

# Matthew

Sermon on the Mount

March 09, 2025

## I. Introduction

- A. Last week we looked at seven of Jesus' parables in **chapter 13**. Today we are going to finish **chapter 13**, and move on to the **chapter 14** and part of **15** where there are a number of Jesus' stories.
- B. Pray

## II. Discounted by family and home town

- A. **Matthew 13:53-58**, When Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there. [54] He came to His hometown (*Nazareth*) and began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? [55] Is not this the carpenter's son? (*Mark 6:3, Is not this the carpenter? Regardless, Jesus was from a blue-collar family, He did blue-collar work Himself, and He had no known formal education.*) Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? [56] And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" [57] **And they took offense at Him** (*probably felt judged by Him and therefore felt resentment or indignation toward 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 miracles there because of their unbelief.
- B. It is possible that Jesus' fellow townspeople were saying, in essence, "You think you are better than us!" And when people think you think you are better than them, they conclude that you think they are inferior to you, and that makes them feel judged and insulted, which in turn moves them to become resentful, or angry, or even hostile toward you.
  - 1. Added to this response by the townspeople, it appears His own brothers didn't think very highly of Him.
  - 2. These two responses together was the reason Jesus said, "A prophet is honored everywhere except in his hometown and in his own household."
- C. As a result of their negative, unbelieving response, Jesus did not do many miracles there.
  - 1. If we look back at those Jesus healed, the majority showed their faith by coming to Him and asking Him to heal them, or heal their child, or cast out a demon, or perform some other miracle.

2. My point is, those who came to Jesus for a miracle demonstrated the strength of their faith by coming to Him.
3. Given the response of the townspeople, it is doubtful many came to Him for healing or other such miracles – which was a show of unbelief, and therefore the reason Jesus did not do many miracles there.

### III. John's death

- A. **Matthew 14:1-12**, At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus, [2] and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him." *(Obviously, Herod was wrong. Why? I think it was because he was a committed unbeliever. The reality is, unbelief turns us against God and drives us away from God. However, committed unbelief leads to unfounded and irrational views of God resulting in absurd assumptions about God and Christians, and drives ludicrous accusations against God, Christians and the Christian life. In other words, committed unbelief is irrational and therefore leads to irrational thinking about everything related to God.)*
- B. [3] For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. [4] For John had been saying to [Herod], "It is not lawful for you to have her." [5] Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded John as a prophet. *(Herod wanted to silence John because John was judging him and making him look bad. And though he wanted to kill John, he didn't because he did not want to look bad in the people's eyes. Selfishness, rather than justice, was the only factor in his dealings with John.)*
- C. [6] But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, [7] so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. [8] Having been prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." *(Only an evil mother would make such an evil, grotesque request of her daughter. And imagine what she taught her daughter.)*
- D. [9] Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths, and because of his dinner guests *(Once again, the motive is selfish – not wanting to look bad.)* [10] He sent and had John beheaded in the prison *(One possible cost for speaking God's truth to wayward people. What price are you willing to pay?)* [11] And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. [12] His disciples came and took away the body and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus.

- E. Selfishness is a powerful force residing in each of us, and it drives ungodly, unjust, unloving, self-serving, self-exalting, pleasure seeking thinking, choices, and behavior. Beware of selfishness – especially in yourself.

#### IV. Jesus withdraws; Out of compassion, He feeds 5000+

- A. **Matthew 14:13-21**, Now when Jesus heard about John, He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself (*possibly to mourn the loss of John, and the sinful insanity that caused the loss*); and when the people heard of this, they followed Him on foot from the cities (*Self-interest coupled with a sense of need often blinds us to the needs and the good of others. This was true of the crowds who allowed their sense of need to ignore Jesus' need to be alone*).
- B. [14] When [Jesus] went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick (*He could have felt irritated at their self-seeking thoughtlessness. What would you feel in this situation?*).
- C. [15] When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and the hour is already late; so send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." [16] But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away; **you give** them something to eat!" (*Though the disciples saw the need, they could not see a way to meet it.*) [17] They said to Him, "We have here **only** five loaves and two fish." [18] And He said, "Bring them here to Me."
- D. [19] Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds, [20] and they all ate and were satisfied. They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets (*Jesus not only fed the crowd, He provided more than was needed –which ensured everyone had enough*). [21] There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children.

#### V. Walking on water

- A. **Matthew 14:22-33**, Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. [23] After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray (*If Jesus, who is both the Son of God and Immanuel, felt the need and saw the importance of praying, I am thinking we should too. **Romans 12:12** exhorts us to be devoted to prayer.*);
- B. [23b] and when it was evening, He was there alone. [24] But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the

wind was contrary. [25] And in the fourth watch of the night (*between 3-6 am*) [Jesus] came to them, walking on the sea. [26] 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 courage (*i.e., let courage be in control*), it is I; do not be afraid (*don't let the circumstances drive fear*)."

