

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

[illegible]

PRAYER REQUEST

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

[illegible]



BIBLE STUDY
FEBRUARY 15, 2016

MATTHEW 13:44–58 (ESV)

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶ who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. ⁴⁸ When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all these things?” They said to him, “Yes.” ⁵² And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

⁵³ And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, ⁵⁴ and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? ⁵⁵ Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶ And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” ⁵⁷ And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household.” ⁵⁸ And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 13:44-50

1. What drastic measures did the man who found the treasure and the merchant looking for fine pearls take? Why?
2. The parables are given in the context of final judgment. If we have final judgment in mind, how would the actions of the man and the merchant be considered wise?
3. Am I living with the “end of the age” in mind? How can I best prepare for that day?

Matthew 13:53-58

4. On what basis did the townspeople deny Jesus’ spiritual authority and message? What was foolish about their reasoning?
5. Why would it be the case that a prophet gets no honor in his hometown? What does this reveal about human nature?



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY
FEBRUARY 16, 2016

MATTHEW 14:1–21 (ESV)

¹At that time Herod the tetrarch^a heard about the fame of Jesus,² and he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.”³ For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife,⁴ because John had been saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.”⁵ And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet.⁶ But when Herod’s birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod,⁷ so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.⁸ Prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.”⁹ And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given.¹⁰ He sent and had John beheaded in the prison,¹¹ and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.¹² And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.

¹³Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate^b place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.¹⁴ When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.¹⁵ Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.”¹⁶ But Jesus said, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.”¹⁷ They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.”¹⁸ And he said, “Bring them here to me.”¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.²⁰ And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over.²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Tetrarch: (in the Roman Empire) the governor of one of four divisions of a country or province

^b Desolate: 1. Empty of people 2. Joyless, empty

Matthew 14:3-5

1. Notice Herod's response to John's message. What has been my response to truths that point out something I am doing wrong or that challenge me to give up a cherished idol or activity?

Matthew 14:5-11

*"Like most weak men, Herod feared to be thought weak (Plumptre). His oath should neither have been made nor kept. Decapitation (v. 10) though sanctioned by Greeks and Romans was contrary to Jewish law, which also forbade execution without trial."*¹

2. Notice the words in the text that point out the contrast between the appearance of Herod as a self-assured man fully in control, and the things that really control him. How did events snowball as they did? Am I in the middle of a snowballing process of becoming hardened regarding some sin, pushed along by shame, fear, and pride, like Herod?

Matthew 14:13-21

3. What happens to Jesus' plan to have some private, solitary time and what are his and the disciples' reactions to this?
4. How does Jesus' example challenge me regarding how I typically respond to interruptions to my plans, or the intrusion of others' needs?
5. Reflect on Jesus' statement: "You give them something to eat." In what way is God saying the same to me?
6. What is the role of the disciples in this miraculous feeding of the multitudes, and how does this raise the stakes involved in my obedient or disobedient response to Jesus' commands, "You give them something to eat" and "Bring them here to me"?

¹ Frank E. Gaebelein, Gen. Ed. Expositor's Bible Commentary CD (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992).



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY
FEBRUARY 17, 2016

MATTHEW 14:22–36 (ESV)

²² Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”

²⁸ And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” ²⁹ He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

³⁴ And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. ³⁵ And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent around to all that region and brought to him all who were sick ³⁶ and implored^a him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Implore: (v.) to beg someone earnestly or desperately to do something

Matthew 14:22-23

1. After a long, exhausting day, Jesus still prioritized his solitude with God and made it a point to spend time in prayer. What priority does prayer hold in my life?
2. Jesus sought out the solitary time of prayer upon hearing about John's execution (vv. 12-13). How do I typically process personal difficulties, grief, or other emotional distress?

Matthew 14:25-33

3. Contrast Peter's response to the other disciples'. What can I learn from Peter's request to go to Jesus?
4. What did Peter have to abandon first in order to go to Jesus?
5. What are the areas of my life that I cling to, from which I am unwilling to step out in faith?
6. Even though Peter "fails" and begins to sink, Jesus reaches out and catches him. In what ways does this give me confidence to step out and take risks for God?



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY
FEBRUARY 18, 2016

MATTHEW 15:1–20 (ESV)

¹Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, ²“Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” ³He answered them, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever reviles^a father or mother must surely die.’ ⁵But you say, ‘If anyone tells his father or his mother, “What you would have gained from me is given to God,” ⁶he need not honor his father.’ So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God.” ⁷You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:

⁸“‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
⁹in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”

¹⁰And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: ¹¹it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles^b a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.” ¹²Then the disciples came and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?” ¹³He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. ¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.” ¹⁵But Peter said to him, “Explain the parable to us.” ¹⁶And he said, “Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.” ²⁰These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Revile: (v.) to speak about in a very critical or insulting way

^b Defile: (v.) to spoil or make dirty/unclean

^c Slander: (n.) the action of making a false statement that damages a person's reputation

Matthew 15:1-2, 10-20

1. Contrast the Pharisees' view of cleanliness with Jesus' view. Are there ways in which my view of spiritual cleanliness resembles that of the Pharisees?
2. What comes out of a man's heart?
3. Given the clear reality of man's sinful heart, how could the Pharisees have focused so much on external rituals—such as the washing of hands—as a way of becoming clean?
4. How can I keep from making the same mistake like the Pharisees of focusing on the external rituals?



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY
FEBRUARY 19, 2016

MATTHEW 15:21–39 (ESV)

²¹ And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² And behold, a Canaanite^a woman from that region came out and was crying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.” ²³ But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying out after us.” ²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” ²⁶ And he answered, “It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁷ She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.” ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

²⁹ Jesus went on from there and walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there. ³⁰ And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, ³¹ so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

³² Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.” ³³ And the disciples said to him, “Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?” ³⁴ And Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven, and a few small fish.” ³⁵ And directing the crowd to sit down on the ground, ³⁶ he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ³⁷ And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces left over. ³⁸ Those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. ³⁹ And after sending away the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definition

^a Canaanite: (n.) non-Jewish person living in the region

Matthew 15:21-28

1. What drove the Canaanite woman to Jesus? What perspective should I have toward difficult situations in my life?
2. What did the Canaanite woman endure to experience healing?
3. The Canaanite woman did not feel entitled to receive healing from Jesus and yet asked him to heal her daughter. What are some things about life that I feel entitled to? Consider how this might contribute to a lack of growth or healing in some area of my life.
4. Jesus praises this woman as having great faith. What is it about her response that warranted this praise, and what picture of faith does she represent?

Matthew 15:29-39

5. Reflect on the contrast between the need of the hour and the small provisions in the disciples' possession. Yet, what does Jesus ask them in v. 34? What was the focus of the disciples, and what was the focus of Jesus in their approach to the problem?
6. Reflect on the potential use of seven loaves and "a few small fish." What steps had to happen before this small amount could be used to feed the multitudes? To what extent have I released the few loaves and fish that I have?



