

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

**Jesus is the Messiah,
Our Savior!**

WHY JESUS WAS BORN!

Matthew 1 records the genealogy of Jesus in the flesh. Matthew traces Jesus' origin from Abraham and David, and then tells us the reason why He was born – to “save His people from their sin” (v. 21).

1) Jesus' genealogy traces his origin to Abraham. Matthew teaches us the faithfulness of the Lord for Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ promised to Abraham by the Lord.

Writing to mainly Jewish hearers, Matthew traces Jesus' origin through Abraham and David. This was significant because the Lord promised Abraham that his “seed” will greatly increase in number (Gen. 12:1-3) and He promised David that one of his sons will establish God's kingdom forever (2 Sam. 7:12, 13). Indeed, Matthew is pointing out to us the faithfulness of the Lord and His promise to Abraham and Israel of a Messiah.

2) Jesus' genealogy teaches us the AMAZING GRACE and FAITHFULNESS of the Lord our God by providing us, His people with a Savior.

Observe that Matthew mentioned several women in Jesus' genealogy whose majority were not Hebrews and of questionable character. They were: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Uriah's wife or Bathsheba, and Mary. This teaches us the amazing grace and love of the Lord for sinners like us. This tells us also that God's plan from the very beginning was to include other nations in His plan of salvation. The Lord divinely and sovereignly orchestrated our salvation and even used angels to accomplish His will. Indeed, Jesus was sent by the Father in order to ***“save His people from their sins”*** (v. 21).

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God is a FAITHFUL & TRUE GOD. He is dependable and powerful and will accomplish His will and purposes in this world and in our life.

2) The Lord our God is a GRACIOUS & LOVING GOD! His will is to save a world of sinners; not just the Jews but all those who will place their trust in His Jesus as their Savior!

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You are our FAITHFUL & SOVEREIGN GOD! You promised to give us a Savior and You gave us Jesus. You are GRACIOUS & MERCIFUL. You are not a respecter of person. You had mercy on sinners like me and called us by Your Gospel. Thank You for Jesus who is my Savior. All these I pray in His Name. AMEN!”

WISE MEN VISIT BABY JESUS!

Matthew 2 tells us of the visit of the Magi or Wise Men to Baby Jesus in Jerusalem. They came with a definite purpose and that is to “worship the newly born King of the Jews.” And in spite of the apathy and reluctance of the Jews to their mission, they proceeded to look for the Child and found Him. Upon seeing Him, they presented Him with gifts and worship Him.

1) The Magi or Wise Men came from the east and looked for the Baby Jesus!

Bible Scholars says that these “magi” were actually royal advisers to the king and were expert in the field of astrology, science, and other fields. Most probably these Wise Men came from Babylon at that time where after the exile many influential Jews stayed and lived (like Daniel and his friends). Perhaps, influenced by Jews like Daniel, they became worshipers of the Lord and learned of the prophecy about the coming Messiah. Prompted by the Star of Bethlehem, they travelled long and hard to find the newly born King of the Jews (v. 2).

2) The Magi or Wise Men gave precious gifts and worshiped the Baby Jesus!

While the religious leaders and authorities of Jerusalem were oblivious of Jesus’ birth and fulfilment of the Scriptures about the Messiah (Micah 5:2), these Wise Men were determined to locate the Baby Jesus. Herod, in pretense, encouraged them to seek for the Child and inform them later of His where about. Finally, after locating the Baby Jesus, they presented Him with precious gifts and worshiped Him.

3) *The Magi or Wise Men were warned by the Lord not to disclose where the Baby Jesus was.*

Warned in a dream by the Lord, they changed their route going back to where they came to protect the Child King from Herod's evil plot. Upon learning of the Wise Men's action, Herod was furious and ordered the massacre of children who were 2 years old and under in and around Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the Lord also warned Joseph and Mary, in a dream, to flee to Egypt and hid the Child. Then, later they returned to Israel and settled in Nazareth.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) *SEEK THE SAVIOR & TAKE NO REST UNTIL WE FIND HIM & WORSHIP HIM. Like the Wise Men, let us seek the Lord Jesus until we find Him and fully give Him the honor and worship that He rightly deserved.*

2) *KNOW GOD'S WORD & TAKE HEED TO WHAT IT SAYS. A truly wise person is not just a hearer of God's Word but a DOER! The Wise Men upon learning God's Word, obey God's leading.*

4) *FEAR THE LORD & YOU WILL FEAR NO ONE OR NOTHING ELSE! Like the Wise Men who did not love their live but risked them for the sake of Jesus' safety, we are to live fearlessly for our Lord Jesus.*

PRAYER:

"Our heavenly Father, indeed, You are our WISE & LOVING GOD! Indeed, mold me to be the WISE BELIEVER that You desire me to be. Make me wise and give me spiritual insights in order to make Christ-exalting decisions and choices in my life. Lord, make me to fear You and obey Your Word faithfully. All these I pray in Jesus' Name. AMEN!"

THE BAPTISM OF JOHN & JESUS

Matthew 3 records the baptism done by John the Baptist and his baptism of Jesus. Upon seeing Jesus, John knew He was the Messiah and told him that he was not worthy to baptize Jesus. But our Lord Jesus insisted that they had to do it “for righteousness’s sake.”

1) John’s baptism teaches us the value of the spirit rather than the form in religious rituals.

John made it clear that he was not the Messiah or the Christ but the One who “prepares the way for the Lord...” (v. 3). His baptism is symbolic. It should prepare them to the coming of the Messiah even Jesus who will baptize them with the Holy Spirit and fire (vv. 11-12). His baptism was for repentance; that is, for the people to humble their hearts and repent of their sins and “produce fruit in keeping with repentance” (v. 8). It should prepare them to receive Jesus as their Savior and King.

2) Jesus’ baptism teaches us total obedience and submission to the Father’s will!

On the other hand, our Lord Jesus teaches us the need and value of total obedience and submission to the Lord’s will. Even though our Lord was much greater than John the Baptist, yet He let John baptized him “for righteousness’ sake,” that is, in obedience to the Father’s will and plan (v. 15). Observe also how the heaven opened and rejoiced on Jesus’ baptism. Particularly, the Father was pleased and affirmed Jesus as His Son, the Messiah whom He sent in order to save His people. But not only that the Father was pleased with Him; the Holy Spirit came to dwell in Him. He was anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and thus, He began His earthly ministry!

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God DESIRES our HEART! More than our rituals or 'doing things' for Him, He wants our HEART to be fully devoted and yielded to Him!

2) The Lord our God DELIGHTS in TOTAL OBEDIENCE & SUBMISSION! He wants our TOTAL DEVOTION & LOVE because He as our FATHER wants to bless us with AFFIRMATION & POWER!

PRAYER:

"Our heavenly Father, indeed, You are our FAITHFUL & LOVING FATHER! You desire not performance but our HEART to be totally YOURS! Lord, indeed, teach us to TOTALLY OBEY & SUBMIT to Your will and commands. For in this You are pleased and through this You anoint and empower us. In Jesus' Name. AMEN!"

ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE & DISCIPLESHIP

In this chapter, Matthew records the temptation of the Lord Jesus by the devil and how He overcame them by using the scriptures or God's Word. Matthew also narrates the calling of the first disciples giving us insights as to the mission that our Lord Jesus will give to all who will follow and serve Him.

1) The temptation of Jesus teaches us that we have an enemy who will do everything to stop us from being an effective and fruitful disciple of Jesus!

The temptation of our Lord Jesus reminds us that we have an enemy whose main goal is to stop us from becoming the person that God intended us to be – a person conformed to the likeness of our Lord Jesus! Like Jesus, Satan will tempt us to deny or disobey our God and forsake His calling and purpose for our life. But like our Lord Jesus, we have the Word of God with us to help us overcome Satan's every temptation.

