

# The Gospel of Matthew: Son of Abraham, Son of David

## SESSION 3: THE BEGINNINGS of JESUS' MINISTRY:

**A: TEACHER - The Sermon on the Mount, Mt 5-7**

**B: HEALER/MIRACLE WORKER -**

**Ministry/Mission in Galilee, Mt 8-9**

**C: DISCIPLESHIP/MISSION - Mt 10**

### OPENING PRAYER/REVIEW of SESSION 2

**A) TEACHER - The Sermon on the Mount, Mt 5-7**

(1) First of 5 MAJOR DISCOURSES: + Chs. 10, 13, 18, 23-25;

(2) 5:1-12 The Beatitudes:

(a) **SETTING:** more like hill, compare Lk 4; Mt has 6 mountain settings!

(b) **CROWDS:** not meant to be exclusive of the 12;

(c) **Beatitude**, Latin, "beatitudo" = blessedness;

(d) **COMPARE BEATITUDES:**

#### MATTHEW

Addressed to **THEM** (3<sup>rd</sup> person plural)

Result stated as **IS**

5:3 **Poor in spirit**/Kingdom of heaven

5:4 **Mourn**/Will be comforted

5:5 Meek/Inherit the land

5:6 **Hunger** and thirst for **righteousness**/Satisfied

5:7 Merciful/Shown mercy

5:8 Clean of heart/See God

5:9 Peacemakers/Children of God

5:10 Persecuted for the sake of righteousness/  
Kingdom of heaven

#### LUKE

Addressed to **YOU** (2<sup>nd</sup> person plural)

Result stated as **WILL BE**

6:20 **Poor**/kingdom of God is yours

6:21b **Now weeping**/Laugh

6:21a **Now hungry**/Satisfied

**FOUR WOES** no match in Mt:

6:24 Rich/Received your consolation;

6:25a Filled now/Be Hungry;

6:25b Laugh now/Grieve and weep;

6:26 All speak well of you/Ancestors treated  
the false prophets the same way;

*not much of a match after this point*

*out of order*

*no match*

*no match*

*no match*

*no match*

*no match*

*match again*

**Addressed to YOU**

5:11 **Insult**, persecute, utter every kind of **evil**  
Against you falsely because of **me**,  
**Reward will be great in heaven;**

*out of order*

6:22 Hate, **insult**, denounce your name as  
evil on account of the **Son of Man**/  
**Reward will be great in heaven;**

- (e) **Blessed**, Grk, "makarios," also means happy, receiving God's favor;
- (f) The poor is literally, beggar, from "ptochos," in Grk;

**(3)5:13-16 Salt and Light:**

- (a) **salt**: to season, preserve, purify, used in covenants, liturgy, etc.
- (b) **light**: to "see" the good works of the disciples;
  - (i) The city on a hill may be a reference to Jerusalem!

**(4)5:17-20 The Law and Righteousness: SIX ANTITHESES (Contrasts)**

- (a) "you have heard/**but I say to you,**" = **Jesus interprets law for its intended purpose** - fulfilling it, and disciples go farther than the law!

**(5)5:21-26 - #1 On Anger:**

- (a) Anger breaks relationships, reconciliation heals, murder not impossible;

**(6)5:27-30 - #2 On Adultery:**

- (a) **Lust** is what may lead to adultery;
- (b) **Hyperbolic** language ("tearing out, cutting off") conveys weight of problem;

**(7)5:31-32 - #3 On Divorce:**

- (a) **In Mt only, divorce is regarded as a form of adultery;**
- (b) "unlawful," from "pornei" = sexual irregularity;

**(8)5:33-37 - #4 On Taking Oaths:**

- (a) Christian disciples are to have transparent relationships - no oaths needed!

**(9)5:38-42 - #5 On Non-retaliation:**

- (a) Urges disciples to avoid escalating violence by practicing non-retaliation;

**(10)5:43-48 - #6 On Love of the Enemy:**

- (a) "miseo," = **loving less than something else;**
- (b) Jesus suggests:
  - (i) "**agape**" **enemies** = godly love vs. "phileo," = fondness or affection;
  - (ii) **praying for persecutors** = fellow Jews who opposed Christians;
  - (iii) **greeting all people**, not just salutation but with well intentions;
- (c) To fulfill the law: **LOVE AS GOD LOVE and ACTS TOWARDS ALL;**
- (d) **Tax collectors** = Gentiles, sinners, harlots = disreputable, suspicious, people;
- (e) To be **PERFECT** is to be complete or mature;