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



MESSAGE NOTES



BIBLE STUDY
FEBRUARY 22, 2016

MATTHEW 16:1–12 (ESV)

¹ And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. ² He answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ ³ And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, 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. ⁴ An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” So he left them and departed.

⁵ When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. ⁶ Jesus said to them, “Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” ⁷ And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, “We brought no bread.” ⁸ But Jesus, aware of this, said, “O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? ⁹ Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ¹⁰ Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ¹¹ How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven^a of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” ¹² Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Leaven (n.): a powder, like yeast or baking powder, that causes dough to ferment and expand

Matthew 16:1-4

1. Why is Jesus' frustrated in vv. 2-4? Why would people be good at "how to interpret the appearance of the sky"?
2. What does this say about the reason for their spiritual dullness? What can I learn about my own spiritual sensitivity from this?
3. Do I recognize the "signs of the times" now and has it shaped my identity and direction in life?

Matthew 16:5-12

4. According to the disciples' interpretation, Jesus was pointing out a mistake they made, when in reality Jesus was issuing an important warning about something else. What caused them to misunderstand Jesus?
5. Are there ways in which my own sense of shame or discouragement over a mistake becomes a lens through which I misinterpret God or other people?



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY
FEBRUARY 23, 2016

MATTHEW 16:13–28 (ESV)

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

²¹From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” ²³But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

²⁴Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? ²⁷For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. ²⁸Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Bar-Jonah (n.): son of Jonah

Matthew 16:13-20

*"Christianity never consists in knowing about Jesus; it always consists in knowing Jesus. Jesus Christ demands a personal verdict. He did not ask only Peter, he asks every man: 'You - what do you think of me?'"*²

1. What does v. 15 reveal about the essence of the gospel?
2. What is the confession that I am building my life upon? Does it match with Peter's confession that Jesus is "the Christ, the son of the living God"?
3. What authority does Jesus give to the church?
4. How does this immense responsibility affect my life?

Matthew 16:21-23

5. Think about situations where those who are closest to me can become a "hindrance to me" because they "are not setting their mind on the things of God, but on the things of man," or situations in which my protective love towards someone can actually hinder them from obeying God. What does this reveal about how we should understand human love and loyalties?

Matthew 16:24-27

*"Losing one's life to Jesus means giving over one's own will to follow him alone in discovering God's will as the central, driving force for one's life. This concept echoes later in Paul's declaration, 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!' (2 Cor. 5:17). The new life of the kingdom of God is discovered only by giving over to Jesus one's old life and finding new life in following him."*³

6. What are the two kinds of "life" presented in this passage and what is the relationship between the two?
7. In what specific ways am I called to "deny [myself] and take up [my] cross and follow [Jesus]"?

² Barclay, William, *The Gospel of Matthew: Volume 2* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, (c) 1975), p. 138.

³ Wilkins, Michael J. "Matthew 16:1 - 28" In *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Matthew*. By Michael J. Wilkins, 552-588. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2004.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

FEBRUARY 24, 2016

MATTHEW 17:1–27 (ESV)

¹ And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² And he was transfigured^a before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³ And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁵ He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” ⁸ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.” ¹⁰ And the disciples asked him, “Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” ¹¹ He answered, “Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. ¹² But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.” ¹³ Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

¹⁴ And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him, ¹⁵ said, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic^b and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. ¹⁶ And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me.” ¹⁸ And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly. ¹⁹ Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” ²⁰ He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”

²² As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, ²³ and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.” And they were greatly distressed.

²⁴ When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax^c went up to Peter and said, “Does your teacher not pay the tax?” ²⁵ He said, “Yes.” And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke

to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?"²⁶ And when he said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free.²⁷ However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself."



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Transfigured (v): to change in appearance to be exalted or glorified

^b Epileptic (n): a disorder of the nervous system which causes seizures

^c Two-drachma tax (n): at the annual census, each person over the age of 20 was to give a half-shekel offering for the support for the tabernacle

Matthew 17:1-3

*"The 'six days' probably indicates the time it took to travel from Caesarea Philippi (16:13) to the high mountains (17:1); that is, the Transfiguration took place within a few days of the prediction that Jesus must go to Jerusalem and be killed. The two passages must therefore be read together. [...] Those Jesus 'took with him' were Peter, James, and John, the inner circle of the Twelve."*⁴

1. What can I learn from the fact that the transfiguration event took place after Jesus plainly told the disciples about his death (cf. Matt 16:21-28)? What does this show about the true meaning of "glory" in Christian life?

Matthew 17:10-13

*"Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.' So writes Malachi, and then he goes on: 'And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse' (Malachi 4:5, 6). [...] Jews came to believe that not only would Elijah come, but he would restore all things before the Messiah came, that he would [...] make the world fit for the Messiah to enter into. The idea was that Elijah would be a great and terrible reformer, who would walk throughout the world destroying all evil and setting things to rights. The result was that both the forerunner and the Messiah were thought of in terms of power. [...] Jesus corrects this. Elijah has come; but his way was the way of suffering and of sacrifice, as must also be the way of the Son of Man."*⁵

2. Reflect on the tragedy of Jesus' words: "... they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased." How good am I in recognizing God's messenger, or a message from God that comes packaged in a way I do not like? From God's perspective, what would have been the alternative to having them do to John (and Jesus) "whatever they pleased"?

Matthew 17:14-20

3. Why is Jesus so frustrated with the disciples' lack of faith?
4. Reflect on Jesus' words: "Bring him here to me." Who are the people I need to bring to Jesus?

Matthew 17:24-27

5. Although Jesus makes it clear that "the sons are free," he goes on to pay the taxes. What wisdom about Christian life is Jesus teaching here?

⁴ Frank E. Gaebelein, Gen. Ed. Expositor's Bible Commentary CD (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992)

⁵ The Gospel of Matthew: Volume 2, 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily Study Bible, Rev. ed. The Westminster Press: Philadelphia.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

FEBRUARY 25, 2016

MATTHEW 18:1-20 (ESV)

¹At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” ²And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them ³and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, ⁶but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

⁷“Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! ⁸And 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 lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.

¹⁰“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹²What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? ¹³And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. ¹⁴So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

¹⁵“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”



STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 18:1-6, 10-14

1. What misunderstanding about the kingdom of heaven does the disciples' question reveal? In what ways am I like the disciples, seeking to be great? How does this contrast with Jesus' values?

