

2019-2020 Bible Study

#14

1/7/20

Matthew 4 (Cont)

1/7/20

Setting the Stage for Matthew 4

- You are a 30-year-old **1st Century Jew**
 - Living in Jerusalem in 65 A.D.
 - Married with a family
 - Working as a shopkeeper
 - Attempting to live a “righteous life”
 - Curious about “the new way” of Judaism including:
 - Who is the Rabbi *Joshua*, son of *Joseph* the carpenter, from Nazareth
 - The rumor that he is the long-awaited “Messiah”

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- **Matthew 4:17** *“From that time Jesus began preaching, saying, ‘Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’”*
 - The kingdom of heaven sounds to many people clouds and angels with harps
 - This is not what Matthew was talking about
 - Mark and Luke use the phrase “Kingdom of God” which can be found all over the Old Testament
 - The “Kingdom of God,” and the “Kingdom of Yahweh” were understood to be the “Kingdom of Israel”
 - The people of Israel had been waiting for 500 years for the restoration of their own independent kingdom

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- The Jews had been waiting for the Old Testament prophecies to be fulfilled to include:
 - The arrival of a Messianic King in the line of David
 - The restoration of the Glory Cloud and Ark to the temple
- This king would sit on the throne of David, rule the people, and defeat all their enemies

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- This was a crisis point which had caused a division among the people at the time of Jesus into several different sects each seeking a different solution to the problem
 - Sadducees
 - Pharisees
 - Essenes
 - Zealots
- Because of this, Jesus began to restore the “light” through His preaching
- They wondered why they were still in exile, under the Romans, and the false king Herod

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- Matthew tells them that Jesus was calling them to repent and prepare themselves for the Kingdom of Israel (Heaven) which is about to be restored
- He promised that it was about to happen at that moment and that fact caused some of the people to begin to follow Jesus *

Setting the Stage for Matthew 4

- You are a 25-year-old **1st Century Jewish fisherman**
 - Living in Galilee near Capernaum in 30 A.D.
 - Married with a family
 - Working in the fishing industry with Peter, Andrew and the Zebedee family
 - Attempting to live a “righteous life”
 - Curious about the teachings of the Rabbi *Joshua*, son of *Joseph* the carpenter, from Nazareth
 - The rumor that he is the long-awaited “Messiah”
 - You attend his Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- **Matthew 4:18-22** *“As he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen...and followed him”* ²
 - Father asked if we would follow a guy who walked up to us in the middle of our job and asked us to follow him?
 - That (often heard on vocation retreats) is not what happened here
 - This was not the first time Peter and Andrew had met Jesus
 - John’s gospel tells us that Andrew (and John) first met Jesus when He was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan (John 1:35-51) ¹

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- Andrew and John (and others) were disciples of John the Baptist and were by the Jordan when John said: *“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!”* **(John 1:29)**
- The next day, John sees Jesus and points Him out to his disciples saying, *“Behold the Lamb of God”* **(John 1:36)**
- So John and Andrew follow Jesus that afternoon, and after asking where he lived, Jesus replied, *“Come and see”* **(John 1:39)**
- Immediately afterward, Andrew ran to tell his brother Peter about this encounter, expressing that Jesus is the long awaited *“Messiah”*

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- Most likely, John gave the same message to his brother James (and Nathaniel was also included)
- This group of men had been preparing for this moment for a long time
- Since they all (except for John) had families, they did not stay with Jesus at that time
- They were part of the fishing industry working out of *Capernaum*
- They returned to their boats to make some money for their families and then, from time to time, returned to hear Jesus

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- Most likely they did this for several weeks
- They did not stay with Jesus for two reasons
 - They needed to support their families
 - The rabbi Jesus had not called them to be His disciples
- Many people followed Jesus, but only some were His disciples
- Further, those he later “sent out to preach” were Apostles (one who was sent)
- Even after the four fishermen were called, they did not abandon their boats and their father
- In this story they leave their boats, but in the next, they go back in their boats taking Jesus across the lake

