

1. This is the third section of Matthew. The theme is how people respond to Jesus.
2. John the Baptist has a question for Jesus, “Are you the Messiah?”
3. John was imprisoned because he preached righteousness and denounced Herod’s actions.
4. John is confused. He has not lost faith in Christ; that is apparent from the fact that he sent his disciples to ask Jesus the question and he seems prepared to accept whatever answer they bring back, but he is confused because his expectations of Jesus were not met.
5. John asked the key question all of us must answer, “Who is Jesus Christ?” Everything else depends upon the answer to this question.
6. Many people struggle with peripheral questions. One of the greatest things you can do for them is to show them the most basic question, “Who is Jesus?” That is John’s question.
7. The two most powerful proofs that Jesus is who He says He is, are He fulfilled prophecy and the miracles He performed.
8. Not everyone who knew the prophecies and saw the miracles that Jesus performed responded. Even the Pharisees did not believe although they knew the prophecies and saw the miracles. They knew who Jesus was but willfully denied that He was the Messiah.
9. Many people will admit that Jesus provides us a way to know God, but Jesus said He is the only one who reveals God to us. Jesus is the only way to come to God. This was the answer He sent to John.
10. Michael Green gives six characteristics of a pharisaic spirit. The pharisaic spirit:
  1. Had a legalistic approach to the Old Testament.
  2. Was desperately conservative about customs.
  3. Was inclined to attribute to Satan what is God-given.
  4. Masked a rebellious heart under intellectual skepticism.
  5. Had a restless lust for signs and wonders, which can never prove the point at issue.
  6. Finally, can open the way for infection by evil forces.

1. This ends the first half of the Gospel of Matthew. We find that Jesus is without honor in His hometown. Jesus leaves Galilee and moves toward Jerusalem and His death.
2. Each of the seven parables calls us to make a decision as to how we are going to respond to Jesus.
3. Parables are earthly stories with heavenly meanings, seeking to make one main point. There are a number of details which have significance, but the main point of the Parable of the Sower is: 'Be careful how you receive the Word of God'.
4. Jesus used this method of teaching because it fulfilled Old Testament prophecy.
5. Michael Green gives 3 reasons why Jesus used parables.
  1. Leaders of the religious establishment turned against Him and He could no longer teach in the synagogue.
  2. A parable revealed the truth to those who were hungry and concealed it from those who did not look for it.
  3. A parable cannot be understood until you understand who Jesus is. That knowledge is given to those who are ready to receive it.
6. A fourth reason we might add is that it fulfills the prophecy of Psalm 78:2.
7. The Parable of the Sower is unique to Matthew's Gospel – 'weeds among wheat'. The church is a group of people, some of whom are committed and some uncommitted. We are warned not to sort out the unregenerated, because in doing it we might throw out some weak saints who need our love.
8. The last three brief parables are also unique to Matthew. The Hidden Treasure and Pearl make the point of the value and cost of the Kingdom. In the Hidden Treasure Parable, the man stumbles on the treasure; in the second story people searched diligently looking for truth. It costs everything you have and is worth all you give.
9. The last parable, the Parable of the Net, is also unique to Matthew and reminds us of God's judgment to come at the end of the age. There are no shortcuts, and God will make His final separation.
10. The conclusion of this chapter is that Galilee rejected Jesus - not everyone did, but most did. Jesus continues to move to Jerusalem.

1. There is not one incident or teaching recorded in chapters 14 and 15 that are not found in another Gospel. The feeding of the five thousand and the resurrection are recorded in all four Gospels.
2. The second half of Matthew's Gospel begins with John the Baptist being beheaded. This prepares us for the coming crucifixion of the Lord. Many are called upon to pay the ultimate price of their convictions.
3. Herod's marriage to Herodias brought him nothing but trouble. The father of his first wife, Aretas, was furious and went to war with Herod. They inflicted a terrible defeat on him and not long after that Herodias persuaded him to go to Rome to seek the title of "King." He lost everything and was exiled.
4. Although God loved John and he was the greatest man ever born, John was not immune from martyrdom. His work for God was finished and God allowed him to die.
5. It may at first glance seem amazing that the disciples had no idea how to feed the hungry crowds since just about six weeks before they watched Christ feed the 5,000. One explanation might be that sometimes God has to teach us lessons more than once.
6. The first miracle took place in Galilee. The second probably took place on the other side of the Sea of Galilee in the region called the Decapolis. If this is true, then the majority of the first group were Jews. However, the second group was a mixed multitude of people. Through Jesus the old promise of God - "through you all the nations of the earth will be blessed" - came true.
7. The two feeding miracles were important because "Jews believed that the Messianic age would see the return of the 'bread from heaven', God's gift of manna to the forefathers in the wilderness..." Food in the desert would characterize the days of the Messiah.
8. The feeding of the multitudes not only looks back to Jewish expectations and their fulfillment, but forward in anticipation of the Lord's Supper Jesus would institute for the church.
9. The order of events in today's sections exactly corresponds to the order found in the Gospel of Mark. It appears that Mark has the most chronological account of Christ's life.
10. It is possible that Matthew's Gospel was not written until the time things became more difficult for Christians. At first Christians stayed in the synagogue. They were Jews who found the Messiah. This gave them some protection since Jews were accepted by the Romans. Later they had to move out from under that umbrella of protection and were persecuted by both Jews and Romans.
11. Jesus had sent the disciples ahead out on the sea in the midst of a storm. Jesus was not unaware of their plight. He is praying for them on the mountain. Christ is always interceding, praying for us. He will deliver us as He did the disciples.
12. The key ingredient for success in our lives is Faith. We cannot reduce our faith to a list of rules and regulations. The thoughts that make us unclean come from our heart.