Matthew 18:7-10

*"Jesus now addresses the disciples directly about their personal responsibility for their own actions. Lest they deceive themselves into thinking that all sinful behavior is the result of others causing them to sin, Jesus declares that they must take responsibility for their own tendencies to cause themselves to sin (again skandalizo, as in 18:6). Similar to the hyperbole in the SM (5:29-30), Jesus indicates that cutting off one's hand or foot or plucking out one's eye in this life (18:8-9) is no comparison to the eternal judgment destined for allowing the passions of one's own life to lead one into sin. Jesus is not advocating physical self-mutilation, but through dramatic figures of speech he indicates the rigorous self-discipline needed for committed disciples."*⁶

*" 'Little ones' does not only mean children, but those who humble themselves like children as Jesus described. It is a wicked thing to sin, and it is a far greater evil to lead others into sin."*⁷

2. Reflect on Jesus' words in v.7. What are some ways that I may be contributing to the "temptations to sin" that our world is full of?
3. What kind of drastic measures am I called to take to deal with sins in my life? What should be my motivation?

Matthew 18:15-20

*"At its widest what Jesus was saying was, 'If anyone sins against you, spare no effort to make that man admit his fault, and to get things right again between you and him.' Basically it means that we must never tolerate any situation in which there is a breach of personal relationships between us and another member of the Christian community."*⁸

4. What responsibility do I have towards other people's sins? What responsibility and authority does the church have?
5. What can I learn from the process that a person is advised to take in leading a brother to repent?

⁶ Wilkins, Michael J. "Matthew 18:1 - 35" In *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Matthew*. By Michael J. Wilkins, 609-640. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2004.

⁷ Guzik, David. *David Guzik's Commentary on Matthew*, Chapter 18, (Enduring Word Media, 2004) (Section 3b)

⁸ Barclay, William. *The Gospel According to Matthew*. pg. 187



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY
FEBRUARY 26, 2016

MATTHEW 18:21-35 (ESV)

²¹Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. ²³“Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. ³²Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”



STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 18:21-22

1. What is the attitude behind Peter's question and what does it reveal about human nature?
2. What can we learn about God's heart based on Jesus' answer?

Matthew 18:23-27

"The total revenue of the province which contained Idumaea, Judaea and Samaria was only 600 talents; the total revenue of even a wealthy province like Galilee was only 300 talents. Here was a debt which was greater than a king's ransom."

3. What does the servant's words and actions reveal about how he views himself?
4. How would the servant have felt upon receiving the king's mercy? Why?
5. How does the king's cancellation of the servant's debt resemble what the cross accomplished?

Matthew 18:28-35

6. Reflect on the servant's treatment toward his fellow servant. In what ways do I forget God's mercy and over-focus on the sins of others? In what ways have I missed opportunities to show mercy to others?



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



MESSAGE NOTES



BIBLE STUDY
FEBRUARY 29, 2016

MATTHEW 19:1–15 (ESV)

¹Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ²And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

³And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” ⁴He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? ⁶So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” ⁷They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” ⁸He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”

¹⁰The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” ¹¹But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. ¹²For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”

¹³Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, ¹⁴but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder^a them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” ¹⁵And he laid his hands on them and went away.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Hinder: (v.) to delay or prevent

Matthew 19:3-9

1. Think about the loss, destruction and pain released into the world by one couple's divorce. Considering the immense personal pain involved (not to mention pain and damage to others), why do people get divorced? What does this show about the human condition?
2. Reflect on the words, "because of your hardness of heart... but from the beginning it was not so." What does this reveal about how God works to shape his people toward his will within the reality of man's sinfulness?

Matthew 19:4-6

3. To what source of authority does Jesus turn in answering their question about divorce?
4. In what ways can reading about what God wanted "from the beginning" clarify many issues in my life?
5. Reflect on the words "male and female," "a man," "his wife," "the two," "one flesh," "no longer two," and "let not man separate." What basic truths about God's original design for marriage emerge from these words?



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 1, 2016

MATTHEW 19:16–30 (ESV)

¹⁶ And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” ¹⁷ And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.” ¹⁸ He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, ¹⁹ Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁰ The young man said to him, “All these I have kept. What do I still lack?” ²¹ Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” ²² When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

²³ And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ Again I tell you, 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.” ²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” ²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” ²⁷ Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” ²⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 19:16-26

1. What does the man's question "what good deed must I do to have eternal life" reveal about his view of the kingdom of heaven?
2. Why must Jesus address the issue of wealth and what does this say regarding what it takes to "have eternal life"?
3. What are the forms of wealth that I need to surrender in order to follow Jesus?

Matthew 19:23-24

*"...wealth is a heady intoxicant, because it provides most of the counterfeits that fool a person into thinking he or she does not need God."*¹⁰

*"...one should be careful of the 'deceitfulness of wealth.' This passage does not suggest that wealth is wrong, however, but it does suggest that there is something about wealth that can choke off the effectiveness of the gospel and keep one from entering the kingdom."*¹¹

4. What warning about wealth do I need to heed?

Matthew 19:27-29

5. What have I "left ... to follow [Jesus]"?
6. Jesus says that whoever leaves his brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. What does this reveal about what God truly wants for us?

¹⁰ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004) 650.

¹¹ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004) 658.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 2, 2016

MATTHEW 20:1–34 (ESV)

¹ “For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius^a a day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ And going out about the third hour^b he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ ⁵ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. ⁶ And about the eleventh hour^c he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ ⁸ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ ⁹ And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, ¹² saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?’ ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge^d my generosity?’ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first last.”

¹⁷ And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, ¹⁸ “See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death ¹⁹ and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”

²⁰ Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. ²¹ And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” ²² Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are

asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able."²³ He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."²⁴ And when the ten heard it, they were indignant^e at the two brothers.²⁵ But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.²⁶ It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave,²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

²⁹ And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him.³⁰ And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"³¹ The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"³² And stopping, Jesus called them and said, "What do you want me to do for you?"³³ They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened."³⁴ And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Denarius: (n.) a typical day's wage for a laborer

^b Third hour: 9:00AM

^c Eleventh hour: 5:00PM, near the end of a workday

^d Begrudge: (v.) to resent

^e Indignant: (adj.) feeling anger at something considered unfair or unjust

^f Prevail: (v.) be victorious

Matthew 20:1-16

"[...]In the context of Matthew's gospel there is another function of the parable. That is to answer Peter's question in Matthew 19:27. Peter had first made a claim and then asked his question. The claim was, 'We have left everything and followed you.' The question was essentially, 'What reward are we going to get for our special loyalty and love?' Peter's assumption is that he and the other disciples deserved a greater reward because of the greatness of their commitment to Christ. Jesus' reply makes it clear that God does not judge based on what is deserved, but on the basis of grace."¹² "[...] the principle in the world is that he who works the longest receives the most pay. That is just. But in the kingdom of God the principles of merit and ability may be set aside so that grace can prevail^f."¹³

¹² Roger Han, "Biblical and Theological Resources for Growing Christians", Christian Resource Institute, <http://www.cresourcei.org/biblestudy/bbmatt15.html>.

¹³ Frank E. Gaebelien, Gen. Ed. Expositor's Bible Commentary CD (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992).

