forgiveness, prayer, and discipleship.

We may possess extensive biblical knowledge while allowing pride, bitterness, selfishness, or spiritual indifference to remain unchallenged.

But the kingdom of heaven is not merely a subject for academic investigation.

Its teachings demand a personal response.

Jesus said:

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” — Matthew 6:33 (KJV)

This command reaches into every area of the believer's life.

It confronts our priorities.

It challenges our ambitions.

It examines our relationships.

It influences our stewardship.

It governs our conduct.

It calls us to place the will of God above the desires of self.

To seek first the kingdom of God is to recognize that the authority of Christ must take precedence over every competing loyalty.

His righteousness must shape our character.

His Word must govern our convictions.

His example must influence our treatment of others.

His mission must guide our service.

And His promises must sustain our hope.

The great question at the conclusion of this study is therefore not simply how much we have learned about Matthew.

The greater question is this:

How has the truth of Matthew changed the way we live?

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT STILL SPEAKS

Nearly two thousand years have passed since Jesus delivered the teachings recorded in Matthew chapters five through seven.

Human society has experienced extraordinary changes.

Nations have emerged and disappeared.

Scientific discoveries have transformed daily life.

Technology has reshaped communication.

Cultures have developed new customs, institutions, and philosophies.

Yet the spiritual needs of humanity remain remarkably consistent.

Pride still corrupts the heart.

Anger still destroys relationships.

Lust still distorts human desires.

Greed still competes with devotion to God.

Hypocrisy still disguises itself as righteousness.

Worry still troubles the anxious soul.

And people still face the fundamental choice between obedience to God and submission to the priorities of the world.

The words of Jesus remain as relevant today as when they were first spoken.

Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Blessed are the merciful.

Blessed are the pure in heart.

Love your enemies.

Pray for those who persecute you.

Forgive those who have wronged you.

Lay up treasures in heaven.

Seek first the kingdom of God.

Enter through the narrow gate.

Build your life upon the rock of obedience to Christ.

These teachings cannot be reduced to inspiring quotations.

They reveal the character and demands of life under the authority of the King.

The Sermon on the Mount exposes the inadequacy of mere outward religion and calls us to a righteousness that proceeds from a heart transformed by God's grace.

It is not enough to hear the words of Jesus.

We must respond to them.

As our Lord warned:

“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.” — Matthew 7:26 (KJV)

The storms of life will come.

Trials will test our faith.

Temptations will challenge our convictions.

False teachings will seek to mislead us.

But those who truly belong to Christ must build their lives upon the solid foundation of His truth.

The wisdom of this world changes with the opinions of each generation.

The Word of the King endures.

THE CHURCH MUST NEVER FORGET HER KING

One of the most remarkable declarations in Matthew is found in the words of Jesus to Peter:

“And upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” — Matthew 16:18 (KJV)

These words remind us that the church ultimately belongs to Jesus Christ.

It is not the possession of any one pastor.

It is not the personal kingdom of any religious leader.

It does not exist to glorify human personalities, preserve institutional reputations, or pursue worldly influence.

The church belongs to the Lord who purchased His people through His saving work.

He is its foundation and supreme authority.

He is the Head of His people.

He is the One whose Gospel must be proclaimed.

And He is the One whose commands must direct its mission.

When a congregation loses sight of Christ, it risks losing sight of its purpose.

Buildings may be impressive.

Programs may be elaborate.

Attendance may be substantial.

Religious activity may be constant.

Yet without faithfulness to the truth of Scripture and genuine devotion to Jesus Christ, outward success can conceal spiritual weakness.

The church must never substitute entertainment for biblical teaching, popularity for faithfulness, or human ambition for the mission of Christ.

It must proclaim the Gospel.

It must teach sound doctrine.

It must cultivate genuine discipleship.

It must demonstrate Christian love.

It must care for those in need.

It must call sinners to repentance and faith.

And it must remain faithful to the authority of the One who declared that He would build His church.

Pastors must remember that they are servants of the King.

Teachers must remember that they are entrusted with the Word of the King.

Congregations must remember that their worship belongs to the King.

And every believer must remember that service in the kingdom is an expression of gratitude and obedience, not a pursuit of personal glory.

THE GREAT COMMISSION IS STILL OUR RESPONSIBILITY

The Gospel of Matthew concludes with one of the most significant commands ever given to the followers of Jesus Christ.

The risen Lord declared:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” — Matthew 28:19 (KJV)

The Great Commission stands as a continuing responsibility of the church.

The disciples were not instructed to keep the message of salvation to themselves.

They were not commanded to preserve the teachings of Christ merely as a private religious tradition.