**(11)6:1-18 Almsgiving, prayer and fasting = THREE ACTS of PIETY:**

- **Material unique to Mt.** With **Lord's prayer at the center of this section;**
- As God is gracious, generous and merciful so must disciples be the same with others;
- Emphasis on inner disposition for each of the three practices and on right relationship;

**(a) 6:2-4 - #1 Almsgiving:**

- (i) Giving alms, "elemosyne," = give mercy, without fanfare;
- (ii) **Hypocrite** = an actor performing behind a mask, like Pharisees;

**(b) 6:5-15 - #2 Prayer:**

- (i) Jesus continues to critique **ostentatious** behavior, not prayer;
- (ii) **Prayer = communion with God**, not forcing God or outward signs;
- (iii) "Your Father knows," see **Isa 65:24**;
- (iv) "Tameion," **innermost room in a house**, where one would not be seen;
- (v) **Lord's Prayer** (compare with shorter/more original version in Lk 11:2-4):
  - 1. "OUR," = typically Jewish, communal prayer, oneness of all;
  - 2. FATHER = providence, not exclusive gender metaphor;
  - 3. **THREE PETITIONS concerning GOD = YOU/YOUR:**
  - 4. **THREE PETITIONS concerning HUMAN NEEDS = US/OUR:**

**(c) 6:16-18 - #3 Fasting:**

- (i) avoiding **ostentatious** behavior (gloomy or neglected appearance);

**(12) 6:19-7:12 Ethical Sayings:**

- (a) **Earth treasures** have no permanency and can be stolen;
- (b) **God treasures**, things of value to God, (good works) last forever;
- (c) "Eyeing" the treasures of others = holding, creating inner darkness;
- (d) How does a person split loyalty between two masters?**
- (e) **Mammon**: Aramaic = wealth, money and/or property, s
- (f) "Therefore," indicates the above teaching is applied to the next section:
- (g) **God knows about bodily needs**, cares for all of creation:
  - (i) "birds in the sky," whereas Lk (12:23) has crows or ravens = unclean;
  - (h) "Pagans," from "ethun" referring to non-Jews, heathens, Gentiles;
  - (i) **PRIORITIES**: right relationship with God/what matters to God
  - (j) a good "eye" = personal integrity - then one can correct others;
  - (k) **Dogs** = outside animals; **pigs** = unclean animals;
  - (l) God's loving providence returns in the ASK, SEEK, KNOCK teaching;
  - (m) **Golden Rule** also found in **Lev 19:18, Tob 4:15**, as a summary.

**(13) 7:13-29 Exhortations/Warnings: CONCLUSION of Sermon on the Mount**

- (a) two kinds of people + consequences of those who don't do the will of God;
- (b) **conflicts/tensions** in Matthean community and/or with Jewish rivals;
- (c) **Narrow vs. wide gate**: easy paths offer little merit, lead to destruction;
- (d) **Good vs. rotten fruit/trees**: know (prophets) by their good works;
- (e) **True vs. false disciples**: the one who truly does God's will;
  - (i) "I never knew you," anticipates Peter's denial, 27:72;
- (f) **House on rock/sand**: listening/acting on Jesus' words = solid foundation;
- (g) 5 major discourses end "When Jesus finished these words," **Deut 32:45**.

**B) HEALER/MIRACLE WORKER – Ministry/Mission in Galilee, Mt 8-9**

**(1) 8:1-9:38 Compassionate Healing: Jesus mighty in DEED not just WORD!**

**(2) collection of miracles, mostly healings with a more or less formulaic pattern:**

1. Description of setting
2. Sick person petitions Jesus (there are varying degrees of faith)
3. Sickness details added to emphasize Jesus' great healing power
4. A word of healing/a touch from Jesus
5. Healing is actualized
6. Reaction from others/crowd

(b) A display Jesus' power over illness/nature, but do not result in faith;

**(3) 8:1-4 A Person with Leprosy:**

(a) **Biblical leprosy** = varying degrees of skin blemishing, not Hansen's disease;

**(4) 8:5-13 A Centurion's Servant:**

(a) **centurion** = commanding 100 soldiers);

(b) Jesus heals without touch/from a great distance, indicating his power;

**(5) 8:14-15 Peter's Mother-in-law:** compare with Mk 1:29-30

**(6) 8:16-17 Summary:** Mt characteristically makes reference to scripture.

**(7) 8:18-22 The Rigors of Discipleship:**

(a) Jesus **attracted** those who want to follow him; discipleship is rigorous!