2) Jesus' calling of the first disciples shows us that the Lord wanted "disciples" and use them to accomplish His plan of salvation. He wants not just a fan's club but totally committed disciples!

Jesus made it clear from the very beginning that He called us to be His "followers" and to be "fishers of men." He called us to be His messengers of His Good News. Not just to receive and enjoy the news that we are forgiven of our sins because we trusted in Jesus as our Savior but to be His ambassadors in telling others of the Gospel/Good News! Like Jesus who taught in the synagogues, preached the Good News, and healed the sick, the disciples would also do the same ministries in the days ahead.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) BEWARE! As Christ's followers and disciples, we have an enemy who wants to see us fail in our walk with Christ. Resist him and overcome him through God's Word! Put on the full armor of the Lord for complete victory (See Eph. 6).

2) BE 'FISHERS OF MEN'! Let us fulfill the Lord's purpose and calling for our life as His disciples. Let us equip ourselves to be effective in winning people to Christ and making them His disciples.

PRAYER:

"Our heavenly Father, indeed, thank You for REMINDING us that we have an enemy in this world whose desire is to destroy our relationship with You and the Lord Jesus Christ. Teach me Your Word and how to resist the evil one. Equip me and empower me to be the "fisher of men" that You called me to be. All these I pray for the honor and glory of Your Name and the Lord Jesus. AMEN!"

SERMON ON THE MOUNT: KEY TO BLESSEDNESS

In Matthew 5-7, Matthew records what has come to be known as the “Sermon on the Mount.” Addressed particularly to His disciples, Jesus delineates the character qualities and behavior of those who will follow His steps and obey His call.

1) In the “Beatitudes” (vv. 3-12), Jesus teaches us the key to blessedness and happiness – Seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness!

Our Lord opened His ‘sermon’ on the Mount by pointing His disciples to the blessedness of seeking His kingdom and His righteousness. Jesus encouraged and exhorted them to pursue this kind of life that pleases the Father now and will ensure them of eternal rewards in the future. Observe that these qualities were deemed not as ‘grand’ and ‘desirable’ by the proud heart but they were surely pleasing to our Father in heaven and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2) Our Lord Jesus points His disciples to Himself as the KEY to fulfilling the Law. By this, Jesus emphasizes the importance of obeying the spirit rather than the letter of the Law.

Jesus redefines the Law as understood by the Jews at that time. Notice what our Lord Jesus told His disciples in v. 20: *“Unless you surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”* These religious leaders were obeying the law as far as performance is concern but their hearts were far away from God. They do it not out of love for God but out of duty or obligation. In other words, the Lord looks at the heart more than the performance of the Law. More importantly, Jesus taught us that He came to fulfill the

Law (v. 17) and to empower us to be able to obey the Law in the spirit too. In this chapter, Jesus exhorted and gave His disciples a new perspective on the commandments of the Lord. He was challenging them to live a deeper and extraordinary life through Him!

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God looks at our heart! He desires that we love Him with all our being; that we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and we obey Him from the heart!

2) The Lord our God gave us JESUS to be our Savior and Lord. Included here is the grace and power to live a life that pleases and glorifies Him!

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, Thank You for our Lord Jesus Christ whom You sent and gave to be our Savior and Lord. Through Him You gave us a new heart – a heart that could love You, obey You, and please You and glorify You. To You I bow down in worship and praise. AMEN!”

TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS & RICHES

In this section of the “Sermon on the Mount”, Jesus talked about the three “big” acts of righteousness of the Jews; namely, prayer, giving, and fasting. Jesus also gave them the cure for worry for all our material and physical needs.

1) Our Lord Jesus teaches us that true righteousness is not external but internal. The Father looks at the motive of our heart!

Our Lord repeatedly pointed out that our acts of righteousness should be done secretly and not to impress people. By this, we are guaranteed a reward from the Father. Praying, giving, and fasting; lose their value when we do them to impress people. Then it becomes a means to self-glory which is not pleasing to the Father. We must always remember that the Lord looks at the heart and that all our action should be motivated by our total devotion and love for Him. In fact, He has given us a new heart in Jesus Christ! (2 Cor. 5:17).

2) Our Lord Jesus teaches us that the cure for worry for our physical and material needs is WORSHIP OF GOD! He is our true riches!

Jesus also revealed to us here the cure to worry for all our material and physical needs. And this cure is to WORSHIP THE LORD. He began with teaching His disciples to pray; the God-ordained means by which we get from God what we need. We are to learn to PRAY TO GOD. Then, He pointed out to them to need to SERVE GOD ONLY and NOT MAMMOM. We are to SERVE GOD with all our heart. And finally, Jesus taught us to TRUST THE LORD. If our Father provided for His other lesser creation, will He not also provide for us, the “crowning glory of all His creation”

(Psalm 8)? We are to SEEK FIRST THE LORD's KINGDOM & HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, and all that we need will be provided.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God has given us a new heart through the Lord Jesus Christ! He looks at our heart and evaluates our motives and desires.

2) The Lord our God wants to show us the CURE to WORRY in this life: WORSHIP HIM & NO OTHER! Love Him with all our being!

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You desire from a HEART that loves You alone and is totally devoted and committed to You. Give us that kind of heart, LORD! Continually teach us to WORSHIP YOU ONLY and have no other gods in our life. Teach us to PRAY TO YOU, to SERVE YOU ONLY, and TRUST You with all our heart and being. In JESUS' NAME I pray. AMEN!”

WHO IS THE TRULY WISE PERSON?

In this last section of the “Sermon on the Mount”, Jesus talked about the importance of doing or obeying the teachings or the truths that our Lord Jesus instructs or teach us to do.

1) One could know who are the true followers and disciples of Jesus through the way they live or through their lifestyle.

Our Lord Jesus pointed out here several descriptions of those who are His true followers or disciples. One is a non-judgmental attitude or recognition that each is responsible to the Lord and will be held accountable before Him. We are to be compassionate to people (vv. 1-6). Second is persistence in prayer or pursuing the Lord (vv. 7-11). Third is choosing the “narrow road” over the “wide road.” By this I think the Lord means choosing “obeying” God’s will rather than man’s will (vv. 13, 14). And fourth and last is a changed or transformed life. The only way to know a tree is by its fruit (vv. 15-23).

2) The best and only right response to the Lord’s teachings or truths is obedience or putting it to practice!

Jesus also emphasized the necessity to put into action the teachings that we hear from Him by telling his hearers the parable or story of the two builders. He told them that the only wise thing to do to respond to His teachings is to follow or obey them. Just like the “Nike” advertisement, we are to “just do it!” This is the key to a victorious life in Christ Jesus – to trust and obey HIM!

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God wants us to live a life that reflects His character and qualities. We are to live a life of compassion for people and passion for the Lord!

2) The Lord our God wants us not just to be HEARERS but DOERS of His Words! Let us JUST DO His Will!

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You are LOVING & COMPASIONATE GOD! You DESIRE that we too live a life of compassion to people and passion for You. Lord, empower us and teach us to be DOERS of Your Words and not just HEARERS. Show us that this is the only way to be blessed and be able to please You. In Jesus’ Name, AMEN!”

FAITH – THE KEY TO SEE GOD’S WORK IN OUR LIFE!

In Matthew 8 we will discover the key to see the works of the Lord Jesus in our midst – It is FAITH! Someone said the Lord cannot work in the atmosphere of unbelief. Unbelief ties the Hand of the Omnipotent but faith frees it to do the miraculous!

1) The Lord Jesus came to heal us from all our infirmities and diseases (Body, Soul and Spirit). All He is looking for from our hearts is FAITH to believe Him and His Word!