They were sent to make disciples among the nations.

The Gospel was to cross geographical boundaries, cultural distinctions, linguistic barriers, and social divisions.

The message of salvation through Jesus Christ was to be proclaimed throughout the world.

That mission continues.

There are still people who have never heard a clear explanation of the Gospel.

There are still communities in need of faithful Christian witness.

There are still families who require biblical instruction.

There are still churches that need sound teaching.

There are still young believers who need spiritual guidance.

There are still hurting souls who need to hear of the grace and mercy of God.

There are still men and women who need to know that forgiveness and eternal life are found through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Great Commission is not simply an assignment for missionaries serving in distant lands.

It is a defining responsibility of Christ's people.

Not every believer will preach from a pulpit.

Not every Christian will travel across the world.

Not every disciple will write books, lead churches, or teach in seminaries.

But every follower of Christ is called to live faithfully under His authority and participate according to the opportunities and gifts God provides in the mission He has entrusted to His church.

Some will proclaim the Gospel publicly.

Some will teach children.

Some will minister to the sick.

Some will serve struggling families.

Some will encourage discouraged believers.

Some will support missionary work.

Some will share the truth of Christ with a neighbor, coworker, friend, or family member.

All of these forms of faithful service can contribute to the mission of making disciples.

The risen King has given His command.

The church must remain faithful to that command until the work entrusted to her is complete.

THE KING IS COMING AGAIN

Matthew's Gospel also directs our attention toward the future.

In chapters twenty-four and twenty-five, Jesus spoke about coming judgment, watchfulness, faithfulness, and the glorious appearing of the Son of Man.

His words remind us that human history is not moving toward an uncertain conclusion beyond the knowledge or control of God.

The future remains under divine authority.

Jesus declared:

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” — Matthew 24:30 (KJV)

The return of Christ is a major element of Christian hope.

Believers may differ in their understanding of certain prophetic details, including the timing and sequence of events associated with the end of the age.

Yet the central testimony of Scripture remains clear.

Jesus Christ will return.

His authority will be fully manifested.

God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

His purposes will be accomplished.

And His kingdom will reach its appointed consummation.

For the faithful Christian, the promise of Christ's return should produce neither reckless speculation nor spiritual complacency.

It should inspire holiness, perseverance, faithful service, and readiness.

Jesus repeatedly emphasized the importance of watchfulness.

He warned against careless living.

He described the responsibility of servants entrusted with their master's possessions.

He taught that those who profess allegiance to the King must be prepared for His coming.

The expectation of Christ's return should therefore influence how we live today.

We should forgive readily.

We should love sincerely.

We should serve humbly.

We should pray faithfully.

We should resist temptation.

We should proclaim the Gospel.

We should steward our time and opportunities wisely.

And we should remain steadfast in hope.

The believer's calling is not to establish speculative dates or become consumed by sensational predictions.

Our calling is to remain faithful to the Lord whose return is certain.

The King who came in humility will be revealed in glory.

WHEN EARTHLY KINGDOMS PASS AWAY

One of the enduring lessons of Scripture is the temporary nature of human power.

Consider the kingdoms that dominated the ancient world.

Egypt possessed tremendous wealth and influence.

Assyria built an empire feared by surrounding nations.

Babylon conquered Jerusalem and carried God's people into exile.

Persia ruled vast territories.

Greece spread its language and culture across the Mediterranean world and beyond.

Rome exercised political and military authority over the world in which Jesus lived.

Each empire appeared powerful in its own generation.

Each possessed rulers who sought to preserve their dominion.

Each left a lasting mark upon history.

Yet none maintained its supremacy forever.

Their rulers died.

Their political structures changed.

Their territories were divided.

Their power eventually diminished.

The lesson is unavoidable.

Human greatness is temporary.

Earthly authority is limited.

Political power is fragile.

But the kingdom of Jesus Christ is of an entirely different order.

Daniel's prophecy describes a dominion that will not pass away and a kingdom that will not be destroyed.

The New Testament reveals Jesus Christ as the One through whom God's everlasting purposes are fulfilled.

This truth should bring profound confidence to the hearts of believers.

We need not place our ultimate hope in the survival of any earthly institution.

We need not surrender to despair when human leadership disappoints us.

We need not imagine that the future of God's kingdom depends upon the success of a political movement or the strength of an earthly nation.

The promises of God stand upon His own faithfulness.

The authority of Christ does not fluctuate with world events.

The King reigns regardless of who occupies the temporary thrones of human government.

His kingdom cannot be conquered by armies.

His truth cannot be destroyed by persecution.

His promises cannot be invalidated by unbelief.