- C. [28] Peter said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, [prove it by commanding] me to come to You on the water." [29] And [Jesus] said, "Come!" And Peter (*believing it was Jesus, and that Jesus would make it possible for him to walk on water*) got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.
- D. [30] But seeing the wind, he became frightened (*in spite of Jesus telling him to walk on the water, and in spite of Jesus being right there, the circumstances appeared so threatening that Peter went from faith to fear*), and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"
- E. [31] Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith (*insufficient faith, unsure faith, hesitant faith, faith that was still so weak it was easily compromised by threatening circumstances*), why did you doubt?" (*Peter did not need to doubt; he was not forced to doubt. He chose to attribute more power to the circumstances than to God, and in so doing chose to move from faith to fear.*)
- F. [32] When they got into the boat, the wind stopped. [33] And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"
- G. This story follows the feeding of the 5,000, which should have been reason enough for Peter to continue trusting and walking on the water. However, there were no physically threatening circumstances in the feeding of the 5,000, but there was in walking on the water.
  - 1. We are prone to trust God well when there are no obvious threats to our well-being or the well-being of those we love. But let the circumstances bring us face-to-face with what appears to be an obvious threat, and we too easily abandon faith for fear, and move from settled trust to distrust.
  - 2. It is in these moments that we see how strong our faith is. And though your faith may be weak, unsure, and hesitant at times, God provides a path toward stronger, dependable faith. **James 1:2-4**, says, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, [3] knowing that the **testing of your faith** produces **endurance** (*remaining firm in faith in spite of the circumstances*) [4] And let endurance have its perfect result (*outcome*), so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

3. God is not asking us to rejoice over the suffering or threatening circumstance itself. That would be irrational. However, it is the trial that provides the path to a greater, stronger, more resilient faith. Therefore, we are rejoicing over the outcome or a stronger faith that can come from continuing to trust in the face of the trial.

## VI. People seeking the community good

- A. **Matthew 14:34-36** When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret (*gih NESS uh ret*). [35] And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent word into all that surrounding district and brought to Him all who were sick; [36] and they implored Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were cured.
- B. The men of Gennesaret are to be commended for seeking the good of the community – as demonstrated by their sending word into all that surrounding district that Jesus had come and they should bring the sick and needy to where Jesus was.
- C. Is not this love – seeking the good of all who are or will be affected by our choices and behavior? Our Christianity is not a private affair, but something that holds the greatest possible good for everyone who will come and enter in through the narrow gate. Therefore, may we not keep this to ourselves, but rather, may we spread the gospel, truth, and love so that all who will come, may come.

## VII. Religious traditions are subservient to the Word of God

- A. **Matthew 15:1-9**, Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said (*if Jesus was still in Gennesaret, then these religious leaders traveled 80+ miles – which is an indication of how driven they were to find fault with Jesus*), [2] “Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? (*Christian traditions are religious practices that evolve over time and are treated as activities and practices good Christians do.*) For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread (*a ritual cleansing as part of an outward manifestation of religious purity.*).”
- B. [3] And He answered and said to them, “Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? [4] For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother (**Exodus 20:12**),’ and, ‘He who speaks evil of (*i.e., curses*) father or mother is to be put to death (**Exodus 21:17**).’
- C. [5] But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,” [6] he is not to (*does not have to*) honor his father or his mother.’ And by this you invalidated the word

of God for the sake of your tradition. *(To practice this tradition meant devoting some possession or amount of money to God, thus treating it as sacred and only to be used by the person who devoted it. This means you could shield your possessions or wealth from being given to your parents in their time of need or old age – thus keeping it for your own use or giving it to the Temple or synagogue for the religious leaders' use. This tradition was too often used for selfish reasons by all involved, and therefore intentionally failed to honor one's parents in their time of need or old age.)*

- D. [7] You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: [8] 'This people honors Me with their lips *(they say the right words at the right time)*, but their heart *(actual beliefs and values as revealed by this kind of religious tradition)* is far away from Me. [9] But in vain do they worship Me *(their worship is meaningless to God and therefore will not gain from God what they hope to gain)*, teaching as [Godly] doctrines the precepts of men.' "
- E. Empty worship is worship that makes claims about who God is and who He is to you that are contradicted by how you live. In other words, you are saying or singing the right words – and you may even have good feelings that go along with your words. But your life – that which comes from your heart – does not support your words, or even contradicts them. Therefore, empty worship is not only meaningless, it is offensive to God, and destructive to you. It is destructive to you because it feeds the self-deceiving belief that you are something you aren't.
- F. Vain worship is a serious matter to God, and it ought to be to us. Read **Isaiah 1:10-20**, to get a graphic picture of how God views vain, empty worship. Read **1 Corinthians 11:27-32**, to get a graphic picture of how God views taking communion in vain because you have known yet unrepentant sin in your life.
- G. Religious traditions can be good and even helpful in living the Christian life. Yet when we make our traditions more important than God's word, we are in the wrong and need to get back to treating God's word as more important than our traditions.

## VIII. Conclusion

- A. Though these stories are about other people, read them, ponder them, and consider how to apply them to yourself. And though you and your situations may not perfectly fit them, you can learn truths from them that can grow your understanding of God and the will of God, can strengthen your faith, and can grow your godliness.