

Bible Study 2023-2024

Class #16

1/30/24

Synoptics 23 – 24

- Matthew 19 (Cont)

Matthew 19 (Cont)

- **Matthew 19:10-12** *“The disciples said to him, if such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry...let him receive it”*
 - The disciples perceived that if this is the case, it would mean that one could not get divorced once married
 - Father suggested that we underline the words, “**receive**” and “**given,**” and reference **1 Corinthians 7:7***
 - According to the early church tradition, 11 of the 12 Apostles were married (John was not married)

Matthew 19 (Cont)

- In that culture, most Jewish men got married between the age of 15 to 18
- Anyone older was considered a sloth, since they were not providing any assistance to the society
- A women of that time got married between the ages of 12 to 15
- Most likely, all but one of the disciples of Jesus were grown men in their 20s and 30s, and had families with children
- The only exception was John, the youngest disciple

Matthew 19 (Cont)

- Paul talks about his own celibacy as a “gift from God” **1st Corinthians 7**
- As he said, he wished that everyone was like him in this matter, even though everyone had different gifts
- He did not wish this in the modern sense, where today some see the church in a dualistic sense, in which sex is evil
- Paul understood that his celibacy allowed him to go about freely and establish churches wherever he went (he converted Asia Minor and Greece)

Matthew 19 (Cont)

- Father pointed out that the other 12 Apostles seemed to have been successful in preaching the gospel in Judea and Samaria (but they did not initially seem to move too far from there)
- It was the celibate guys who's missionary work seemed to have been more successful (the married clergy appeared to have stayed in place)
- It was the perfect job for the celibate since they were not incumbered with families
- Paul further discusses this in **1 Corinthians 9:5***, where he said, "Don't Barnabas and I have rights like the other apostles?"

Matthew 19 (Cont)

- He stated that they had no stumbling blocks to proclaiming the gospel as he compared himself to the prophet *Jeremiah*
- Father concluded that the early church had married clergy and laity, but also celibate clergy and laity
- Those who were celibate felt that they were called by God to that state for the sake of the kingdom (kingdom) they had made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom

Matthew 19 (Cont)

- **Matthew 19:13-15** *“Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray....And he laid his hands on them and went away*
 - Jesus often used children to demonstrate the nature of those who would enter the Kingdom of God

Matthew 19 (Cont)

- **Matthew 19:16-22** *“And behold, one came up to him saying,...for he had great possessions”*
 - Father suggested that Jesus was being a bit subtle with the young man here when he asked him why he referred to Jesus as “God”
 - “Why do you call me good if only God is good?”
 - This can be seen as a hint at what is going on in the second half of Matthew’s gospel

Matthew 19 (Cont)

- Jesus answered by giving the young man a list of the commandments from the second half of the decalogue
 - First half (1-4) is about loving God
 - Second half (5-10) is about loving our fellow man
- This summary of the Law is found in **Deuteronomy 6:4-5*** and **Leviticus 19:2*** (from the **Holiness Code**)

Matthew 19 (Cont)

- After the young man stated that he had done all of this, and asked what was still missing?
- Jesus' response was that what he needed to do to be perfect (this should remind us of **Matthew 5:48** where it says you shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect)
- Jesus was discussing the young man's holiness (righteousness) by going beyond that of a scribe or Pharisee
- He was saying that if he wanted to be perfect, he should go beyond the Torah, and then come and follow Jesus

Leviticus (Cont)

- **Leviticus 17-22** contains the “**Holiness Code**” which was very important for the Old Testament, but also played a major role in the New Testament
- The “Holiness Code” is located right in the middle of the Law (Torah)
- The **Book of Leviticus** was seen as the central “**scroll**” of the Law and understood as the “heart of the Torah”
- At the center of Leviticus is the Holiness Code, and **Leviticus 19:2 d** states: “*You shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy*”

Leviticus (Cont)

- As a reminder, the word Holy (*qadosh*) meant to be set apart, distinct, different
- The *Hebrew* people were supposed to be set apart, and different from all the other nations round about
- *Israel* had been called out of *Egypt* by *Yahweh* and set apart as a model for the other nations to follow
- Even the “sojourners” who were living among them and came out with them in **Exodus 12**, were under parts of the “Holiness Code”
- Only in the “Holiness Code” do we find laws governing the “sojourners”

Leviticus (Cont)

- In fact, the sojourners did **not** even have to circumcise their sons, abstain from pork, or obey the *Kosher* laws
- But, every Israeli male had to obey **all** of the laws of the *Torah* including those in the “Holiness Code”
- The “Holiness Code” will be extremely important when we look at what happened in **Acts 15**, where we see the resolution to the *Council of Jerusalem* concerning the suggestion (by the Judaizers) that one had to become a Jew before becoming a Christian

Matthew 19 (Cont)

- He was telling the young man that if he wanted to take the next step he must be like Him
- Then the young man walked away because he had great possessions
- Jesus turned to His disciples and told them that it was harder for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man enter the Kingdom of God (the kingdom of the new covenant Jesus came to establish)
- Father then discussed two explanations of this passage
 - It was a small gate next to a main gate in the city wall
 - This was a mistranslation and it would have said harder than a rope going through the eye of a needle (either cases were impossible)

Matthew 19 (Cont)

- **Matthew 19:23-26** *“And Jesus said to his disciples,...but with God all things are possible”*
 - Father pointed out that whatever it said, it would have been an impossible situation
 - But, with God all things are possible
 - Even though salvation for a rich man would be very difficult, God can save anyone, as He is the author of salvation
 - Father then pointed out that wealth is given by God, and we are responsible for its use

Matthew 19 (Cont)

- As a norm, many wealthy people who are not in crisis do not often see a need for prayer, while those in need are often more religious
- We see this in the **Epistle of James** as well
- This teaching does not condemn wealth, or approval of poverty; either rests on actions