And His final victory cannot be prevented by the opposition of men.

THE GREATEST QUESTION REMAINS PERSONAL

After twenty-eight chapters of biblical exposition, historical explanation, theological reflection, and practical application, one question remains more important than all the others.

Do you know the King?

It is possible to understand the genealogy of Jesus without trusting Him as Savior.

It is possible to study His miracles without submitting to His authority.

It is possible to memorize His parables without embracing their truth.

It is possible to explain His crucifixion without personally relying upon His saving work.

It is possible to affirm the historical reality of His resurrection while continuing to live in resistance to His commands.

Biblical information, however valuable, must never be mistaken for genuine saving faith.

Jesus warned:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” — Matthew 7:21 (KJV)

These words demand serious self-examination.

Have we merely adopted the outward language of Christianity?

Have we confused religious activity with genuine devotion?

Have we relied upon church attendance, family heritage, personal morality, or religious knowledge as the basis of our acceptance before God?

Or have we truly recognized our sin, turned to Jesus Christ in repentance and faith, and placed our trust in Him as Savior and Lord?

The Christian Gospel does not proclaim salvation through human achievement.

It proclaims salvation by the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

No amount of religious effort can erase the guilt of sin.

No record of personal accomplishment can make a sinner righteous before a holy God.

No human institution can provide the redemption that Christ alone has accomplished.

The cross reveals both our desperate need and God's gracious provision.

The resurrection declares the victory of the Savior.

And the Gospel calls us to respond with repentance and faith.

For those who already know the Lord, the question takes another form.

Are we living faithfully under His authority?

Are we obeying the truths we have studied?

Are we growing in humility and holiness?

Are we extending mercy to others?

Are we demonstrating the love of Christ?

Are we seeking first the kingdom of God?

Are we helping others become disciples?

The Gospel of Matthew must not become merely a completed course of study.

It must become a continuing influence upon our lives.

A FINAL WORD TO THE READER

As the author of *The King and His Kingdom*, my greatest desire has never been simply to produce another biblical reference work.

There are many commentaries, books of theology, devotional resources, and Bible study materials available to the Christian reader.

Some provide extensive scholarly analysis.

Others emphasize practical application.

Still others concentrate upon historical background, language studies, or doctrinal interpretation.

All may serve useful purposes when they remain faithful to Scripture.

My desire in preparing this commentary has been to direct attention consistently to the person, teachings, authority, and saving work of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of Matthew is not ultimately about the accomplishments of an author, the reputation of a commentator, or the intellectual achievements of biblical scholarship.

It is about Jesus.

It is about the fulfillment of divine promises.

It is about the arrival of the Messiah.

It is about the righteousness of the kingdom.

It is about the authority of the Son of God.

It is about the sacrifice of the Savior.

It is about the triumph of the resurrection.

And it is about the continuing mission of those who belong to Christ.

If these pages have helped you better understand the Word of God, I am grateful.

If they have encouraged you to examine Scripture more carefully, I am grateful.

If they have challenged an incorrect assumption, corrected a misunderstanding, or strengthened your confidence in biblical truth, I am grateful.

But above all, if this study has caused you to love Jesus Christ more deeply, trust Him more fully, and obey Him more faithfully, then it has accomplished its highest purpose.

There is no greater honor for a teacher of Scripture than to point others toward the Savior.

There is no greater achievement for a student of the Bible than to know the Lord revealed within its pages.

And there is no greater hope for the Christian than the certainty that the risen King remains faithful to His promises.

UNTIL THE KING RETURNS

There will come a day when our earthly journeys reach their conclusion.

The books we have written will eventually become old.

The sermons we have preached will fade from human memory.

The buildings we have constructed may one day disappear.

The positions we have held will pass to others.

The names celebrated by one generation may be forgotten by the next.

But the Word of God will remain.

Jesus declared:

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” — Matthew 24:35 (KJV)

That promise should shape our understanding of what truly matters.

We are temporary residents in a changing world, but we serve an eternal King.

Our earthly opportunities are limited, but our service to Christ possesses significance beyond the fleeting rewards of human recognition.

Our bodies are mortal, but the hope of resurrection rests upon the victory of the risen Savior.

Our knowledge remains incomplete, but the faithfulness of God is perfect.

Until the King returns, there is work to be done.

There are souls to reach.

There are Scriptures to teach.

There are burdens to bear.

There are prayers to offer.

There are acts of mercy to perform.

There are spiritual battles to endure.

There are temptations to resist.

There are discouraged believers to strengthen.

There are families to disciple.

And there is a world in need of the Gospel.

We are not called to live in fear of the future.