In this chapter we see the Lord Jesus doing what He came to do – teaching God’s Word and healing people of their infirmities and diseases. This was to fulfill the words of the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 53:4). Indeed, Jesus is our Teacher and Healer. He taught us the Way to our Father in heaven and healed us from all our infirmities and diseases of body, soul (mind), and spirit. Note that Jesus responds to our FAITH. He knows those who believe and those who do not. He even knows those who have “little faith” in Him! And FAITH is the key that will bring God’s manifold miracles in our life!

2) People do not need “signs and wonders” in order to believe in God. Many would prefer “business as usual” than Jesus in their lives!

But notice that not all people respond rightly to Jesus in spite of the miracles that He performed. Though these miracles proved among others things that He is God, many still doubted Him and refuse to believe in Him. They rejected Him because He is not good for their “business!” People do not want to surrender their life or will to Jesus but wanted to maintain their status quo. They know the cost of following

Jesus. It will cost them to change the way they live! And many even today do not want that.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God wants to HEAL us! He wants to bring WHOLENESS into our life. Our faith in Him will bring His manifold blessings and miraculous interventions in our life!

2) The Lord our God DESIRES that we BELIEVE in Him and His Word. But He gives us the FREEDOM to choose to BELIEVE OR NOT.

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You are our SAVIOR & HEALER! You desire that we be healed from all that oppress and torment us and worries us. Thank You for Jesus and His Blood that paved all these blessings and miracles to be available to us. Lord, grant us the FAITH to believe YOU and Your Word. Lord, I place my faith/trust in You and Your Word. AMEN!”

FAITH – THE KEY TO SEE GOD'S WORK IN OUR LIFE 2

In Matthew 9 Jesus continues to teach, preach and heal to every place He went. Noticeable was the prominence of faith in the ministry of our Lord. He acknowledged and blessed those people who placed their faith or trust in Him. He also gave them a vision to see the world through His eyes and shared His compassion and plan of salvation for sinful men.

1) The Lord Jesus responds to faith in our heart. He blesses those who believe in Him and His power but leaves those who don't believe on their own.

Observe that in every healing and miracle that took place in this chapter, we see the Lord Jesus responding and acknowledging the faith of the person asking for healing or a miracle (vv. 2, 18, 21, 28). All of them believed in Jesus and His power to heal or perform the miracle they were asking from Him. But to those who don't believe like the Pharisees, Jesus leaves them on their own (vv. 3, 11, 34).

2) Our Lord Jesus shows His compassion to the lost and shares to His disciples a vision of a great harvest of souls!

In vv. 35-38, our Lord showed His compassion for the lost. He saw them as hopeless, helpless, and shepherd-less. Without Him they were hell-bound. Then, He shared to His disciples His great vision of harvest from among these people. First, He told them about the POTENTIAL OF THE HARVEST. "The harvest is plentiful..." Then, He pointed out to them the PROBLEM OF THE HARVEST. "The workers are few..." Finally, He shared to them the PRINCIPLES OF THE HARVEST. "Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the harvest field." The principle is TALK TO

THE LORD OF HARVEST. Particularly we are to ask Him to send out workers. We need workers and not spectators and fence sitters. We are to TRAIN people who are ready and willing to work for Jesus Christ.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God SEES FAITH in our heart. Nothing will be impossible to Him who believes!

2) The Lord our God is a COMPASSIONATE GOD! He came to call and save sinners like you and me. And He wants us to join Him in their harvest as His faithful and effective workers!

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You are our COMPASSIONATE GOD! You DESIRE to save sinners and are calling us to be active and faithful workers of Your end time harvest. Lord, empower us to be the faithful workers that You desire us to be. Mold us and shape us to be conformed to Jesus our Savior and Lord. In His Name we pray. AMEN!”

THE TWELVE – THE CHARGE & THE CHALLENGE!

In Matthew 10, Jesus chooses from among His disciples 12 men whom He also called apostles. He charged them to preach that the kingdom of God has come and to heal the people from all sickness and infirmities. He also told them the challenges that they will face along the way but that their faithfulness will be amply rewarded by the Lord.

1) The Lord somehow shows us that the key to accomplish the Great Commission is not a program nor an event but a living relationship of men with Jesus.

Observe that these 12 were part of the first disciples that Jesus had. From Luke 6: 12ffg, we learned that Jesus actually spent some time praying before making His choice of these 12 men. He knew the great role and responsibility that they will bear as leaders of His Church. But most importantly, we know that they had a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus (of course the Lord knew about Judas!). In other words, they had a personal and living relationship with Jesus! Thus, we need men and women who are truly in love and 'crazy' for Jesus. Men who will follow hard after Jesus and His cause!

2) Our Lord Jesus shows us that while salvation is free, but discipleship is not cheap. Following Jesus will not be easy but it will surely be amply rewarded!

From the passage we also learn that salvation should be offered free of charge to all. While it is true that salvation is free because it is by grace through faith in Jesus, discipleship is not a 'bed of roses.' It will not solve all our problems but it will surely present to us challenges that through God's grace and help you could also overcome. In fact, there are great rewards that await the followers or

disciples of the Lord who are faithfully obeying and serving the Him (2 Cor. 5:9, 10).

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God wants to have a LIVING & LOVING CONNECTION with men and women. This is the KEY to our personal growth as individual believer and corporate growth as a church.

2) The Lord our God wants followers or disciples not just spectators or fence sitters. And He will amply reward those who are faithful to His cause!

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You DESIRE an INTIMATE & LIVING RELATIONSHIP with Your people. Mold and shape us to be the faithful disciples and followers that You want us to be. Teach us to obey Your Word and do Your will with all our being. In Jesus’ Name I pray. AMEN!”

THE CHURCH NEEDS FORCEFUL MEN!

In Matthew 11, Jesus commended John the Baptist and spoke of his greatness as a prophet of God. He then declared that the kingdom of heaven had been forcefully advancing and “forceful men” were laying hold of it.

1) Greatness in the Kingdom of God and before the Lord is not about a great and grand ministry. It's all about obedience to the will and purpose of the Father.

When our Lord Jesus was asked by John's disciples (as requested by John) if He were the Christ, Jesus replied “Yes.” Then Jesus commended the person and ministry of John and spoke of his greatness among the OT saints. He even revealed that John was actually the one who will come in the spirit of Elijah who was to come to prepare His coming (v.10). As Jesus has noted, there is no ‘greatness’ or ‘grandeur’ in the person or ministry of John. But there is solid commitment to do the Lord's will amidst opposition and indifference of people. Thus, greatness in the Kingdom of God is all about obedience and submission to our Father's will.

2) The Church of Jesus Christ needs men and women who will forcefully advance the Kingdom of God!

Note that Jesus declared that the least in the kingdom will be greater than John. In fact, Jesus referred to them as “forceful men” laying hold of the kingdom (vv. 12-13). These are the kind of men and women needed today to advance the kingdom of God! And who are they? As seen in the ministry of Jesus and from our passage today, these “forceful men and women” are those who have believed in Jesus as their Savior and repented of their sins and taken hold of our Lord Jesus Christ! They had come to Him and

answered His call to “take His yoke and learn from Him!” (vv. 28-30).

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) *The Lord our God wants our OBEDIENCE & TOTAL COMMITMENT. He is pleased with those who totally submit their life and will to Him!*

2) *The Lord our God needs FORCEFUL MEN today to advance His kingdom. Will you be these men and women who will “take His yoke and learn from Him”?*

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You desire OBEDIENCE rather than sacrifice. This is greatness in Your sight. Lord, teach me to fully and faithfully submit to Your will. Mold and make me the “forceful man” that You desire me to be. I am taking Your yoke and am willing to learn from You. In Jesus’ Name. AMEN!”

JESUS IS LORD OF ALL!

