

Week 4, Day 16

Matthew 22:1-14

Today's Scripture reading is another parable told by Jesus. After reading all the verses, use the space below to write a summary of the parable.

What is your first thought as to the meaning of the parable?

It is important to note where this parable falls in context. The chapter starts with the words, "Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables." This lets us know that it is a continuation of the conversation with the religious leaders we studied last week. Therefore, this parable is the third of three that Jesus told in the temple complex in response to the initial question, "By what authority are You doing these things?" (21:23)

We know that the first guests invited to the banquet or wedding feast were the Israelites. Earlier in our study of Matthew, when Jesus sent the disciples out on mission in chapter 10, He sent them only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." They were, after all, God's chosen people and the ones that He pursued all throughout the Old Testament. He was still pursuing them.

Thinking about the Old Testament and how God desired His people to return to Him when they were in rebellion, who do the slaves represent in this parable?

When the first guests refused the offer to come to the banquet the slaves were given a new set of instructions. They are found in verse 9. What are the new instructions?

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit empowered Peter to preach a powerful sermon. You can find it in Act 2. The sermon was preached to Jews not just from Israel, but from many nations. Peter recounted what had happened to Jesus in Jerusalem but summarized the Gospel message in verse 21. Write Acts 2:21 below:

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples came to realize that the Gospel message was not just for the Jews but for the Gentiles as well. When Jesus said, "For God so loved the world" He meant the whole world. So, back in today's parable, the message went out to the Jews and when they refused it, the *invitation to follow* was sent to everyone else.

The next part of the parable deals with the one who was there but did not have on the right clothes. How must one be clothed or what must one put on according to Galatians 3:27-28 in order to attend the banquet?

We read the words of Jesus regarding those who mistakenly think they are eligible to enter the kingdom of heaven back in Matthew 7:22-23. There will be those that think they have on the right garments and they simply will not. Although there will be those that will not enter into eternity in the presence of God, it really is God's desire that none should perish. (2 Peter 3:9)

That brings us to the final verse in today's Scripture reading. Some people will get caught up on the word *chosen*. We hear debate about Calvinism and election and maybe you have a strong opinion about what you believe in that regard. Bible scholars and theologians certainly have a lot to say and write on the subjects. While Calvinists believe that there is an *elect* determined by God before the foundation of the world, there are those that believe that election is tied to foreknowledge. Consider the following written by theologian Henry Thiessen:

"Election is seen...as that sovereign gracious act of God whereby he chose in Christ for salvation all those whom he foreknew would respond positively to prevenient grace...foreknowledge is not itself causative. There are things which God foreknew because he has purposed to permit them to come to pass, and still other things which he foreknew because he foresees what men will do without causing them to do so. God foreknew what men would do in response to his prevenient grace, and he elected those whom he foresaw would respond positively."¹

Perhaps Charles Ryrie wrote it more simply this way, "God looked down the corridor of time and in His foreknowledge saw who would accept Christ and then elected them to salvation."²

Either way, I am thankful for so great a salvation! It was offered freely to me and to you.

Prayer Primer: Thank God for your salvation offered freely at the expense of His Son, Jesus Christ.

¹Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), 106-7.

²Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986, 1999), 358.

We start today's study with a very strange partnership. This partnership shows the length that Satan went to carry out his desire of having Jesus executed. As the Pharisees plotted to trap Jesus (vs 15) they realized that they needed some help. They reached out to the Herodians. Time will not allow us to fully explore the history of the Herodians; however, we have to at least understand who they were. The Herodians were loyal to the Herod Dynasty. The Herods were descendants from Isaac' son Esau (Genesis 25) and they had come to power in Israel before the Romans took control. The Romans allowed the Herods to maintain their power so long as they were loyal to Rome. The Herodians thought that rule by the Herods was better than direct Roman rule and so they were supportive of Rome because Rome was supportive of the Herods. The Pharisees, of course, hated any form of Roman rule. They could not support Roman rule in any form or fashion. This made the Herodians and the Pharisees the 1st century equivalent of hard-core Democrats and hard-core Republicans in our political system. To see these two groups working together to trap Jesus was a very amazing thing. These 2 groups did not work together on anything; in fact they opposed each other on everything.

I bring all this up to remind us how this alliance came about. Satan will do anything in his attempt to thwart the plan of God. 2000 plus years has done nothing to diminish Satan in that effort. Satan wants to thwart the work of God in your life and there is no limit to what he will attempt to make that happen. Satan will bring about very difficult things in your life in order to thwart the work God desires to do in your life. What have been some hindrances you have experienced in attending and completing this study?

This should remind us of the intense nature of the spiritual warfare that we are engaged in with Satan. In order to refocus our attention on this subject turn to Ephesians 6 and read verses 10-12. Rewrite those verses in your own words (paraphrase them) in the space provided. As you paraphrase the verses underline what you consider to be key words.

