

- Last week we looked at some of the things Jesus said He requires of those who follow Him and desire to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and how Jesus said these persons would conduct themselves in the world. Finally, we also studied about how Jesus, through His teaching, showed Himself to be from Heaven and different from those around Him.
- This week we are going to be studying exclusively from several of the Gospel Accounts (remember, when we say “Gospels” we really mean “Gospel accounts” since there is only one Gospel, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whereas last week we studied from the Gospel of Luke and all we looked at was in order in which it happened in that text, this week we will be “jumping around” in the scriptures to “piece together” the chronological events that were unfolding. This week is more about events that happened and Jesus’ teachings than it is about the miracles He performed.
- Christ tells a parable about a persistent widow who is seeking justice against someone. She is seeking a ruling in her favor from a judge who does not fear God or anyone. She has no one to advocate for her, but she gets what she wants because she petitions the judge daily and he finally rules in her favor “lest she beat me down by her continual coming.” Christ says that this is how we should pray to God, day and night, for what we want. (Luke 18:1-8)
- This is what Paul means when he tells the Thessalonians to “pray without ceasing.” (I Thessalonians 5:17) By the way, this is not the shortest verse in the Bible, since it is three words. The shortest is John 11:35.
- Jesus tells a parable about two men who pray – a Pharisee (traditionally viewed well by society) who prays conspicuously and in a bragging way, and a tax collector (traditionally not viewed well by society) who prays in a very humble way. Christ makes the point that the person who exalts himself will not be viewed favorably by God and the person who is humble will be rewarded. (Luke 18:9-14)
- One of the principles that we read through the Bible is that God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. (Psalms 138:6, Proverbs 3:34, Proverbs 29:23, Matthew 23:12, Luke 1:52, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5)
- Remember that Jesus grew up in the region of Galilee and has returned there. But now He is going from the Galilean region down to an area of Judea “beyond the Jordan” river. Here the Pharisees immediately try to trick Him by questioning him about divorce. He tells them that originally God did not approve of it, but that Moses had allowed it because the people wanted it that way. Christ says that adultery is the only permissible reason for divorce, and that sexual urge is the only reason to be married. Otherwise, it is better to remain unmarried. (Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12)
- The apostle Paul also writes about this issue to the Corinthian church when he tells them it is better to abstain from sex altogether but for those who lack the self-control it is “better to marry than to burn with passion.” (I Corinthians 7:8-9)

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- Jesus sees that His disciples are keeping the children away that people have brought, and He calls the children to him and says that the innocence of children is how all people should receive the Kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17)
- A very wealthy man comes to Jesus and asks him “good teacher” what must I do to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven? Christ says that only God should be called good, and confirms with him that he has kept the commandments. Christ tells him to go sell everything and give it to the poor. The man went away very sad since He was wealthy and Christ says that this shows how hard it is for a wealthy person to enter God’s kingdom, but those who do make sacrifices like this will be rewarded. (Matthew 19:16-30, Mark 10:17-31, Luke 18:21-34)
- Jesus tells a parable of laborers in a vineyard. He explains that a man hired three people. One worked all day, one worked half a day, and one worked only a couple of hours. He paid them all a day’s wage, and when the ones who had worked all day complained about not being treated equally, he explained that he gave them exactly what they had negotiated, and it was his choice to pay workers how he wanted to pay them. (Matthew 20:1-16) The analogy here is to a person who comes to Christ late in life versus those who have been in Christ a long time or in midlife. We all get the same reward, and we should all be happy about that.
- Jesus tells his disciples about going to Jerusalem where He will be put on trial, mocked, flogged, spit upon, and will be resurrected after three days. The disciples don’t really understand. (Matthew 20:17-19, Mark 10:32-34, Luke 18:31-34)
- James and John’s mother (Mark says it was them and not their mother) comes to ask if her sons can be seated by Christ’s side in heaven. The other ten apostles are not happy about this request. Christ tells them it is not His to grant but God’s, and makes a point of saying that the point of life in the Kingdom is service, not ambition. (Matthew 20:20-28, Mark 10:35-45)
- Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem for the Passover. As He approaches, two blind men, one named Bartimaeus, hail Christ as Lord and ask to be healed. In pity, He does. They and the crowd around them rejoice and praise God. It is worth noting that this is one of those incidents where we get details from various Gospel accounts. (Matthew 20:29-34, Mark 10:46-52, Luke 18:35-43)
- As Jesus goes through Jericho, a short man named Zacchaeus (who was a tax collector) climbed up a tree to get a better view of Christ. Christ told him to come down because He wanted to dine at his house. When people grumbled about the fact that Christ was dining with someone who the world had such a low opinion of (tax collectors in that day were known for becoming wealthy by “skimming off the top”), Christ noted that he was just as important as any of them and Christ’s mission was to “seek and save the lost.” It is also worth noting that Zacchaeus makes a point of telling Christ that he is honest, giving half of his wages to the poor and paying people back four times the amount if he finds that he defrauded them. The point of that is that people’s perception is not always based on reality – people were generalizing about him based on his occupation and they turned out to be wrong in his case. (Luke 19:1-10)

