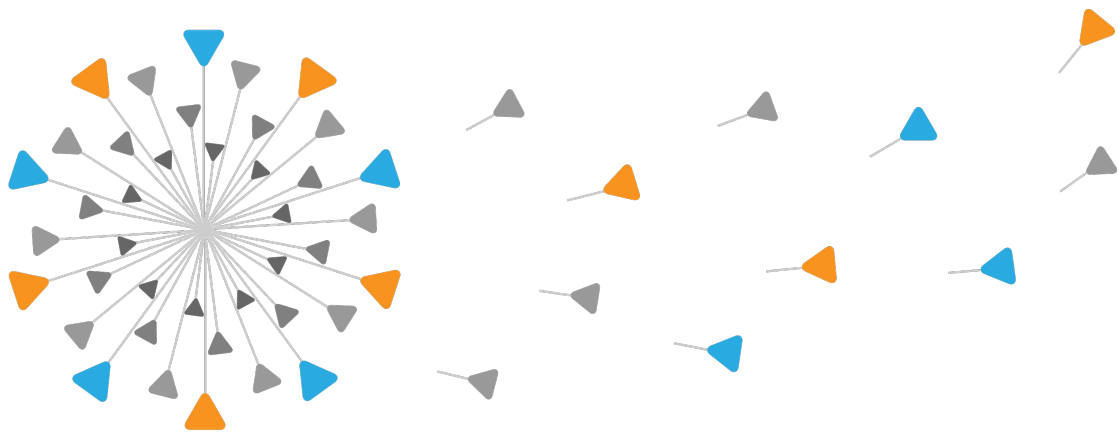


Matthew's Gospel

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Useful Reading on Matthew's Gospel for the Preacher

The following is a list of books that you might find useful in trying to get to grips with Matthew's gospel.

1. **Teaching Matthew: Unlocking the Gospel of Matthew for the Expositor** by Jackman & Philip. Not currently in print, but if you can find it you will find a lot of the material I give you is covered in this book which is probably the most useful thing for you to read to get a big picture of the gospel.

Commentaries on Matthew:

1. **The Tyndale Commentary** by R.T. France
I found this to be by far the most useful commentary in helping me preach through Matthew. It is succinct, clear and makes very helpful sense of the bigger picture of Matthew and, in particular, in terms of fulfilment of the Old Testament. If you are going to buy one commentary – this is the one to go for.
2. **Notes on Matthew** by James Philip
As with the rest of these expository notes available free to download here these are succinct and extremely helpful for the bible teacher
<http://www.thethron.org/resources/the-james-philip-archives/bible-readings/>
3. **Online Commentary** by Knox Chamblin
I have also found this really very useful indeed. You can get it free online in pdf format from the Third Mill web site – www.thirdmill.org
4. Carson in the **Expositor's Bible Commentary**
I haven't made extensive use of this, but when I have, I have found it reasonably good and others have found it useful.
5. **Matthew** by J.C. Ryle (Banner of Truth)
Some excellent stuff in this book of Ryle's expositions.
6. Leon Morris – **The IVP Pillar Commentary**
Very long, pretty tedious and not much use on the big picture but for tricky detail in a particular verse can be very helpful.
7. **Hendrickson** (Banner of Truth)
Some good things in here, but really I have used it only for occasional reference.
8. William Barclay's **Daily Study Bible**
Some useful background tit-bits and scene setting but typically liberal.

On the **Sermon on the Mount** in particular -

Sinclair Ferguson's little book, *The Sermon on the Mount*, published by Banner of Truth is very useful as is **Don Carson's** Biblical Classics Library on the Sermon on the Mount and **John Stott's** in the BST. If you want something copious and comprehensive, **Lloyd Jones'** studies in the Sermon on the Mount. **Alexander McLaren's** expositions on Matthew (as on most things) are sometimes outstanding

1. Seven Keys to Unlock Mathew's Gospel

1. Continuity

- With Old Testament Covenant History E.g., 1:1-17

2. Climax

- fulfilment of the whole Old Testament (esp. 1:18-2:23)
- 2 Key passages: Matt 11:12-14
Matt 13:52

3. Confrontation/Conflict

- 5:12; 3:7; 8:5-13; 13:57; 21:15, 33-43; Ch23

4. Church/Community

- 16:18/ 18:17; 7:21 not 'Lord, Lord' but doing the will of the Father
- (c.f. 8:11, 12:50 true family)

5. Catechism (Teaching)

Ch. 1-4 introduce Jesus' identity; Ch. 26-28 = climax of story. Between intersperse 5 Teaching blocks

- 5-7 Real Kingdom People: People of Righteousness
- 10 Real Kingdom Mission
- 13 Real Kingdom expectations (the now and the not-yet Parables of the KG)
- 18 Real Kingdom Churches: Communities of Righteousness
- 24-25 Real Kingdom Judgment

6. Cosmos

7. Christ's Kingdom

- Jesus came both to ***Usher in his KG***
 - o Hence 3 (?4) 'movements' marked by 'from that time...' 4:17, 16:21, (? 26:16)
 - The *Person* of the King 1:1-4:16
 - The *Proclamation* & Presence of the King felt 4:17-16:26
 - (The *Persecution* of the King 16:21-26:15)
 - The *Passion* of the King 26:17ff (16:21ff)
 -
- and to ***explain the meaning and response to his KG***
 - o Hence the 5 'teaching blocks'

A self-explaining story

Matthew is the teacher. Attend to him, and proclaim ***his*** message.

2. The Real Person of the King 1:1-4:25

Ch 1-2 the birth narratives introduce Jesus:

the emphasis is on **Continuity** (esp. the genealogy) & also **Climax** (*fulfilment* of 1:18-2:23)

These chapters are ideal for a series running into Christmas. Here are a couple of ways I have done this:

First, taking 6 sermons covering Matt 1-2 running into Christmas through advent and into Christmas carol services

A Fulfilling Christmas :

St Matthew's explanation of the birth of Jesus

Jesus is:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. The Christ: A King to bless all nations | Matt 1:1-17 |
| 2. Emmanuel: God with us to save | Matt 1:18-25 |
| 3. The Shepherd King | Matt 2:1-12 |
| 4. God's True Son | Matt 2:1-12 |
| 5. The bringer of hope to the hopeless | Matt 2:16-18 |
| 6. A Nazarene | Matt 2:19-23 |

alternatively, here are two series, one on each chapter, allowing for more focus:

What's So special about Jesus' birth? Matthew 1

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. A Royal Birth 1:1-17 | (emphasising fulfilment of covenant and Kingdom) |
| 2. A Revealing Birth 1:18-25 | (emphasising the incarnation as God revealed in the flesh) |
| 3. A Redeeming Birth 1:18-25 | (emphasising v21, salvation from sins) |
| 4. A Reassuring Birth 1:18-25 | (emphasising Immanuel, God with us) |

What Kind of King is Jesus? Matthew 2

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| 1. A Real Shepherd | Matt 2:1-12 |
| 2. A Real Son | Matt 2:13-15 |
| 3. A Real Sufferer | Matt 2:16-18 |
| 4. A Real Swear-word | Matt 2:19-21 |

Ch 3-4 now introduces the ministry of Jesus

Now the emphasis on *confrontation* emerges.

Israel confronted by her King!

Taking Ch 3-4 together we see that they form a build-up to the ministry of Jesus through **proclamation** and **demonstration**.

In summary Matthew's message is:-

1. Repent! You're everything you should not be! (3:1-12)

this is the Day of the Lord; the day when God comes as a blazing fire of judgment (v11-12). The only response is repentance, or disaster (Mal 4:5-6) Jesus is the Judge

2. Look! He's everything you could never be! (3:13-4:11)

But, Jesus comes also as saviour, to save his people from their sins (1:21). How? Through atonement: a double exchange:

- He stands in our place: he is baptised for *our* sins (3:13-17)
- and we in his: His perfect obedience is for our righteousness (4:1-11)

c.f. 2Cor. 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

3. Listen! He speaks with authority (4:12-25)

These verses then are the intro to all that follows.

Jesus authority is authenticated by

- a. **Scripture** (12-17) it is all as it was foretold by prophets long ago
- b. **The power of his summons** (18-22) He has the power to call into his Kingdom
- c. **His own ministry** of word and work (23-25) summarises his whole ministry that follows

All this is Key to understanding the **Sermon on the Mount** that follows immediately on.