Another group that had an adversarial relationship with the Pharisees was the Sadducees. Again, time does not permit us to study all the differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; however we need a working understanding of the conflict. The Pharisees believed in a resurrection. The Sadducees did not. The Bible makes very clear that the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection (Matthew 22:23, Mark 12:18, Luke 20:27). As remarkable as it seems, the Sadducees viewed their position as the more enlightened position. They held to a strict interpretation of the Pentateuch (the first 5 books of the Bible). The Sadducees said that the Pentateuch did not teach a resurrection and so they denied there was one. All the reward a person received, according to the Sadducees teaching, was received in this life. When a person died body and soul died and there was nothing after that. The Chief Priests almost exclusively came from the Sadducees. They were the aristocracy and the most wealthy and powerful members of the Sanhedrin. The Sadducees thought that they had Jesus because they were enlightened and this “common carpenter” would certainly have no answer for their wisdom. They bring a question about the resurrection which was a mockery of Jesus and the Pharisees. What does Jesus tell them in verse 29?

What a great start by Jesus to the question. The question and the answer, however, bring us to a very important discussion. Will we be married in heaven? What does Jesus say in verse 30?

This sometimes makes people sad because they do not understand what will be the relationship in heaven with their spouse. Marriage is designed by God to teach a person about the exclusive relationship we are to have with God. Turn back to Ephesians and read Ephesians 5:22-31. What is the statement made in verse 31?

That verse tells you that verse 22-30 are the “reason a man shall leave his father and mother”. Marriage is the closest thing we have on earth to the kind of exclusive relationship that we are to have with God. As we wrap up today’s study I want you to define several words found in this passage. You can use a dictionary or just use your own working knowledge of the terms to write your definitions:

Submit (vs 22):

Head of the church (vs 23):

To make her whole (vs 26):

Prayer Primer: Today’s study has reminded us that Satan opposes us and God desires an intimate relationship with us. Pray that you will be alert to what Satan will do today to damage your intimacy with God

Yesterday we looked at the relationship between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. In today's passage, the Pharisees have heard that Jesus has "silenced" the Sadducees and realize they have the opportunity to "trap" Jesus. In order to understand the question we have to understand the obsession that the Pharisees had with discussing, debating, and categorizing the Law of Moses. The history of Jewish law records that there are 613 separate laws to obey. They arrived at that number because 613 separate letters are used in the Ten Commandments. There is no apparent connection in the letters and the laws but that was the number they came up with. This is what is termed, "Rabbinical letterism." They then divided their interpretation of the law into two parts: 248 affirmative laws--one for every part of the human body--and 365 negative laws--one for every day of the year. They divided the 613 laws into light laws and heavy laws. The light laws were not as binding as the heavier laws. They knew they couldn't possibly keep all 613 laws, so they were more lenient on some and heavy on others. There was much debate between the Jewish religious leaders on which laws were light and which were heavy. The Pharisees assumed Jesus was a man with a big ego who was trying to establish Himself as the Messiah. In their minds He was sure to set Himself up as the only authority. The Sadducees accepted only the Pentateuch and held Moses as their absolute authority. The Pharisees also held Moses as their supreme authority, but also accepted the entire Old Testament as authoritative. They, like the Sadducees, expected Jesus to supersede Moses.

Jesus of course knows their thoughts and avoids the trap with an amazing response. We must spend some time praying through His response and apply it to our lives.

Jesus said it was not a question of heavy or light laws, but a question of passionate love for the Father. Read Jesus' response in Verse 37. What I am about to ask you to do perhaps the most important thing you will do all week and maybe all year. Jesus said that the most important thing for a person was to love God in three ways. Using any resources you might find as well the teaching you have received over the years, I want you to define all three:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart:

Love the Lord your God with all your soul:

Love the Lord your God with all your mind:

What does Jesus say that will do as a result of our love for Him in John 14:15?

What does Jesus say in John 15:10?

So our love for Him is expressed in our obedience. Our obedience is most clearly demonstrated in how we treat others. What does Jesus say is the 2nd most important command in Matthew 22:39?

How does that play out in a believer's everyday life? In other words, what are some ways we love our neighbor as ourselves in day in day out life?

Prayer Primer: Pray that in each area listed (heart, mind, and soul) your love for the Father will grow.

William Barkley was one of the brightest theologians of the 20th century. He held the position of Professor of New Testament and Hellenistic Greek at Glasgow University. He has authored 30-plus books on the New Testament and the New Testament era. He spent several years living in Jerusalem studying Jewish history. Dr. Barclay has concluded that there were 7 kinds of Pharisees living in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus earthly ministry. I will recite them for you here. I will quote the title that he gave to each, but paraphrase his definition of each.