We are called to live in faithfulness to Christ.

We are not commanded to retreat from our responsibilities.

We are commanded to serve.

We are not instructed to place our confidence in earthly greatness.

We are called to trust the King whose kingdom cannot be shaken.

Let the world pursue its temporary crowns.

Let earthly rulers seek their passing glory.

Let the kingdoms of men rise and fall.

The Christian has been called to something infinitely greater.

We have been called to follow Jesus Christ.

To proclaim His Gospel.

To obey His Word.

To love His people.

To demonstrate His righteousness.

To participate in His mission.

And to await the fulfillment of His promises.

THE LAST WORD BELONGS TO THE KING

Matthew began his Gospel by identifying Jesus as the Son of David and the Son of Abraham.

He concluded by recording the words of the risen Lord.

Between those two great declarations lies the inspired testimony of the Messiah's earthly life, ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection.

The King has been revealed.

His authority has been demonstrated.

His righteousness has been proclaimed.

His sacrifice has been offered.

His resurrection has been declared.

His disciples have been commissioned.

And His enduring presence has been promised.

There is nothing more fitting at the conclusion of this commentary than to return to the words of Jesus Himself:

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” — Matthew 28:18 (KJV)

What a declaration!

The authority of the risen King extends beyond earthly borders.

It transcends political systems.

It reaches beyond generations.

It encompasses heaven and earth.

His sovereignty is not temporary.

His authority is not borrowed.

His mission has not failed.

His promise remains secure.

And His kingdom will reach its glorious fulfillment.

As we close this commentary, may we do so not merely with a greater knowledge of the Gospel of Matthew, but with hearts renewed in devotion to the One whom Matthew proclaims.

May we never forget the humility of Bethlehem.

May we never overlook the authority revealed in Galilee.

May we never neglect the righteousness taught upon the mountain.

May we never take lightly the warnings spoken in Jerusalem.

May we never lose sight of the suffering endured at Calvary.

May we never doubt the victory declared at the empty tomb.

And may we never cease to proclaim the Gospel entrusted to the church.

For the King who was promised has come.

The King who was crucified has risen.

The King who commissioned His disciples remains with His people.

And the King who reigns will come again in glory.

The Gospel has been proclaimed.

The cross has accomplished its saving purpose.

The tomb stands empty.

The authority of Christ is absolute.

The promise of His presence endures.

The mission of His church continues.

And the final fulfillment of His kingdom is certain.

The earthly kingdoms of this world will not endure forever.

The achievements of human greatness will fade.

The crowns of mortal rulers will one day be laid aside.

But the glory of Jesus Christ will never diminish.

His Word will never fail.

His promises will never be broken.

And His kingdom will never end.

For the King still reigns.

The King is worthy.

And the King is coming again.

A CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

As we come to the conclusion of this journey through the Gospel of Matthew, we bow before You in gratitude for the priceless gift of Your Holy Word.

Thank You for revealing Your Son, Jesus Christ, as the promised Messiah, the Savior of sinners, and the eternal King.

Thank You for the covenant promises fulfilled through Him.

Thank You for His perfect obedience, His compassion toward the suffering, His wisdom in teaching, and His authority over all creation.

Thank You for the cross, where the greatness of Your love and the seriousness of our sin stand so clearly revealed.

Thank You for the empty tomb and the glorious certainty of the resurrection.

Thank You that Jesus Christ lives and reigns.

Lord, do not allow the truths we have studied to remain merely within our minds.

Plant them deeply within our hearts.

Let Your Word correct our errors, expose our sins, strengthen our faith, and transform our lives.

Give us the humility to receive Your instruction.

Give us the courage to obey Your commands.

Give us the wisdom to discern truth from error.

Give us compassion for those who are lost.

Give us love for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Give us perseverance when trials arise.

Give us faithfulness when the world opposes Your truth.

And give us an unshakable hope in the promises of our risen Savior.

Bless every pastor who opens these Scriptures to feed Your people.

Bless every teacher who seeks to explain Your Word faithfully.

Bless every student who desires to grow in understanding.

Bless every family that gathers to read the Bible.

And bless every individual who turns to the Gospel of Matthew seeking to know Jesus Christ more fully.

Above all, may Your Son be exalted.

May His Gospel be proclaimed.

May His people remain faithful.

May His kingdom purposes be accomplished.

And may our lives bring honor and glory to the One who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Until the day when faith becomes sight and we behold our Lord in the fullness of His glory, help us to remain steadfast in truth, fervent in love, and faithful in service.

We ask these things in the precious and powerful name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, our Lord, and our eternal King.

Amen.

THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

The Gospel of Matthew has brought us from the genealogy of the promised Messiah to the universal authority of the risen Savior.

The journey through these twenty-eight chapters has ended, but the call to follow the King continues.

“And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” — Matthew 28:20 (KJV)

To God alone be the glory.

Dr. Paul Crawford

Author of The King and His Kingdom

A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew

SOLI DEO GLORIA — GLORY TO GOD ALONE

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

A Personal Word from Dr. Paul Crawford

THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew

By Dr. Paul Crawford

DEAR READER,

It is with a heart filled with gratitude to Almighty God, a deep reverence for His Holy Word, and a sincere desire to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ that I present to you *The King and His Kingdom: A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew.*

There are many books a person may read during a lifetime, many subjects worthy of study, and many areas of knowledge that may enrich the human mind. Yet I firmly believe there is no greater pursuit than coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ through the inspired Scriptures.

The Bible is not merely an ancient collection of historical accounts, religious teachings, or moral instructions. It is the living testimony of God's revelation to humanity. Through its pages, we discover the holiness of our Creator, the tragedy of human sin, the wonder of divine grace, the promise of redemption, and the glorious hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Among the sixty-six books of the Bible, the Gospel of Matthew holds a particularly important place in the unfolding revelation of God's plan of salvation.

Matthew introduces Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, and the rightful King whose coming fulfills the promises proclaimed throughout the Old Testament.

From His miraculous birth in Bethlehem to His victorious resurrection and final commission to His disciples, Matthew presents the authority, compassion, righteousness, wisdom, and majesty of Jesus Christ.

It is my prayer that, as you journey through this commentary, you will see Him more clearly, understand His teachings more deeply, and grow in your commitment to follow Him faithfully.

WHY I WROTE THIS COMMENTARY

My purpose in preparing this work is both simple and deeply important: to help readers understand the Gospel of Matthew as faithfully and thoroughly as possible while continually directing their attention to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

I believe that every verse of Scripture deserves careful consideration.

Too often, Bible study becomes limited to familiar passages, well-known stories, or selected verses that seem immediately relevant to our circumstances.

While there is certainly value in studying individual passages, we must never forget that every portion of Scripture contributes to the complete revelation God has given us.

The genealogy of Jesus is important.

The account of His birth is important.

His baptism and temptation are important.

His sermons, miracles, parables, confrontations, warnings, and promises are important.

His suffering, death, burial, and resurrection are essential to the Gospel.

Even passages that initially appear difficult, repetitive, or unfamiliar contain truths worthy of prayerful examination.

The Apostle Paul reminded Timothy:

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” — 2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)

This command expresses a responsibility that should be taken seriously by every Christian who teaches, preaches, or studies the Scriptures.

God's Word must not be handled carelessly.

It must not be manipulated to support personal opinions.

It must not be distorted to satisfy popular religious trends.

It must not be separated from its historical and literary context merely to create an appealing message.

Instead, Scripture must be approached with humility, diligence, honesty, and a willingness to submit to the truth it reveals.

That conviction serves as the foundation of this commentary.

I have sought to organize this work so that each of Matthew's twenty-eight chapters can be studied carefully, with attention given to the meaning of individual verses, the relationships between passages, the historical circumstances of the text, and the doctrinal truths communicated through the inspired record.

My desire is to provide a resource that will encourage serious Bible study without losing sight of the practical spiritual needs of everyday Christians.

THE BIBLE MUST ALWAYS REMAIN OUR FINAL AUTHORITY

I want to emphasize an important principle at the very beginning of this book.

No commentary, regardless of its length, detail, or theological depth, should ever be placed above the authority of the Holy Scriptures.

Human authors are capable of making mistakes.

Bible teachers may misunderstand difficult passages.

Theologians may disagree concerning interpretations.

Denominations may reach different conclusions about certain doctrines.

But the inspired Word of God remains the standard by which every interpretation must be evaluated.

I do not ask you to accept a conclusion merely because I have written it.

I encourage you to open your Bible, examine the passages carefully, consider the cross-references, evaluate the explanations, and search the Scriptures for yourself.

Where the meaning of a passage is clear, we must receive it with confidence.

Where historical or theological questions require careful investigation, we must study patiently.

Where sincere believers hold differing interpretations, we should examine the evidence fairly and avoid confusing human certainty with divine revelation.

The goal of sound biblical interpretation is not to make Scripture agree with our preferences.

It is to bring our understanding into agreement with Scripture.

I believe that an honest student of God's Word must always be willing to learn, to reconsider an interpretation when the biblical evidence requires it, and to distinguish between what Scripture explicitly declares and what may be reasonably inferred.