4:17 Repent! Jesus began **preaching** The KG is at hand

4:23-25 **proclaiming** and **demonstrating the** gospel of the KG (NB brackets with 9:35)

So what follows in 5:1-7:28 is the proclamation of the Kingdom. It is Jesus **expounding the Gospel of the Kingdom**

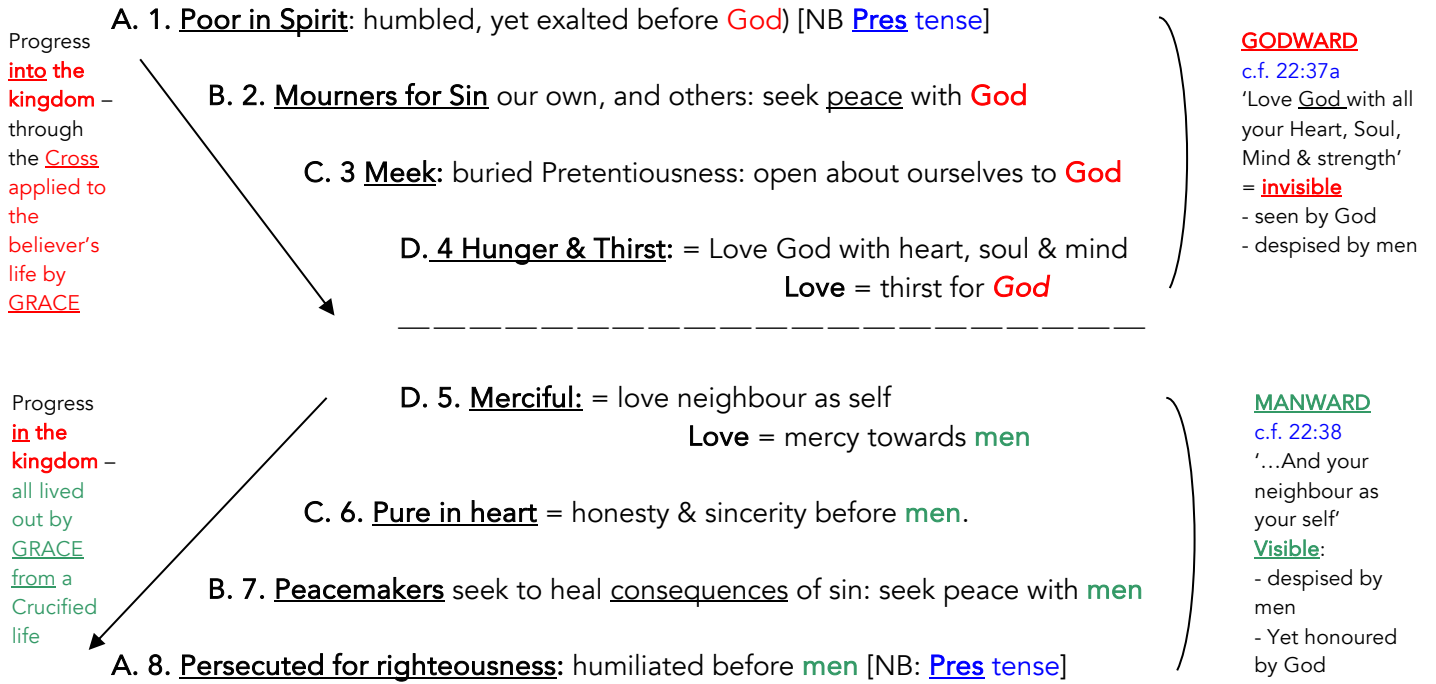
3. Real People of the Kingdom 5:1-7:29

(1st 'teaching block')

A. The Portrait of a Christian Matt 5:1-12 (The Shape of the Beatitudes)

The Shape of the Teaching = The shape of true discipleship:
= Resurrection life through death

↳ so the Shape of the Text echoes this.



takes back to 1st Beatitude & is evidence of it: You Are blessed, though humiliated & hated.
and then: Expounded in v11-12: because it is so important.

This pattern of the Beatitudes permeates the Whole of the Sermon on Mount

- **The Way into kingdom** is **Invisible**: A change of heart by Grace (Beatitudes 1-4)
Admit poverty ⇨ Weep for sin ⇨ Submit meekly ⇨ long for righteousness
- Yet real Grace is **Visible**: Lived out in world (Beatitudes 5-8)

So: rest of Ch 5: The Heart of the Law: **Evidence** is seen in Kingdom people's lives in their relationships with the **World**

B. The Purpose of a Christian Matt 5:13-20

Beatitudes describe the King's people. But what are the King's people for?
That's the Key to understanding what the Sermon on the Mount is all about and why it is here at this point.

Remember the context and the big picture

Matthew's Gospel: the Gospel of the **King**

4:23-9:35 Brackets: proclaiming and demonstrating the **Kingdom**
9:36ff joining the mission of the king: as labourers for the Kingdom

So, 5:1ff begins the exposition of Kingdom righteousness by giving a **portrait of the King's people**. Now, Matt 5:13-20 tells us what their **calling** is.

The King's *people* are his ambassadors in the world; **Ambassadors of the King's Rule**

They proclaim his rule, and they manifest his rule. Lips and lives go together. Hence,
Mission and holiness go together for God's people

1. The Purpose of God's mission to the world through his people

- fulfilment through Christ and his people v17

The Law's missionary purpose: Deut 4:5-8 etc

The Prophets confirm and expand this e.g., Isa 41-42; 49 etc. Israel as God's missionary servant
In the latter days, the true Servant, Christ Isa 61 1

AND his people Isa 61:6ff; 43:10,21 etc c.f. Acts 1:8

2. The Picture of God's mission to the world through his people

- radical, counter-cultural witness to the King's rule v13-16

3. The Power of God's mission to the world through his people

- radical obedience to the King's rule v18-20

Mission and holiness go together. Hence, the rest of the sermon expounds the 'greater righteousness' of the life of God's missionary ambassadors.

C. The Practice of a Christian

i. THE HEART OF THE LAW Matt 5:21-48

= An explanation of the 'greater righteousness' of 5:20

Basic Text = 5:17-20 is expounded in 21-48 as Jesus works through some examples that demonstrate the attitudes and behaviour the King demands of those who submit to his rule.

Jesus takes us to the heart of the LAW.

God's law has never been just about **rules** but about Right **Relationships**.

Jesus' exposition of God's Law (commands) i.e. Kingdom Righteousness is in terms of **RELATIONSHIPS**.

1. As **Evidence** of Right Relationship with God
 - the radical obedience Jesus talks about is only possible from lives touched by grace. The fruit of true repentance (3:8)
 - the obedience of living faith is not about rules, but relationship

2. As **Expressive** of Right Relationship with God
 - What this looks like in practice in life (see below). It is visible in relationships with the world that are radically loving, pure and faithful

3. As **Exposure** of the need for Right Relationship with God
 - v48 exposes us all, and our need for grace. Only Jesus can take us to the heart of God's law because only Jesus can take us to the heart of the Father

Matthew 5:21-48 expands & illustrates point 2

The shape of Matthew 5:21 – 48

See Matthew's beautiful symmetry!

Right relationships with the **World** Express right relationship with the **Father**

1. Radically **Loving** relationships within the Christian community (21-26)
2. Radically **Pure** relationships in Personal, Private lives (27–30)
3. Radically **Faithful & True** in most intensive, exclusive relationships (marriage) (31–32)
4. Radically **Faithful & True** in most extensive, inclusive relationships (33–37)
5. Radically **Pure** relationships in Public lives (38–42)
6. Radically **Loving** relationships outwith Christian Community – even with enemies (43–48)

1 & 6 are Related: because Love for God = **expressed** in love for brothers **and** the world

2 & 5 are Related: because Idolatry is **expressed** in Lust for Sexual **and** material gratification

3 & 4 are Related: because infidelity **expressed** in marriage bond will mean infidelity in other less-exclusive bonds also.

ii. THE LAW IN THE HEART The "SHAPE" of Matt 6:1-7:12

(= HEAVEN in your HEART)

a heavenly perspective on:

Giving 2-4

Prayer 5-15

Fasting 16-18

**THE KEY
TEXT** ⇒

19-24
**True Kingdom
Perspective
Earth v Heaven**

True Kingdom Piety
in our
Devotional life
(Our Daily Worship)

Key message:

Devotional Life is a life of **personal devotion** to the Father & for the Father.

Because, we live in God's sight & live for his eyes only.

