

(Through the Bible) Matthew 20-22

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon explores the themes of grace, servanthood, and the significance of Jesus' suffering as taught in Matthew 20-22.

Duration: 1:32:29

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1-2, Matthew 20:1-16, Matthew 21:1-3, Matthew 21:19-21, Matthew 22:14, Matthew 23:37-39

Topics: "Parables Of Jesus", "Gods Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses two parables from the Bible. The first parable is about workers in a vineyard, where the speaker emphasizes that it is never too late to turn to God and receive eternal life. The second parable is about a householder who sends servants to collect fruit from his vineyard, but they are mistreated and killed. Finally, the householder sends his son, who is also killed. The speaker explains that this parable teaches that those who reject God's messengers will face judgment, and the vineyard will be given to others who will produce fruit. The sermon also briefly mentions the signs of Jesus' second coming and the judgment of the nations.

Transcript

Shall we turn to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 20, and continue our book-by-book study through the Word of God. Matthew, chapter 20, opens with the parable of the laborers going out into the vineyard. Jesus said, For the kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard.

And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. Now, a penny was a denarius, and it was just a day's wage, the average day's wage. So, translated into our present day, an average day's wage for a laborer, maybe \$25 or so.

And he went out about the third hour. He started out at six o'clock in the morning and hired these men who were standing in the marketplace to go out and work in his vineyard. About the third hour, nine o'clock in the morning, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said unto them, Go into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you.

And they went their way. Again, he went out about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, noon and three in the afternoon. He did likewise.

And about the eleventh hour, five in the evening, he went out and found others standing idle and saith unto them, Why do you stand here idle all day? And they said unto him, Because no man has hired us. He said unto them, Go also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall you receive. So when the even was come, and the Lord of the vineyard said unto his steward, Call the laborers and give them their hire, beginning from the last into the first.

When they came, they that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man the denarius, or the penny. But when he came to the first, they supposed that they should have received more, but they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and you've made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden of the heat of the day.

But he answered and said to them, Friend, I do thee no wrong. Did you not agree to work for a penny? Take that which is yours and go your way, and I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with what is my own? Is not your eye evil because I am good? So the last shall be first and the first shall be last, for many are called.

But few are chosen now. If you go back to the last verse of the previous chapter, you find this state same statement meant they that are first shall be last and they that are last shall be first. And then he repeats this again.

So this seems to be the words that couch this particular parable. Going back just a little bit further, Jesus, Peter had said to Jesus, Lord, we have left all to follow thee. And Jesus tells him that, look, no one's left anything.

But what in this life you'll get a hundredfold in a life to come eternal life. Now, what is Jesus seeking to teach by this parable of sending forth the laborers into the vineyard? Basically, what he is teaching is that as we serve the Lord in his vineyard, that what really counts is the fact that the Lord sent me. Notice these people didn't go in on their own accord.

The Lord sent them into the vineyard and because they were sent of God, they each one received from the Lord that same portion. Sometimes we see people who on their deathbed receive Jesus Christ as their savior. And they enter in to eternal life.

And we have served the Lord all of our lives. And we enter in to eternal life. It's God's to give, however, to whomever he pleases.

And if those who in the last moment come into the kingdom of God, God rewards them and they receive the reward for their place in the kingdom. Unfortunately, they have missed the blessing of knowing God and serving God all their lives. They miss the joy of what it is to serve the Lord.

But I do believe that in this parable, he is teaching that a person at the end of the road can turn in the eleventh hour and come to God and receive a share of the kingdom, equal share as far as eternal life is concerned. Another thing that it teaches, I believe, is that we all will be rewarded for our faithfulness in our service to God. If I'm faithful for an hour, if I'm faithful for twelve hours, it is my faithfulness to the service to which the Lord has sent me.

Now, a lot of times we think that men like Billy Graham will surely receive the greatest rewards in heaven because look at the tremendous fruit of his ministry. But I am convinced that there are others who will

receive either as great or even greater honor than did Billy Graham or then will Billy Graham, who you have never heard of. You've never known them.

They never did make front page or even back page. But yet, people who have been faithful to that service to which God has employed them, whether it be intercessory closet prayer that nobody knows anything about. And I think when we get to heaven, we're going to be surprised when we see those that are sitting on the front row.

Where did they come from? Never heard of them before. And yet, the true faithful saints of God who have been obedient to the bidding of the Lord to go into the vineyard. And no matter what place, what time, it is their faithfulness to the call of God in going for which God makes the reward.

In fact, I do believe that many times those who have been called to a more prominent ministry will actually receive a much lesser reward because we get so much reward now. There is such tremendous reward just in being able to minister to people the feedback that comes from it. It is so rewarding.

And yet, the Lord says, we'll get the penny. And so, that's good enough for me. Now, the Lord does here point out, look, if I want to be good, if I want to extend grace, you shouldn't really complain about the grace that I extend.

What is mine is mine to do with as I please. And so, they were actually thinking evil because of his good. Then Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way and he said unto them.

Now, he's on the way, there's probably great multitudes, but he takes the twelve apart. He said, behold, we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes and they shall condemn him to death and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify him and the third day he shall rise again. Now, this is their final trip to Jerusalem.

When they get to Jerusalem, those culminating events of the life of Jesus are going to take place. He's been with them now for almost three years and he feels it necessary to draw them now into that more intimate fellowship of his suffering as he has set his face to go to Jerusalem, knowing exactly what awaits him there. And he prophesies so accurately the things.

First of all, he's going to be betrayed. Judas, one of the twelve who is listening to him, will be the one who betrays him. He is first of all betrayed by Judas to the chief priest because Judas made a bargain with the priest to turn Jesus over to them.

