

# LESSONS FROM MATTHEW: POINTS TO GROWING DISCIPLES (Part 1)

## **A. BACKGROUND**

### **1. Jesus' early works may appear coincidental, but instead have focus**

- a. Chaps 8.1 - 11.1 have a wide but deliberate variety of miracles
- b. Show His power over the entirety of creation
  - 1.) Natural afflictions of men: Disease, dumbness, death
  - 2.) Spiritual afflictions of men: Demonic forces
  - 3.) Over nature and darkness
  - 4.) Over man's traditions
- c. Finally, His power to forgive and to delegate authority
- d. These works were aimed at **establishing the King's Credentials**

### **2. Beginning in Chapter 11, we see the official Jewish leadership's challenge to those credentials as the nation's supposed leader**

#### **a. Rejection of John the Baptist**

- 1.) (11.2-6) Note Jesus' answer to John's question
  - a.) His power & authority demonstrated through His works
  - b.) (vs 6) "who does not take offense" > does not stumble over Him
    - .. i.e. don't miss the point of these works
    - .. (Isa 35.5-6, 61.1) > He is the Messiah !
- 2.) Was John questioning Jesus' authority ? (11.7-11)
  - a.) The crowd might have been wondering about John's question and commitment
  - b.) Jesus addressed the crowd directly about John not being weak
  - c.) In fact, John was the prophesied messenger to the Messiah's coming
    - .. (Mk 1.2-3) combines Mal 3.1 and Isa 40.3
    - .. Another sign that Jesus was the true coming Messiah
  - d.) Finally, Jesus indicated John the Baptist's value - and a contrast
    - .. There was none greater than him to this point > faithfulness
    - .. And yet, any disciple of Christ would be even greater
- 3.) The battle John was waging within God's kingdom (11.12-15)
  - a.) Who was waging this battle of violence ? > religious leaders
    - .. They were opposing what John, Jesus, and the disciples promoted
    - .. "suffers violence" > is violently treated
    - .. "take it by force" > grasping it for their own
  - b.) The people needed to understand this
    - .. If they heeded John's message, repented, and accepted Jesus, then Elijah's prophecy would be fulfilled
      - (Mal 4.5-6)

- 4.) Yet the people wouldn't respond to their salvation opportunity (11.16-19)
- a.) Jesus compared them to children who can't be pleased by anything
  - b.) They weren't pleased by either the prophet or the Messiah
    - .. John didn't eat or drink > rejected him
    - .. Jesus ate and drank > accused him of being a drunkard & friend of sinners
  - c.) But the wisdom of John and Jesus would be proven right by the saving of many from their sins

**b. Rejection of His miracles/Condemnation of the three cities (11.20-30)**

- 1.) Jesus mentions three sets of cities to show the height of Jewish rejection
- a.) He had performed significant miracles in one city of each of the sets
    - .. Korazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum
    - .. All on NW shore of Sea of Galilee
    - .. Yet they did not recognize Him as Messiah and repent of their sins
  - b.) To drive home their refusal, he named three other wicked cities who would have repented had they seen the same miracles
    - .. Tyre, Sidon, Sodom
    - .. All were 30-60 miles away from being able to see Him
- 2.) The Galilean cities had more "light" but didn't respond and now are in ruins

**c. Finally, in Chapter 12: Controversies over His authority**

- 1.) Working on the Sabbath > Disciples eating from grain field
- a.) Ahimelec (Nob priest) giving David the shew bread
  - b.) Jesus gave the principle Ahimelec decided from (Mk 2.23-28)
    - .. When a ceremonial principle conflicts with a moral duty, the lesser obligation gives way to the heavier
    - .. Eating bread to sustain life outweighed the ceremonial restriction
- 2.) Healing on the Sabbath
- a.) An act of mercy toward a sheep in a pit was in order on the Sabbath
  - b.) Then why wouldn't healing a withered hand on the Sabbath be an even greater justification to break tradition ?

**3. The turning point is reached (Matt 12.22 - 24)**

- a. Jesus is accused of working miracles through Satan's power
- b. His response to the spiritual leaders of the day is scathing
  - 1.) (Matt 12. 38-42)
  - 2.) By the time they would realize His only sign was true, it would be too late for them to accept Him as King

#### **4. At this point, Jesus turns to a focus in instructing His disciples**

- a. Began to use parables for the first time (Matthew 13.1-3)
  - 1.) Two Greek root words make up "parable"
    - a.) "para" = alongside
    - b.) "ballo" = to throw
  - 2.) "Parable" = "to throw alongside"
    - a.) To make a comparison between a known truth & an unknown truth
- b. The disciples noted this change and questioned Him about His change
  - 1.) (13.10-13) - After the Parable of the Sower
- c. Jesus gave three reasons too His disciples for using parables
  - 1.) 13.11a - To communicate the truth to them
  - 2.) 13.11b- To hide the truth from unbelievers
  - 3.) 13.13 - To fulfill (Isa 6.9-10)
    - a.) This answers hiding the truth from unbelievers
    - b.) If they WOULD NOT believe, then the COULD NOT believe

#### **5. His first set of parables gives seven truths about the Kingdom of Heaven**

- a. 13.1-23 The Sower: The gospel will be rejected by most people
- b. 13.24-43 The Wheat & the Tares:  
People of true faith & false professors of the faith will exist together  
until Christ's 2nd Coming
- c. 13.31-32 The Mustard Seed: The church, containing both believers & professors,  
will grow rapidly
- d. 13.33-35 The Yeast: Professors in God will grow without being stopped
- e. 13.44 The Hidden Treasure: Israel is God's treasured possession,  
Christ came to redeem it
- f. 13.45-46 The Pearl: Christ gave His life to redeem the church
- g. 13.47-52 The Net: Angels will separate the wicked & the righteous at  
Christ's coming

#### **6. These set the foundation of understanding for the disciples**

- a. What is going on
- b. What will continue to go on
- c. What the ending will be = the goals
- d. ==> The reality of God's sovereign plan within which they must operate
- e. **Understanding this is important for disciples today !!**

#### **7. After Jesus learned of the beheading of John the Baptist, He increased His focus on His disciples' training**

- a. Keyed in on specific concerns