A HEART in the Right Place

= In **HEAVEN** NOT **EARTH**

all through 1-18 and 25-7:12 is a contrast: Earth vs Heaven

a heavenly perspective on

Providence 25-34
(toward self)

Perception 7:1-6
(toward others)

Wrong judgments (1-4)
right judgments (5-6)

Persistence 7:7-12
(towards God)

True Kingdom Priorities
in our **Daily Life.**
(Our Daily Walk)

Key message:

Daily Life is a life of **practical discernment** From the Father.

Because: we live with God's sight – Eyes opened to see **earthly** needs and **heavenly** perspective

iii. A SUMMONS WITH NEW AUTHORITY Matt 7:13-29

Conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount is with a summons: A new and ultimate authority calls for response: obedience to JESUS.

1. A Stark Choice 13-20

the unavoidable scandalous exclusiveness of Jesus' **one way** of salvation vs a world of tolerance, relativism and inclusiveness.

- 2 ways, 2 destinations, 2 gates: no third way! Vs the broad way of the dangerous false prophets

2. A Shocking Contrast 21-23

The surprising simplicity of a true relationship with God – through Jesus Christ vs the spectacular, expressive, extravagant religion of a spiritual profession that is ultimately totally wrong.

Impressive words 'Lord, Lord';
impressive worship 'prophesy/exorcisms etc',
impressive works

yet: verdict: 'I never knew you'

empty religion vs real relationship. Reality is seen in one word: **obedience** to Jesus

3. A Solemn warning 24-27

Solemn finality of judgment vs flippancy and foolishness of those who live thinking only of the present

NB: context. The Rock is Jesus' words v24. Lives built on that alone will stand at the last judgment

4. A Single Authority 28-29

The sole and exclusive centrality of Jesus himself as the only lasting foundation.

Jesus is the ONLY gate/way/rock. He is the judge v23.

You cannot obey God, and do his will, without submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. You must come to him, listen to him, obey him so as to know him.

Preaching the Sermon on the Mount

Here's some ways I divided up the Sermon on the Mount to preach on:

1. First, as part of a Sunday series preaching through the whole of Mathew's Gospel, so I took larger chunks:

A Revolutionary Kingdom

The King's People	Matt 5:1-12
Ambassadors of the King's rule	Matt 5:13-20

Demands that go Deep

The Heart of the Law	Matt 5:21-48
The Law in the Heart	Matt 6:1-7:12
A Summons with Ultimate authority	Matt 7:13-29

2. An alternative way I did it as Wednesday lunchtime series. This allowed more detail, and was in a way more satisfying, and easier if you have less time to preach.

The Portrait of a Christian

- Jesus describes his kind of people

Following and Fishing:	4:17-5:2
Bankrupt and Blessed	5:3
Tears and Joy:	5:4
Meekness and Might	5:5
Desire and Satisfaction	5:6
Mercy-filled and Merciful	5:7
Cleansed and Transparent	5:8
Reconciled and Reconciling	5:9
Reviled and Rejoicing	5:10-12

The Purpose of a Christian

- Studies in Mat 5:13-20

The Christian's missionary calling	5:17
The Christian's missionary culture	5:13-16
The Christian's missionary commands	5:18-20

The Practice of a Christian

- 10 studies on the Sermon on the Mount

1. A True Kingdom Morality

- **Heavenly relationships on earth now**

- An earthly relationship with heaven
5:20
- Heavenly relationships on earth: **Love**
5:21-26 & 43-48
- Heavenly relationships on earth: **Purity**
5:27-30 & 38-42
- Heavenly relationships on earth: **Faithfulness**
5:31-37

2. A True Kingdom Mentality

- **Heavenly Realities in the heart Now**

- Living with true Kingdom Perspective
6:19-24
- Understanding true Kingdom Piety
6:1-18
- Exercising true Kingdom Priorities
6:25-7:12

3. A True Kingdom Response

- A Stark Choice
7:13-20
- A Shocking Contrast
7:21-23
- A Solemn Warning
7:24-2

3. A slightly different format re-worked for a Sunday series on the Sermon on the Mount:

The Revolutionary Kingdom of Christ

A. The Marks of Christ's People (Matthew 4:17-5:11)

- **The Portrait of True Christianity according to the Lord Jesus Christ**

People who belong to his Kingdom are people who

1. Answer Christ's call 4:17-22
2. Find Christ's Grace 5:1-11 (esp. v2-5)
3. Live Christ's mercy 5:1-11 (esp. v6-10)
4. Share Christ's experience 5:10-12

B. The Mission of Christ's People (Matthew 5:12-20)

- **The Purpose of True Christianity according to the Lord Jesus Christ**

People who belong to his Kingdom are people who understand

1. The call to Mission 5:17
2. The culture of Mission 5:13-16
3. The commands for mission 5:18-20

C. The Manners of Christ's People (Matthew 5:20-7:12)

- **The Practice of True Christianity according to the Lord Jesus Christ**

People who belong to his Kingdom are people who share, like Jesus

1. True Kingdom Morality

- **They have Heavenly Relationships on earth now**

1. An earthly relationship with heaven 5:20
2. Heavenly relationships on earth: **Love** 5:21-26 & 43-48
3. Heavenly relationships on earth: **Purity** 5:27-30 & 38-42
4. Heavenly relationships on earth: **Faithfulness** 5:31-37

2. True Kingdom Mentality

- **They have Heavenly Realities in the heart now**

1. Living with true Kingdom Perspective 6:19-24
2. Understanding true Kingdom Piety 6:1-18
3. Exercising true Kingdom Priorities 6:25-7:12

D. The Message of Christ's People (Matthew 7:12-29)

- **The Preaching of True Christianity according to the Lord Jesus Christ**

People who belong to his Kingdom are people who proclaim, like Jesus

1. A Stark Choice 7:13-20
2. A Shocking Contrast 7:21-23
3. A Solemn Warning 7:24-29

4. The Real King and his Real Kingdom Mission

The Challenge and Call of the King Matt 8-9

In Ch 5-7 Jesus' words proclaimed the KG; in Ch 8-9 his works proclaim the KG
NB brackets of 4:23 and 9:35

A brilliant 3-point sermon from Matthew: each with **3 miracle stories** plus **application to discipleship**, and working up to a climax that challenges the crowds to decision, and calls disciples to see what their new life means.

The ringing message throughout is the **authority** of Jesus over the power of sin in the world/humanity/ the spiritual realm, and his power to drive out and reverse the curse of sin and bring restoration.

His power is displayed over:

1. The tragic hopelessness of sin 1-18

Common emphasis is his authority over sin's power to **exclude** from life. In each, a human being in God's image but reduced to a shadow, and excluded from full participation in the life of God's people – a result of sin's curse.

- An unclean leper
- An untouchable gentile
- An un-named woman

Jesus restores all three – v16 indicates a common pattern. V17 shows this is the great prophetic hope being realised: 'he comes to make his blessings flow, far as the curse is found'

NB v 11-12 – the great messianic banquet c.f. Isaiah 25:6-7

The glory of the gospel of the KG! A world transformed; humanity restored to true integrity in Christ. **Excluded no more.**

But NB: how this happens: v17 He bears our curse.

→ Hence, 18-22 applies to disciples: **The cost of discipleship**. Following Jesus to this New world means rejection and hatred by those of this world. At home with Jesus= no home in this world.

2. The terrifying hold of sin 8:18-9:7

Jesus authority over sin's power to **enslave** life. Sin is a power ruling the fallen world, in its dark dominion

- The **power** of sin and evil at work in creation (storm): **rebuked** with authority
- The **personality** of sin behind the world (demon possessed man): **removed** with authority
- The **penalty** of sin and evil: the paralytic is **released** with authority

Jesus has authority over every power to enslave humanity. He destroys the works of the devil (1 Jn 3:8)

→ Applied in 8:9-17 to explain the **character of true discipleship**.

Matthew's **liberation**: joy and feasting is a foretaste of 8:11-12. True disciples are liberated people!

Hence v16-17: salvation is not just a patch up job: its all new! A new man, for a new world!

3. The terrible helplessness of sin 18-34

Jesus authority over the power of sin to **exhaust** and **extinguish** life

- The woman & girl: one dead, the other as good as dead
- 2 blind men: utterly helpless – can't even see Jesus
- The mute man: can't even ask for help. Double oppressed – also demon possessed

Yet all brought face to face with the Messiah, the 'Son of David': breaks the power of sin as the Lord of life

Focus is all on the person of the Saviour

→ Hence last application: the **call of discipleship** 36-38 (after summary verse 35) says: join in the mission of the gospel of the KG to a **helpless** world!

The call: A world **estranged** by sin's hopelessness, **enslaved** by its hold, **exhausted** in its helplessness needs the compassion of a Saviour – and disciples who share that compassion and heed the call to mission. (hence, chapter 10 follows)

The challenge: v33-34 2 reactions are possible: Joy or scorn.