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- Father pointed out how people often wonder how Jesus could call a person to leave family and occupation all at once to follow Him
- He suggested that vocations do not come out of nowhere or from someone coming up and asking you to follow them
- They come from prayer and properly formed Christian families

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- *Zebedee* and his wife were in support of their sons following Jesus
- Most likely, their sons told them all about Jesus and they encouraged them to become his disciples
- *Zebedee* would never have seen his sons as choosing to abandon the family*

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- **Matthew 4:23-25** *“And he went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people...and from beyond the Jordan”*
 - Once again this simply means the “Kingdom of God” and the “Kingdom of Israel”
 - It is about the “gospel” (good news) stating that Jesus will save them from their sins
 - Father again stated that knowing the definitions of these terms helps us to understand the political context of the 1st century

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- The people of that time were waiting for the return of:
 - God into the temple
 - The glory cloud
 - The Ark of the covenant
 - The messianic king to appear and defeat their enemies
- But instead, Jesus preached the “good news” by proclaiming that the Kingdom of God was at hand
- He demonstrated the signs of this by curing every disease, infirmity, pain, demoniacs, eclipitics, paralytics and He even raised some from the dead
- This was about the restoration of the Garden of Eden where neither sickness or death was originally found

Matthew 4 (Cont)

- Eden was being replanted as the sign that the kingdom was being restored and the relationship between God and man was drawing near again
- Because of this, people from all walks of life began to follow Him
- Father reminded us that there were two audiences here: the Jews in the story, and the first century Christians listening to Matthew's gospel
- It is important that we understand how each group would have heard this message
- Next, we will pick up the pace beginning with Matthew 5

Matthew 5

1/7/20

Outline for Matthew 5

- The Beatitudes 1-12
 - Presented from the Mount of the Beatitudes near Capernaum
 - Jewish audience from Galilee
 - Discussion of Beatitudes in the Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraphs 1725-1729
- Continuation of Sermon on the Mount
 - Salt and Light 13-16

Outline for Matthew 5 (Cont)

- The fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets 17-20
- Concerning
 - Anger 21-26
 - Adultery 27-30
 - Divorce 31-32
 - Swearing Oaths 33-37
 - Retaliation 38-42
 - Love for Enemies 43-47

Matthew 5

- **Matthew 5:1-2** *“Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them”*
 - At this point we will begin to cover more ground because we will study these passages in more detail when we get to the semester class on the Synoptic Gospels
 - Father pointed out two important themes being introduced when Jesus:
 - Went up the mountain
 - Taught them the “Beatitudes (Mt 1:3-12)
 - Jesus used the reoccurring theme “you have heard that it was said. But I say to you”
 - What they had heard were the teachings of Moses

Matthew 5 (Cont)

- Matthew was proclaiming that Jesus was greater than Moses which was of great interest to his Jewish audience
- Father also pointed out that the Hebrews loved to combine two words together in a Semitic image (interference) such as:
 - “He sat down and opened his mouth and taught them”
 - “Jesus arose and went to Cana”
- Biblical Greek (Konia Greek) was like “Spanglish” as it combined regular Greek with many “Semitic interferences”
- Father suggested that this was a major hint of how early this Gospel was written *

Matthew 5 (Cont)

- **Matthew 5:3-12** *“Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven ... For your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you”*
 - Again, “Great in heaven” means “Great from God”
 - God will reward you when you are persecuted
 - Don’t worry God will reward you for this
 - His audience consisted of Jews listening to all of this from Jesus in Galilee
 - Jesus gave the beatitudes on a hill above the city of Capernaum (the mount of the beatitudes overlooking the Sea of Galilee)

