

# Matthew

Sermon on the Mount

October 13, 2024

## I. Introduction

A. Over the past two weeks, we have looked at **Matthew 8** and **vs 1-13** in **Matthew 9**. Today we will make our way to the end of chapter 9. And as a reminder, these stories present examples of Jesus' dealings with people, and these examples help us understand Jesus, His ministry, His humility, His compassion, His power, and who He came to serve and to save. As before, I will read and comment on each story as we come to it.

## B. Pray

## II. Examples of Jesus' dealings with people that reveal His mindset and the scope of His ministry

A. **Matthew 9:14-17**, Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, "Why do **we** and the **Pharisees** fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" [15] And Jesus said to them, "The attendants of the bridegroom (*disciples of Jesus*) cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. [16] But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results. [17] Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved."

1. When John's disciples asked, "Why do **we** and the **Pharisees** fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" they were inferring that devout, serious-minded Jews fasted, and that Jesus' disciples were not as devout as they could or should be.
  - a. Apparently, Jesus' disciples were not observing any fasts, which in the mind of devout Jews would make their devoutness suspect.
  - b. Could it be that they were following Jesus for the excitement and popularity it brought them?
  - c. This was a reasonable question in light of Jewish religious traditions and the devout way John's disciples and the Pharisees practiced their Judaism.
2. Regarding fasts, the Law required one fast a year – on the Day of Atonement (**Leviticus 16:29**). The Jews added four more annual fasts upon their return from Captivity to commemorate the destruction of the Temple and the exile. To these five, they progressively added

- 25 more fasts to remind themselves of the troubled times that afflicted Israel over the years and God's subsequent salvation.
- a. These thirty fasts were not only part of their religious traditions, keeping them was one of the identifying marks of a serious-minded Jew – such as a Pharisee. And yet, Jesus said that our righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven. Apparently fasting is not enough to open heaven's doors.
  - b. What about us? Do we think like the Pharisees thought? What do we treat as the identifying the marks of a serious-minded Christian? Does it include godliness in the home, in our mind, in our words, and in our daily activities – including the ones only God sees?
3. Jesus responded to the question raised by John's disciples by saying, "The attendants of the bridegroom (*disciples of Jesus*) cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom (*Jesus*) is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast."
- a. It is my opinion that Jesus is making the point that He himself, His teaching, and His ways **correct** both the Jewish interpretation of the Law and the way they practice their religious traditions.
  - b. To me, this is supported by Jesus' words in **John 17:3**, "**This is eternal life**, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." In other words, eternal life is not about the devout practice of your religious theology and traditions, but a reconciled and mutually satisfying relationship with God.
  - c. And Paul adds these words in **Romans 2:13**, "It is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified (*which represents a serious pursuit of godliness in every area of life*)."
  - d. Though our theology and religious traditions are important, what matters most is a healthy, mutually satisfying relationship with God and godly living in the daily affairs of life?
4. Jesus continued with two supporting examples:
- a. **First**, patching an older piece of clothing with new, unshrunk cloth – which would tear the older piece as the patch, itself, began to shrink. **Second**, putting new wine into used wineskins – which would burst the already stretched wineskins as the new wine ferments and gives off the gases of fermentation.

- b. It is my opinion that in these two examples, Jesus is reinforcing the truth that the truer, fuller, all-encompassing Christ-way, or what we have come to call the Christian way, is different enough from the beliefs, traditions, and practices of the Jews that it cannot be squeezed into their mold or made to fit their religious practices. To try and do so would result in the loss of both the old way and the new.
  - c. Yet this is not the first time the book of Matthew makes this point. A quick review of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His activities as recorded in **Matthew 8-9** provide sufficient proof that Jesus' teachings and ways would not fit within the traditional beliefs and practices of the Jewish religion. Something new had come, and the old could not accommodate it.
- B. Matthew 9:18-26**, While He was saying these things to them, a synagogue official came and bowed down before Him, and said, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live." [19] Jesus got up and began to follow him, and so did His disciples. [20] And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak; [21] for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I will get well." [22] But Jesus turning and seeing her said, "Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well." At once the woman was made well. [23] When Jesus came into the official's house, and saw the flute-players and the crowd in noisy disorder, [24] He said, "Leave; for the girl has not died, but is asleep." And they began laughing at Him. [25] But when the crowd had been sent out, He entered and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. [26] This news spread throughout all that land.
1. According to the OT Law, physical contact with a woman who is bleeding (**Leviticus 15:19-33**) and a body that is dead (**Numbers 19:11-12**) would make you religiously unclean. Yet in this story, Jesus willingly has physical contact with a bleeding woman and a corpse.
    - a. Was Jesus special, or was He free from the constraints of the Law, or was it something else? I believe it was something else. Let me explain.
    - b. In both cases, Jesus was doing good for someone in need – which raises the question, "Can you really break any of God's laws when in an effort to do good you help or serve someone in need?" According to Jesus' own words, and a more thorough reading of God's word, the answer is no – you can't. For example:

- c. In **Matthew 12:1-7** we read that on a particular Sabbath, the disciples were hungry, and because they were walking through a grainfield, they picked grain and ate it.
    - (1) The Pharisees saw this and pointed out that the disciples were breaking the Law by working on the Sabbath (*picking grain*).
    - (2) Jesus responded by giving two examples of people breaking the Law – yet God approving what they did because they were doing good in serving others.
      - (a) David, when he and his companions were hungry, entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread – which was only to be eaten by the priests.
      - (b) The Temple priests who work on the Sabbath.
    - (3) Then Jesus said (v 7), “If you had known what this means, ‘I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned (*declared guilty*) the innocent.”
  - d. In **Matthew 12:9-13** we read about another Sabbath when Jesus went into a synagogue and saw a man with a withered hand. Some Pharisees asked if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath (*do work*)? Jesus responded by asking what they would do if one of their sheep fell into a pit on the Sabbath. Of course, the obvious answer is they would rescue it. Jesus concluded by saying that since people are more valuable than sheep, it must be lawful (*approved by God*) to do good on the Sabbath.
2. We can support this conclusion from other scriptures as well. Consider: If love fulfills the law (**Romans 13:10**), and if treating others in the same way we want to be treated is the essence of the message conveyed by the law and the prophets (**Matthew 7:12**), and if the whole law is fulfilled in this one statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (**Galatians 5:14**), then we can conclude that no law of God is to ever be understood, interpreted, or practiced in any way that prevents us from doing good to those around us.
  3. In these two stories, we see an immediate **need** for Jesus to bring the girl back to life, because they buried their dead the same day they died. And as for the woman who was bleeding for 12 years, her **need** was medical, social and religious. Medically in that her constant loss of blood had a negative effect on her physical health. Socially in that her bleeding would result in some forms of ostracism (*likely no marriage, no job, no social life*), and religiously in that she was constantly ceremonially unclean and thus unable to participate in the customary religious practices of Judaism.

4. One final thought: the woman's healing did not come from touching Jesus' garment, but from her faith, that is, believing that if she touched it she would be healed.

C. **Matthew 9:27-31**, As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" [28] When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." [29] Then He touched their eyes, saying, "It shall be done to you according to your faith." [30] And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them: "See that no one knows about this!" [31] But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land.

1. It is interesting to note that they called Jesus, "Son of David," which infers they saw Jesus as the Messiah – which was contrary to how the religious leaders saw Jesus.
  - a. Historically, the Jews believed that the Messiah was a son or descendent of David.
  - b. Matthew confirms this perspective in **Matthew 1:1**, "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Matthew goes on to record someone identifying Jesus as the Son of David eight more times.
2. It is also worth pointing out that the blind men showed their appreciation for being given sight by doing the opposite of what Jesus asked them to do – keep quiet about their healing. This makes me examine how I show my appreciation for the many times and ways God shows His love and care to me.

D. **Matthew 9:32-34**, As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him. [33] After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." [34] But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

1. What a difference in responses to Jesus healing the mute, demon-possessed man – the crowds were amazed and the Pharisees were upset – which prompted them to turn the crowds against Jesus by saying disparaging, derogatory things about Him.
2. This story reminds us of how easily those who appear to be the most spiritual among us can turn what ought to be "service unto God" into a competition with other Christian workers (*even in their own church*). And this sick form of competition most often results in using ungodly

means to gain greater fame and a larger following than those they are competing against.

- a. The sad reality is, for these kinds of religious people, their concern is first and foremost for themselves and what they are getting out of their Christian service.
- b. For Jesus, however, the honor of God and the good of others was His first and foremost concern. May this be ours as well.

E. **Matthew 9:35-38**, Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing **every** kind of disease and **every** kind of sickness. [36] Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were **distressed** (*feeling oppressed and in pain due to their circumstances*) and **dispirited** (*discouraged, disheartened, and depressed*) like sheep without a shepherd. [37] Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. [38] Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”

1. The most common understanding of Jesus’ request that we ask God to send out workers is to see it in relation to evangelism and people’s need for eternal salvation. I am not suggesting this is wrong, but it is only part of why we ought to be praying such a prayer.
2. True, unbelievers desperately need eternal salvation. But they just as desperately need to hear (1) truth about what matters most in life, (2) where true security, and a healthy sense of well-being, and lasting happiness are found, (3) how to have inward peace in the most outwardly unpeaceful situations, (4) why and how God’s ways lead to an abundant life now while any other way is self-destructive and adds more problems to your life, and (5) what is required to leave the self-destructive life behind and gain this God-given abundant life.
3. The point is, when we beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers, let us do so with a heart that includes concern and compassion for the many around us who are oppressed, discouraged, disheartened, and depressed due to their circumstances.
4. And may we be one of God’s workers by going to our family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers and bringing them the truths that will show them the way to eternal life and set them free from a distressed and dispirited life.