In Matthew 12, Jesus answered some of the questions and criticism of the religious leaders of the day and taught the truths of the kingdom of God. He concluded his discourse by challenging the people to believe in Him and make Him their Master and Lord!

1) The Lord Jesus Christ's preaching and healing ministry prove without a shadow of a doubt that He is the Messiah, the Savior our Father sent!

In vv. 1-14 our Lord Jesus argued with the Pharisees about the Sabbath and pointed out to them that the Sabbath was made for man - to serve man; and that He is the Lord of the Sabbath. He also proved and demonstrated that He is the Lord over diseases and over demons by healing a shriveled man and setting free a demon-possessed man, who was blind and mute. By these things, Matthew declared that Jesus was the Chosen Servant of God and "in His Name the nations will put their hope" (v. 21).

2) The Lord Jesus Christ must be the Lord of ALL in our life or not at ALL!

Note that when Jesus was asked by the Pharisees for a miraculous sign, He told them about important events in their past history that will condemn them because they did not believe in Him. In effect, He was saying to them that they will not get it but they too have to believe by faith that He is the Messiah. Finally, when told that His family members were looking for Him, Jesus answered that His mother and brothers are those "who does the will of my Father in heaven" (v. 48). Indeed, they have to fully acknowledge Him as Lord of all or not at all!

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) *The Lord Jesus Christ is the CHOSEN ONE, HE is the MESSIAH sent by the Father, our SAVIOR and LORD!*

2) *The Lord our God desire that we acknowledge JESUS CHRIST as LORD OF ALL OR NOT AT ALL!*

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You are the Lord of Creation! You are Lord over diseases and demons. You are the Lord of lords and King of kings! Teach me to submit to You and do Your will in my life. Lord, be Lord of all in my life, be Lord of all! In Jesus’ Name. AMEN!”

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

In Matthew 13, Jesus taught several parables about the kingdom of God. These earthly stories were supposed to teach the people heavenly truth and apply them in their lives. They were keys to entering the kingdom of God. They were the Word of God which could give us spiritual understanding and to know the Gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1) To understand the Parables of the Lord Jesus is a great privilege granted to God's people. Let us fully put to practice the principles they teach us!

In vv. 34, 35, Matthew noted that Jesus' teaching in parables was a fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy about the coming Messiah (Isa. 6:9, 10). In vv.11-17, our Lord Jesus made it clear that the parables were intended for the Lord's people to understand and apply in their lives. While for those outside the kingdom they were just stories with no meaning whatsoever to them. In fact, they will never fully understand them unless enlightened by the Holy Spirit. So here Jesus explained the meaning of the parables of the sower and the weeds to the disciples (vv. 18-23; 36-43).

2) Faith is the atmosphere whereby the miracles and works of the Lord Jesus will thrive or grow.

Note that when our Lord Jesus began teaching and healing people in his own home town, he did not do many miracles there. The reason was the prevailing unbelief of the many about Jesus. After teaching in their synagogue, they were amazed by his teaching but it did not moved to faith in Him but made them to question where He got all these things. And verse 57 said "they took offense at Him." Indeed, as what our Lord Jesus Himself declared, "*Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without*

honor” (v. 57). He did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith (v. 58).

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God wanted His people to KNOW HIS TRUTH through His parables. They are earthly stories that will teach us divine or heavenly truths in this life!

2) The Lord our God desire that we LIVE BY FAITH! As Hebrews 11:6 says, “Without faith it is impossible to please the Lord...”

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You are the Lord of TRUTH! You want us to know the TRUTH and to be set FREE by Your TRUTH. Teach me to obey Your Word and to LIVE BY FAITH BY OBEYING IT. Lord, teach me to LIVE BY FAITH by fully obeying YOUR WORD and just DO IT! In Jesus’ Name. AMEN!”

THE CHALLENGE OF FAITH

In Matthew 14, Jesus did two notable miracles (the feeding of the 5,000 and walking on water) that convinced His disciples that He was indeed the Son of God, the Messiah!

1) The death of John the Baptist may seem uneventful to men but not to God. The Lord values the death of the righteous!

Matthew began this chapter by citing the account of the death of John the Baptist. Notice that John was speaking the truth when he was arrested and imprisoned by Herod. Later, John paid his righteous stand for God with his life. He was executed for speaking against sin and evil. His death may seem uneventful and unglamorous but not before the Lord our God. In fact, observed that our Lord Jesus spent time in prayer after learning of His death (v. 13). God mourns the death of the righteous! The death of His children will never escape God's attention!

2) As our Lord Jesus challenged the faith of the disciples, He is now challenging us to believe in Him and His works!

Note that in the feeding of the 5,000 our Lord Jesus challenged and stretched the disciples' faith to 'feed' the people. And they saw the mighty Hand of God provided for the needs of the people using five loaves and two fishes. While on the next miracle, when they saw Jesus walking on water, Peter somehow was challenged to do the same. At first Peter believed that he could walk and he did walk but when he saw the waves, his faith wavered and he began to sink. And the Lord rescued him. On the other side of the

sea, Jesus did many miracles because the people believed in Him (see vv. 32-36).

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God will surely REWARD the RIGHTEOUS for He DELIGHTS in them!

2) The Lord our God CHALLENGES us to BELIEVE in HIM and His mighty works! Without faith it is impossible to receive from the Lord what we desire from Him!

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You DELIGHT in YOUR People! Your eyes guard our life and You will REWARD us someday according to our faithfulness to You. Lord, You challenge us to live by faith. To believe that nothing is impossible with You. Lord, I do believe that You can do great and mighty things in my life and ministry. In Jesus’ Name. AMEN!”

THE HEART OF THE MATTER IS THE MATTER OF THE HEART!

In Matthew 15, Jesus zeroed in to the heart of the matter as far as man's spiritual condition is concerned – It is the matter of the heart!

1) It is not what comes into our mouth that defiles us but the things that come out of our heart!

At this point, Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees and scribes because His disciples were eating without washing their hands. They contended that this was not in conformity to the traditions of the elders. But our Lord Jesus countered that they were disobeying the law of God by their man-made traditions or commandments. He cited the fourth commandment which was being sidestepped by their man-made tradition. Jesus pointed out that they were to worship and follow the Lord's command from the heart and not just to do a lip service to it as what they were doing. Then, Jesus proceeded to teach them that it is not the food or things that come into our mouth that defiles us but the things that comes out of our heart. Thus, declaring that the heart is sinful and needs the transforming power and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ!

2) Our Lord Jesus is seeking those whose hearts are believing and following hard after Him!

Matthew also noted of the story of the Canaanite woman who sought the Lord's favor to heal her daughter who was demon-possessed. She was so persistent in her request that the Lord Jesus granted her the "children's bread" which was supposed to be for the Jews only. This showed us that a heart, whether Jew or Gentile, that believes and earnestly and persistently seeks the Lord's

mercy shall be satisfied and blessed! May the Lord grant us such kind of heart that follows hard after the Lord!

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God looks at our heart! He is after the condition and state of our internal being!

2) The Lord our God delights in a heart that fully believes and follows hard and persistently after Him! It is the heart that will be blessed and satisfied!

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You are the God who looks at the heart! You know us from inside us. You delight in those whose hearts are totally inclined towards You, a heart that fully believes and follows hard after You. Lord, grant me such kind of heart. Mold me and transform me to be the kind of person You intended me to be. In Jesus’ Name. AMEN!”

A FAITH LIKE PETER!

Matthew 16 records the confession of Peter that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of Living God. Our Lord Jesus clearly told His disciples that this revelation or saving knowledge was not from Peter or man, but from God the Father. This is the kind of faith we need to have. Not a perfect faith as we will also discover; but nevertheless, a saving faith that comes from God Himself.