But they in turn will deliver him to the Gentiles, who will first of all mock him. They put upon him a scarlet robe and they began to say unto him, hail king of the Jews and they mocked him and then Pilate delivered him unto them to be scourged. Jesus said, they will scourge me.

I am certain that there is much about the scourging of Jesus that we do not fully understand. It is not an accident that Jesus was scourged. He here is predicting the fact that he is going to be scourged.

The scourging was an extremely painful experience. The prisoner would be tied to a post in such a way as your back would be stretched and then they would take a leather whip with little bits of lead and glass embedded in it and they would lay this leather whip across the back and it was so designed to when they pulled it back up to rip up pieces of flesh. The purpose of the scourging was the third degree Roman style.

The idea was you were to confess the crimes that you had committed against Rome and as you confessed your crimes, the man who was administering that scourging would go easier and easier on you. But if you were silent and refused to confess your crimes, then each time he would lay the whip on heavier and heavier until you would be forced to cry out your crime against the Roman government. Herein is where the prophecy of Isaiah, of course, really stands out.

As a sheep before her shears is dumb, so he opened not his mouth, which means that each lash that was laid upon him was laid with greater ferocity as they were seeking to elicit from him some confession of wrong. But he had done no wrong. Isaiah prophesied the fact that he would be scourged.

But in prophesying the fact, Isaiah tells us the reason. Now, do you think that God the Father would allow his son to suffer unnecessarily? If you do, you have a different concept of God than I do. I do not believe that God would just allow his son to take all of that suffering if there were not some value to be received from that suffering.

And thus, as Isaiah predicts the scourging, the stripes, he declares by his stripes, ye are healed. In the eighth chapter of Matthew, as it tells of them bringing all of their sick and those that were diseased to Jesus, and he healed them, everyone, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying, he in his own body bore our sufferings. And Peter, quoting Isaiah, looking back at that scourging, said by his stripes, ye were, past tense, healed.

Now, Paul the apostle, as he is talking to the Corinthian church about their abuse of the love feast, where they were remembering the broken body of Jesus and his blood that was shed for our sins. Paul said, that which I received from the Lord I delivered also unto you, that the same night in which Jesus was betrayed, he took bread and when he had broken it he said, take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you. And after the supper he took the cup likewise and said, this cup is a new covenant in my blood which is shed for the remission of sins and as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death until he comes.

And then Paul warned the Corinthians about the manner in which they did partake of the Lord's supper. Warning them against that casual, careless attitude in which many of them were receiving it. Warning those who were using this love feast as an excuse just to sort of gorge themselves and they were not really realizing the spiritual significance of these things.

And he said, if a person eats or drinks in an unworthy manner, he is eating and drinking damnation to his own soul. And then he said interesting things. For this cause there are many who are weak and sick among you because they do not understand the Lord's body.

Now, what did Jesus mean when he broke the bread and said, this is my body broken for you. He is talking about no doubt the scourging that he was going to receive because it could not be that any of his bones should be broken. First of all, because the sacrifice that was offered to God could not have any blemish, any broken bones.

Secondly, the prophecy of Psalm declared not a bone of him shall be broken. Therefore, he could not have any broken bones. Therefore, when he said, this is my body broken for you, he could not refer to some bones being broken.

But his body was broken open by this scourging that he received. Now, according to the historians, this scourging was such an awful taxing thing upon the person that many people never made it to the cross. There were many who died right there as a result of the scourging itself.

Many of them bled to death. But Jesus was no doubt very weakened by it. For they needed someone to help him bear the cross.

That scourging was for you, that by his stripes you may be healed. Now, Paul said, if you understand this, when you partake of the broken bread, you can receive from God a work of his spirit in your body. Now, many who do not understand this are weak and sick because they do not understand the Lord's body.

They don't understand all of the provision that the Lord has made for them. By his stripes you are healed. Spiritually, yes.

But I do not think that it can be limited to spiritual only the whole context. And especially Matthew 8 would extend it also to physical healing. And I believe that we can believe and trust Jesus Christ for physical healing as well as spiritual healing.

And I do believe that in communion they should always be healing services where people, as they take the broken bread and remember the suffering of Jesus Christ, by faith receive the result of that suffering, the purpose for which God allowed him to be suffered and receive healing and strength in your body. How many times during communion has God touched me physically and ministered to me physically as I received that work of Christ for my own physical need. So, Jesus predicts his crucifixion, finally, and then rising again.

So, he's telling the disciples this was going to happen. We're going to Jerusalem. I'm going to be betrayed.

I'll be turned over to the chief priests. They in turn will give me to the Gentiles, the Romans, that they might mock me, scourge me, and crucify me. But I will rise again on the third day.

Now, again, whenever Jesus talked to his disciples about his death, this thought was so repulsive to them, their minds just turned off and they never heard, I'm going to rise again the third day. Just the idea of him being crucified was so shocking that their minds in trying to absorb that lost everything else he said after that. And so, they didn't really remember that he said he was going to rise the third day until after the resurrection.

Then they remember, oh yeah, he said he was going to rise the third day. Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children. Now, James and John were the sons of Zebedee.

And she came to him with her sons. So, little old Jewish mama coming to Jesus with her two sons. And every Jewish mother wants the best for her son.

They're beautiful people. I love that family strength among them. And she came worshiping him and desiring a favor from him.

And he said unto her, what is it that you want? And she said unto him, grant that these my two boys may sit the one on your right hand and the other on your left in your kingdom. You have to love the mothers, don't you? But Jesus answered and said, you don't know what you're asking. Are you able to drink of the cup that I shall drink and be baptized with the baptism that I am going to be baptized with? And they said

unto him, we're able.