1. Reflect on the description of the hired men as “standing idle in the marketplace.” In what ways does this characterize life apart from the meaningful labors of the kingdom of heaven?
2. Why is it inappropriate for those who were hired first to “grumble at the master of the house?” What does their grumbling reveal about their view of their work in the vineyard?
3. What is my reaction to the fact that there is no extra “reward” for serving God longer? What is my attitude towards God’s generosity and grace towards others?

Matthew 20:17-28

“It is often ignorance that seeks leadership, power, and glory: the brothers do not know what they are asking. To ask to reign with Jesus is to ask to suffer with him... To ask for worldly wealth and much honor is often to ask for anxiety, temptation, disappointment, and envy; and in the spiritual arena to ask for great usefulness and reward is often to ask for great suffering (cf. 2 Cor 11:23-33; Col 1:24; Rev 1:9). ‘We know not what we ask, when we ask for the glory of wearing the crown, and ask not for grace to bear the cross on our way to it.’”¹⁴

4. Reflect on the inappropriateness of James and John’s request (made through their mother) coming after Jesus’ detailed predictions of his suffering and crucifixion. What does this show about what happens to my heart when I seek personal gain and ascendancy?
5. In what ways am I like John and James?

Matthew 20:25-28

6. Reflect on Jesus’ teaching about greatness and servanthood.

¹⁴ Frank E. Gaebelin, Gen. Ed. *Expositors Bible Commentary CD*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992) notes for Matthew 20



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 3, 2016

MATTHEW 21:1–11 (ESV)

¹ Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” ⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

⁵ “Say to the daughter of Zion,
‘Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. ⁸ Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” ¹⁰ And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” ¹¹ And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”



STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 21:1-11

"The crowds shout out 'Hosanna,' which is the transliteration of the Hebrew expression that means 'O save' (cf. 2 Sam. 14:4; 2 Kings 6:26)... They further cry out to Jesus as 'Son of David' (21:9). Linked with Hosanna, the title 'Son of David' is unmistakably messianic. The crowd acknowledges what Jesus has already stated in his fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9: He is the Davidic Messiah...on whom they call to save them out of their oppression."¹⁵

1. Reflect on the ways in which "Hosanna" captures the deepest cry of the human heart. To who are we directing this cry?
2. What are the things that I wish God would save me from? How does this compare to the message of the Gospel?

Matthew 21:1-6

3. Why is it important that Jesus gave such specific instructions to the disciples in fulfillment of the prophecy?
4. How might the disciples have felt as they obeyed Jesus' seemingly strange instructions and then found everything as Jesus had said?
5. Have there been times when God's commands to me seemed to not make sense? What has been my response to them?

¹⁵ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew, The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004) 687.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 4, 2016

MATTHEW 21:12–22 (ESV)

¹² And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.¹³ He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den^a of robbers.”

¹⁴ And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant,¹⁶ and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read,

“‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise?’”

¹⁷ And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

¹⁸ In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry. ¹⁹ And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” And the fig tree withered at once.

²⁰ When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?”²¹ And Jesus answered them, “Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen. ²² And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definition

^a Den: (n.) where wild animals live; wild animals' lair

Matthew 21:12-17

1. What is so offensive and tragic about what was happening in the temple?
2. Think about the fact that what Jesus found fundamentally offensive, the temple authorities found perfectly okay. Who has the authority to define what is appropriate in my life?
3. Are there ways in which I have failed to consider God's standards and allowed worldly values and practices to be the norm in my life?

Matthew 21:18-19

*"This cursing of the barren fig-tree represents the state of hypocrites in general; and so it teaches us that the fruit of fig-trees may justly be expected from those that have the leaves. Christ looks for the power of religion from those that make profession of it ..."*¹⁶

4. Meditate on the description, "nothing on it but only leaves." What kind of church and what kind of Christian would be aptly described as having "nothing on it but only leaves"?
5. What does fruit represent?
6. How fruitful am I?

¹⁶ Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible. <http://www.ccel.org/h/henry/mhc2/MHC00000.HTM>



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 5, 2016

MATTHEW 21:23–32 (ESV)

²³ And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴ Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things.” ²⁵ The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’” ²⁶ But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’” ²⁹ And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definition:^a Culpability: (n.) blame; responsibility for a wrong^b Far-reaching: (adj.) having important, extensive effects**Matthew 21:23-27**

“ ‘John’s baptism’ (v. 25) is a way of referring to the Baptist’s entire ministry ...Jesus asks whether that ministry was from heaven or from men. ... ”¹⁷

“They cannot alienate the people by saying that John’s highly popular prophetic ministry was not from God. They fear that the people may turn against them and cause an uprising (21:26), which would jeopardize the Roman support of their leadership. But neither can they endorse the very prophet who had condemned them for not repenting (cf. 3: 7-10)...These religious leaders recognize the dilemma Jesus has put them in, so they refuse to answer. That refusal shows their dishonesty, and they must accept their culpability.”¹⁸

1. Notice that the priests and elders confidently came to challenge Jesus, only to be confronted with a question that invites them to take a stance on the truth, which would have far-reaching^b consequences in their lives. What practical considerations do the priests and elders consider before giving their answer to Jesus? What does this show about their view and attitude toward truth?
2. What fears, and other practical considerations do I allow to negatively affect my response to Jesus and my consideration of the authority he will have in my life?

Matthew 21:28-32

“The shock value of Jesus’ statement can only be appreciated when the low esteem in which tax collectors (see on 5:46) were held, not to mention prostitutes, is taken into account... But Jesus is saying that the scum of society, though it says no to God, repents, performs the Father’s will, and enters the kingdom, whereas the religious authorities loudly say yes to God but never do what he says, and therefore they fail to enter.”¹⁹

3. Reflect on what this parable says about obedience—actual, physical carrying out of God’s commands.
4. In what areas of my life have I been like the first son—making empty promises, but not following through in obedience?
5. Given that the parable is directed to the Pharisees (the religious people of the day), what dire warning is here for me regarding the consequences of developing such a separation between my words and obedience?

¹⁷ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, NIV Application Commentary Series DVD (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004)

¹⁸ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), pp. 695-696.

¹⁹ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, NIV Application Commentary Series DVD (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004)



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



MESSAGE NOTES



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 7, 2016

MATTHEW 21:33–46 (ESV)

³³ “Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. ³⁴ When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. ³⁵ And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. ³⁷ Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ ³⁹ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰ When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?’” ⁴¹ They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

⁴² Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“‘The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is marvelous in our eyes?’

⁴³ Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. ⁴⁴ And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 21:33-42

*“Many absentee landowners were notorious for their harsh treatment of their tenants. Here, the scene is reversed, and the landowner’s servants are abused when they come to collect a portion of the harvest. The landowner continues to send servants to collect what is rightfully his, but each is treated the same way (22:36). The treatment of these ‘servants’ calls to mind the same fate that befell God’s prophets throughout Old Testament history (e.g., 1 Kings 18:4; Jer. 20:1 - 2). Jesus will soon hold the teachers of the law and Pharisees culpable for the ill fate of the prophets and wise men sent to Israel (cf. Matt. 23:34).”*²⁰

1. Reflect on the description of what the landowner did in preparing the vineyard before renting it out to the tenant farmers. In what way is this true of my life?
2. What is absurd about the tenants’ response to the landowner’s request? What basic truths did the tenants disregard in pursuing their course?
3. In what ways have I been like the tenants in challenging God’s rightful authority over my life?
4. What is Jesus claiming about who he is through this parable?