Headings in the Sermon on the Mount from the Jerusalem Bible

- The Beatitudes – Mt 5: 1-12
- Salt of the earth and light of the world – Mt 5:13-16
- The fulfillment of the Law – Mt 5: 17-19
- The new standard higher than the old – Mt 5: 20-48
- Almsgiving in secret – Mt 6: 1-4
- Prayer in secret – Mt 6: 5-6
- How to pray. The Lord's Prayer – Mt 6: 7-15
- Fasting in secret – Mt 6:16-18
- True treasures – Mt 6: 19-21
- The eye, the lamp of the body – Mt 6: 22-23

Headings in the Sermon on the Mount from the Jerusalem Bible

- God and money – Mt 6: 24
- Trust in Providence – Mt 6: 25-34
- Do not judge – Mt 7: 1-5
- Do not profane sacred things – Mt 7: 6
- Effective prayer – Mt 7: 7-11
- The golden rule – Mt 7: 12
- The two ways – Mt 7:13-14
- False prophets – Mt 7: 15-20
- The true disciple – Mt 7: 21-27
- The amazement of the crowds – Mt 7: 28-29

The Sermon on the Mount

- At the time of the Sermon on the Mount Israel:
 - Longed for Yahweh's kingdom to come
 - Wanted to inherit the earth
 - Thirsted for justice
 - Hoped for mercy
 - Looked for a vision of God
 - Desired to be called the creator's son
 - Wished to be vindicated in a national victory

The Sermon on the Mount (Cont)

- The “Sermon on the Mount” (Mt 5-7) is found only in Matthew’s gospel (Luke presents a similar “sermon on the plain”- Lk 6:17-49)
- Jesus shocked the people who climbed the mountain to hear him by introducing in the “Beatitudes” an unexpected lineup of those to be “blessed”:
 - The poor
 - The mourners
 - The meek
 - The hungry
 - The merciful
 - The pure of heart
 - The persecuted
 - The peacemakers

The Beatitudes Examined

- The Greek word Matthew used for blessed is *makarios* which has two meanings:
 - Blessed – the recipient of divine favors
 - Happy – one who is fortunate
- Jesus combines both meanings and gives a road map to help them find not only happiness but also the blessings and graces of God in our lives
- His words were just as jarring in his day as they are for us today

The Beatitudes

(CCC paragraphs 1725-1729)

- The Beatitudes:
 - Take up and fulfill God's promise from Abraham on by ordering them to the Kingdom of heaven. They respond to the desire for happiness that God has placed in the human heart
 - Teach us the final end to which God calls us: the Kingdom, the vision of God, participation in the divine nature, eternal life, filiation, rest in God
 - Confront us with decisive choices concerning earthly goods; they purify our hearts in order to teach us to love God above all things

The Beatitudes

(CCC paragraphs 1725-1729)

- The beatitude of eternal life is a gratuitous gift of God. It is supernatural, as is the grace that leads us there
- The beatitude of heaven sets the standards for discernment in the use of earthly goods in keeping with the law of God

The Beatitudes (Cont)

- The beatitudes are a foretaste of the delights of heaven as they provide a:
 - Summary of the magnificent ideal proposed for Christian living
 - Contrast between the life of those attached to the things of this world and the life of those who follow Christ
- Each beatitude contains two parts:
 - The meritorious act
 - A reward
 - Which applies primarily to the life to come
 - While at the same time provides a promise of happiness even in this life

Matthew 5 (Cont)

- At that time, Galilee was a hot bed of Zealots who were waiting for the restoration of the kingdom
- They were waiting to conquer the Romans
- Father said that some of His audience might have been Pharisees who were searching for “righteousness” (compliance with the *Torah*)
- They might, at that point, have believed that Jesus was their guy
- But then, in the next passage. He said: *

Matthew 5 (Cont)

- **Matthew 5:17-18** *“think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them...will pass from the law until all is accomplished”*
 - “Until” does not mean that something is going to change after that
 - Jesus was saying that these things will be fulfilled
 - He will soon explain how the law and the prophets were going to be fulfilled *