1. **Son of Man, Dan 7:14** = Jesus as a human or Christological title;

**(8) 8:23-27 Stormy Fears: signs of "little faith"**

(a) "**seismos megas**," = great shaking/earthquake, foreshadows death (27:51);

(b) Jesus' powers are even over mighty waters, **ancient symbol of chaos**;

**(9) 8:28-34 Ministry at the Margins: Two Demoniacs**

(a) Correction of Mk (5:1) with miracle in Gadara, not Gerasa;

**(10) 9:1-8 Forgiveness with Healing: The Paralytic**

(a) Jesus crosses back to the Capernaum side of the lake, "**his own town**;"

(b) Compare Mk (2:1-12) **lowering him through the roof of the house**;

(c) There was an ancient belief that **sin and sickness were connected**;

(d) **Blasphemy** = claiming a power only God has: forgiveness of sins;

(e) This healing story emphasizes several points:

(i) Jesus' power continues to grow – **he can read thoughts!**

(ii) **Jesus facing opponents as an adult** – and the conflict will grow!

(iii) Role of **community intercession**;

(iv) **Jesus heals body and spirit**, paralytic to rise (egeirein) (28:6);

**(11) 9:9-13 The Call of MATTHEW:**

(a) Mk's version (2:13-17) has the tax collector named **Levi**;

- (i) Hebrew, "**Mattityahu**" = gift of Yahweh; Grk, Mattheos;
- (b) **Tax collectors** = marginal, disreputable people, therefore sinners because:
  - (i) **collaborators with Rome**, collecting a Roman tax, **disloyal to Israel**;
  - (ii) Mixed too frequently with **Gentiles**;
- (c) Considered **dishonest for charging more than the required taxes**;
- (d) **Table fellowship** indicated intimate association and collaboration;

**(12)9:14-17 Old and New:**

- (a) Jews fasted on the Day of Atonement (**Lev 16:29**) and also for:
  - (i) Penance (**2 Sam 12:13-25, 1 Kgs 21:27**);
  - (ii) Mourning (**2 Sam 1:12, 3:36**)
  - (iii) Divine Revelation (**Dan 10:3**);
- (b) "**Bridegroom**," (**Hos 2:19, Isa 54:3-6, Jer 2:2**), no fasting at weddings!
- (c) "**the time will come**," = his departure/death, appropriate time for fasting;
- (d) **cloth and the wine/wineskins**: Mt adds that the old can be preserved only by means of the new, as in how Jesus newly interprets and fulfills the law, bringing new life to the old – **Mt does not want to let go of the old!**

**(13)9:18-26 Tenacious Faith: The Official's daughter/Hemorrhaging Woman**

- (a) Compare with Mk (5:21-43);
- (b) **Jesus has the power to raise the dead**;
- (c) Mt includes Jewish details: flute players, tassels;
- (d) In Mk, the daughter is near death;
- (e) The faith of each petitioner is central to each story;
- (f) Several details of this story foreshadow Jesus' passion and resurrection:
  1. **Both woman and Jesus bled**, did not cry out and remained faithful;
  2. Both girl and Jesus surrounded by an **unruly crowd** (27:39-44);
  3. The little girl "**arose**," same verb used in Jesus' resurrection;
  4. **News spreads afterwards** (28:6-8);

**(14)9:27-31 Efficacious Faith: Healing of Two Blind Men**

- (a) "**Do you believe that I can do this?**" Good for current readers to ask!
- (b) **Son of David**, returns, as in the genealogy and in reference to Joseph;
- (c) "**See that no one knows about this**," carryover from Mk's (10:46-52)

**(15)9:32-34 Healing and Conflict: Healing of a Mute Person**

- (a) Sickness and sin connected; so also **demonic possession**;
- (b) **Conflict!** Pharisees attribute miracle to "the prince of demons," **Beelzebul**;

**(16)9:25-38 Compassionate Shepherd:**

- (a) Jesus is focused on **ministry among the Jews** ("in their synagogues");

- (b) God as **shepherd** readily familiar to Jews (**Ps 23, 100, Isa 40:11**);
- (c) "**send out laborers**," moves smoothly into the next section on mission;

C)