²⁰ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, NIV Application Commentary Series DVD (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004).



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 8, 2016

MATTHEW 22:1–22 (ESV)

¹ And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, ² “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, ³ and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. ⁴ Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’ ⁵ But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶ while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. ⁷ The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. ⁸ Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ ¹⁰ And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. ¹² And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. ¹⁶ And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone’s opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice^a, said, “Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰ And Jesus said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” ²¹ They said, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Therefore render^b to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” ²² When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Malice (n): evil intent to cause harm

^b Render (v): to do, to pay as due to a superior

Matthew 22:1-14

*"It was customary for the wedding guest to be given garments to wear to the banquet. It was unthinkable to refuse to wear these garments. That would insult the host, who could only assume that the guest was arrogant and thought that he did not need these garments or that he did not want to take part in the wedding celebration. [...] Christ has provided this garment of righteousness to everyone, but each person must choose to put it on in order to enter the King's banquet (eternal life)."*²¹

1. In what way does vv. 8-10 capture the gospel?
2. What can be said of the attitude of the guest without wedding clothes toward the king and his son? How is this inappropriate in light of the fact that he had been invited to the banquet due to the king's generosity?
3. What does this passage say about my need for a proper response to God's grace?

Matthew 22:19-21

*"Coinage in the ancient world had significant political power. Rulers issued coins with their own image and inscription on them. In a certain sense, the coin was regarded as his personal property. Where the coin was valid, the ruler held political sway over the people."*²²

4. Whose portrait is inscribed on the Roman coin?
5. According to Genesis 1:26, in whose image is man created?
6. What does Jesus' answer imply about God's ownership over our lives? How should this affect the way I view my money, time, resources, etc.?

²¹ NIV Life Application Bible (Grand Rapids Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1991) 1698.

²² The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary & Meditation, www.rc.net/wcc/readings/matthew.htm



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 9, 2016

MATTHEW 22:23–46 (ESV)

²³ The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, ²⁴ saying, “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.’” ²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ So too the second and third, down to the seventh. ²⁷ After them all, the woman died. ²⁸ In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her.”

²⁹ But Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ³¹ And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: ³² ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.” ³³ And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

⁴¹ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, ⁴² saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” ⁴³ He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴ “‘The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at my right hand,

until I put your enemies under your feet’?”

⁴⁵ If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?” ⁴⁶ And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 22:23-30

1. What are some ways critics of Christianity pick at minor details, focus on marginal issues, or seize upon things that do not make sense to them as a way of evading the truth of the gospel? Are there some ways in which I do the same?
2. The Sadducees simply took earthly realities and projected them simplistically into eternal life and found the result absurd. How does Jesus characterize their thinking in v.29? What might be the reasons why the Sadducees read the Scripture and yet they knew “neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?”

Matthew 22:34-40

3. Reflect on the simplicity and clarity of Jesus’ summation of the entirety of God’s commands. How have I obeyed these commands in my life?



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 10, 2016

MATTHEW 23:1-12 (ESV)

¹Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ²“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, ³so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. ⁴They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. ⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries^a broad and their fringes^b long, ⁶and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues ⁷and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. ⁸But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. ¹⁰Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. ¹¹The greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹²Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^aPhylacteries (n): leather cases worn on the arm and forehead containing Scripture written on parchment

^bFringes (n): tassels on a garment reminding people to obey God's commandments

Matthew 23:1-4

1. How did the scribes and the Pharisees lack integrity in their lives? What precautions do I need to take to avoid this?

Matthew 23:5-7

2. Reflect on the things that the Pharisees and teachers of the law loved. To what extent are their values similar to mine?
3. How has this affected me in terms of doing all my deeds “to be seen by others”?

Matthew 23:8-12

4. What truth can save me from loving the recognition and attention described in vv. 5-7?
5. Reflect upon how Jesus embodied the paradox described in vv. 11-12 while on earth.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 11, 2016

MATTHEW 23:13-26 (ESV)

¹³ “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. ¹⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte^a, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

¹⁶ “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ ¹⁷ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? ¹⁸ And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ ¹⁹ You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ²⁰ So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. ²¹ And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. ²² And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

²³ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. ²⁴ You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

²⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Proselyte (n): convert

Matthew 23:13-15

1. What are some of the ways I might inadvertently shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces by my example?
2. What can I do to address or prevent this hypocrisy?

Matthew 23:16-22

"On the popular level, people had begun using many surrogate phrases for God's name, hoping to avoid judgment if they broke the oath. Pharisees endeavored to distinguish which oath phrases were actually binding...in any case, Jesus rejects their reasoning. Jesus rails in part against traditions that have created inconsistent standards of holiness. (We might compare churches today that...fight for the authority of Scripture yet care so little for it in practice that they ignore the context of verses.) ...Jesus' attack is ultimately directed against the profanation of God's name."²³

3. The Pharisees and teachers of the law attempted to distinguish between oaths taken by the temple versus the gold, and the altar versus the gift. Reflect on the degree to which the Pharisees must have been out of touch with their inner motivations, given that they were capable of taking such measures to avoid genuinely obeying God. Are there similar ways in which I am avoiding confronting what's in my heart by pointing to some technical compliance?

Matthew 23:23-24

"Jesus does not condemn scrupulous observance in these things ('without neglecting the former'), but insists that to fuss over them while neglecting the 'more important matters of the law' (cf. 22:34-40)—justice, mercy, and pistis (here rightly translated 'faithfulness')—is to strain out a gnat but swallow a camel (23:24) both unclean creatures."²⁴

4. What are the "weightier matters" that Jesus is referring to here?
5. What trivial or less significant things about Christian living distract me from understanding more deeply the fundamental truths of the gospel?

²³ Keener, Craig S., *IVP New Testament Commentary Series: Matthew* (InterVarsity Press, 1995-2005), Matthew 23.

²⁴ Frank E. Gaebelien, Gen. Ed. *Expositor's Bible Commentary CD*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992) notes for Matthew 23.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



MESSAGE NOTES



BIBLE STUDY
MARCH 14, 2016

MATTHEW 23:27–39 (ESV)

²⁷ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs^a, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness^b.