Now, notice the mother is the one doing the speaking, but the boys are right there and they're behind her. And who knows, but what they may have put her up to it. Because when Jesus asked the question, they're ready to respond.

You betcha, we're able. Jesus, of course, was talking about his crucifixion and his death. His being despised and rejected.

Drinking of that cup. And he said unto them, you shall indeed drink of my cup. We read in the book of Acts that Herod stretched forth his hands against the church and had James beheaded.

That's one of the two. You shall indeed drink of my cup and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with. But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give.

But it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my father. And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brothers. But Jesus called them unto him and he said, you know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them.

And they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you. But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister or servant.

And whosoever will be the chief among you, let him be the bondslayer. Jesus here is teaching the servanthood of the ministry and the path to greatness. It is tragic that we have gotten so far away from the concepts that Jesus taught.

It is tragic that we have a professional ministry that so often seeks people to cater to it rather than to realize that they are the servants of all. Jesus said that among the Gentiles there is this desire to exercise lordship and dominion over people. It is tragic that in church circles there is also that endeavor many times to exercise lordship and dominion over people.

One of the weird doctrines of the seventies was the shepherding doctrine where so many men sought to establish themselves as the lords over the flock of God and causing people to submit to their authority. To where they exercise such dominion and authority and lordship over people that they inserted themselves between the people and God. Rather than seeking God as to whether or not you should buy a new car, you had to seek your elder or your shepherd.

And it really was a heavy bondage trip and so anti what Jesus has declared. If you really want to be great in the kingdom of God, learn to be the servant of all. He that would be great among you, let him be your servant.

And if you want to be chief, then become the bond slave. And that's exactly of course what the word minister means, servant. It doesn't mean someone who is to be looked up to and someone who is to be catered to and someone that's to be bowed to and all of this kind of stuff and do special favors because he's the minister.

To take on the position of the minister is to take on the position of the servant to the flock of God. And I pray to God that we will never lose this concept of the ministry that we are the servant of all. It is so important that we maintain.

Because Jesus said, I didn't come to be ministered to, but to minister and to give my life as a ransom for many. He didn't come that people might cater to him and minister to him. He came to minister to the people's needs.

And as they departed from Jericho, they're on their way to Jerusalem. They've come down the Jordan Valley. They've come to Jericho.

And now as they depart from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And behold, there were two blind men who were sitting by the wayside. And when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out saying, Have mercy upon us, O Lord, thou son of David.

And the multitude rebuked them because they should hold their peace. But they cried out all the more saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. And Jesus stood still.

And he called them and said, What do you want me to do for you? And they said unto him, Lord, we want our eyes opened. So Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight and they followed him.

Now we see Jesus leaving Jericho. A great multitude of people thronging around him. And these two blind men hearing the multitude passing by and observing all of the bustle and activity said, What's going on? What's happening? And someone said, Jesus is going by.

Now they no doubt had heard of the fame of Jesus. I'm certain that everyone who was afflicted had heard of the fame of Jesus. They had heard of the miracles that he had wrought up in the area of the Galilee, around Capernaum.

And to these men who were blind, they saw this as their one opportunity for a whole new life. And so they began to cry out to Jesus. They couldn't see him.

They could probably tell the direction and the flow of the crowd, which direction he was. But they began to cry out to Jesus. And the multitude around them said, Shut up.

Hold your peace. Tried to discourage them from seeking Jesus. But they were so desperate.

They weren't discouraged. They even cried louder. Jesus, our son of David, have mercy on us.

And Jesus heard their cry and stood still. He said, Call those fellows to me. And they no doubt led these two blind men to Jesus.

And as they stood there with those clouds over their eyes, Jesus said, What do you want? They said, Lord, if we could just see. And he had compassion upon them and healed them. And they joined the crowd following him on up to Jerusalem.

Remember, at this point, the heart of Jesus is very heavy because he knows that he soon is going to be betrayed, mocked, scourged, crucified. And yet he takes time still to minister to the needs of others. He was never too busy to minister to individual needs.

When a person's ministry gets so great and they become so prominent that they lose touch with people and they can no longer minister to people's individual needs, their ministry has become greater than their Lord's. When it gets to where I have to sneak in the back door at the last minute and sneak out before

things are over, then I need to find something else to do. When you can no longer take time to minister to individuals.

Now, these men, of course, do give to us a very beautiful picture of people who are blind in sin. And there is the spiritualizing of the text. Crying out for Jesus.

And everybody will always try and discourage you, but persist, for there's a whole new life. Now, when they drew near to Jerusalem, they were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives. And then Jesus sent two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and immediately you're going to find an ass tied and a colt with her.

Loose them and bring them unto me. And if any man say unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them, and immediately he will send them. Now all of this was done that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, behold, your king cometh unto thee, meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the full of an ass.

And the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass and the colt, and put their clothes, and they set him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut down branches from the trees, and placed them in the path. And the multitudes that went before and that followed cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. And when he was coming to Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

The triumphant entry of Jesus on what is traditionally known as Palm Sunday. So we are moving into the final week. For it is during this week that Jesus will be betrayed, scourged, crucified.

Luke gives us a fuller account of this particular day, and in as much as we'll be moving through to Luke, we will save much of the comments on the triumphant entry of Christ until we get to Luke's gospel. I would like to point out that the disciples, the multitudes that are crying after Jesus, are actually crying forth a messianic psalm. Psalm 118, where David, there in prophecy concerning the Messiah, talks about the stone that would be set of not by the builders, but the same becoming the chief cornerstone.