1) The Bible predicted that false teachers and false teachings will abound in the last days. Like the ‘yeast’ of the Pharisees and Sadducees, we are to be discerning and on guard of these teachings. Thus, be equipped in the Word!

At this point, Jesus warned the disciples of the “yeast” of the Pharisees and Sadducees. They did not get it at first but later on understood what the Lord meant. The NT writers clearly predicted that false teachers and false teachings will abound in the last days before the Lord returns. Thus, we are to be discerning and on guard of these things. As Peter himself exhorted us, *“But grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ!”* (2 Pet. 3:18).

2) Like Peter’s faith, our faith too will be put to test. Our faith need not be perfect but it surely must be not just ‘head knowledge’ but a ‘saving knowledge’ of the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God!

Matthew cited the confession of Peter as to who Jesus is. When Jesus asked the disciples who He was as perceived by the people, they gave various answers. But when He asked Peter, Peter confessed that Jesus was the

“Christ, the Son of the Living God!” Then, Jesus told them that Peter did not generate such knowledge but this ‘saving knowledge’ was a revelation by His Father in heaven. Later, Jesus tested again Peter’s faith by telling the disciples plainly His coming suffering and death in the hands of the religious leaders. This time Peter gave in to Satan’s lie (he entertained Satan’s ideas in his mind and spoke them to Jesus) and he was rebuked by the Lord. Peter’s faith might be imperfect but it surely was a “saving faith.” But how could we know whether our faith is a ‘saving faith’ or not? Our Lord Jesus gave us the standards as to where we are to measure our faith. In vv. 24-28, our Lord gave us the marks of His true followers and disciples. A true saving faith is demonstrated by this kind of life.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God is the God of TRUTH! He is the only WAY, TRUTH, and LIFE. We are to be People of the Book. We must be equipped in the Word of God!

2) The Lord our God is the AUTHOR and PERFECTER of our FAITH! He gives saving faith to His people and wants them to demonstrate it before the world.

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, You are the God of TRUTH. You hate the liar and the deceitful and those who love error. That’s why You gave us the Word for us to know Your truths. Lord, teach us Your truth that we may practice them in our daily living. Lord, thank You for giving us saving faith, to know Jesus as the Messiah and our Savior. Lord, may my life reflect this faith in Him by living a holy and fully obedient life before Him and in this world. In Jesus’ Name. AMEN!”

FAITH LIKE A MUSTARD SEED!

In Matthew 17, the Lord Jesus challenged the disciples to increase their faith as well as exercise their faith in Him. He even declared that “nothing will be impossible for you” if only they will believe.

1) The transfiguration of Moses as accounted by Matthew is another important proof of His divine origin and deity. Here, Jesus revealed His glory to His ‘inner circle’ of disciples.

At this time Jesus brought Peter, John and James in a mountain to pray and there Jesus was transfigured before their eyes. His appearance shone and with Him appeared two men. The disciples recognized them as Moses and Elijah. Also, the disciples asked about Elijah and Jesus told them that he already came and prepared His coming. And they understood that He was referring to John the Baptist. So, this experience bolstered their faith in Jesus as the Messiah, Son of God.

2) The Lord Jesus rebuked the disciples’ little faith. Then, He challenge them to believe in Him for “nothing will be impossible” for them.

Here, we find a father crying to Jesus to heal his demon-tormented son because His disciples could not get the demon out of the boy. The Lord Jesus rebuked the disciples little faith and told them that even if they had a faith like a mustard faith, they could perform great miracles in His Name. So, He challenged them to increase their faith in Him and to believe that “nothing will be impossible” for them. He exhorted them to be persistent in prayer and use the

discipline of fasting as effective tools to destroy the works of the devil in people's lives.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord Jesus Christ is the ETERNAL WORD! He was with the Father in the very beginning and He was God. In time, He became FLESH (MAN) and dwelt among men in order to be our Savior. His death on the Cross gave us life!

2) The Lord Jesus WANTS us to experience His supernatural intervention. He wants us to know and understand that “nothing is impossible” to him who believes in Him!

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You sent us JESUS to be the Messiah, our Savior and King! He came as a Man yet He shared Your glory in heaven. He came down to earth so that we could go up in heaven. Lord, increase my faith to believe that “nothing is impossible” to him who believes in You. Lord, make me persistent and passionate in prayer and fasting for the sake of the revival and growth of Your church here in FBC. All these I pray in Jesus’ Name. AMEN!”

FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER!

In Matthew 18 the Lord Jesus emphasized the necessity for believers to forgive one another from the heart. He showed them the consequences and cost of withholding or not releasing forgiveness to others.

1) The “little children” illustrates to us who are the greatest in the kingdom of God - They are those who are child-like in their trust and humble in their walk with the Lord.

When asked by the disciples, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of God?” The Lord Jesus called a little child used it to answer the question. He is the one who is child-like, that is, trusting and humble in walk with God is the greatest in the kingdom of God! Jesus proceeded to teach that we are not to be stumbling blocks to these little children but point them to Jesus. Our Lord taught us to deal seriously with sin in our lives and to live godly lives before God and others.

2) Unforgiveness is a trap of the enemy. Our Lord Jesus wants His people to be known as loving and forgiving. He wants us to be free from this stronghold of the devil.

In another question, Peter asked the Lord, “How many times should I forgive a brother who sins against me?” The Lord replied, “Seventy times seven.” What the Lord meant was actually was that it is unlimited. Then, He told them the story of the unmerciful servant which illustrates the truth that the Lord expects us to be a loving and forgiving people. Just as the Lord has forgiven us, we too are to forgive those who have wronged us. If we want God’s

forgiveness for our sins, we too are to forgive those who have sinned against us (Eph. 4:32)!

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) *The Lord Jesus Christ delights on those who are HUMBLE in heart and CHILD-LIKE in their trust in Him. He is looking for those who admit that they are lost and needed to be found!*

2) *The Lord Jesus WANTS us to be a LOVING & FORGIVING people. He expects us to forgive others as He has forgiven us our sins.*

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You are LOVING & FORGIVING GOD. You CAME to seek us and even DIE for us. You FORGAVE us our sins and assured us of eternal life. Lord, empower us to do the same to others – to love and forgive those who have wronged us and be restored in all our relationships. Lord, I put my trust and hope in You and Your love for me. All these I pray in Jesus’ Name. AMEN!”

PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM

In this chapter, the Lord Jesus revealed to His disciples the principles of the kingdom. Particularly, He shared to them the rules, the requirements, and the rewards of the kingdom.

1) The Rules of the Kingdom are obedience to the Word, willing surrender to God's will, and child-like faith (vv. 1-15).

When asked by the Pharisees about marriage, the Lord Jesus affirmed the words of the Book of Genesis that marriage was instituted by God. Marriage is between a man and woman and the two shall become one flesh. He told them that divorce was not His original will and man should not separate them. He seemed to allow only divorce for marital infidelity or immorality. Related to this, the Lord Jesus also taught that some have been given the gift of celibacy and some chooses to be celibate for the sake of the kingdom. In saying this, I think that the Lord delights in willing and deliberate surrender of our will to His will. Lastly, Jesus again used the children to describe the kind of faith we need to demonstrate before God – a child-like trust in Him!

2) The Requirement of the Kingdom is total surrender of our life to the Lord Jesus Christ! (vv. 16-27).

When asked by a young rich man as to how he can enter the kingdom of God, our Lord Jesus presented to him the requirement of the kingdom – total surrender of our life even our all to the Lord. The man thought that being good was all that was needed and that he had complied with this.

But the Lord showed him the content of his heart – his greed for riches which he could not forsake for Christ. The Lord made it clear here that to enter the kingdom we are to totally surrender our life our all to Jesus!

