

Christ Church

“What God Requires”

Passage: Matthew 22 & 23

Main Idea: What God requires from us, God freely provides for us

Doctrine: Law/Gospel

PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

Each of 4 gospel writers were selective in what they included in gospel, depending on the people they were writing to & reason were writing

- Since Matthew’s aim is to present Jesus as *King*, specifically the promised Son of David, king of Israel, it’s not surprising that during these last days of Jesus’ earthly life, Matthew focuses on Jesus’ parables & teachings regarding the *Kingdom of heaven* (God)

Jesus says, “*The Kingdom of heaven is like this*”; & it’s far from what majority of Jews & from what religious leaders of Jesus’ day expected

- Surprising to them & surprising to us because Kingdom of God is based on Gospel; not on our performance, but on God’s provision

Main Idea: What God requires from us, God freely provides for us

- That’s Gospel; not doing but receiving what Jesus has done for us
- Simple truth see in Matthew 22 & 23 that’s still surprising us today

Outline

- I. The Clothing (Matthew 22:1-14)
- II. The Challenge (Matthew 22:15-40)
- III. The Condemnation (Matthew 23:1-39)

Open your Scripture Journal to Matthew 22

I. THE CLOTHING (Matthew 22:1-14)

Last week, leaders challenged Jesus’ authority to *do & say* what He did; Jesus answered them with two surprising Parables in Matthew 21

- Parable of the 2 Sons & Parable of the Vineyard
- But the Parable which probably most surprised religious leaders is the one this week in Matthew 22:1-14, *Parable of the Wedding Feast*

Jesus says that the Kingdom of heaven may be compared to king who gave a wedding feast for his son; sent servants to bring those who’d been invited to the feast, but they refused to come

- Sent other servants, some of whom were ignored; others were killed
- In his anger, king destroyed murderers & told servants to go & get whomever they found along streets, “*bad & good*”, to come to feast

In this Parable, the King is God; His Son is Jesus, the Bridegroom; servants God sends are Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist; banquet is marriage supper of Lamb at the end of the age

- Those to whom invitation first extended are Jews, religious leaders
- Those who actually come to the banquet are Gentiles, poor, tax collectors & prostitutes; all those who said “yes” to God’s invitation

What about the man who accepted invitation & came, but was kicked out because he didn’t have the right clothes? That doesn’t seem fair

- At a royal wedding, the king would provide a special garment to each guest; what the king required, the king freely provided
- This garment pictures the righteousness of Christ freely given to all who say “yes” to Jesus; repent of sin & trust in Jesus for salvation

So, the man with no wedding garment represents religious leaders, or anyone, who trusts in own righteousness to get into God’s Kingdom

- Think what they bring is good enough to allow them entrance
- Isaiah: “*All our righteousness is as filthy rags*”; only way we’re accepted into God’s presence is by being clothed in righteousness of Jesus Christ
- *Great Exchange* - Jesus gets our sin & we get His righteousness

The end of those who think they can enter into God’s presence without being clothed in the righteousness of Christ is to be “*bound hand & foot & cast into the outer darkness where there will be weeping & gnashing of teeth*” = eternal separation from God in hell

- We are welcomed into God’s presence *not* because of who *we* are, but because of what we’re wearing, the righteous robes of Jesus

Verse 14: Though the invitation was broad, went out to many; those actually chosen by God to enter His Kingdom are few

- Point of these 3 Parables in Matthew 21 & 22 is that, because the religious leaders have rejected Jesus, God has rejected them

TRANSITION

Jesus again antagonized religious leaders, so they’re trying to find a way to get rid of Him, either by trapping Him into saying something that could be construed as blasphemy, so could justify killing Him

- Or by discrediting Him before the people so stop following Him

- To that end, they *Challenge* Jesus with 3 questions

II. THE CHALLENGE (Matthew 22:15-46)

1. Paying taxes to Caesar (22:15-22)

Verse 17: Pharisees ask, “*Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?*”

- Israel was under Roman rule, & paid taxes to support Rome; people hated paying taxes; why Jews who became tax collectors (Matthew) were hated by Jews = put them in same category as prostitutes
- So, if Jesus *opposed* paying taxes, He’d be in trouble with Rome
- And, if He *approved*, He’d be in trouble with the Jews