Our loyalty must always belong to the truth.

MORE THAN AN ACADEMIC STUDY

Although this commentary examines historical context, doctrine, biblical interpretation, and theological themes, I do not want its pages to become merely an intellectual exercise.

There is a difference between knowing facts about Jesus Christ and knowing Him personally as Savior and Lord.

A person may understand the historical background of first-century Judaism yet remain spiritually indifferent.

Someone may explain the structure of the Sermon on the Mount while neglecting its commands.

A reader may possess extensive knowledge of the parables while failing to recognize their personal application.

And an individual may discuss the crucifixion and resurrection as historical events without responding to the saving message they proclaim.

Jesus issued a serious warning:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” — Matthew 7:21 (KJV)

These words remind us that genuine Christianity requires more than religious vocabulary, outward profession, or intellectual agreement.

The Gospel calls sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, and the life of a disciple is to be characterized by obedience to His teachings.

I want this commentary to challenge the mind, but I also want it to speak to the heart.

I want it to explain doctrine, but I also want it to encourage devotion.

I want it to strengthen biblical understanding, but I also want it to inspire faithful Christian living.

My hope is that every reader will come away not merely knowing more about the kingdom of heaven, but possessing a greater desire to honor the King.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS STILL RELEVANT TODAY

One of the great themes of Matthew is the kingdom of heaven.

John the Baptist declared:

“Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” — Matthew 3:2 (KJV)

Jesus began His public ministry with the same announcement.

Throughout His teaching, the kingdom remained central.

He explained its righteousness.

He revealed its mysteries.

He described its citizens.

He warned about the consequences of rejecting its message.

He proclaimed the certainty of future judgment.

And He taught His followers to pray:

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” — Matthew 6:10 (KJV)

These teachings are not irrelevant relics of an ancient religious culture.

They speak directly to the spiritual condition of the world today.

We live in an age when truth is frequently treated as a matter of personal preference.

Moral standards are often reshaped to accommodate changing cultural expectations.

Religious appearances sometimes receive more attention than genuine holiness.

Material success is regularly mistaken for divine blessing.

Human popularity is often valued above faithfulness to God.

Yet the message of Jesus Christ remains unchanged.

Repentance is still necessary.

Faith is still essential.

Humility is still a mark of genuine discipleship.

Righteousness still matters.

Forgiveness remains a Christian responsibility.

Love for God and neighbor continues to stand at the heart of faithful obedience.

And the command to seek first the kingdom of God remains as relevant today as when Jesus first spoke those words.

The kingdom of heaven is not merely a theological concept to be analyzed.

The teachings of the King confront our values, priorities, decisions, relationships, and spiritual commitments.

A person cannot seriously study Matthew without encountering the searching authority of Jesus Christ.

TO PASTORS, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS OF THE WORD

I have written this commentary with a wide range of readers in mind.

To the pastor preparing sermons, I hope you will find explanations that assist you in studying the biblical text, understanding its context, and communicating its message faithfully.

To the Sunday school teacher or Bible study leader, I hope these pages will help you organize your lessons, explain difficult passages, and encourage meaningful discussion.

To the student of theology, I hope this work will strengthen your commitment to careful exegesis, doctrinal understanding, and responsible interpretation.

To the Christian who studies the Bible privately, I hope this commentary will provide a helpful companion as you read through the Gospel of Matthew at your own pace.

And to the individual who is just beginning to explore the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, I hope you will discover the beauty, power, and transforming truth of the Gospel.

This book is not intended only for those who possess formal theological training.

The Word of God belongs in the hands and hearts of His people.

Every believer should be encouraged to study Scripture.

Every Christian should desire to grow in biblical understanding.

Every follower of Jesus should seek to know the One whom the Scriptures reveal.

Whether you read one verse at a time, study an entire chapter, prepare a sermon, or work systematically through the complete Gospel, I pray that this commentary will serve as a useful resource in your pursuit of biblical truth.

A WORD ABOUT DIFFICULT PASSAGES

As we progress through Matthew, we will encounter passages that have generated considerable discussion among Bible scholars, pastors, and theologians.

Questions concerning the kingdom of heaven, the relationship between law and grace, the identity and mission of the Messiah, the teachings on divorce, the nature of forgiveness, the meaning of certain parables, and the prophetic declarations of Matthew chapters twenty-four and twenty-five require careful attention.

I believe that difficult passages should not be ignored simply because they may produce disagreement.

Neither should they be approached with arrogance or unnecessary hostility.

The responsibility of the biblical interpreter is to examine the text honestly, consider its immediate and broader context, evaluate relevant cross-references, and seek the meaning intended by the inspired author.