²⁹ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰ saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ ³¹ Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³² Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. ³³ You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? ³⁴ Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, ³⁵ so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. ³⁶ Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

³⁷ “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁸ See, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹ For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Whitewashed tombs: outwardly very beautiful but holds nothing but death and decay on the inside

^b Lawlessness (n.): contrary to the law

^c Veneer (n.): a superficial appearance, especially one that is pleasing

Matthew 23:27-28

"When rightly understood, Jesus' woes may strike too close to home for comfort. When religion becomes a veneer^c of holiness to conceal unholy character, it makes its bearers less receptive to God's transforming grace."²⁵

1. Why is it ironic to think of a whitewashed tomb as beautiful? Are there ways in which I focus on external ritual or activities while ignoring inner corruption?

Matthew 23:29-32

"We sometimes think, if we had lived when Christ was upon earth, that we should not have despised and rejected him, as men then did; yet Christ in his Spirit, in his word, in his ministers, is still no better treated."²⁶

2. What might have caused the Pharisees to think that they were above the deeds of their forefathers?
3. Why is it easy to think of the sins of other people, other cultures, or previous generations as something I would not have done?

Matthew 23:33-36

4. Why did Jesus utter such scathing rebukes? What can I learn about Jesus' heart from v. 34 and v. 37?
5. In light of this passage, what can I learn about the role of harsh words in leading people to repentance?
6. Note the persistent love of God in sending "prophets and wise men and scribes" to his people. Who are the prophets and wise men and scribes God sent to me to speak his words, and what has been my attitude toward them?

Matthew 23:37-39

7. Reflect on the heart of Jesus as he laments over Jerusalem.

²⁵ Keener, Craig S., *IVP New Testament Commentary Series: Matthew* (InterVarsity Press, 1995-2005), Matthew 23.

²⁶ Henry, Matthew. "Commentary on Matthew 23" In *Matthew Henry Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (Crosswalk, 1706).



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 15, 2016

MATTHEW 24:1–35 (ESV)

¹ Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. ² But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

³ As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” ⁴ And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. ⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. ¹⁰ And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹² And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

¹⁵ “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, ¹⁸ and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. ¹⁹ And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! ²⁰ Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. ²² And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. ²³ Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶ So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he

is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it.²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

²⁹“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

³²“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁴Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 24:1-14

1. According to this passage, what will make it difficult for people to stand firm to the end?
2. In what ways have I witnessed “increase of lawlessness” causing “the love of many [to] grow cold?” How can I prevent my love from growing cold so that I can continue to share in God’s heart?

Matthew 24:3-8

“Though none of those events are the specific sign of the end of the age, collectively they are a sign. When Jesus described these calamities as the beginning of sorrows He literally called them the beginning of labor pains. Just as is true with labor pains, we should expect that the things mentioned - wars, famines, earthquakes, and so on - would become more frequent and more intense before the return of Jesus.”²⁷

3. How am I living in response to the certainty of the second coming of Jesus and the “end of the age”?

Matthew 24:15

4. Think about the ugly picture of an “abomination” standing in “the holy place,” and the many ways in which ungodly and sordid things are occupying places of prominence in areas that were once considered sacred. Are there ways in which I’ve allowed abominations to occupy holy places in my life?

Matthew 24:15-35

5. What kind of character, or attitude, will be required of those at the end times if they are to follow the words of vv. 17-18? Do I have such a clear attitude of detachment toward earthly possessions or comforts in light of urgent spiritual issues?

²⁷ David Guzik. Bible Study Resources by David Guzik, online.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 16, 2016

MATTHEW 24:36–51 (ESV)

³⁶“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. ⁴²Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

⁴⁵“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. ⁴⁷Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. ⁴⁸But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ ⁴⁹and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, ⁵⁰the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know ⁵¹and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 24:36-41

1. What were people doing “until the day Noah entered the ark”? What precautions do I need to take in order to not be in the same predicament as these people?
2. What is the significance of the sentence “one will be taken and one left”? What warning does this serve for people who take comfort in numbers, going along with what everyone else is doing?

Matthew 24:42-51

3. What does the master consider wicked? What is so wicked about the servant’s response to the fact that his “master is delayed”?
4. What would wickedness look like in my context, as a servant of God entrusted with things to be faithful in?



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY
MARCH 17, 2016

MATTHEW 25:1–30 (ESV)

¹“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. ¹¹Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ¹²But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ ¹³Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

¹⁴“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²²And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.’ ²³His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴He also who had received the one talent came

forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'²⁶ But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed?²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.²⁹ For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'



STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 25:1-13

"But the parable has at least two universal warnings. [...] It warns us that there are certain things which cannot be obtained at the last minute. [...] Similarly, it is easy to leave things so late that we can no longer prepare ourselves to meet with God. [...] It warns us that there are certain things which cannot be borrowed. The foolish virgins found it impossible to borrow oil, when they discovered they needed it. A man cannot borrow a relationship with God; he must possess it for himself. A man cannot borrow a character; he must be clothed with it. We cannot always be living on the spiritual capital which others have amassed. There are certain things we must win or acquire for ourselves, for we cannot borrow them from others."²⁸

1. What realities did the foolish ones ignore?
2. How does this parable challenge a casual approach to Christian life?

Matthew 25:14-27

3. How does the master's identical praise for both the two and five talent servants show what God values and the folly of the one talent servant's response to receiving one talent?

Matthew 25:19-23

4. How does faithfulness lead to partaking in God's joy?
5. In what ways does God want me to be "faithful over a little" so that he can entrust me "over much"? Is there some way in which I am refusing to be "faithful over a little" because I want to be in charge of much?

Matthew 25:24-27

6. Why would the one talent servant "[dig] in the ground and hid[e] his master's money" and later blame the master for his own unfaithfulness? What is the relationship between a wrong view of God and unfaithfulness?

²⁸ William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, vol. 2, Revised Edition, the Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1975) 320-321



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 18, 2016

MATTHEW 25:31–46 (ESV)

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Vivid (adj.): producing powerful feelings or strong, clear images in the mind

^b Sin of omission: failure to do good or something that you should have done

^c Heed (v.): pay attention to; take notice of

Matthew 25:31-46

"This is one of the most vivid^a parables Jesus ever spoke, and the lesson is crystal clear - that God will judge us in accordance with our reaction to human need. His judgment does not depend on the knowledge we have amassed, or the fame that we have acquired, or the fortune that we have gained, but on the help that we have given."²⁹

1. What is amazing about the fact that Jesus identifies with those who are considered the "least"?
2. Reflect on the fact that those "who are cursed into the eternal fire" are largely guilty for what they did not do. Who are the needy in my life and what has been my attitude towards sins of omission^b towards them?

Matthew 25:1-46

3. Reflect on the three parables in this chapter. Am I living with the end in the mind?
4. How can I concretely heed^c the warnings from each of these parables?