He has the authority for 8:11 and 8:12

The Mission of the Kingdom claims everything Matt 10

2nd 'teaching block'

Following 9:36-38 we have Jesus' supreme *response of compassion* explained:
He sends out his followers to *proclaim his KG*

Key verse: v16 Sheep among wolves, hence need for wisdom AND realism.

A. The King's briefing for mission 10:1-15

How to be wise and realistic about mission. We need wisdom and realism about:

1. The plan and progress of God's gospel mission to the world 1-6
 - directed by the gospel's unfolding story
2. The proclamation and power of God's gospel mission to the world 7-8a
 - dictated by the gospel's abiding power
3. The priorities and provision in God's gospel mission to the world 8b-10
 - delivered by the gospel's urgent responsibilities
4. The people and partnerships in God's gospel mission to the world 11-15
 - distinguished by the gospel's clear discrimination

B. Enemies of mission: Fears within 10:16-33

v16ff looks further to distant horizons of mission - no longer just the 12 apostles.
Overwhelming emphasis is to expect persecution and to exhibit perseverance

NB 3 specific areas hardship will come from:

- a. The religious establishment v17. Religion hates real faith, because real faith liberates
- b. Society and the state v18 either physical or in other ways
- c. Within the family itself v21. Most painful of all

In such circumstances, the real enemy is FEAR. It can neutralise mission. A great enemy within. We need to see why, with a true gospel perspective, we need not fear, and we can endure and advance.

3 times in 26-33 he gives reasons we fear, and 3 times says 'fear not' (26,28,31) because....

1. The sting of slander v25

- leads so easily to silencing of Christian witness comes from all 3 directions a-c above.
BUT v26, fear not, for the real truth will out in the end:
And, the answer: on the offensive with the truth v27 God is true: proclaim him from the rooftops!

2. The dread of violence and persecution v28

- leads so easily to paralysis and compromise comes from all 3 directions a-c above.
But: do not fear (they can only kill you!)
Rather: Fear him who has ultimate power to save or destroy. God is great: fear him, and you'll fear no other

3. The desolation of divine distance

God seems so far away, abandoned us, forgetting us
No! God is near: to be trusted.
So fear not! v31ff Trust him! He loves, he sees, he cares!

C. Enemies of mission: Conflicts without 10:34-41

The age of mission is an age of warfare. There will be enemies and conflict to the end (16-25). Stated explicitly in v34 by Jesus.

Investing wholeheartedly in the mission of the KG of heaven therefore involves:

1. A painful separation from loved ones 35-37

- the ties of natural affection may be sorely tested, even to the point of terrible sadness and grief in this present age. BUT: Jesus must come first.

2. A costly separation from the world 38-39

- the natural ambitions of the present age – even the best – must be crucified, because you cannot invest in this age and the age to come at the same time.

all this is hard, BUT it is totally overshadowed by:

3. A privileged union with the Saviour himself 40-42

- investing your life totally and completely with Jesus brings not just extraordinary privilege now, but wonderful reward forever.

The Way that Divides

The next teaching section is Ch 13, the parables of the KG. But Ch11-12 highlight the context.

The proclamation of the KG in Ch5-9 leads to a. the rationale for mission in the world (ch10) but also b. the growing opposition from the world. The way of the KG divides. Ch 11-12 form a bridge from the teaching on mission, and prepare what is to come in Ch 13.

It's all about the reactions provoked when God's **word** collides with his **world**.

Ch 11: Judgment begins today!

- Jesus came to bring not peace, but a sword (10:34ff)
- These chapters are a moment of destiny, a great turning point for 'this generation' v16
- Their ultimate, settled rejection is ominously foretold in 12:14: conspire to destroy him
- Therefore, v15, 'Jesus withdrew from them', and quotes Isaiah re going to the Gentiles

God's word always causes convulsions – of eternal significance.

Ch11-12 **display** these different reactions to Jesus and his KG.

Ch 13 **explains** these different reactions

Essential message of Ch11: you can't presume forever on the mercy and grace of God. He has set a day for judgement – and that judgment has begun. Every generation has to make up its mind about Jesus. The time is now: judgment begins today!

3 sections speak of 3 reactions to Jesus:

1. Honest perplexity 1-15

- the message of the KG can at times cause honest, **heart-felt doubts** even among the greatest believers

"if Jesus is real, why is the world still as it is? Where is the judgment on evil – and the heaven we long for?"

Jesus says v4ff: 'its begun! Trust me – don't be ashamed of a KG that is now but not yet' He's done enough for us to trust him for the rest.

2. Hardened perversity 16-24

- the KG message is often met with **hardened derision** and pride even among the most privileged of people

not honest doubt but hardened unbelief – to both the joy and the solemnity of the gospel

but there is a price to be paid for such attitude: v20ff. Fearful. This is where unbelief leads.

3. Humble penitence 25-30

- the message is also met with **heartfelt desire** even among the humble and lowly souls of the world.
- It's not about cleverness, but about coming to Jesus

The rest Jesus speaks of is the hope of all the prophets and the Law: yet mostly Israel rejects him.

You can love the law, yet hate Jesus whose law it is. Emptied of Jesus, the law is a heavy yoke. But with Jesus – it is suffused with the warmth and wonder of his presence.

□ v15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

The same three reactions are seen today. When the gospel is proclaimed, hearts are being judged TODAY.

A violent collision is happening – c.f. v12 (NIV) the KG is advancing forcefully/violently, and there are violent reactions to it still.

NB v22,24: Day of Judgment in the future. But the verdict then is decided now, TODAY.

Ch 12 Can the Church cope with the Real Jesus?

Lifeless religion face to face with the life-giving Spirit of God in the person of Jesus Christ the Son of God

In Jesus, God confronts the religion of Israel once and for all. You can't have the life of God's Spirit within you outside the presence of Jesus Christ.

15-21 = heart of passage. Is 42 quote: Jesus is the one in whom the Spirit dwells fully. Only he can baptise with the Spirit. Yet – confronted with him as he really is – he is refused. He will not force himself on people. He departs from those who spurn him (v15) and turns to those who will welcome him (Gentiles, v21). And organised religion - then AND now – so often still rejects him.

- So: can the professing church cope with the real Jesus?

1. faced with the unanswerable words of God's Spirit, in the person of Jesus 1-14

religious people faced with the real implications of the words of Scripture proclaimed and explained by Jesus himself: a liberating message of life, not a legalistic bondage of death.

- Religion turns relationship with God into rituals and rote. But they are blind.
- Can't see beyond this world; lost the big picture of God's redemption

2. faced with the irrefutable works of God's Spirit in the person of Jesus 22-37

religious people faced with the real implications of the Spirit's work in man

- Jesus says their religious self-sufficiency is really bondage to the devil.
- V22 is a picture of them: blind and mute. They and their religion are powerless. Only Jesus can set them free. (No wonder they react fiercely in v24!).
- Their logic is idiotic – v25 – but the only alternative is to admit he is who he claims to be

But this is culpable: faced with irrefutable evidence, rejection is utter blasphemy.

3. faced with the inevitable warning of God's Spirit in the person of Jesus 38-50

a direct assault on their self assurance and arrogant pride

Repent, or perish is the message clearly given. There is nothing worse than to have stared grace in the face and rejected it. The last state shall be far worse than the first – v45

46-50 show the only true way: submit to his lordship:

shown by love for his presence, and love for his people.

If we do not respond like this, Jesus will not be able to stand our presence any longer, and like v15 he will withdraw himself to those who will welcome him.

5. Real Expectations for the Kingdom Matt 13

3rd 'teaching block' explaining the **NOW** and the **NOT YET** of the Kingdom

Introduction

- Why do so many reject the clear evidence of Jesus and the message of his KG?
- Why do some who seem to follow at first, then turn away?
- Why these mixed reactions to Jesus – seen by the disciples then in Jesus' own ministry, and to be seen by them in their subsequent gospel mission later on – and by all disciples since, and today too?

Jesus' parables in Ch 13 serve to answer these and other questions about the KG:

- explaining its **present** reality and its **future** certainty

There are things that are – hidden to the world
– but visible by faith to those who understand the truth.

God is in control; he has a plan;
we can trust him: whatever reaction we seem to face in the world.

7 parables in all:

- the Sower,
- then 3 pairs of others: each speak of things **hidden** and things to be **revealed**

Understanding this chapter's message is vital for Christian life and Christian ministry!