- 1.) The "*shoulder Pharisee*", so called because he wore his good deeds on his shoulder. He paraded the good that he did.
- 2.) The "*wait a little Pharisee*". This was the Pharisee who could come up with a spiritual reason to put off doing something good. He always had excuses but they sounded very pious.
- 3.) The "*bruised and bleeding Pharisee*" who thought it was a sin to look at a woman and so whenever women were around he bent over and closed his eyes and he kept running into walls. According to the Pharisees, the more bruises you had from walls the more holy you were.
- 4.) The "*humpback tumbling Pharisee*". He wanted to demonstrate his humility so he slouched way over and bent his back and walked around all day in that humble position and thought it was wrong to lift his feet so he shuffled his feet and he kept tripping on things and tumbling.
- 5.) The "*ever reckoning Pharisee*". He was the Pharisee who kept count of all of his good deeds so he would know what God owed him in terms of blessing.
- 6.) The "*fearing Pharisee*" who did all that stuff because he was scared to death of going to hell.
- 7.) The "*God-fearing Pharisee*" who did what he did because he thought it was right to do and he had integrity to some extent. He was the one out of the seven who was a really good guy.

That's the group to whom our Lord speaks in this chapter. The Jewish religious system did not honor God because it had lost the object of its affection, which was God. Jesus pointed out 5 areas in which the Pharisees and the Scribes were lacking in this system.

Jesus said that the Pharisees and Scribes were lacking in Authority. Where does Jesus say the Pharisees sat in verse 2?

That is not a real chair but it is a place of authority. Much like a professor might be the "chair" of a department. But the Pharisees gave themselves the authority, it was not from God. Turn to John 10:1-2. What is the analogy that Jesus gives in this passage as it applies to teaching or leading when you have not been appointed?

Not only did they lack authority, they also lacked integrity. In verse 3 Jesus tells the people very plainly “do as they say and not as they do”. Turn to Romans 7:22. What does Paul tell us should be our reaction to the law of God?

The lack of integrity was that the Pharisees did love the law so they taught it but did not practice that law.

In addition to authority and integrity the Pharisees also lacked spirituality. According to verse 5-7, why did the Pharisees do the things that they did?

God repeats a particular command 4 times in the Old Testament. Read Exodus 13:9; Exodus 13:16; Deuteronomy 6:8; and Deuteronomy 11:18. Why do you think God told the people to tie His Word unto their heads and their hands?

The reason that God did this was to drive home the point that the law of God should guide our thoughts and our actions. The Pharisees did what they did to be seen instead a love for the Word of God.

A final area in which the Pharisees were lacking was humility. Read verses 8-12 of Matthew 23. Give your definition for the words “exalts” and “humbles” as found in verse 11.

There are 7 “woes” given in the rest of the chapter. I have listed the specific verse that contains each “woe”. Read the verse and the verse that are in that “woe” and label each of the woes as a lack of authority, integrity, sympathy, or humility.

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 23

Verse 25

Verse 29

Prayer Primer: Pray that all you think and all you do will be guided by God’s Word.

As we come to Matthew 24 we enter into the realm of eschatology, or the study of the last days. It is important to remember that we need not get caught up in trying to interpret modern events based on these verses. A classic example was the German empire of World War II, more specifically Adolph Hitler. Many, if not most, Baptist preachers in the south took to their pulpits at some point in the mid 1940's and warned that Hitler could be the one. His attempt to conquer all of Europe and thus, reunite the old Roman Empire was a fact many good intentioned preachers noted. But, of course, the most glaring was the persecution of the Jewish people. More churches had billboards during that time than at any other point in history, up to that time. The subject of these billboards: Repent the End Is Near. I give you that information not to bash those preachers; I probably would have been in league with them. I point that out merely to remind us that Matthew 24 and passages like it were not recorded in Scripture to stir up idle speculation. They were written as a reminder of the reality of Christ's coming and as an encouragement to the believer. How did Paul say Christ's returning would unfold in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2?

According to that statement, we certainly are not going to predict when Christ's return will happen. So what do we learn from this passage?

This passage tells us that there are several things that will be happening at the beginning of the birth pains. That means as the world is getting ready to receive Christ the 2nd time. In each passage listed write the event that will be happening with increasing frequency before Christ returns to the earth.

Matthew 24: 5

Matthew 24:6

Matthew 24:7

Matthew 24:7 (a second sign listed)

Matthew 24:9

Matthew 24:10

Matthew 24:11

Matthew 24:12

(Some will point to this sign as a proof that a person can lose their salvation. A true believer can never have their love turn cold. These will be people who appear to love God, but in reality, are not true believers.)

Matthew 24:14

All of these things are happening, to varying degrees as you participate in this day's study. So what does all this mean for us? It means to stay in a state of expectant living. What does being expectant mean?

What was the last thing that you were really expectant about? It could be a positive or a negative.

As we continue in this passage we come to the “abomination that causes desolation”. This event is defined in Daniel 24:7. That verse 3 specific things that the antichrist will do. Identify those 3 things here:

He will make a _____.

He will _____ stop the sacrificing and offerings.

He will offer the abomination in the _____.

When we study Scripture we have to remember the thrust of the passage. The thrust of Matthew 24 is found in verses 36-51.

Verse 42 tells us that we must be _____

Verse 44 tells us that we must be _____

Verse 46 tells us that we are to be _____ when Christ returns. What does that mean you, personally, are to be doing?

Prayer Primer: John said come quickly Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:20). Pray that you would be in a state of readiness.