²⁹ William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Volume 2, 1975, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 325-326.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



MESSAGE NOTES



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 21, 2016

MATTHEW 26:1–25 (ESV)

¹ When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, ²“You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”

³Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. ⁵But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

⁶Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, ⁷a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. ⁸And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? ⁹For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.” ¹⁰But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. ¹²In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. ¹³Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”

¹⁴Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

¹⁷Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?” ¹⁸He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’” ¹⁹And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

²⁰When it was evening, he reclined at table with the

twelve.²¹ And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”²² And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?”²³ He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me.”²⁴ The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”²⁵ Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”



STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 26:6-13

1. Contrast the evaluation of this woman's actions by Jesus and his disciples. From where does this difference spring? Is there some way in which I consider the time and resources I am giving for Christ “wasteful”?
2. How does the woman with the alabaster jar challenge my view of what is beautiful? How can I live a more beautiful life?

Matthew 26:14-16

“Judas, therefore, sold Jesus for less than five pounds. If greed was the cause of his act of treachery, it is the most terrible example in history of the depths which love of money can reach... It may be that Judas was [a zealot], and that he had looked on Jesus as the divinely sent leader, who...could lead the great rebellion. He may have seen that Jesus had deliberately taken another way, the way that led to a cross...Judas may have hated Jesus because he was not the Christ he wished him to be. He may have thought that Jesus was proceeding far too slowly; and he may have wished for nothing else than to force his hand. He may have betrayed Jesus with the intention of compelling him to act. ...the tragedy of Judas is that he refused to accept Jesus as he was and tried to make him what he wanted him to be. It is not Jesus who can be changed by us, but we who must be changed by Jesus. We can never use him for our purposes; we must submit to be used for his. The tragedy of Judas is that of a man who thought he knew better than God.”³⁰

3. How does Judas' response to Jesus illustrate the nature of sin? How does Judas' question “What will you give me” illustrate the nature of sin?
4. In what areas of my life do I have the attitude of Judas? In what ways do I get frustrated at God's ways, or think that I know better than God?

Matthew 26:20-23

5. Think about the effect of Jesus' announcement that “one of you will betray me” on this group of people who were so tightly knit for three years. Given the disciples' shock at the news that one of them would betray Jesus, what must have Judas been good at doing in his relationship with the rest of the disciples?
6. Why is betrayal so sad?

³⁰ William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. II, Revised Edition. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1975), 327-332.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 22, 2016

MATTHEW 26:26–56 (ESV)

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” ²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the ^acovenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

³⁰ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ³¹ Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ ³² But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” ³³ Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” ³⁴ Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” ³⁵ Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷ And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” ³⁹ And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” ⁴⁰ And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? ⁴¹ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ⁴² Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” ⁴³ And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. ⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” ⁴⁹ And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed

him.⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.⁵¹ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.⁵² Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.”⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions^a of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” ⁵⁵ At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. ⁵⁶ But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^aLegions (n): an army unit, each with thousands of people

Matthew 26:30-46

1. Are there ways in which I am like Peter in overestimating myself and dismissing warnings?
2. What lessons can we learn from this passage about the role of prayer in facing challenges required for costly obedience, and how does Jesus demonstrate this?
3. In what ways is it reassuring that Jesus focuses on the triumph of the resurrection, and looks forward to the reunion in Galilee (vs. 32) even though he has just told the disciples that they will all “fall away” that night?

Matthew 26:36-39

“Jesus does not ask them to pray but to watch. As he grievously anticipates his looming death, his overwhelming sorrow reveals a heart broken almost to the point of death itself, because he knows that he will experience his Father’s forsakenness (cf. 27:46). This reveals the depth of Jesus’ human relationships he feels is necessary to sustain him in his time of greatest need. It may be difficult to grasp that the Son of God had such needs, but to do so gives us a more adequate understanding of his incarnation.”³¹

4. Reflect on the fact that Jesus was “very sorrowful even to death.” What does this say regarding Jesus’ humility and vulnerability? How does this passage make clear the extent of Jesus’ suffering on my behalf?
5. Are there difficult situations in my life where I need to pray, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will”?

Matthew 26:47-55

“With a touch of sad irony Jesus says, ‘Friend, do what you came for.’ The designation ‘friend’ (hetairos) is found three times in Matthew. The preceding two times Jesus used it in parables to address a person who abused a privileged relationship (20:13; 22:12). Here Judas has violated the most privileged relationship with Jesus Messiah [...] Judas manipulates friends and enemies to advance his goals, but within the deception Jesus maintains control of his own destiny to reconcile friends and enemies to God and to each other.”³²

6. Given what Jesus says in v. 53, what is so amazing about Jesus’ actions here? What can I learn about the heart of God toward my salvation?

³¹ Wilkins, Michael J., *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Matthew*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2004.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY
MARCH 23, 2016

MATTHEW 26:57–75 (ESV)

⁵⁷Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. ⁵⁸And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. ⁵⁹Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, ⁶⁰but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward ⁶¹and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’” ⁶²And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” ⁶³But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure^a you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” ⁶⁴Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” ⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy^b. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.” ⁶⁷Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, ⁶⁸saying, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?”

⁶⁹Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” ⁷⁰But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you mean.” ⁷¹And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁷²And again he denied it with an oath: “I do not know the man.” ⁷³After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.” ⁷⁴Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^aAdjure (v): to command solemnly, under oath

^bBlasphemy (n): cursing or show contempt to God

Matthew 26:57-58

1. Reflect on the phrases “following him at a distance” and “sat with the guards to see the end.” Why is this picture of Peter troubling?
2. Given the fact that Peter later denies Jesus completely, what warning does this passage have for me?

Matthew 26:74-75

3. Why did Peter weep bitterly? What might Peter have realized about himself and about Jesus when he heard the rooster crow?
4. What did Peter remember, and how did this lead him to repent? What implication does this have about the role of God’s word in my life?
5. Observe the honesty of the gospels to show this kind of humiliating picture of Peter, the rock of the Christian church. What truth about the gospel does this reveal?

Matthew 26:57, 59-61

“All criminal cases must be tried during the daytime and must be completed during the daytime. Criminal cases could not be transacted during the Passover season at all. Only if the verdict was Not Guilty could a case be finished on the day it was begun; otherwise a night must elapse before the pronouncement of the verdict, so that feelings of mercy might have time to arise. Further, no decision of the Sanhedrin was valid unless it met in its own meeting place, the Hall of Hewn Stone in the Temple precincts. All evidence had to be guaranteed by two witnesses separately examined and having no contact with each other. And false witness was punishable by death...Still further, in any trial the process began by the laying before the court of all the evidence for the innocence of the accused, before the evidence for his guilt was adduced...These were the Sanhedrin’s own rules, and it is abundantly clear that, in their eagerness to get rid of Jesus, they broke their own rules. The Jews had reached such a peak of hatred that any means were justified to put an end to Jesus.”³³

6. What motivated the Sanhedrin to break their own rules in order to “put [Jesus] to death”?
7. Looking at the Sanhedrin and what great lengths they went to in order to reject the truth, what can I learn about what the rejection of the truth ultimately does to one’s heart?