Jesus took opportunity not only to silence His enemies, but to teach important spiritual truths when He said in *Verse 21*: “*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, & to God the things that are God’s*”

- Caesar made the coin, his image is on it, so give it back to him
- But, Jesus says, God’s image is on us; He owns us; He alone is worthy of our worship & our very lives, so give Him what’s His

2. Resurrection (22:23-33)

Next, Sadducees challenged Jesus with a theological question

- Sadducees were powerful religious leaders; rich, elite ruling class
- Though most Jews did believe in resurrection, Sadducees didn’t

Make up this scenario to trap Jesus: Man dies without any children

- Old Testament law said if man died without children, his brother was to marry his widow & raise up children in dead brother’s name
- This was to protect the family; they needed children to not only carry on their name but to keep businesses & inheritance intact
- Dead man had 6 brothers; each in turn, marry his widow, but each one dies without having children by her; afterwards, woman dies
- *Verse 28*: “*In the resurrection, of the 7, whose wife will she be?*”

Jesus says they are wrong for 2 reasons: They don’t know God’s Word & they don’t know the power of God

- Bible teaches physical resurrection; i.e., *Job 19:26*: “*After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God*”
- Fact Sadducees didn’t believe in it proved didn’t know God’s Word

AND, Bible *doesn’t* teach there is marriage in resurrection (heaven)

- Verse 30: “*In the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven*”; not *be* angels in heaven
- Why no marriage in heaven? Several reasons: Like there’s a fixed number of angels whom God created, there’s fixed number of saints whom God chose to be in heaven with Him; so, there’s no need to create more, which is one purpose of marriage on earth

Also, because earthly marriage is simply a Picture; picture of intimacy, of the Church, Bride of Christ, united with our Bridegroom

- Once the reality comes, we don’t need pictures anymore
- Even the best parts of the best marriages here pale in comparison to the joy we will have in the presence of our Bridegroom

So, Sadducees didn’t know Scriptures which did teach resurrection, but also teach that there is no marriage in resurrection

- And Jesus said they didn’t know *power* of God to raise the dead
- Same power that spoke everything into existence; power that raised Jesus from dead; power that creates spiritual life out of spiritual deadness will also give physical life to our mortal bodies
- Verse 32: “*God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*”

We draw wrong conclusions when we don’t know God or God’s Word

- Good news is that, through His Son & through His Spirit, the knowledge that God requires from us, He has freely provided for us
- *Implications?* Study God’s Word; ask God for wisdom & insight so we will not only know *Word of God*, but we’ll know the *God of Word*

3. Greatest Commandment (22:34-40) (Third Challenge)

Verse 36: “*Which commandment is most important?*”; Jesus gave a very short answer: “*Greatest commandment is that you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind*”

- You discussed “*heart, soul, & mind*” in groups = everything you are
- Hope you also said we can’t do that; not difficult, it’s impossible

That’s the whole point; same as all God’s commands

- This is what God expects, & you can’t possibly do it
- Good news: What God requires from us, God freely provides for us

Gospel: God circumcises our hearts; puts His Spirit in us to produce both the *desire & ability* to do what God wants us to do

- That’s why Jesus said, “*You SHALL love God with all you are*”
- Not “*you better do this; just try harder*”

- Jesus isn't counting on us; He's stating a fact; you shall love God because He first loved you & put His love-producing Spirit in you
- If He didn't do that, we wouldn't have any love for Him at all

Love for God is proof that we belong to God & that He's living in us

- The Law was good to give us God's standard, but it had no batteries
- Gospel is batteries; power of God to produce what the law demands

Verse 39: *And a second is, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"*

- Gospel order: Vertical love for God overflows into horizontal love for others; our love for God becomes visible as we love others
- "*Loving your neighbor as yourself*" means you want the same things for them as you want for yourself
- You want to be healthy; have money to pay bills; have meaningful relationships – we love others by wanting those things for them
- We love others by praying the same things for them as we pray for ourselves: "Reveal Yourself to us; open our eyes to see You; create in us desire for You that nothing else can satisfy"
- When we love God right, we will love people right; so, best thing we can do for every person in our lives is be a woman who loves Jesus

Leaders' *challenges* didn't work way they'd hoped; Jesus passed every test; so, then He challenges them with a question of His own:

- Verses 41-46: "*Whose son is the Christ (Messiah)?*"
- Religious leaders say Messiah is the physical descendant of David, so why, quoting Psalm 110, does David call the Messiah, "*Lord*"?
- If Messiah is only David's human descendant, why does David call Him God?