3) *The Reward of the Kingdom is present as well as future blessings and glory! (vv. 28-30)*

Our Lord Jesus also revealed the reward for all those who will take heed to the requirement of the Lord. He promised them present reward – 100 times as much what they lost and future glory –even eternal life!

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) *The Lord desires that we obey His Word, surrender our will to His, and walk in child-like faith.*

2) *The Lord wants us to willingly and deliberately surrender our will to His!*

3) *The Lord shall certainly reward those who followed Him with all their being with present and future blessing and glory!*

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, Your desire is for us to walk in full obedience to Your Word and in child-like faith in You. Lord, empower me to willingly and deliberately submit and surrender my will to Your will. Lord thank You for You will surely reward me with present and future blessings and glory. And I give You praise and thanks and worship. In Jesus’ Name. AMEN!”

BE CAREFUL OF WHAT YOU ASK!

In this chapter, the Lord Jesus followed up on the principle of the kingdom. He told them how one could be great in the kingdom of God and then continued to show compassion on the people and heal them.

1) The Lord Jesus is free to be generous to whomever He wants to. He will show mercy and bestow grace on whomever He wants to (vv. 1-16).

Our Lord Jesus gave a parable to teach His disciples that He will be generous to whomever He wants to. We are not to compare ourselves with others but to be focus on our own service to the Lord. His grace is sovereign and free. What matters to Him is our attitude and our heart – that it be grateful and thankful to Him for all His blessings to us.

2) To be great in the Kingdom of God, you have to serve the Lord and others! (vv. 20-28)

When requested by the mother of James and John to let her sons sit at the right and left of the Lord when His kingdom comes to reign, the Lord answered that it is His prerogative to assign who should sit on His left or right but the Father. Jesus sensing their wrong concept of greatness corrected it by telling them that the kingdom of God is different from the kingdoms of this world, where the rulers rule and lord it over their people. He told them that whoever wants to be great in the kingdom of God, he must be the servant of all. Like Jesus we have to have His mindset – He came to serve and not to be served!

3) The Lord rewards persistent and persevering faith. We could get His attention with that kind of faith.

Our Lord Jesus also demonstrated to the disciples that He rewards persistent and persevering faith. For when two blind men learned that Jesus was just around they never stop calling and crying His Name and to ask Him to heal them. The crowd tried to rebuke and stopped them but they continued. Then Jesus STOPPED and came to them and asked them what they wanted. When Jesus heard them, He has compassion on them and healed them!

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord or God is a GENEROUS & GOOD GOD! He will have mercy and grace on whomever He wants to.

2) The Lord wants us to be great in His Kingdom – Serve Him and others with all your heart!

3) The Lord shall certainly reward those who are persistent and persevering in their faith.

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You are a GRACIOUS, GENEROUS & GOOD GOD! You desire that we walk in humility and with a servant attitude. Lord, mold me to be a humble and faithful servant. Make me also the persistent and persevering in my trust in You. I give You praise and thanks and worship You. In Jesus’ Name. AMEN!”

JESUS, REJECTED BY THE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES!

This chapter begins the Jerusalem ministry of our Lord Jesus and the start of the escalation of His falling out with the religious leaders of the day. This will eventually lead to His arrest, suffering, crucifixion and death at the Cross.

1) The Lord Jesus' triumphal entry to Jerusalem fulfills what was written about the Messiah in the scriptures (vv. 4-5, 9, 13, 16).

Our Lord Jesus gave instructions to His disciples to prepare His coming to Jerusalem by riding a donkey. This was to fulfill what was written about the Messiah coming to Jerusalem (vv. 4-5). Amazingly, large crowds were formed to welcome His coming to Jerusalem and I led also to the fulfillment of scriptures prophecies about the Messiah. In the temple, the Lord drove out all those who were buying and selling and overturned the tables of the money changers (v.13) and the children were singing praises to Him. This angered the religious leaders and made them indignant.

2) The Lord Jesus told the religious leaders that the Father had rejected them for refusing to believe in Him.

When the chief priests and scribes saw what was happening to the people and the amazing things Jesus was doing, they came to Him and questioned Him. "By what authority are you doing all things?" Jesus told them that He will answer them if they answer first His question regarding John the Baptist's baptism - "Where did it come from? Was it from heaven or from men?" But they could not answer Him. They told Jesus, "We don't know!" So, Jesus told them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing all these

things!” Then, Jesus told them two parables (The Two Sons and the Tenants) which illustrated how God had rejected these religious leaders who were supposed to do the Father’s will but were now not believing Jesus and even rejecting Him. After hearing these parables they knew that He was referring to them. And so they started to talk of how to arrest Him but were afraid of the people who believed that He was a prophet.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord Jesus is the Messiah our Father sent. He fulfilled all what was written about Him in the Scriptures.

2) The Lord Jesus gives the Kingdom to those who wants it desperately in their life. But those who don’t believe will not see it!

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, indeed, You are our LOVING FATHER who gave us the MESSIAH, A SAVIOR FOR OUR SINS! He came and fulfilled Your will and HE gives the kingdom to all people You gave Him. Lord, blessed indeed are those You choose and open their eyes to see the beauty of the Lord Jesus. Increase my faith to believe that nothing is impossible to him who believes. In Jesus’ Name. AMEN!”

JESUS IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH & THE LIFE!

In this chapter our Lord Jesus emphasized the need to wear the “proper clothing” for the Kingdom’s Banquet. He answered the questions posed by the religious leaders of the day whose aim was to trap Him. His answers to their questions astonished many but also made more enemies.

1) The Lord Jesus compares the coming Kingdom of God to a Wedding Banquet. He pointed out that “proper clothing” is needed to enter this blessed occasion – the Righteousness of Christ!

Our Lord Jesus continued to speak to the religious leaders who were trying to trap him with hard and tricky questions. He told the parable of the Wedding Banquet which again taught that God has opened the Banquet to all people because His guests (the Jews) had rejected the invitation (vv. 1-22). But the highlight of the story is the entrance of one fellow who did not have the “proper attire” for the Banquet. As usual, Jesus left the people wondering as to the meaning of His words. So the question is – What is the “proper clothing” for the Lord’s Banquet. The apostle John gave us a hint as to the answer. John, seeing the multitude of people which no man could count gathered before the throne of God (during his vision where he saw heaven), was asked by one of the 24 elders:

“These in white robes – who are they, and where did they come from?” He answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev. 7: 13, 14)

In other words, they got it by believing and trusting in Jesus, the Lamb of God who shed His Blood for them. Have you already trusted and believed in the shed Blood of Jesus? His righteousness is our “proper clothing” for heaven when the time comes!

2) *The Lord Jesus answers all the questions of the religious leaders revealing His knowledge of the Scriptures. The fact is He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! (Jn. 14:6).*

After telling them the parable of the Wedding Banquet, the religious leaders, sensing that he was referring to them who had rejected Him, started to ask Him questions in order to trap Him. But Jesus answered them satisfactorily and with authority because His answers came all from scriptures (Note that He quoted four OT passages). First, our Lord Jesus established the truth that as believers and as citizens of a country, we are to pay taxes or submit to ruling government (Rom. 13:1ffg). Secondly, He corrected the wrong notion of the Sadducees regarding the resurrection and declared that resurrection is one of our future hopes (vv.23-33). Third, He declared to them the greatest of the commandments and quoted Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18 in which He summarized the whole of the OT laws into two: Love the Lord and love people, with all our being! (vv. 34-40). Finally, He countered them with a question that revealed their lack of understanding as to who the Messiah was (vv. 41-39). As Matthew has stated, “No one dared to ask Him any more questions.” (v. 40).