1. Jesus shows that the Pharisees are able to predict the weather but cannot read the signs of the times. The Pharisees and Sadducees had opposing theological and political views, but they joined together in opposing Jesus. Enemies will come together to oppose the work of God.

2. Jesus refused to give them another sign or miracle. The reason had nothing to do with lack of evidence, but it was a matter of the will. The heart is set against the truth.

3. There are two possible reasons to use the sign of Jonah. Jesus could be saying, "Watch, after I am dead three days I'll come back to life." The other possibility was when Jonah arrived in Nineveh to preach, he did no miracles but preached a simple message. The message was – "listen to my message - decide". I am all the proof you need.

4. It was at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus asked the most important question we must all answer: "Who do you say that I am?" Here He made the promise that He has so marvelously kept - "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."

5. The Roman Catholic Church has always said Peter is the rock upon which Christ proposed to build His church. Some protestant theologians, pointing to the different forms of Peter's name, which Jesus used, see play on words in which Jesus Himself was the rock. A third view would be that Peter's confession of Christ is the rock upon which the faith of the church was built.

6. Jesus gave His authority to the apostles. Thus, their words became inscribed into Scripture and they also could act with authority with respect to the church. This authority was not claimed by the succeeding generation of Christians.

7. The confession at Caesarea Philippi is a turning point in the life of Jesus. Up to this time, His ministry and teaching were public. After this, the greater emphasis will be on quiet, private teaching to the 12 to prepare them for when Jesus is longer with them. Jesus begins to teach them that He will soon suffer and die.

8. Peter is rebuked by Christ when he refuses to accept the teaching of Christ about His impending death. The Messiah was expected to usher in God's victory. It was equally hard to realize that the way of the Master would also be the way of His disciples.

9. Denying one's self is not the concept of discipleship that many Christians have. Christ wants sovereignty over our lives. Jim Elliot said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep in order to gain what he can never lose."

10. Matthew is the only gospel to record the incident regarding the payment of the temple tax. Christ was willing to comply with the customs and conditions of the Jewish religion of His day. He knew there was a fish swimming around with money in its mouth and sent Peter to get it and sovereignly directed it into his net.

11. Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ at Caesarea Philippi. The word 'Christ' means 'anointed one'. Only three groups of people were anointed in Israel - prophets, priests and kings. Jesus was the Messiah, the anointed one - prophet, priest and king.

1. Matthew 18 is important because it is about personal relationships in the kingdom of God. Jesus gave us these teachings Himself.

2. Internal relationships make or break Christian churches. There are 7 qualities that Jesus is looking for in His disciples.

A. The most important characteristic is humility in sharp contrast to what the world teaches today. Greatness is found by serving others. Jesus used a child to illustrate this.

B. Next is welcome. The church should be the place where all people, children, and unimportant people are welcomed and encouraged.

C. Third is wholeheartedness. Matthew is concerned about causing others to stumble. If there is someone who is guilty of unrepented sin, affecting the body of the church - that person should be disciplined.

D. Pastoral care is important. The purpose of the parable about the lost sheep is pastoral as opposed to evangelistic. Jesus is talking about relationships in the church. The lost, lonely, sick, and discouraged are like sheep without a shepherd. God cares for them. This is symbolized by the fact that in heaven the angels always behold the face of the Father who is in heaven. Jewish listeners would have understood this. Angels have unrestricted access to God's presence. Do the leaders care?

E. Openness is important. Churches are full of criticism and gossip. There are three ways to handle it correctly.

1. Go directly to the person who has offended. If he won't listen take one or two others with you; if that does not work take others with you. As a last resort tell the church.

2. Attitude is important, go in charity, saturated by prayer.

3. You want your brother to listen, or maybe you will learn that you were wrong. Remember the goal is restoration.

F. Forgiveness needs to govern our relationships with each other. Jesus said we are to forgive seventy times seven, meaning we should always forgive since we are forgiven ourselves.

G. Jesus talks about freedom from resentment, a deadly disease that is common. If we do not forgive, we will not be forgiven.

3. Matthew 18 is one of the great chapters in the Bible because it tells us how we are to live with one another in the church. It tells us how to solve conflicts in the church. Let's use it!