This is the work of God. It's marvelous in our eyes. And then he declares, This is the day that the Lord hath made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it. What day? The day that God has made for man's deliverance. The day that God has set for the Messiah to come.

This is that day. And then as you go into verse 25 of Psalm 118, The Hebrew is Hosanna. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord.

O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. We have blessed thee out of the house of the Lord.

So they are crying out this save now from the Psalm 118. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Save now in the highest.

And they're crying for the Messiah to save. An appropriate cry. It's an appropriate psalm for the occasion.

This is the day that God had ordained to bring the kingdom of God to man. And Jesus went into the temple of God. And he cast out all of them that sold and bought in the temple.

And he overthrew the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold doves. And he said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves. He cast all of the merchandisers out of the temple grounds.

Now, these merchandisers were crooked. The money changers were there to exchange the Roman currency into the temple shekels because you could not give Roman currency to God. They had a tradition against that.

The only offering that you could give to God would be the temple shekel. So, these money changers were conveniently there in the temple to change your Roman currency for the temple shekel. The only thing is that they were gouging the people.

The people, knowing that they had to have the temple shekel, these men were charging them exorbitant prices for the temple shekel. And thus, they themselves were raking off a part of the profit which they split with the priest with whom they were in cahoots. Also, out on the street, you could buy a dove for just a few cents, really.

They were about 25 cents for a dove out on the street. But these who were selling doves in the temple precincts had the seal, the priest's seal on the dove. And they were going for five bucks apiece because they were kosher.

They had been approved by the priest. So, if you bought one out on the street because you could not offer to God anything that was blemished if it didn't have the little seal on it when you brought it to the priest, he would look carefully over it until he would find some blemish and say, I can't, you know, offer this to God, take it, you know. And he had this thing going, a kickback.

You know, you got the seal, you got the little imprint. Yeah, this one's fine. You know, you paid the five bucks for it.

We'll offer this one. Men who designed to make profit off of the desire of people to worship God. Those who would profit off of religion.

Those who designed schemes by which they might profit off of the people's desire to worship God. And Jesus was upset with this. He said, you've made my father's house a den of thieves.

He drove them out. The Bible said, my father's house shall be a house of prayer. You've changed it.

You've perverted it. You've made it a den of thieves. And then, once it was cleansed of this merchandising, we see the temple as God intended it to be.

And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple and He healed them. Where people really began to experience the work of God in their lives. That's what the temple was intended.

For people to come and receive God's work in their lives. Not to be bothered by a lot of hucksters calling out their wares and making it a big marketplace. Merchandise, rip-offs.

But a place where people can come and receive the touch of God upon their lives. And it was fulfilled as the blind and the lame came to Him and He healed them. Now when the chief priest and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children were crying in the temple saying, Hosanna to the son of David.

They were very displeased. And they said unto Him, Do you hear what they are saying? And Jesus said unto them, of course, Have you never read out of the mouth of babes and sucklings? Thou hast perfected praise. And He left them and went out of the city to Bethany and He stayed there.

Jesus did not spend His time in Jerusalem during this last week, but spent it there in Bethany and came into Jerusalem each day. But here to me it is so beautiful. The children who were always attracted to Jesus crying out, Hosanna.

And as the scribes and Pharisees would get upset with this, Jesus just quoted in the Psalms, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God's perfected praise. Now in the morning as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it and He found nothing thereon but leaves only.

And He said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward, forever. And immediately the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marveled saying, Did you see how quick that fig tree withered away? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Barely I say unto you, If you shall have faith and doubt not, You shall not only say to this which is done to the fig tree, But also if you shall say unto the mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done.

And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, Believing you shall receive. Very broad promise for prayer. You must note that it was made to the disciples.

And what constitutes discipleship? Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me. Prayer is never to be used for our own lust or desires to enrich ourselves. James said you ask and receive not, Because you ask amiss that you might consume it upon your own lust.

The purpose of prayer isn't really to get my will done. The purpose of prayer is to get God's will done. And that person who is a disciple, The person who has denied himself to take up his cross to follow Jesus Christ, Is more concerned in God's will than it is his own will.

And that man has power in prayer. And this promise is for that man. It's not a general promise to anybody.

Whatsoever things you desire, you know, Do you desire a new Cadillac or whatever, you know, just whatever. Maybe you want a Mercedes, just, you know, all things, whatever. No, it isn't, it isn't a broad promise to just fulfill Any whim or wish or fleshly desire that you have.

This promise is made to those men who have denied self, The self-lying and taken up their cross to follow Jesus. Now, this parable of the fig tree, It's the first time Jesus used his power in judgment. Up until now, he's always used his power to bless, to help, to heal.

First time it's used in judgment. It is interesting when Jesus was quoting the prophecy of Isaiah concerning himself When he was in the synagogue in Nazareth. The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, To mend the brokenhearted, To set the captive at liberty, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

And then he closed the book. He stopped, closed the book and didn't go any further. The rest of that prophecy, The next phrase is, And to declare the day of the judgment of our God.

But that was not yet. That would come. But this is the first time Jesus used his miraculous powers in judgment.

And it sort of surprised the disciples, Not that he cursed the fig tree, But how quickly the curse was fulfilled. It withered so rapidly. Now, if there were leaves on the tree, Now you say, well, it was April, the time of the Passover.

It's too early for figs. It isn't fair that he would curse the fig tree for not have any figs in April. Over there in Israel, Certain of the fig trees have what they call the first ripe fruit.

When we are there and we usually go in February, You will see large figs. Usually there are no leaves. These figs come out first.