Matthew 26:65-68

“To this day when a man is brought face to face with Jesus Christ, he must either hate him or love him; he must either submit to him, or desire to destroy him. No man who realizes what Jesus Christ demands can possibly be neutral. He must either be his liege-man or his foe.”³⁴

8. Why did the people respond so violently to Jesus’ claim? What is surprising and yet not so surprising about their response?
9. What could have led to these people being so wrong about Jesus? What warning does this have for me?

³³ William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Volume 2, 1975, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 353-354.

³⁴ William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Volume 2, 1975, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 356.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY
MARCH 24, 2016

MATTHEW 27:1-31 (ESV)

¹When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. ²And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.

³Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, ⁴saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." ⁵And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. ⁶But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money." ⁷So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. ⁸Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. ⁹Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, ¹⁰and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me."

¹¹Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." ¹²But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. ¹³Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?" ¹⁴But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

¹⁵Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. ¹⁶And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" ¹⁸For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. ¹⁹Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream." ²⁰Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. ²¹The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." ²²Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" ²³And he said, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

²⁴So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd,

saying, “I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.”²⁵ And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!”²⁶ Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged^a Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion^b before him. ²⁸ And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ³⁰ And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Scourged (v): Beaten, whipped

^b Battalion (n): army

Matthew 27:1-10

1. What does the response of the chief priests—“what is that to us? That’s your responsibility”—reveal about human inability, and the helplessness of sinners to find forgiveness from human courts?
2. What is tragic about the response of both Judas and the priests?

Matthew 27:6-10

“They are fixated on very precisely upholding religious custom but hardhearted about their immoral cause of the betrayal of Jesus to death. The irony is that they are careful not to defile the temple treasury with blood money, but they are the very ones who earlier schemed to provide the money that shed the blood of an innocent man.”³⁵

3. What is ironic about the chief priests’ concern about the use of the money, especially in light of Judas’ confession that he had betrayed “innocent blood”?
4. What caused the chief priests to be so blind towards what they were doing to Jesus? In what ways am I guilty of the same?

Matthew 27:11-25

“...the narrative does not implicate Pilate alone: the insistent people, blindly following their blind leaders (v. 20; compare 15:14; 23:16), embrace the moral responsibility Pilate seeks to evade. In the narrative world of Matthew, their acceptance of guilt for Jesus’ blood on themselves and the generation of their children (27:24-25) directly invites the catastrophic events of AD 66-70 (23:29-39)”³⁶

5. What is behind the people’s bold request (v. 25) that displays total ignorance of Jesus’ identity? How does this show that rejection of God is, at least partially, fueled by recklessness?

³⁵ Wilkins, Michael J., *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Matthew*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2004.

³⁶ IVP New Testament Commentaries *Matthew 27:11-26* Intervarsity Press



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 25, 2016

MATTHEW 27:32-66 (ESV)

³² As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled^a this man to carry his cross. ³³ And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴ they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall^b, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵ And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. ³⁶ Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. ³⁷ And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." ³⁸ Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. ³⁹ And those who passed by derided^c him, wagging their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." ⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ⁴² "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ⁴⁷ And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." ⁴⁸ And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹ But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." ⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

⁵¹ And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵² The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, ⁵³ and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴ When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

⁵⁵ There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, ⁵⁶ among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹ And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

⁶² The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³ and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and

steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first."⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can."⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.



STUDY QUESTIONS

Definitions

^a Compelled (v): forced

^b Gall (n): a bitter herb

^c Derided (v): mocked, scoffed, laughed in contempt

Matthew 27:41-44

*"At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the devil tempted Jesus in the same way (4:3, 6); now the people throw another cruel temptation at him to escape the cross: 'Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!' Their taunt says more than they know, but Jesus will continue to pursue the Father's will, as he resolutely affirmed three times in Gethsemane (26:39 - 44). Matthew's readers will hear in these taunts from the passersby another allusion to Psalm 22: 'But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads' (Ps. 22:6 - 7)."*³⁷

1. How is the attitude of "save yourself" manifested in the world today?
2. What are the situations in my life when the voices that tell me to "save [my]self" clamor the loudest?

Matthew 27:45-46

*"Not only does Jesus bear the load of humanity's sin, but he becomes sin on our behalf (see 2 Cor. 5:21). He became cursed by God for us, 'for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree"' (Gal. 3:13). William Hendriksen comments graphically on the darkness that portends Jesus' cry: The darkness meant judgment, the judgment of God upon our sins, his wrath as it were burning itself out in the very heart of Jesus, so that he, as our Substitute, suffered most intense agony, indescribable woe, terrible isolation or forsakenness. Hell came to Calvary that day, and the Savior descended into it and bore its horrors in our stead."*³⁸

3. Reflect on Jesus' suffering and darkness as he bore the weight of my sin.
4. How does Jesus' cry "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" provide hope in times of despair?

Matthew 27:51-54

*"This large blue, purple and scarlet curtain separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, an inner room which symbolized God's presence (Exodus 26:31-33). It was, in effect, the barrier that separated people from God. When God supernaturally tore the curtain (perhaps by earthquake) he showed dramatically that Christ's death had given people access to God (Heb. 9:1-15; 10:19-22)."*³⁹

5. How does the fact that "the curtain of the temple was torn in two" and "the tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised" illustrate what Christ has accomplished through his death?

Matthew 27:62-66

6. What is ironic about the chief priests and the Pharisees trying to secure the tomb against the resurrection?

³⁷ Wilkins, Michael J. "The Mocking of Messiah (27:39 - 44)" In *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Matthew*. By Michael J. Wilkins, 900. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2004.

³⁸ Wilkins, Michael J., *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Matthew*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2004.

³⁹ "Matthew 27:51" In *The Quest Study Bible: Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) 1432.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION & COMMITMENT



BIBLE STUDY

MARCH 26, 2016

MATTHEW 28:1-20 (ESV)

¹ Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." ⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

¹¹ While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. ¹² And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers ¹³ and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' ¹⁴ And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." ¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."



STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 28:1-8

“Most of the same women who courageously witnessed Jesus’ gruesome crucifixion and burial plan to visit the tomb in order to assist the family in finalizing the body for burial. Jewish custom permitted both men and women to prepare corpses, with women allowed to attend to corpses of either gender but men not allowed to attend to women’s corpses. The women go to the place where Jesus was laid prior to the Sabbath”⁴⁰

1. What is the significance of the angel reminding the women that Jesus had risen “as he said”? What impact would those words have on the women?
2. Are there any areas in my life where I need to cling to God’s words to prevail over my own emotions and expectations?

Matthew 28:5-10, 16-20

3. What can I learn about the simplicity of being a witness in the angel’s commands to “come see,” then “go quickly and tell”?
4. How do the words “All authority,” “all nations,” and “I am with you always” challenge any limitations that I place on myself in obeying the Great Commission?
5. Think about the words “teaching them to observe.” What more does this entail than verbal communication of the message?
6. In what ways can I concretely obey Jesus’ final charge to all his followers?

⁴⁰ Wilkins, Michael J., *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Matthew*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2004.



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MESSAGE NOTES