- What we are to expect **NOW** – today – as the KG grows on earth
- And what we are **NOT** to expect until his KG comes at last in glory

Confusion about this will spell disaster in Christian life and Christian ministry!

The Structure of the teaching

7 parables which explain: what we should expect to see in the mission of the Kingdom, & why.

1. The Sower 13:1-23

- tells us it is the gospel, and people's response to it, that judges for eternity (c.f. 12:37)

V1-23 answer the Question of John the Baptist in Ch 11:

Why such varied response to the gospel of the KG? and where is the judgment God promised?

Jesus' answer: in fact, **God's judgment is at work in the world already** – in the **gospel** itself. And it is **because of this** we see the varied reactions we do see to the message.

Then follow 3 pairs of parables each speaking of things presently hidden, but nonetheless real, and which one day will be visible to all creation.

The pattern is symmetrically arranged (a common feature in Matthew): The first and last parable are a pair bracketing the section; in between come two pairs:

A¹ B¹ B² C¹ C² A²

2. Wheat & Weeds (A¹) 13:24-30 & explained in 36-43; and the Dragnet (A²) 47-50

- Presently hidden but real division of the KG from the world

3. The mustard seed (B¹) and the leaven (B²) 31-33

- Presently hidden but real growth of the KG in the world

4. The Treasure (C¹) and the Pearl (C²) 44-46

- Presently hidden but real **value** of the KG to the world

1. The gospel of God is a double-edged sword 13:1-23

1. The Sword of God's Judgment:

the gospel itself is God's instrument of judgment 10-17

- In the proclamation of the gospel and in the response it produces, God's verdict on men and women is being forged, as they are divided in their responses to Jesus and his claim upon them.

The point of the sower is that the *word is at work* (19). 10-17 describe the nature of that work: division

NB sower, and 3 subsequent parables: = to the crowds in parables (see v34)

Then v36 leaves crowds to explain clearly to disciples.

A developing division. NB ends v 47ff – unambiguous **separation**

God's word **divides**. Hence his use of parables – v13

- NOT as homely illustrations to make teaching *easier*.
- Rather the opposite: to conceal the truth further from those whose hearts are hard against him v12.

V11 – only God can open eyes: he is sovereign BUT

He is absolutely just – and men are responsible for their rejection: their hearts are hard v15.

Look at the division between v52 and v53ff. Total contrast.

- The gospel is God's instrument of division

2. The Sowing of God's Judgment:

We shall see God's word working his judgment when the gospel is at work (1-9, 18-23)

- And we are not to despair or lose heart. God's word doesn't fail (Is 55:11)
- There is no fault in the message, but in the hearts of those who reject

▣ Encouragement to Disciples:

- God knows what he is doing! A great harvest will be evident one day: keep sowing!

▣ Warning to other Listeners (v9)

- God's word is powerful to save OR to condemn. Don't resist it. Remember v12.

2. Present realities and future certainties.

Wheat & Weeds (24-30 & 36-43) and the Net (47-50)

Presently hidden but real division of the Kingdom from the world

Questions: Why do the wicked prosper?
Why is there so much opposition to the gospel?

Need to see *future* certainty to live with *present* realities.
(compare with Psalm 73: understanding comes when 'I discerned their end' Ps 73:17)

Hence title "**Present realities and future certainties.**"

- Unrealism re present ➔ false optimism & triumphalism
- Uncertainty re future ➔ despair and cynicism

Parable of the Weeds: key message - there **is** a final sifting;
until then both will be together

Parable of the Net: - adds that Judgment is delayed *for mercy's sake*:
because the harvest is so important.

2 lessons:

1. No misplaced triumphalism for the church: a messy world AND church to the end.
2. No misplaced security for the world: there *will* be an end, separation, judgment.

☐ He who has ears, let him hear!

3. Trusting God's Kingdom way, not ours?

The mustard seed and the leaven (31-33)

Presently hidden but real growth of the Kingdom in the world

Questions: If the KG is here, where is the power, impact, glory?

- Let's do it our way!

No. If we must have no triumphalism (tares/net) *neither* should we be falsely pessimistic!
God's ways are not our ways, but God's ways are the best and most wonderful ways of all!

Hence title: "Do you trust God to do things his way?"

The growth of the KG is both **inevitable** and **irrepressible**:

- so don't lose heart. Be patient & persistent

1. Mustard seed: the focus is on propagating power of the Kingdom of God
it seems insignificant: But in end, it *will* fill the whole world:

- growth is *inevitable* so have faith & patience in sowing

2. Leaven: the focus is on penetrating power of the Kingdom of God.
Growth is irrepressible. It calls us to faithfulness and perseverance.

- People are God's method. Contagion will spread the

▣ Trust God to build the Kingdom his way, and join in doing it his way.

Isaiah 55:9-11 – his word always accomplishes his work.

4. Solid Joy and Lasting Treasure

The Treasure and the Pearl (44-46)

Presently hidden but real value of the Kingdom to the world

The Secret of the Kingdom is **value investing!**

- *Seeing what others do not see, and investing for the long term.*

Hence title: **"Solid Joy and Lasting Treasure."**

1. The prize of finding Jesus and his KG

- what you have in him is greater than all the treasure of earth

2. The price of finding Jesus and his KG

- it costs everything! Can't have this along with other treasure

3. The promise of finding Jesus and his KG

- it's happening all the time! Some are searching; others find it by 'chance' encounter. Because he is a treasure searching for finders!

▣ Proclaim with confidence: he shall be found! Invest in that, and hold it forever.

6. Real Communities of the Kingdom 13:52-18:35

Understanding Jesus and his Household

13:52 is a key verse: a bridge to the 2nd half of the Gospel. The 'old' and the 'new' is on Kingdom revelation finding its fulfilment in Jesus as the Key to it all. It is those who understand this who will pass on the treasure to others.

Therefore, the growth of the disciples' understanding is in focus in the next few chapters

➔ Jesus is building a community who understand the Kingdom of heaven, and pass its message on

- A community in **continuity** with Israel, yet increasingly **divided** from its now redundant religious system

Hence, ch14-17 highlight the developing chasm of division. Immediately after 13:52 the people are 'offended' at Jesus. "scandalised" v57

Walking with Jesus: towards, or away?

The key question and challenge, then, is which road are you on?

- In Ch14 we see some refusing to understand, and insisting on the road to unbelief.
- And some – despite perplexities – following Jesus on the road to faith and understanding.

Observe the contrast

1. Stumbling in blindness + ignorance (13:53-14:12)

- First the crowd in Nazareth; then a close up in one individual, Herod

2. Journeying in faith and understanding (14:13-33)

- 2 great signs to open eyes in understanding, and open hearts in faith
First the crowds (13,15,19,20); then the individual (Peter on the water).

When people are following Jesus, and seeking him, he leads them into understanding and faith v33.

And yet!

Jesus exposes the Heart! Ch 15:1-20

Records a clash with elders and pharisees. NB the context (14:34-36): Revival! Yet what concerns them is a lack of proper handwashing! Tragic. But, worldly religion is always exposed by the presence of the living God.

The True gospel of Jesus always

- confronts with an Authority that exposes tradition (1-2)
- demands an integrity that exposes sham (3-9)
- shines a light that exposes the heart (10-20)

a sobering word for the 'religious' today, including the 'evangelically religious'

what a total contrast in 15:21ff – pagan, Canaanite faith!
Jesus IS building his church, and he is drawing people from all nations.

So:

15:21-16:12 focuses on understanding the true extent and scope of the church:

The bread of heaven or earthly leaven? 15:21-16:12

- the great and generous bounds of his household

16:13-28 focus on understanding the true builder (Jesus himself) and the true foundation (the apostolic gospel of the cross)

The Power and Authority of Heaven on Earth 16:13-28

Ch 17 focuses on understanding the true home of the Church: not this earth but the resurrection Kingdom of Glory

The Road to Glory 17:1-27

NB after the display of the glory of Christ in the transfiguration, there is a graphic display of the road to glory for followers of Jesus.

V14-21 demonstrate the old order: their total impotence

V 24-27 speak of the new order: they are sons of the King, and subject to none!

Yet between are v 22-23 – the road from old to new comes only by Jesus' death and resurrection.

- The road to glory is the road of humility and death: for Jesus, and for his followers too

Hence, all this leads into the 4th teaching block:

about what living on that Road to glory looks like for Jesus' new community – the church - now.

Those who are **living on earth for heaven**.