Jesus again exposed a major error in thinking of majority of Jews & the religious leaders that Messiah was merely human & not divine

- Jesus gave them lots of opportunities to see & hear Who He was & what He came to do, but they didn't get it; nation rejected their King
- So, Jesus rejected Israel as a whole = Matthew 23

III. THE CONDEMNATION (Matthew 23:1-39)

Three parts to Chapter 23 (quickly):

1. Verses 1-12: Jesus warns the people

- Warns crowd & disciples of danger of following religious leaders

- They were hypocritical; their walk didn't match their talk; they were indifferent to those they were supposed to be leading
- They were proud; sought positions of importance not to serve God, but be praised by men

God warns us because He loves us (like our kids); warns us because nothing's changed; lots of false religions & false religious leaders *today*

- Don't just listen to what they *say*, watch what they *do*, how they live; & look not only at *their* lives, but at the lives of their followers

Verses 11-12: Jesus repeats the solution to hypocrisy & pride:

- *"The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, & whoever humbles himself will be exalted."*
- Remember what it means to humble ourselves? Admit apart from Jesus we got nothing; we can do nothing; turn from depending on ourselves to trusting in Him; cast everything we are on Him

2. Verses 13-36: Jesus pronounces judgment

- 7 "woes"; profound grief or distress pronounced on Pharisees
- 1. Vs 13: For making salvation hard for other people; stumbling block
- 2. Vs 15: For corrupting their followers; making them just like they are
- 3. Vs 16-22: For trivializing religion; preachers do this today when they water down the Gospel so as not to offend people
- 4. Vs 23-24: For neglecting what's actually important; majoring on the minors; concerned for minutia rather than weightier matters
- 5. Vs 25-26: For greed & self-indulgence; ties right in with 6th "woe"
- 6. Vs 27-28: For wickedness within; *"whitewashed tombs"*; clean up the outside, but reality is that they are dead inside
- 7. Vs 29-36: For the murder of God's prophets; saying they would not have killed God's prophets like their forefathers did, while all the time they're plotting to kill Jesus

God requires more than outward behavior modification; God requires inner transformation; good news is that through the Gospel, what God requires from us, God freely provides for us

Verse 36: Religious leaders & nation of Israel as a whole are guilty of all these things, so judgment will come *"upon this generation"*

- Prophecy fulfilled in 70 AD when their temple was destroyed
- Prophecy has been fulfilled throughout history; explains why Jews are religiously & racially persecuted & discriminated against

- When nation as a whole & those who were supposed to be leading them refused their Messiah, God removed His protective hand
- But, because God is a Faithful, Covenant God, did not reject nation of Israel permanently; all part of His good plan (*Romans 9-11*)

3. Verses 37-39: Jesus displays compassion

- “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem; how often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!*”
- Parable of Wedding Feast: They were invited, but refused to come
- In spite of that, Jesus’ *condemnation* on Israel & her leaders was spoken more with tears than with wrath

Wrath is not God’s final Word – Jesus is

- The righteousness that God requires from us, He has freely provided for us through the work of His Son on the cross
- Gospel door is still open to Jews & Gentiles; rich & poor; educated & uneducated; all races & all nations
- Fact that Israel rejected their King would not hinder God’s great plan of redemption
- Instead of establishing His Kingdom on earth at this time through Israel, Jesus would build His Church
- When that work is finished, He will return & take His Church, His Bride, to heaven to enjoy Him forever (*Matthew 24 & 25*)

PRAYER SPRING BREAK NEXT WEEK – no Bible study