They're called the first ripe figs. And even by late February, early March, These figs are quite well developed. And it is actually not until April or so, Or the latter middle of March, Where the leaves really begin to come out on the fig trees.

But if you'll notice a fig tree, The figs always come out before the leaves. So if there were leaves on the tree, There should have been some of these first ripe figs. And of course, there would have been the forming new little figs of the regular fig crop.

There were no figs, only leaves. It was not fulfilling the purpose for which God has created a fig tree. It wasn't bringing forth fruit.

And thus, it was cursed. Now, the nation of Israel, In the Bible, has been typified as a fig tree. In Jeremiah chapter 23, God speaks of the basket of good and evil figs.

And he likens it unto the nation of Israel. The basket of evil figs, So evil they could not be eaten, were to be cast out. In Joel and in Hosea, Also, there is that figure of the fig tree for the nation of Israel.

And this, no doubt, is symbolic as well as actual, But the symbolism was of the nation Israel failing to bring forth fruit for the master, Was to be cursed, withered. And that, of course, is exactly what did happen so quickly after the death of Jesus. Their rejection of Him.

So quickly, the nation withered and died. Now, when He was come to the temple, The chief priests and the elders of the people came unto Him, As He was teaching, and they said, By what authority do you do these things? And hey, who gave you the authority? You see, He was coming now the next day. The day before, He had gotten rid of all of the money changers And those that were selling doves and all.

And so now, the chief priests and all are challenging Him. By what authority? And who gave you the authority to do these things? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I'll ask you one thing, Which if you tell me, I will likewise tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? Was it from heaven or men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we will say from heaven, then He will say unto us, Why didn't you believe Him? But if we say of men, We fear the people, for they all believe that John was a prophet.

And they answered Jesus and said, We cannot tell. And He said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John.

The people counted John as a prophet. But John was not the light, But he was sent to bear witness of the light. That was the true light, That lighteth every man that cometh in the world.

And John said, This is He. And He pointed to Christ. Now, if they accepted the authority of John, Then they would have to also accept that of Jesus.

If they would accept that John's authority was from heaven, Because John bore witness of Jesus and said, Behold the Lamb of God, Which takes away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I speak, Who came before me, Because He was preferred before me. And I'm not worthy to untie His shoes.

John's witness of Christ. If they accepted that His authority was from heaven, Then they would have to, Then they would find the place where Jesus had His authority. John bore witness of Jesus.

So in asking them, of course, They were in a impossible position, Because they had rejected John. And yet the people, the popular opinion, Was that John was indeed a prophet. So they were stuck.

Now Jesus said, What do you think? And this whole question of authority, And John, and so forth, Is in this next part here. He's now going to give two parables. And He's asking them in the parable To give Him the answer.

He's creating a situation. He says, now what's right? And He's letting them answer it. And it's not until they've answered the two That suddenly, wow, they realize, Hey, that was us.

He got us, you know. He was directing that at us. What do you think? There was a certain man who had two sons.

And he came to the first and he said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not. But afterward he repented and went.

And he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered him and said, I go, sir. But he did not.

Now whether of the two did the will of the father? They said unto him, the first. Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and harlots Will go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you In the way of righteousness.

He's coming back to John. And you believed him not. But the publicans and the harlots believed him.

And you, when you had seen it, Did not afterward repent That you might believe him. Now, the parable, of course, Is directed against them. The publicans and the harlots Were the son who said no To the kingdom of God.

They were the ones who were living in sin And had turned their backs upon God. But they were the ones Who later repented And went out And served. Whereas the Pharisees Are those who rendered to God Lip service.

Oh, I'll go. Yes, sir. And they rendered to God Only lip service But did not really serve God.

Only lip service. And so, which one really does the will of God? The one that repents and goes? Or the one who just says he will go but doesn't? God doesn't really count lip service. The Bible says To rend your heart Not your garments unto the Lord.

There's a lot of outward religion. God's interested in your heart. A lot of people go through Outward motions of religion.

The rending of their garments The tearing of their garments Was a sign of tremendous emotional Feelings and all That a person may have. Rip my clothes, you know. Oh, I'm moved with emotion.

God said, look, I don't want your emotional outbursts. I want your heart. I want really to be a matter of the changed life That comes from the heart.

Not just an outward observance. Not just an outward show. Not an outward form.

I want it to be done in the heart. So, when they answered him You know, the one who went out Jesus said, yes. And the publicans and harlots Are going to go into the kingdom of God Before you do.

He's easy on them right now. When we get to chapter 23 He's going to really lay them low. He's building up to it.

And then he points back to John How that the publicans and harlots Went out and repented and were baptized. But how they Even after they sought And realized Would not even afterward repent. Now, here another parable.

I'm going to hit him again. There was a certain householder Which planted a vineyard and hedged it. Now, he's referring to the parable Of the vineyard in Isaiah 5 Which they all knew so very well.

The minute he announces this Vineyard which was hedged And the wine press and all This is exactly what Isaiah describes Of the nation of Israel. How God planted the vineyard And he came at the time to gather the fruit And all there was was wild grapes. And how he just let the vineyard go.

And they knew That this vineyard was representative Of the nation Israel. Now, another parable. This householder which planted a vineyard Hedged it round about Dug a wine press in it Built a tower And let it out to husbandmen And went to a far country.

And when the time of the fruit drew near He sent his servants to the husbandmen That they might receive the fruit of it. And the husbandmen took his servants And beat one And killed another And stoned another. Again, he sent other servants More than the first And they did unto them likewise.

But last of all He sent unto them his son Saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son They said among themselves, This is the heir. Come, let's kill him.