Living on Earth for Heaven:

4th 'teaching block' - Understanding the Life of Jesus' Church

A. Walk Humbly (18:1-14) The way to be exalted in the Kingdom

This means:

1. Receiving Jesus himself (1-5)

NB context: 'who is the greatest'

being humbled by grace, and dependent on him for everything. As one who has no status (a child)

You lose your life to find life. An attitude that is visible in our willing reception of our brothers (5)

2. Not rejecting Jesus' brothers (6-9)

we will never jeopardize our brethren or ourselves. Family responsibility not to put stumbling blocks

3. Reflecting Jesus' Father (and ours) (10-14)

hearts aligned with the father's love that gives all for the undeserving and loves to restore the lost

B. Do Justly (18:15-20) Righteousness rules in Christ's Kingdom

The home of righteousness (2Pet 3:13) means the home of right relationships.

Where Sermon on the Mount detailed in personal terms, here it is in corporate terms for the church community.

Because we are not yet fully 'home' – sin is still a problem and it must be overcome in church relationships.

Sin can rupture relationships ➔ and lead to real disaster (14 – perishing). But **grace** can win back (15).

It all depends on how we deal with our brother who sins against us.

We are to 'do justly': i.e., act with the merciful justice of God. That means we have

- A responsibility from God we can't shirk (15-17) – to 'win him'.
- The authority of heaven we mustn't shrink from (18-19) – not affirming /ignoring sin
- The presence and power of heaven we mustn't forget (20) – a great encouragement!

NB: We need to digest v 1-14 first if we are to be this kind of people and community

C. Love Mercy (18:21-35) The place of Indefatigable forgiveness

We can't separate our relationship with Jesus from our relationship with his brothers in the church. But it is hard to restore and win back our brothers, as above. It requires a

truly merciful and forgiving spirit. Therefore, we are to be a people in whom forgiveness reigns supreme.

21-22 statement: the extent of true forgiveness:

70 x 7. I.e., limitless! The difference of heaven vs earth is not just a bit more; it's a qualitative difference, a difference of worlds. In heaven, forgiveness radiates from the heart. So with heaven's people.

➔ exposition

- The **Experience** of true forgiveness: (23-27)
- The **Evidence** of unforgiveness (28-30) NB 'fellow-servant' 29,31,33. Shows he hasn't really experienced heart-changing mercy himself
- The **End** of unforgiveness (31ff) belongs in hell, and leads to hell

7. The Coming Real Judgment of the Kingdom

A. Unique authority pressed home 19-21:32

Increasing revelation of Jesus as Messiah accompanied with increasing vehemence of opposition as the Gospel moves towards the climax at the cross: the height of fulfilment and the depth of rejection together.

Ch 19 presses home Jesus' unique authority over his KG. Personal allegiance to him is the only way into his KG and on in his KG. Journeying with Jesus.

- Hence emphasis on 'coming' & 'following' 2, 14, 21, 27ff etc

But following where? Ans: The New World v28.

And how? Ans: by the way of the cross: That means turning backs on this world (repentance) and towards the New World (Faith)

Key Q then is: which world do you really belong to?

Ans: does your relationship with Jesus define your relationships with this world – or vice versa?

So 19:1-12 examines **marital** relationships; and 16-30 **material** relationships.

Between is 13-15 and example of making Jesus the real defining relationship right from the start.

Ch 20 is about 'Rewarding Service for Jesus'.

There is real reward, but we can still have a wrong attitude to that.

- So don't have a reward mentality (1-16)
- And don't have a rule mentality (20-24)
- Rather have a redeemer mentality (17-19, 25-28) like Jesus who stoops to serve

But the religious authorities will not have it.

They are totally blind; in contrast, even the blind beggars 'see' and follow him (34)

Ch 21 is the climax of prophetic fulfilment as the King enters Jerusalem.

- Even the children cry hosanna.
- The officials of Israel see it all (15) but are blind and bitter
- So Jesus leaves: he departs from his city v17

A Painful Verdict Pronounced 21:33-23:39

Rest of Ch 21 to end of 23 pronounce the **verdict**: 'Abandoned by God'

21:33- 22:14 They have scorned the **call** of Jesus:
so their KG will be taken away (parable of talents 33-45) and they will be shut out from God (wedding)

22:15-46: they have all scorned the **words** of Jesus (Pharisees, Herodians and Sadducees all) so there is nothing more Jesus can answer them (46)

Ch 23 therefore pronounces the terrible verdict: only complete **woe**: 7-fold cursing of woe.

- Climaxing in v38: 'your house is left to you desolate'.

It is the end of an era. Only total Judgment can now follow

➡ Hence, leads into the teaching of Ch 24-25.

Be Ready for Judgment by listening to Jesus
The coming of the Kingdom in power & judgment Matt 24-25:
The final 'teaching block'

1. Introduction: Context as Key

A. Whole Book context

- The King establishing his Kingdom with Power:
3 movements (1:1-4:16; 4:17-16:20; 16:21ff)
- The King teaching about his Kingdom with authority:
5 teaching blocks

B. Immediate Context

- a) Structural clues brackets 24:3 & 26:1
(c.f. 5:1 & 7:28-29; 10:5 & 11:1; 13:1 & 53; 18:1 & 19:1)
- b) preceding text links with end of Ch 23
- c) The shape of the question and Jesus' answer – 2 parts.
- d) The purpose of Jesus' teaching: preparation not speculation.

So:

- Ch 24-25 are one discourse, bringing clarity and focus to our understanding of *"the last days."*
- Jesus does usher in the great and awesome Day of the Lord (Mal 4:5ff) for Israel. (= both glory and Judgment).
- But also, the great recreation of the whole universe (Is 65ff).
NB Is 66:7ff – a birth process. C.f. Matt 24:8 – 'birth pangs'.

2. Purpose as Key

How to divide up the discourse to make sense of it?

Both AD 70 AND the final judgment are in view. But how to see which is which?

One way: RT France (IVP Tyndale Commentary):
solves by taking up to v35 as ref to AD 70, and only after v36
'but concerning that day' = Parousia (2nd Coming)

BUT:

- problem of v 29-31. Can this really be AD70?
- And don't v 26-31 run together?
- And v27 and v30 almost exactly parallel 25:31-32 Christ's *coming* in power and glory

Remember: Jesus is a teacher: logical, and clear.

- Makes his point: 'this is what is coming, within this generation and at the end of all things: so be clear!'
- then applies it. (so what?) 'so – this is how to be ready—for the judgment in Judea, AND the last judgment': so *be* ready!

Suggest the 4 x "So" / or "therefore" is the key: **v15, 26, 33, 42**

Thus....

3. Outline of the whole teaching:

Be Ready for Judgment by listening to Jesus!

A. General expectations for all the last days 24:4-14

- Don't be misled: the whole process of the birth pangs of the new world will share these characteristics, from now right to the end. So, keep your focus on v14 – the gospel mission!
- So don't panic. But you do need to be prepared to act!

B. Specific actions for these last days: learn and be READY 24:15-44

2 clear predictions of judgment – of different scale 15-31

- ...**SO** learn about the coming judgment on **Judea**: it is certain to come 15-25
- ...**SO** learn about the coming judgment on the whole **earth**: it too is certain to come 26-31

2 clear preparations for judgment – of different kind 32-44

- be ready then for judgment on Judea: **SO keep your eyes open!** 32-35 (visible signs ∴ be ready then)
- be ready always for judgment on earth: **SO stay awake!** 36-44 (no signs ∴ be ready always).

C. Urgent Preparation for the last day – the coming of Jesus 24:45-25:30

- who then is faithful and wise servant who will be prepared for his master's return?

Ans: 3 parables about what do if there is delay: being sure of the master's return (middle one, 25:1-13); therefore serving his people (24:45-51) and sharing the master's purpose (25:14-30) [symmetry!]

D. Real Experience of the last day – judgment by the Son of man 25:31-46

- certainty; completeness; consequences; and criteria: works=evidence of real love for Jesus.
- NB Not an indictment of the church for lack of care for the poor; rather an indictment on the world for *their* rejection of Jesus' "brothers" (12:50, 23:8, 28:20)

1. Expectations for the Last Days

Sermon outline for Matt 24:1-14

What are we to expect as Christians in this world until Jesus comes?

What a comfort!

- Jesus knows everything that will face us—and has told us in advance so we will endure!!

1. What we are to expect:

it's as easy as ABC.....

A
B
C
D
E
F
G

2. How we are to respond

- Be warned!
- Be glad!
- Be bold!