### **DISCIPLESHIP/MISSION – Mt 10, C pp.59–63**

#### **(1) 10:1–4 Called for Mission:**

- (a) This is the **SECOND** of the **FIVE MAJOR DISCOURSES** in Mt;
- (b) **12 disciples** (12 tribes of Israel) are **given authority** (exousia) to **cast out unclean spirits and to cure illnesses – what Jesus has been doing**;
- (c) Only Mt uses the word, **apostle**, meaning one who is sent;
- (d) Only Mt lists **apostles in pairs**, editing out Mk comments, adding his own:
  - (i) Peter is "**protos**," meaning first; Mt will develop that primacy of Peter;
  - (ii) Matthew is named as a "**telones**," tax collector;
  - (iii) Simon is listed as a **Cananean** – Lk 6:15 lists him as a zelotes or zealot;
  - (iv) Judas Iscariot = from Keriot;
  - (v) Compare Mk: James and John as "**boanerges**," sons of thunder;
- (e) Mt agrees with Mk (3:14–19) but not with Luke 6:12 and Acts 1:13;

#### **(2) 10:5–15 Commissioning: Evangelization the old way!**

- (a) The commissioning instructions include:
  - (i) **WHERE to travel** – to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (unique in Mt) and inclusive of all of Israel, not just one group within Israel;
  - (ii) **HOW to travel:**
    1. No monetary provisions for the money belt (worn under garment);
    2. No sack, which would be to carry food and/or extra clothing;
    3. No second tunic – one is enough!
    4. No sandals (or extra sandals?) Mk 6:9 allows sandals;
    5. No walking stick/staff to ward off wild animals; also in Lk 9:3;
      - a. **TRAVEL LIGHT, reliant on God and the hospitality of others**;
      - b. The good news is **for rich and poor!**
  - (iii) **HOW to approach people on the journey** – look for worthy persons;
  - (iv) **WHAT to say** – as John B and Jesus: the kingdom of heaven is at hand;
  - (v) **WHAT to do:**
    1. **HEAL** the sick, **RAISE** the dead, **CLEANSE** lepers, **CAST OUT** demons – a summary of Jesus' mighty powers, now **SHARED** with the 12;
    2. for the **WORTHY?** Stay and wish peace upon the homes of these;
    3. For the **UNWORTHY?** Let your peace return to you;

- (b) Those who **reject** the disciples/message face **dire consequences!**

#### **(3) 10:16–42 The Cost of Missionary Life:**

- (a) **Foreshadows what Jesus himself will experience** (and not be spared)

- (b) **Division in the family** from religious tensions is ever-present (**Mic 7:6**);
- (c) Endurance until "the end" is **multivalent**:
  - (i) **Martyrdom** of the witness(es)?
  - (ii) The **end of sufferings** as God's reign on earth?
- (d) "you will not finish the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes?"
  - (i) Coming of Son of Man = **death and resurrection of Jesus in history**?
  - (ii) Or like Mt 24-25: Coming of Son of Man as **establishment of the fullness of God's reign on the last days**?
  - (iii) In either case, "finishing the towns of Israel," meaning complete fulfillment of the law in Israel – still unaccomplished?
- (e) **DO NOT FEAR**:
  - (i) Of **proclaiming boldly** (in the light and on housetops)!
  - (ii) **Bodily death**: the soul, psyche, is of greater value than the body;
  - (iii) **DO fear**, or rather, be on guard against:
  - (iv) the one that destroys body and soul in Gehenna (place of final punishment); **ONLY GOD** has the power to destroy body and soul so the idea here is to **FEAR GOD MORE than PEOPLE!** God exercises control over Gehenna;
- (f) "assarion," = Roman copper coin, 1/16 of a denarius = day's wage;
- (g) Sparrows were the meat of the poor – how sad!
- (h) **apostasy**, denying faith for various reasons, such as fear or allurements;
- (i) "**sword**," not a call to warfare but a consequence of accepting the gospel;
- (j) **family divisions** stemming from loyalty to the gospel are identified;
- (k) **Taking up one's cross** = suffering endured for the sake of the gospel;
- (l) For those being received:
  - (i) "**You**," = apostles + **Matthean apostles** and prophets in the community;
  - (ii) "**Righteous ones**" is unclear;
  - (iii) "**Little ones**" = any Matthean community member or **diminutive group** within the community, as the phrase will return in Mt 18:6, 10;
- (m) **No results of the apostles' missionary ventures**, as in Lk 9:10 and 10:17;
- (n) The characteristic closing line of this second discourse will come in 11:1;
- (o) Most important Christological feature (10:40) "**Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.**"

#### CLOSING PRAYER

#### PREPARATION for NEXT SESSION