Where differing interpretations exist, the reader benefits from understanding why those interpretations have been proposed and how they relate to the biblical evidence.

My goal is not to turn this commentary into a collection of speculative theories or denominational controversies.

My purpose is to explain the Scriptures as carefully as possible while encouraging readers to examine the Word of God with reverence and discernment.

We must remember that theological knowledge, however extensive, should produce humility rather than pride.

The more clearly we understand the greatness of God, the more deeply we should recognize our own need for His wisdom and grace.

KEEP YOUR EYES UPON JESUS

Throughout this book, there is one truth I hope you will never forget.

Jesus Christ is the central figure of the Gospel of Matthew.

Not Matthew himself.

Not Herod.

Not John the Baptist.

Not Peter.

Not the Pharisees.

Not the Roman governor.

Not the crowds.

The central figure is Jesus.

He is the promised Son of David.

He is Emmanuel, God with us.

He is the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased.

He is the great Teacher who speaks with divine authority.

He is the compassionate Healer who responds to human suffering.

He is the Lord of the Sabbath.

He is the Son of Man.

He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

He is the suffering Servant who gives His life as a ransom for many.

He is the crucified Redeemer.

He is the risen Lord.

And He is the King to whom all authority in heaven and earth has been given.

Every major movement within Matthew's Gospel directs our attention toward Him.

The genealogy establishes His messianic identity.

The birth narratives reveal the fulfillment of prophecy.

The baptism and temptation prepare the way for His public ministry.

The Sermon on the Mount reveals His authority as the Teacher of kingdom righteousness.

The miracles demonstrate His power.

The parables illuminate His teaching concerning the kingdom.

The confrontations with religious leaders expose the consequences of unbelief and hypocrisy.

The prophecies direct our attention toward future judgment and the fulfillment of God's purposes.

The crucifixion reveals His sacrificial mission.

And the resurrection declares His victory.

If we understand every historical detail yet fail to see the glory of Jesus Christ, we have missed the central message of the Gospel.

My prayer is that we will never lose sight of the King while studying His kingdom.

MY PERSONAL PRAYER FOR YOU

As you begin this journey through Matthew, I would encourage you to do three things.

First, **read the biblical passage before reading my explanation.** Allow the words of Scripture to speak for themselves. Observe the details, consider the context, and ask what the passage reveals about God, humanity, sin, salvation, and faithful discipleship.

Second, **approach the study with prayer.** Ask the Lord to give you wisdom, understanding, discernment, and a willing heart. Biblical knowledge is valuable, but spiritual growth requires that we respond faithfully to the truth we discover.

Third, **put what you learn into practice.** Do not allow the lessons of Matthew to remain confined to the pages of this book. Carry them into your home, your church, your workplace, your relationships, and your daily decisions.

When Jesus teaches forgiveness, examine whether there is someone you need to forgive.

When He warns against hypocrisy, examine your motives.

When He speaks about prayer, consider the condition of your prayer life.

When He commands His followers to seek first the kingdom of God, evaluate your priorities.

When He speaks about judgment, consider the seriousness of eternity.

When He commands His disciples to make disciples of all nations, ask how you can participate in that mission.

And when you read of His suffering and sacrifice, remember the immeasurable grace demonstrated through His love for sinners.

My prayer is that this commentary will bring you closer to the Lord, strengthen your confidence in Scripture, and deepen your commitment to biblical Christianity.

I pray that it will bring encouragement during difficult seasons, clarity during moments of uncertainty, and renewed determination to remain faithful to Christ.

Above all, I pray that its pages will continually point you to the Savior rather than to the author.

THE GLORY BELONGS TO GOD

Any worthwhile understanding we gain from Scripture should ultimately lead us to worship the God who has revealed Himself through His Word.

The purpose of Christian teaching is not to elevate the reputation of a human writer.

It is to communicate divine truth faithfully.

The purpose of biblical scholarship is not merely to demonstrate intellectual ability.

It is to serve the church through a deeper understanding of God's revelation.

The purpose of preaching is not to entertain an audience or glorify the preacher.

It is to proclaim the Word of God and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.

I therefore offer this commentary with the conviction that all glory belongs to God alone.

If these pages prove helpful, may the Lord receive the praise.

If they encourage someone to study Scripture more diligently, may the Lord receive the praise.

If they strengthen a struggling Christian, assist a pastor, equip a teacher, or lead a reader toward a deeper knowledge of salvation in Christ, may the Lord receive the praise.

For the authority belongs to Scripture.

The power belongs to God.

And the glory belongs to Jesus Christ.