2. Actions for the Last Days 24:15-44

Introduction

- Follows on from v1-14 which lays out General expectations for all the last days: "birth pains" v8
- But we need to know not only what to expect, but how to act: v44 "Be Ready!"
 - BOTH for a coming judgment on Judea
 - AND for the coming judgment on the whole world
- We must **LEARN** what is to come, and so **BE READY** for what is to come
- Key = 4 x "so" in v15,26,33,42
 - where the general teaching is then applied to the specific situations of judgment
- The logical approach of a good teacher

Two clear predictions of judgment – of different scale 24:15-31

- 15-25 ...SO learn about the coming judgment on Judea: it is certain to come
 - those 'in the know' will see the signs in history
- 26-31 ...SO learn about the coming judgment on the whole earth: it too is certain to come
 - But very different: no-one in the world will be able to miss this
 - cosmic
 - public
 - ultimately divisive
 - final

Two clear preparations for judgment – of different kind 24:32-44

- 32-35 be ready then for judgment on Judea:
 - SO keep your eyes open! (visible signs ∴ be ready then)
- 36-44 be ready always for judgment on the earth:
 - SO stay awake! (no signs ∴ be ready always)

3. Preparation for the last day 24:45-25:30

Introduction

- The heart of the New Testament gospel: Acts 10:42
- Everyone will face the judgment seat of Christ – Matt 25:32
- who then is faithful and wise servant who will be prepared for his master's return?

The answer: given in 3 parables about what do if there is delay:
NB Mathew's symmetry

being

Sure of the master's promise (middle one, 25:1-13);

- faithful and wise servants are prepared, not presumptuous about the Lord's return

therefore

Serving the master's people (24:45-51)

- faithful and wise servants are responsible, not reckless in their attitude to the master's household

and

Sharing the master's purpose (25:14-30)

- faithful and wise servants are ambitious, not apathetic about the mission of the Kingdom

.....all this is really the evidence that someone truly

Savours the master's presence

- really knowing and loving the Lord Jesus himself

4. Experience of the last day 25:31-46

Introduction

- What the world will not countenance, and the worldly church seeks to fudge and tone down, Jesus speaks of with stark certainty and unambiguous clarity.
- A day of clear and unequivocal separation v32

To be ready for that day we must take with great seriousness 4 things about this great separation: -

Its approaching certainty

- The central message of the NT gospel and the meaning of the Resurrection:
Acts 10:42; 17:31 c.f. Ps2

Its awesome completeness

- one sovereign judge, not many; one separation from among all nations;

Its astounding criteria

- This is NOT a challenge to the Christian church for its failure to care for the poor and needy!
It is a stark challenge to the WORLD about whether they have welcomed and cared for and shown love to Christ's people, and thus to him.
- Jesus' verdict on people then will reflect their verdict on him now, a verdict visible now in their response to Jesus' *true brethren* in the world (v40; c.f. 12:50; 23:8; 28:10 also 10:40 etc.)

Its abiding consequences

- The destiny decreed on that day will be irreversible and eternal

8. Matthew's Preaching of Christ's Passion

The climax of the Gospel where *all Matt's key themes* come together.

Following the teaching on the coming of the Kingdom in power and glory, the climax of the story explains the grounds of that future coming: the death and resurrection of Christ.

- He *will come in power and glory*, but he will receive the throne **only** through the *triumph of his death and resurrection*.

Here now is the ultimate **climax** of the **continuous** story of redemption, in the ultimate **confrontation** with the world. Not just Israel vs her God, but the world vs its creator.

Only in the cross is the full **hatred** of the world for God revealed

And the full **love** of God for a rebellious world revealed

NB Matthew is NOT just giving us an account of history, which Paul and others later gave us the theology of.

Matthew is a theologian too (and remember, the Gospels post-date the epistles).

And above all a *preacher*.

His passion is **proclamation** of the cross: **explanation** and **preaching** of the cross.

- In his passion narrative, he **Proclaims** the cross as a **saving death for sins**
- In his resurrection narrative, he **Proclaims** the cross as a **saving message for the world**

We must preach the gospel from the Gospels – and especially in the passion narratives

To do so we need to

- **Think Preacher:**
these are Matthew's sermons, his preaching distilled in essence for us. Therefore,
- **Think Structure:**
his preaching style is to use careful structure; rarely linear, often symmetrical
- **Think Bible:**
His concerns to show continuity and climax of all the **OT** in Jesus should alert us to see him explaining Jesus' death in terms of all the OT theology of sacrifice and showing it fulfilled in Jesus

NB: symmetry and contrast are prominent in each of Matthew's 'Sermons'

1. The message of the cross announced 26:1-16

Real Discipleship

• Beauty and Betrayal

Response to the cross of Jesus divides the world.

Brings together 2 things so clearly:

- God's unstoppable purpose: v2=his clear timetable. God is sovereign in redemption
- Undeniable personal response this redemption demands from all. (cf10:38).

Contrasted in the **Betrayal** of Jesus by

- the united leaders of Israel (3-5).
- and the disciple, Judas 'one of the twelve'(14-16) [indeed, all of them v56]

For this world's gain: 'what will you give me' v15.

Matt places between v5 and v14 (breaking the flow) v6-13 – a stark contrast of **Beauty**.

Message: the way to discipleship that doesn't betray, is extravagant love of Jesus – despite the world's scorn: 'why this waste'. To Jesus, it is 'a beautiful thing to me'

2. The Message of the Cross Explained 26:17-45

Real atonement for sin through sacrifice & substitution

• A. Deliverance and Destiny: a prophesied, sacrificial death

3x clear focus on 'Passover'. This is what Jesus says his death fulfils. The Passover is coming

Passover is THE event in the OT that speaks of sacrifice, and deliverance and atonement.

The blood is the blood of **deliverance** out of bondage: shed blood at beginning of Exodus 12 and into the **destiny** of the people of God: shed blood of the covenant Ex 24:8

So with Christ's death: the blood of forgiveness that seals the New covenant – Jer 31; 1 Cor 5:7.

Like the Passover: not automatic: the blood must be appropriated 'drink this'.

V29 – speaks of the future: the goal: the father's house. He brings us to God 1 Pet 3:18.

• B. Forgiveness and Forsakenness: a purposeful, substitutionary death

Clear contrast of 2 cups that are drunk: Jesus with his disciples in the upper room and in the garden.

The cup of **forgiveness** v28 proclaims a death that works forgiveness for many despite man's unfaithfulness.

- both upper room and garden preceded by unfaithfulness: (Judas, 20-25; Peter, 31-35). All are betrayers, and real **forgiveness** can be received from God alone: we must drink the cup of his death for us.
- But: sin must be paid for; it can't be brushed away. Gethsemane is the other side of the wonder of the upper room. That we may drink of his cup, he must drink ours: the

cup of **forsakenness** – the wages of sin. C.f. the scapegoat – abandoned in the wilderness carrying sin. Explains the agony.

This is THE **substitutionary death** all the OT looked for, v24.

NB 3x Peter's denial spoken of; 3x disciples fail him; but 3x Jesus prays 'thy will be done'. He is faithful.

A double exchange: all that is ours → him; all that is his → ours. 'Full atonement, can it be?'

- We cannot trust ourselves! We have all let Jesus down – and will do so again.
- But we can trust Jesus! He will not betray his father, or us.

3. The way of the cross confronted

26:47-75

Real Repentance

• Surrender and Scorn

The cross is not just theology to be understood; it is a way of life that confronts us. The **way** of the cross confronts all in the message of Jesus: either to be scorned or surrendered to.

Scorn of the cross: the way of the world

- **Judas** 47-56 the defiance of the worldly man.
Sin as personal rebellion against God
Exposed as a man of the world, his treasure on earth (c.f. 6:19-20)
- **Caiaphas** 57-68 the derision of the worldly church.
The sheer dishonesty of dead religion
Perverse refusal of the plain words of Jesus; refusal to submit to Lordship.
- **Peter** 69-75 the denial of the worldly disciple.
The shame of disloyalty.
Trying to serve 2 masters, but no-one can.
Carry the cross & face shame OR scorn Christ.

Scorn for the way of the cross = rejection of the REAL Jesus OR surrender to the way of the cross along with the real Jesus

Surrender to the way of the cross: the way of Jesus

- Serene submission of the way marked out in total contrast to all those around him and their attachment to this world.
- He is already crucified in spirit – Gethsemane's battle won. So, v50ff. This is God's way, v56

Heb 12: for 'the joy set before him'

Learn to scorn the praise of men, and learn to lose with God;

For Jesus won the world through shame, and beckons thee his road (Faber).

4. The achievement of the cross displayed

27:1-26

Real Redemption

• Redemption and Rejection

20:28 'to give his life as a ransom for many': releasing from bondage by the payment of a blood price.