- Christ tells the Parable of the Ten Minas. A mina was about three months' worth of wages. A nobleman went away and gave one servant 10 minas, one servant 5 minas, and one servant 1 mina. While he was gone, the people rejected his rule and so he had to return. The one with 10 invested it and doubled it. The one with 5 minas invested it and got 5 minas. The one with 1 mina hid it away because he was afraid to lose it. The one with 10 minas got 10 cities to look after. The one with 5 minas got 5 cities to look after. The one with 1 mina had it taken away and given to the one with 10. The nobleman says simply that to everyone who has, more will be given to him, and to those who have very little, even that will be taken away. He also says that his enemies (presumably those who rejected his kingship) should be executed. (Luke 18:1-27) In telling this parable, Christ is making the point that He will be rejected and that ultimately those who oppose Him will die – further He expects us to be diligent and not fearful in our work for His Kingdom. (Luke 19:11-27)
- Still on his way to Jerusalem, Christ next comes to a town called Bethany. In a house there, a woman anointed Christ with some very expensive oil. The apostles were not happy about what they perceived to be wastefulness, saying instead it could have been sold and the money given to the poor. Christ said that the poor will always be with them (meaning they will always have people to help), but He won't. (Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9)
- When Jesus approaches Jerusalem, He sends two apostles in town to find a donkey for him to ride into town and when they are asked, to respond that the Lord needs it and will return it. As He rides into Jerusalem, people are placing their coats and branches from trees (probably Palm fronds) in the road and shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David" "Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord" and "Hosanna in the Highest." Those who don't know who He is yet are told by the crowd "This the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." The Pharisees tell Christ to tell the crowd to be quiet but He just tells that that if he did, the rocks would do the job for them. (Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:28-40).
- This incident, known as the Triumphal Entry, is notable for two reasons. First, we get a little more detail from each Gospel account here. Second, it fulfills a lot of very specific prophecies. (Zechariah 9:9, Isaiah 62:11)
- Christ lodges on the outskirts of Jerusalem. On the road in, there is fig tree (as we have talked about before, a common symbol of the Jewish nation). Christ is hungry and even though it is not the season for figs, the tree looks like it is in bloom and probably producing fruit. When Christ gets to it, there is no fruit there, so He curses it. Later He goes into the temple in Jerusalem and finds people price gouging for animal sacrifices in the temple itself. This makes Christ very angry, He even says they have made the house of prayer into a den of robbers. He turns over their tables and makes sure they aren't doing that anymore. The people marvel at his teachings, which further enrages the Pharisees. Later that day as Christ and his apostles are going back to where they are staying, they see that the fig tree has withered. Christ explains that if you want something and ask in faith it will

20171203

Like Little Children and A Hollow Jerusalem

Matthew 19-21; 26:6-13 Mark 10-11:25; 14:3-9 Luke 18-19; 21:29-38

p 4 of 4

happen and to make sure to ask with a spirit of forgiveness. (Matthew 21:12-13; 18-22, Mark 11:12-25, Luke 19:45-48, 21:29-38)

- The reason these incidents are connected is that the fig tree, like the Jewish nation, looked like it has good fruit from afar off. But inside, it was not bearing fruit, just like Jesus found the people doing business in the temple. Things looked like they were in good shape there, but on the inside, they really weren't. Just like the expression goes: "you can't judge a book by its cover."

#### Questions:

1. What is the Parable of the Persistent Widow and what does it mean?
2. What does "pray without ceasing" mean? Is this the Bible's shortest verse?
3. Why does Christ tell the parable about the two men who pray? What point is He making?
4. What is one of the most frequent principles we read in the Bible?
5. What does Christ teach about marriage and divorce?
6. What does "better to marry than to burn" mean?
7. How does Jesus say that children illustrate how we are to receive the Kingdom of Heaven?
8. What is the Parable of the Laborers in the vineyard and what does it mean?
9. What specific things does Christ predict about his last days? Do the disciples understand it?
10. What does the mother of James and John want? How does Jesus respond?
11. What is the name of one of the two blind men Jesus heals near Jericho?
12. What happens when Jesus heals the blind men near Jericho?
13. What is notable about the incident where Jesus heals the blind men near Jericho?
14. How does Christ respond to those who tell Him he shouldn't be dining with Zacchaeus?
15. What does Zacchaeus say to Christ about his honesty and what can we learn from that?
16. What is the Parable of the Minas and what does it mean?
17. What do the apostles say about the woman who anointed Christ at Bethany? How does Christ respond?
18. Describe the events that happen when Christ enters Jerusalem.
19. What is the event when Christ enters Jerusalem known as? Why is it notable?
20. What happens when Jesus finds no fruit on a fig tree that looks like it has fruit?
21. Why does Jesus say He is opposed to those who are doing business in the temple?
22. What does Christ say when they find the fig tree withered later that day?
23. How are the incidents with the fig tree and the people doing business in the temple connected?

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