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) *The Lord Jesus is the WAY to Heaven! He is our RIGHTEOUSNESS! He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world! (John 1:29)*

2) *The Lord Jesus is the TRUTH! He is the One that the Father has sent who will give us understanding as to the Father’s will. Let us listen to Him alone!*

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ, our Messiah, the Lamb of God that took away our sins! He is the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE! In Him we put our trust and hope. To Him we give our allegiance and submit our life. In His SHED BLOOD we believe and look forward to His soon return. AMEN!”

BLIND LEADING THE BLIND!

In this chapter our Lord Jesus spoke strong and hard words for the religious leaders of the day. He admonished the people to do what they tell them to do but not to practice what they do. He called them “blind guides”! They were the blind guides leading the blinds!

1) The Lord Jesus speaking against the religious leaders of the day teaches us that LEADERS are to lead from the heart. AN EFFECTIVE LEADER IS A DOER OF THE WORD & NOT JUST TEACHER OF IT!

It is interesting that our Lord Jesus gave these “seven woes” to the religious leaders of the day. So that some Bible commentators think that these are His final or complete condemnation of them noting that He predicted the evil that will happen to them (see vv. 33-35). Whatever may be the case, it was clear that Jesus was not happy in their leadership of the Lord’s people. As Jesus himself said of them, they were “blind guides.” They were not DOER of His Word but TALKERS only! So, Jesus used harsh and strong words to reveal and condemn their evil deeds. He showed them their hearts and exposed to the people. He admonished the people to obey what they teach because it came from the Law. But they were not to follow what they do. And Jesus enumerated these evil practices that they were doing that were not pleasing before the Lord.

2) The Lord Jesus longs for an INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP with His people and HE has not changed. TODAY, HE LONGS FOR AN INTIMATE WALK WITH US!

But note also that our Lord was not completely happy with what was happening to His people. Definitely He was not glad that these leaders were failing and leading the people astray. For after these strong words, our Lord demonstrated strong emotion of compassion and mercy to His people as a loving mother longs for His children (vv. 37-39). From this, we learned and understand that God still do long for us to be intimate with Him. For He has not changed. He's the same. Today, He longs to be close and intimate with each one of us who profess His Name. He even longs for sinners to come to repentance and faith in Jesus. For the Bible says, ***“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16, NIV).***

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God WANTS us all to be DOERS OF THE WORD and not just ‘TALKERS’ OF THE WORD!

2) The Lord our God WANTS us His people to BE INTIMATE with Him! He desires to be a FATHER and a FRIEND to us, His children. And He desires to be MERCIFUL & GRACIOUS to sinners!

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, make me and mold me to be a DOER and not just a TALKER of Your Word. Empower me to put them to practice every day of my life. Lord, remove the things that prevent me from drawing near to You for I know that You will draw near when I do. Lord, use me to be Your heart to others who don’t know You yet. Lord, I pray all these in Jesus’ Name. AMEN!”

THE END OF THE AGE!

In this chapter, our Lord Jesus revealed to His disciples the signs of His coming again implying that somehow, the disciples had an idea that He will be going and returning again in the future. Here, He describes to them the “signs” of the end of the age.

1) The Lord Jesus reveals to His disciples that “various signs” will first took place before the end of the world and His return will happen. The most important of these teachings is that Jesus’ return will be VISIBLE & VICTORIOUS!

Awed by the grandeur and magnificence of the temple, the disciples called Jesus’ attention to it and from which they received a rather intriguing answer from the Lord (v. 2). Later at the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked our Lord to teach them about when these things will come as well as His coming again and the end of the age. Jesus told the disciples that there will be various signs that will happen first before He comes. They include the following: (a) the rise of false Christ, (b) wars, (c) natural and man-made calamities like famines and earthquakes, (d) persecution of the faith, (e) increase of wickedness and coldness of people’s heart, (f) increase of knowledge, (g) the world-wide evangelization of the nations, (h) abomination of the Holy Temple spoken by Daniel, and (i) abnormal cosmic signs or happenings. But what is interesting and I think the most important teaching of Jesus here is the **VISIBLE COMING OF JESUS** after all these things occurred. All the nations will see Him and mourn. And then, the ingathering of the elect will take place. Praise the Lord!

2) As we wait for the Lord's Second Coming and the end of the age, our Lord teaches us to wait in faithfulness, patience, and endurance. He expects us to be always ready and prepared for these things.

Observe that the Lord did not reveal the day or the hour for these things to happen. No one really knows the time. Thus, by this the Lord teaches us to live by faith and not by sight. He showed us that faithfulness, patience and endurance must characterize everyone who professed the Name of Jesus. The Lord expects us to endure the suffering and challenges of the coming persecution and trials of the faith (vv. -14). He expects us to be faithful in our calling and responsibility as His people (vv. 45ffg). We are to believe that His word is faithful and true when He said, "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my Words will never pass away*" (v. 35).

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God promised not only to RETURN but also to bring JUDGMENT to this present world. He will come as a VICTOR and as a JUDGE!

2) The Lord our God expects us His people to be FAITHFUL, PATIENT, & PERSISTENT as we wait for His Coming again and the end of the age!

PRAYER:

"Our heavenly Father, thank You for the BLESSED HOPE that we have in Jesus Christ! Thank You because You are coming again to take us to be with You and to restore Your Reign in the universe. Lord, as wait for You, make us Your faithful servants, patiently and perseveringly serving You. In Jesus' Name I pray. AMEN!"

GOOD & FAITHFUL SERVANTS!

In this chapter, our Lord Jesus continued to reveal to His disciples what shall take place in the future particularly when He returns and the Judgment Day! He warned them to be faithful and watchful as they wait for His coming again and the judgment day.

1) The Lord Jesus through the Parable of the Ten Virgins teaches us to be always ready and prepared for the Lord's Return; while the parable of the Talents teaches us to be good and faithful stewards of His resources in our life.

Jesus as I noted earlier was just continuing His teaching to His disciples and giving them insights as to what will take place in the days ahead. After telling them that the day and time of His return as well as the end of the age, He told in this chapter two parables to challenge them not only to be watchful but also be wise, good, and faithful servants and stewards of their Master even the Lord Jesus Christ. A servant must be a good and faithful steward! He reminded them that as His servants, they will give an account of the resources and opportunities He had given them here on earth. For we are not only going to heaven but we will also be rewarded or given eternal rewards for our good deeds done in the Name of Christ. The apostle referred to this as the Judgment Seat of Christ in his second letter to the Corinthian Church. He warned us that: *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad"* (2 Cor. 5:10).

2) *The Lord Jesus clearly teaches that there will be a Judgment Day where like a Shepherd He will separate the Sheep from the Goats. By saying this, He clearly taught us that there are only two eternal destinations – Eternity with the Lord or without the Lord! It's Heaven or Hell!*

Our Lord Jesus clearly taught that there will be a GREAT & TERRIBLE DAY OF JUDGMENT for the nations. On this day, He will separate the “sheep,” His People, from the goat, those who rejected and refused Him. And He will give to His people their inheritance and to the “goats,” He will send them to eternal damnation. The apostle John referred to this as the Great White Throne Judgment in Rev. 20:21-15. In fact John ended that passage with this frightening admonition: *“If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire”* (v. 15). Is your name already in the Book of Life?”

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) *The Lord our God shall JUDGE first His People. Paul refers to it as the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:9, 10). The Lord will make us account for our good as well as bad deeds!*

2) *The Lord our God shall JUDGE the nations! He will give the inheritance of those who trusted in Christ and in Him but He will send to hell those who refused and rejected Him and God in this life!*

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, thank You for the hope that we have in our future. Thank You because You are coming again to give us the inheritance that You promised to all who will trust in Jesus as their Savior. Lord, continue to mold us to be the good and faithful servants that You desire us to be. Empower us to reach to others who are yet to believe in You that they may escape this great and terrible JUDGMENT DAY that

***awaits those who reject and refuse Your Son Jesus.
Lord, all these I pray in Jesus' Name. AMEN!"***

MATTHEW 26

DAY 26

THE ARREST OF JESUS

Matthew 26 is an action packed chapter that deals primarily with the Lord Jesus' Last Supper with the disciples, his arrest and trial before the chief priests and scribes, and Peter's denial of the Lord and his repentance.

1) Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, and later death are all written according to the Word of the Lord. They were not mere coincidences but a major part of God's incredible and inscrutable plan to save His people.

In the opening verses of the chapter, our Lord Jesus himself predicted what will take place in the next few days- He will be arrested and be crucified! (see v. 2). From the very start Jesus knew what will happen because He came according to the Father's plan. Again we see this when the woman poured out a very expensive perfume on Him in the house of Simon the Leper in Bethany. He told them plainly that this was to prepare His coming death and burial (v. 12). Then, He gathered them for the last time to have the last supper with them and again told them what will take place to Him the days ahead. He told them that one of them will betray him and that He will not dine again with them until He comes again! (vv. 27-29). He also predicted that Peter will deny Him not one but three times. And all these took place according to Jesus' words in fulfillment of the OT prophecies!

2) Peter's story reminds us of the Lord's amazing grace and favor towards His people. We will ultimately be saved because of the Lord's Sovereign and Victorious grace!

Observe that the Spirit through Matthew highlighted Peter's denial of the Lord and his consequent repentance. At first, Peter as the impulsive person that he was, strongly declared that he will never ever deny the Lord. He was very vocal and strong about this that he was even willing to die for Jesus. But when the time came and Jesus was arrested and taken by the religious leaders, all of them fled (v. 56). Peter tried to follow the Lord but when he was identified by some as a disciple of Jesus, he denied it – yes, three times according to the Lord's words! But in the Gospel of John, we learned that the Lord knew this and that He told them that He has prayed for them and He also told Peter that he will be able to recover from this and will strengthen his brethren (See Luke 22: 31-32). Note also that our Lord Jesus taught and demonstrated to them the importance of prayer and intercession in times of crisis and temptation; but apparently they failed at that time and resulted later in their fleeing and deserting Jesus (see vv. 36-46).

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God clearly PLANNED our salvation! Our Lord Jesus intentionally came to seek and save His People from sin and hell.

2) The Lord our God is our SOVEREIGN & GRACIOUS GOD! His victorious and sovereign grace will see us through even in our times of failures, weaknesses, and shortcomings.

PRAYER:

“Our heavenly Father, thank You for Your amazing PLAN of salvation. You sovereignly and intentionally orchestrated our salvation and a major part of it is sending us Jesus to be our Savior, the Atonement for my sins. Lord, thank for Your Sovereign and Victorious Grace which secure me of my eternal

salvation and blessed hope in Christ. Your sustaining grace as seen in Jesus' intercession for us Your people will see us through all our days in this life. I bow down to you in praise, thanksgiving. and worship. In Jesus' Name. AMEN"

MATTHEW 27

DAY 27

THE CONDEMNATION, DEATH & BURIAL OF OUR LORD JESUS

Matthew 27 records the condemnation of the Lord Jesus to die by crucifixion, his testimony before Pilate, and his death accompanied with supernatural events and his burial by a secret disciple named Joseph of Arimathea.

1) Jesus' condemnation, trial, and death by crucifixion show the depravity of the human heart. Judas, the religious leaders, the people, and Pilate wanted only the miracles of Jesus but they refuse to believe Him and give Him their heart.

In spite of the many evidences that the Lord Jesus was not just an ordinary person, Judas refused to believe in Him and betrayed Him. Judas lost a great opportunity and he knew this; and so in remorse, he took his own life. The religious leaders chose to close their eyes and condemned Jesus to die even though they could not really prove His guilt. Then, they sent Him to Pilate to be sentenced to die by crucifixion. The people who witnessed all of Jesus' miracles flippantly united to demand Jesus' death. And Pilate, who was intrigued by Jesus and had the power to save Him, even though he knew that He was innocent for the crimes being thrown at Him, gave in to the people's demand to have Jesus crucified. Pilate compromised the Truth that he knew for political and personal expediency. All of them knew that Jesus did nothing wrong but refuse to believe Him and give Him their heart.

2) Jesus' death proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that He was the Messiah and the One sent by the Father to be our Savior. The supernatural events that accompanied it and the prophecies that were fulfilled attest to it.

Observe the several scriptures fulfilled surrounding and during Jesus' death (vv. 9-10; 35-37; 45-46). There were also a number of supernatural events that took place at the time of His death. The first was the three hours of total darkness that happened from sixth hour to ninth hour of that day (v. 45). The second was the tearing up of the temple curtain from top to bottom (v. 51). The third was the earthquake that took place at that time (v. 51). The fourth was the rising again of some dead saints at that time and who appeared to the disciples (v. 52-53). These were undeniable proofs that Jesus was indeed the Son of God!

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord our God sent His Son Jesus in order to SAVE a sinful world. Man needed a change of heart even a new heart that only the Holy Spirit and Jesus could give!

2) The Lord Jesus is indeed the MESSIAH, the Son of God, who demonstrated to us through His Word and Work His OMNIPOTENT POWER & GLORY!

PRAYER:

"Our heavenly Father, thank You for the LORD JESUS CHRIST who demonstrated through His Word and His Works that He was the One whom You sent to be our SAVIOR from our sin and hell. Thank You for changing our heart through the miracle of new birth. Continue to mold and transform me to be the person that You want me to be. For Your honor and glory. In Jesus' Name. AMEN"

THE RESURRECTION & THE GREAT COMMISSION

The Gospel of Matthew ends with the account of the Lord's resurrection and appearance to His disciples and with the commissioning of the disciples to win the world with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (The Great Commission).

1) Jesus' resurrection proves not only that He is the Messiah sent by the Father but that the penalty of our sins had been paid and we have actually been forgiven by the Father. There is now forgiveness for man's sins!

After three days, an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and an earthquake took place that opened the tomb where the Lord Jesus laid and he sat there. This event was witnessed by the soldiers who were shocked by this and by the women disciples of the Lord who went to see His body. But they were told by the angel that the Lord is alive and that they were to relay the news to the brethren. But before they left, the Lord also appeared to them and they worshipped Him. And the Lord sent them to tell the rest of the disciple that He is alive and to wait for Him in Galilee.

2) Jesus' resurrection gave Him back His former glory and power and the authority as the Lord of lords and King of kings. He has now started to reign as the Lord of heaven and earth! He is the Lord of the Church!

After the disciples went to Galilee to the place where Jesus instructed them to go, the Lord appeared to them and they worshipped Him. Observe that Jesus did not refused to

be worship indicating only that He is indeed a divine being, the Son of God! Then, after assuring them that He is now the Lord of the universe and the Lord of the Church and the Harvest and that He will always be with them, He gave them His final yet the most important mandate of the Church – the Great Commission (vv. 18-20).

POINTS TO PONDER:

1) The Lord Jesus' resurrection completed the purchase of our salvation. The Gospel or Good News is that there is now forgiveness for our sins through our Jesus Christ.

2) The Lord Jesus' resurrection is one of our greatest motivations to preach Gospel and make disciples of the nations. He is now the Lord of the universe and the Lord of the Church!

PRAYER:

"Our heavenly Father, thank You for the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who through His resurrection assured us of the forgiveness of our sins and the hope of eternal life. Lord, make us and mold us to be faithful messengers of the Gospel to others that they too may come to know Jesus and the blessing of the His Gospel. Lord, be glorified and be magnified in my life as I go and make disciples for the Lord Jesus Christ. In His Name I pray all these. AMEN!"