And we will seize the inheritance. And they caught him And cast him out of the vineyard And slew him. Now when the Lord, therefore, of the vineyard comes What will he do to those husbandmen? And they said unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men And let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen Which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

They again trapped themselves. For Jesus said, Did you never read in the Scriptures The stone which the builders rejected? Now he's taking them back actually to the Hosanna. Blessed is he who comes in the

name of the Lord.

Same psalm. The same has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing.

It's marvelous in our eyes. Therefore, I say unto you, The kingdom of God, And this is the prophecy against the nation Israel The religious leaders. The kingdom of God shall be taken from you And given to a nation, Bringing forth the fruits thereof.

And whosoever shall fall upon this stone, The stone which was said of not at the builders, Or Jesus Christ, Shall be broken. But on whomsoever it shall fall, It will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees Heard his parables, They then perceived that he was speaking of them.

And they sought to lay hands on him, But they feared the multitude, Because they took him for a prophet. So, Jesus is predicting to them That the kingdom will be taken from them. And so quickly it was.

And the gospel was preached first to the Jews. But with their rejection, The gospel came to the Gentiles. And, of course, the main thing that God is seeking is fruit.

Jesus said, I am the true vine, My father is the husband. And every branch in me that bringeth forth fruit, He purges it that it might bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the word.

Abide in me that my words abide in you, That you may bring forth much fruit. For herein is my Father glorified. So, the Lord's desire is that we bring forth fruit unto him.

The natural vine did not do it. So, those husbandmen were cast forth from the vineyard. And He gives the vineyard, the kingdom to others Who will bring forth fruit for Him.

And then, there's so much to be said concerning the stone Which was said of Nod of the builders, If you fall on it, you will be broken. But if He falls on you, then He'll grind you to powder. You're going to have one of two relationships to Jesus Christ, Either as your Lord and Savior or as your Judge.

If you fall upon Him in repentance, You will be broken, true, But you'll come into a new, full, rich life. If He is your Judge, you'll be ground to powder. The two aspects, the two faces of Christ, By which people will face Him.

And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables. Now, it's still, He's still, you know, He's still there, And He's laying them on these parables. And He said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king Which made a marriage for his son.

And he sent forth his servants to call them That were bidden to the wedding, And they would not come. There was, first of all, Those who were bidden to the wedding. His son is getting married, And his servants were sent to those that were bidden.

They would not come. Again, He sent forth other servants saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner. My oxen and my fatlings are killed, And all things are ready.

Come unto the marriage. But they made light of it and went their ways. One to his farm, another to his merchandise.

And the remnant took the servants And entreated them spitefully and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, He was angry, And he sent forth his armies And destroyed those murderers And burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, But they which were bidden were not worthy.

Go ye therefore into the highways, And as many as ye shall find, Bid to the marriage. So the servants went out into the highways And gathered together all, As many as they found, Both bad and good. And the wedding was furnished with gifts.

And when the king came in to see the guests, He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. And he said unto him, Friend, how is it that you came in Not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. And then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, Take him away, And cast him into outer darkness, And there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

For many are called, But few are choice. Now herein is a very descriptive parable, Which is prophetic in its nature For the wedding feast of the sun. First of all, The servants sent to those that were bid in, The guests.

And they refused to come. The gospel was first brought by Jesus Christ To the Jews. They refused it.

Now the wedding is all set. Everything is ready. The sacrifice has been made.

Now the servants are to go out And to bid them come. But they began to go to their farm And to merchandise. And this is the preaching by the apostles To the Jews after the death of Jesus.

But still their refusal to come. Then the Lord commanded that they go. First of all, The king was angry at those bidding guests.

And he sent his armies. And they destroyed them And burned the city. This, of course, is what happened When Titus came and burned the city of Jerusalem And destroyed the people.

Because they refused to come. Thus the judgment of God through Titus. And Jesus is predicting that particular event, The burning of the city of Jerusalem.

When I was there, I was taken in some archaeological digs Where this man has dug down under his house Through several centuries, really, Of archaeological artifacts. And partway down, there's a layer of ash About six inches thick. Which is the ash from the burning Of the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by Titus.

And it's quite remarkable To look at that layer of ashes And to realize, you know, what it does represent. Now, Jesus predicted that. The burning of the city.

And then send them out to the highways and byways. Out unto the Gentiles. Bid them all, whoever, to come in.

And so the gospel coming to us. Now, even though we are bidden to come to the feast, It is necessary that we have on the wedding garments. It's necessary that we be clothed in the righteousness Which is of Christ through faith.

There are some who are trying to come Without the proper clothing. There are some who have not put on That righteousness through faith of Christ. But are trying to come in their own righteousness Or by their own efforts Or by their own good works.

They'll never make it when the king Makes the examination of the guest. If you're not clothed in that robe of righteousness Through the faith of Christ, You will be cast out. That's just a plain, straight warning of the Lord.

Then the Pharisees took counsel How they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples With the Herodians. Now, they said unto him, Master, we know that thou art true.

You teach the way of God in truth. Neither do you care for any man. That is, you're not a respecter of men.

Nor do you regard the person of men. You know, you don't bow and scrape to the rich. I mean, you just... You're no respecter of people's persons.

We know that what you say is truth. You're a man of truth. You're a straight shooter.

Tell us, therefore, What do you think? Is it lawful to give tribute Or pay taxes to Caesar or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness. And he said, Why do you tempt me, you hypocrites? They figured that the question... And it was a very sharp and shrewd question. If Jesus said, Yes, it is lawful to pay tribute to Caesar.

Then all of the Jews would have hated him. They would have turned from him. They said, He's a traitor.