ONE FINAL THOUGHT BEFORE WE BEGIN

The Gospel of Matthew opens with these words:

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” — Matthew 1:1 (KJV)

And it closes with the risen Savior declaring:

“And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” — Matthew 28:20 (KJV)

Between those two declarations lies the extraordinary account of the promised King who entered human history, proclaimed the kingdom of heaven, fulfilled the Scriptures, gave His life for sinners, and rose triumphantly from the grave.

What begins with the promise of a King concludes with the assurance of His continuing presence and authority.

The message is magnificent.

The truth is eternal.

The Savior is glorious.

And the kingdom belongs to Him.

As you turn the pages of this commentary, I invite you to study thoughtfully, pray earnestly, question carefully, examine Scripture diligently, and approach every passage with a heart willing to receive the truth of God.

Do not be satisfied merely with gaining biblical information.

Seek biblical understanding.

Do not be content simply to admire the words of Jesus.

Seek to obey them.

Do not merely study the promises of the kingdom.

Place your faith in the King.

And never forget that the One who was born in Bethlehem, taught in Galilee, suffered at Calvary, and rose from the grave is the same Lord who possesses all authority in heaven and earth.

The world may change.

Generations may pass.

Earthly kingdoms may rise and fall.

But the Word of God remains forever.

And Jesus Christ is worthy of our trust, obedience, worship, and praise.

The King has come.

The King has conquered.

The King still reigns.

And the King will come again.

May this book inspire you not only to understand His kingdom, but to live faithfully under His lordship.

May God bless you richly as you study His Word.

In the service of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

Dr. Paul Crawford

Author of The King and His Kingdom

A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew

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“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” — Matthew 6:33 (KJV)

To God be the glory, both now and forever. Amen.

A Closing Prayer

“Father, I thank You for every reader who has walked through these pages. For the one who does not yet know You, I pray they would hear Your voice and receive Your Son, Jesus, as Lord and Savior. For the one who already believes, I pray You would set their heart ablaze with urgency—

to speak, to share, to love, and to never be silent. May we all live as faithful watchmen, sounding the trumpet until the day You call us home. In Jesus' mighty name, Amen."

THE BIBLE WAY TO HEAVEN

1. Admit you are a sinner.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

No one is good enough to go to Heaven on his own merit.

No matter how much good we do, we still come short.

2. Realize the penalty for sin.

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23a)

Just as there are wages for good, there is punishment for wrong.

The penalty for our sin is eternal death in a place called Hell.

3. Believe that Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose again for you.

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9)

4. Trust Christ alone as your Saviour.

"...But the gift of God is eternal life though Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23b)

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13)

Eternal life is a gift purchased by the blood of Jesus and offered freely to those who call upon Him by faith.

Anyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved forever. Being saved is a one-time event.

Dr. Paul Crawford is more than just a Christian Author; His books are a source of inspiration and guidance on your spiritual journey. His books are created with a deep sense of faith and a desire to uplift and inspire all who read.

THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

A COMPREHENSIVE VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW presents Jesus Christ as the long-awaited Messiah, the promised King, and the fulfillment of God's eternal plan. In *The King and His Kingdom*, Dr. Paul Crawford provides a clear, thorough, and insightful verse-by-verse commentary that brings the Gospel of Matthew to life for today's readers.

With careful biblical analysis, historical background, theological depth, and practical application, this commentary helps you understand not only what the text meant to its original audience, but also what it means for your life today.

From the genealogy of the King to the Great Commission, Dr. Crawford guides you through every verse, revealing how Matthew's Gospel points to the identity, mission, teachings, miracles, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—and the establishment of His everlasting kingdom.

INSIDE YOU WILL FIND:

- Verse-by-verse explanations of the entire Gospel of Matthew
- Historical and cultural background for deeper understanding
- Clear and practical applications for everyday Christian living
- Cross-references to related Scriptures
- Doctrinal insights and theological truths
- Maps, charts, and timelines where helpful
- A focus on the person, work, and kingdom of Jesus Christ
- Discussion questions for personal study or group use

DISCOVER THE KING. UNDERSTAND HIS KINGDOM. APPLY HIS TRUTH.

Whether you are a pastor, teacher, student, or a lifelong Bible reader, *The King and His Kingdom* will deepen your understanding of God's Word and strengthen your walk with the King of Kings.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Paul Crawford is a devoted student of God's Word, a pastor, teacher, and Christian author. With a passion for making the Bible clear and relevant, he has written numerous books, commentaries, and Christian novels to encourage believers and strengthen their faith. Through his writing, Dr. Crawford seeks to help others discover the truth, experience the power of God's Word, and live for the glory of Jesus Christ.