The blood of Jesus divides the world:

Either	it opens the gate of heaven	☞ eternal redemption by God
Or	if rejected, closes it forever	☞ eternal rejection by God

Again, point made by symmetry. V11 runs from v2, but 3-10 interjected: Judas' end. And v25 Israel's end.

I.e., surrounded by rejection, and effect of rejection of Jesus' innocent **blood** (4,24)

In centre: drama focuses on great exchange: Barabbas and Jesus:

A picture of **redemption by the blood of Jesus**: Barabbas the guilty goes free; Jesus pays in innocent blood.

And also **rejection of the precious blood**:

- Judas, in despair would rather face hell than repent. Curses himself by hanging – Deut 21:23
- the rest from defiance. Will not have the offensive message. Curse *themselves* v25.
- Pilate in delusion: thinks he can wash his hands of the claim of Jesus.

Be warned! There is redemption – don't force rejection

5. The hatred of the cross unleashed

27:27-44

Real Reconciliation

• Slander and Silence

In the **slander of mockery**, Jesus, the Son of God, faces the wrath of all mankind against God.

No mistaking Matt's portrayal of the suffering servant of Is 53. '*Despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*'.

The climax of man's hatred of God, in the treatment of his Son. C.f. Ch21, the tenants.

- 27-31 the pagan world mocks his kingship – his Lordship (secular thinking)
- 39-44 the Jewish world mocks his salvation (religious thinking: rejects him as **sin-bearer**)

But in the midst: In the **silence of majesty**, Jesus faces the wrath of God against all mankind '*Like a sheep before its shearers is silent, he opened not his mouth*' Is 53:7. explains v42: *he will save others; that is why he will not save himself*

The slander speaks of the sickening hatred of the world for its God; but the silence speaks of the saving heart of God for a world at enmity with him *'while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son'*.

6. The glory of the cross unveiled

27:45-61

Real Revelation

• Darkness and Light

Matthew's theme sentence: 2 Tim 1:10 Our Saviour Jesus Christ has *'abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel'*.

The death of **death** in the death of Christ.

Darkness brackets glorious light!

A. The darkness of dereliction 45-50

- God's presence in judgment: not just on Israel, but Jesus himself. The cry of forsakenness.
- 'He descended into hell'. And yet, one more cry – of triumph v50.

A' The darkness of death – real physical death 55-61

- 'he was crucified, dead and buried' no mistake. NB all the witnesses

B. the Light of Life 51-54

V51 'Look!' (Light has come!)

- The curtain torn: **Restoration** to relationship with God. Heaven and earth reunited through Christ.
- The tombs opened: **Resurrection**: body and soul reunited through Christ.
- And v54: the climax: **Revelation** It is the gospel of Christ crucified that opens the eyes of pagans.

7. The message of the resurrection: Jesus is risen!

27:62 – 28:15

• Rejoicing and Resistance

The message of the cross divides the world, as does the message of the resurrection. Again, stark symmetry: rejoicing surrounded by resistance. But resistance is both futile and fraudulent.

The futility of resisting the true message of Jesus' resurrection 27:62-66

- Chief priests and pharisees and guards: Let's **stop** the resurrection!
Can't stomach the implications of him rising: 26:64 – he is their judge.

The fraudulence of resisting the true message of Jesus' resurrection 28:11-15

- Chief priests and pharisees and guards: Let's **silence** the resurrection!
Blind prejudice at work; hardened unbelief in the face of abundant proof

The future for those that rejoice in the true message of Jesus' resurrection 28:1-10

- See the power of the resurrection at work! Undeniable evidence is rejoiced in
- Faith is not a leap in the dark, but a step into the light of truth: based on evidence

The promise of a future: the light of life eternal for the Gentile world – Galilee is where it begins

8. The meaning of the resurrection: Jesus is Lord! 28:16-20

• Majesty and Mission

Matthew's selection according to his purpose and key themes.

'Galilee of the Gentiles'; the Mountain of revelation (ch5; ch15; ch17 etc) Glimpses of majesty.

Now: Glorious majesty over all the world revealed.

The Great Coronation 17-18

- He has **sovereign power** over heaven and earth. He is LORD over all his people.
Climax of revelation as God – he is worshipped. The Son of Man crowned with glory.
Dan 7:13-14

Because he has now accomplished all his work, there is:

The Great Commission 19

Not only is Jesus the King, he is also the Saviour;

- He has a **saving purpose** among all the nations. He is LORD for all his people
No longer just for Jews, but for all the world. Hence, his ambassadors are commissioned as lights to the world, to call to **become** Christians, and belong (baptising) and to **be** Christians (obeying)

The Great Comfort 20

Immanuel! He is with us always

- He is with us as a **strengthening presence**. It is he who is at work in us and through us all the way.

A Series Preaching through Matthew's Gospel in divisible sections

Christmas Fulfilment	Matthew 1:1-17 Matthew 1:18-24 Matthew 2:1-12 Matthew 2:13-15	Fulfilment 1 Fulfilment 2 Jesus as the Shepherd King Jesus as God's True Son
Confronted by the King	Matthew 3:1-12 Matthew 3:13-4:11 Matthew 3:17-4:11 Matthew 4:12-25	<i>Repent!</i> Look! He's everything you could not be (full atonement 1) <i>Look!</i> He's everything you could not be (full atonement 2) <i>Listen!</i> He speaks with authority
A Revolutionary Kingdom	Matthew 5:1-12 Matthew 5:13-20	The King's People Ambassadors of the King's rule
Kingdom Demands go deep	Matthew 5:21-48 Matthew 6:1-7:12 Matthew 7:13-29 Matthew 8:1-9:38	The Heart of God's Law God's Law in the Heart A Summons with new authority The challenge and call of the King
Mission that claims everything	Matthew 10:1-15 Matthew 10:16-33 Matthew 10:34-42	The King's briefing for mission Enemies of mission Conflicts without:
The way that divides	Matthew 11 Matthew 12	Judgement begins Today Can the church cope with the real Jesus?
Insight from an Insider - Jesus' teaching on his Kingdom	Matthew 13:1-23 Matthew 13:24-50 Matthew 13:31-33 Matthew 13:10-17,44-46 Matthew 13:53-14:33	The gospel of God is a double-edged sword Present Realities and Future Certainties Do you trust God to do things His way? Solid Joy and Lasting Treasure Walking with Jesus
Understanding Jesus and his Household	Matthew 14:34-15:20 Matthew 15:21-16:12 Matthew 16:13-28 Matthew 17 Matthew 18:1-14 Matthew 18:15-20 Matthew 18:21-35	Jesus exposes our hearts The bread of heaven or earthly leaven? The Power and Authority of Heaven on Earth The Road to Glory Living for heaven on earth 1: Walk Humbly Living for heaven on earth 2: Do Justly Living for heaven on earth 3: Love Mercy

A Unique Authority pressed home	Matthew 19:1-12	Defining Relationships 1: marital relationships and the kingdom
	Matthew 19:13-30	Defining Relationships 2: material relationships and the kingdom
	Matthew 19:27-20:34	Rewarding Service for Jesus
	Matthew 20:29-21:32	No Surrender! The scandalous challenge of a unique authority
A painful verdict pronounced	Matthew 21:33-22:14	Scorning the call of Jesus
	Matthew 22:15-46	Scorning the words of Jesus
	Matthew 23	Woe to the Institutional Church of God
Be Ready for Judgment! (by listening to Jesus)	Matthew 24:1-14	Expectations for the Last Days
	Matthew 24:15-44	Actions for the Last Days
	Matthew 24:45-25:30	Preparation for the last of the last days
	Matthew 25:31-46	Experience of the last of the last days
The Passion: St Matthew's Preaching of the cross	Matthew 26:1-16	Beauty and Betrayal - the message of the cross announced
	Matthew 26:17-45	Deliverance and Destiny - the meaning of the cross explained (1)
	Matthew 26:17-45	Forgiveness and Forsakenness - the meaning of the cross explained (2)
	Matthew 26:45-71	Surrender and Scorn - the way of the cross confronted
	Matthew 27	Redemption and Rejection - the achievement of the cross displayed
	Matthew 27:27-44	Slander and Silence - the hatred of the cross unleashed
	Matthew 27:45-61	Darkness and Light - the glory of the cross unveiled
	Matthew 27:62-28:15	Rejoicing And Resistance: Jesus is Risen - The message of the Resurrection
	Matthew 28:16-20	Majesty and Mission: Jesus is Lord! - the meaning of the Resurrection

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