He's a collaborator with the Romans. And they would have turned against him. You remember, they had said to Jesus earlier, We are not under bondage to any man.

I mean, they really didn't consider themselves as slaves of Rome. Even though they were subject to Rome, they didn't consider it. And they hated paying those taxes.

If Jesus said, No, it is not lawful. Then they would have gone right on down and reported him to the Roman officials and had him arrested and imprisoned for advocating a tax revolt. So Jesus, recognizing that they were trying to trap him and that it's a trick.

He said, Why are you trying to trap me, you hypocrites? He said, Give me a coin. One of your tribute money. And so they brought him a denarius.

And he said unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And he, no doubt, held it up and showed them that inscription of Caesar that was on the coin. They said unto him, Caesars. He flipped it back and he said to them, Then render therefore to Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things which are God's.

When they heard these words, they marveled. And they left him and went their way. I got out of that one.

Now the same day, there came to him the Sadducees which say there is no resurrection. They do not believe in the resurrection, angels, spirits. They were the materialists, the rationalists of their day.

And they asked him, saying, Master, Moses said if a man die having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brothers. And the first, when he had married a wife, died and did not have any children.

And he left his wife to his brother, but likewise the second also, and the third, and all the way to the seventh. And last of all, the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of

the seven? For they all had her.

And of course, they thought that they were making the idea of the resurrection seem ludicrous. As there are those even today who not understanding the resurrection, erring because they do not know the scriptures, the power of God, seem and try to make the resurrection seem ludicrous. For instance, if you've had a heart transplant in the resurrection, you're both Christians.

Which body does the heart go with? Or there have been people buried on the prairies whose bodies have returned to dust. The chemicals went back into the soil and the grass roots went down and drew those chemicals out of the soil that were once a part of another person's body. And the cow ate the grass with these chemicals which were a part of someone else's body.

And you drank the milk that came from the cow and assimilated some of those same chemicals that were once a part of someone else's body. So, in the resurrection, which body did these chemicals go in? And they tried to make the idea of the resurrection seem ludicrous. That was the whole idea here.

Making the resurrection of the dead seem to be a ludicrous thing. And Jesus said, you err because you don't know the scriptures. And how many people err because they don't know the scriptures? And with them, they did not know the power of God.

For in the resurrection, number one as far as the cows and transplanting hearts and all, Paul said, some of you will say, how are the dead raised and with what body do they come? And he said, don't you realize that when you plant a seed into the ground, all you plant is a bare grain and God gives it a body that pleases Him? Actually, so that, that which you plant is not that which comes out of the ground because all you plant is a bare grain. God gives it a body as pleases Him. We'll have new bodies.

We know that when this earthly tent, our tabernacle, the body in which we live is dissolved. We have a building of God not made with hands eternal in the heavens. But people don't know the scriptures and so they make all kinds of hypothetical problems.

Now, they were doing the same thing. Jesus said, for in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. Now, the purpose, of course, of marrying is to establish a good, secure environment in which to raise the children.

That's God's purpose for marriage. To bring two lives together in love in order that they might provide a good, healthy environment for the children to grow up in an environment that is secure and an environment that is filled with love. Inasmuch as we will not be having children in heaven, we will be as the angels who neither marry nor are given in marriage.

Just what we will be like, the Lord has left a few surprises for us. And we really don't know. Anything that we offer would be sheer speculation, and that's worthless.

But as touching the resurrection of the dead. Now, they didn't believe in that. Jesus said, have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

God said this in Exodus. Three, six. After Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were physically dead.

He said, God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. So they were still living. They were resurrected, living in their resurrected bodies.

And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine. But when the Pharisees heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, he really shut them up. They were gathered together.

Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? And Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind. This is the first and the great commandment. The second is like unto it.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Paul said, The law is fulfilled in love.

And he that loveth hath fulfilled the law. All of the law and the prophets, basically comprehended in the word love, understood by the word love. The law was set forth in negatives.

Thou shalt have no other gods. Thou shalt not. Thou shalt not.

Jesus put it in a very positive way. Just love God. All your heart, soul, mind, strength.

Love your neighbor as yourself. And this is the law. This is basically what the law is declaring.

That we should have a loving relationship with God first. That is reflected in a loving relationship with fellow man. This is what the Old Testament is all about.

The law and the prophets hang on these two. Now, while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of the Messiah? Whose son is he? Now, they did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. So, he's just telling them their opinion when the Messiah comes.

What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he? And they said unto him, The son of David. Now, they were anticipating a man. They are still anticipating a man.

They do not believe the Messiah is going to be the son of God. They rejected Jesus because he said he was the son of God. They were ready to stone him one day.

He said, I've done a lot of good works. For which of these works are you going to stone me? Not for the good works you've done, they said, but because you being a man are continually making yourself God. When he was brought before Pilate.

Pilate said, I will not crucify him. I don't find any cause of death in him. And they said, we have a law.

And by our law, he ought to die. Because he being a man is trying to make himself the son of God. Declaring that he is the son of God.

And this was the thing that offended them. And of course, this is what provoked this question. What is the greatest commandment? Their Shema is the Lord our God is one Lord.

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength. In the Shema, the Lord our God is one Lord. It is interesting that the word Echad is used for one.

The Lord our God is one Lord. The word Echad is used. The word Echad is an interesting word in Hebrew. Because it is a word for compound unity. Now there is another Hebrew word. Which is absolute unity.

An absolute one. Echad is a compound unity. So that we say that we are one congregation here tonight.

But yet, it is a compound unity. It is a compound one. Because there are many of us here making up the one congregation.

Now, Yaqid, the absolute unity, is where it stands alone, complete by itself. Had in the great Shema of Exodus it declared the Lord our God is Yaqid, one Lord. Then, there would be absolutely no basis for the teaching of the three persons of the one Godhead.

But because the word Echad is used of compound unity, it has within it the hint of the tri-unity of God. The compound unity, the more than one, and yet the unity within one. One God manifested in three persons.

But this they could not accept, would not accept. And they were offended with Jesus because He was declaring to them His divinity. And they were ready to stone Him on more than one occasion as He declared it to them.

So the question, why do you think of Christ? Whose son is He? He is the son of David, that is, He is a man. He is not the son of God, He is the son of David. Now, God promised to David that He would give to him a son to sit upon the throne forever.

And so, the son of David was a common title for the Messiah. You remember the blind men were saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on us. Common title for the Messiah.

But though He was the son of David, He was much more. He was also the son of God. Paul the Apostle, as he opens his epistle to the Romans, declares unto them that he is writing, verse 3, concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.

Yes, coming from Mary, He was of the seed of David. But coming from God, He was the Son of God, declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead. So, they answered Him, the son of David.

He said unto them, how then does David in the spirit call Him Lord, saying, the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool. Now, in Psalm 110, one of those beautiful psalms prophesying the Messiah, recognized to be such. David opens that prophetic psalm with the statement, the Lord, that is Jehovah or Yahweh said unto my Lord, Adonai, sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

David is referring to the Messiah as His Lord. Now, if the Messiah is the Son of David, then how is it that David calls Him Lord? No father in that patriarchal society would ever call his son Lord. That was an absolute forbidden no-no.

It was totally foreign to their whole culture and society where the father ruled until he died. The authority and rule always went back to the father. That was as deeply ingrained in their culture as anything.

And never under any circumstance would a father call his son Lord. But that was the title by which the sons always addressed their fathers. For the father was the Lord over his son even after he was married until the father died.

And the son would refer to his father as Lord. Now, if Jesus is the Son of David, then how is it that David, by the Spirit, again, notice that even Jesus recognizes that the writings of David were inspired by the Spirit of God. Peter, when he was quoting one of David's psalms in Acts, declared, the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spake, saying, so recognize that David was a prophet of God, that the Spirit of God spoke through David.

How is it then that David would refer to him as his Lord? If David then called him Lord, how could he be his son? And no man was able to answer him a word. And after that, none of them dared to ask him any more questions. Now, Jesus Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power.

Jesus said, my father bears witness of me. The Word bears witness of me. The Spirit bears witness of me.

And my works bear witness of me. He said, I don't bear witness of myself. If I bore witness of myself, then you would not believe me.

But he said, the Father, he bears witness of me. When Jesus was baptized, the voice of the Father spoke from heaven, saying, this is my beloved son. Whose son is he? God said, he's my son, in whom I am well-placed.

When Jesus was transfigured before his disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, again, out of the cloud, the voice of God said, this is my beloved son. Hear ye him. Now, in the Old Testament, God bore witness that he was his son.

In Psalm 2.7, there the Father bears witness that Jesus is the Son. And I will declare the decree the Lord has sent unto me. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

God's declaration of him in the Psalm. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. In 2 Samuel 7.14, where God to David was promising the Messiah from his seed, the Lord said, and I will be his father and he shall be my son.

Isaiah 9.6, for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. That's looking at the birth of Christ from the two aspects. From the human aspect, unto us a child is born.

There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. A child is born. But from the divine side, unto us a son is given.

God gave his only begotten son. And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. Definite messianic prophecy.

And the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end. But he is to be a son that is given. Behold, I give you a sign.

The Lord said to King Ahaz through Isaiah, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us. What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? That's what it boils down to tonight. The question is still very relevant to each of us.

What do you think of the Messiah? What do you think really now of Jesus Christ? Whose son was he? And he is either the son of some man from Nazareth, or he is the son of God. The preponderance of evidence points to his being the son of God. But it's so important, your opinion to that question or your answer to that question is so important.

What you personally think of Jesus Christ? Whose son is he? Now, Jesus said, The Father bears witness of me. The Father bore witness in the Old Testament Scriptures. The Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spake, saying, The Holy Spirit bore witness to him.

The Word bears witness to him. His works bear witness to him. Peter said, We were eyewitnesses.

We saw. But also, more than that, we have the more sure word of prophecy. So, that's where it stands tonight.

What do you think of Christ? Whose son is he? Next week, we get into some very interesting, exciting chapters. First of all, 23. And I love 23.

I personally just love the way Jesus laid it on those guys. Now, some people say, Well, that's not very Christ-like. Well, wait a minute.

I'm loving what Christ is doing. What's so un-Christ-like about loving what Jesus did? Man, I mean, he really cut them down. Like Romaine never thought of doing.

Then chapter 24 becomes very fascinating because the 24th chapter, Jesus answers the question, What will be the sign of your coming in the end of the age? And as we deal with the signs of the coming again of Jesus Christ, in Matthew 24, and as we look at the world around us, Hey, we realize we're there. And then the events that will take place when Jesus comes again, as we get into Matthew 25, and the judgment of the nations and all. And so much, much good information in our next lesson.

So we encourage you read it over carefully this week. Get some commentary, study it. And then let's gather together again next Sunday night for this very fascinating study through Matthew 23 through 25.

May the Lord be with you and bless and keep you in his love. Through the power of his Holy Spirit, as you are enriched in your walk with Jesus Christ day by day, as he ministers to you his strength, his power, and may you begin to experience more and more in your own life. That power of God's love, transforming you and changing you and making you into his image by his spirit, which dwells within you.

In Jesus name.

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