

>>>>>> Matthew – Lesson 42 <<<<<<<

1) Will not meet next week (28th) – LWCTD fellowships.

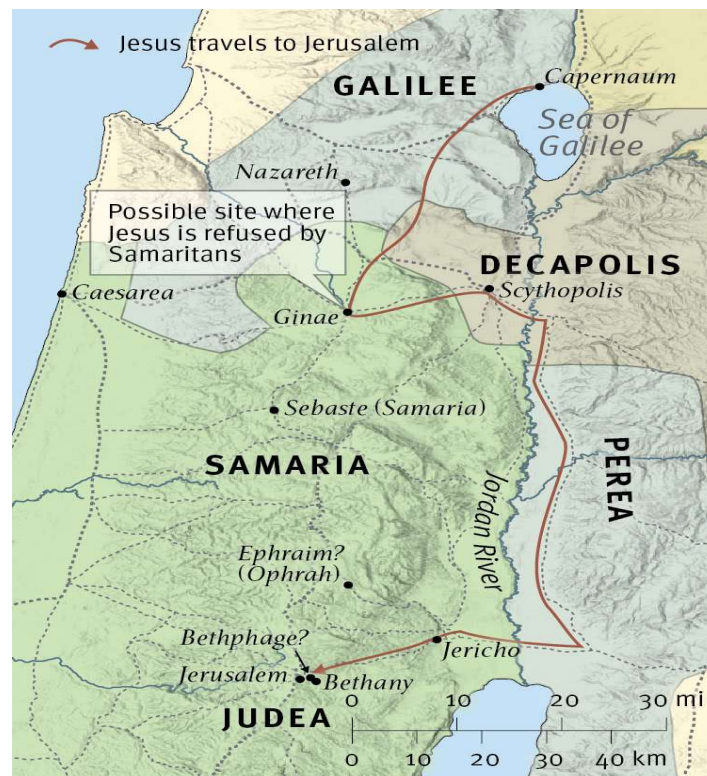
2) Finishing out chapter 20 we read ...

Matthew 20:29–34(ESV)

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

²⁹ And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him. ³⁰ And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” ³¹ The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” ³² And stopping, Jesus called them and said, **“What do you want me to do for you?”** ³³ They said to him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.” ³⁴ And **Jesus in pity touched** their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him.

3) Jesus is almost to Jerusalem; he has passed through Perea and has now crossed back over the Jordan into Judea headed out of Jericho toward Bethany/Bethphage.



Jesus Travels to Jerusalem

4) He now encounters two blind men sitting beside the road.

a) These were not ordinary blind men because they knew exactly who they were waiting for.

b) But, most importantly they, by whatever means had learned who Jesus really was as they cry out “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!”

5) It is always interesting to me when Jesus, sees the ailment a person has and knowing all things still asks; **“What do you want me to do for you?”**

- 6) In this case, without hesitation, these men say clearly, “let our eyes be opened.”
- 7) Verse 34 is one of those cases where I have to disagree with the ESV translation.
 - a) ESV says: “Jesus in pity touched ...”
 - b) NASB says: “Moved with compassion ...”
 - c) Let me begin with a question.

What do you perceive as the difference between pity and compassion?

- d) Webster gives us:
 - i) PITY: sympathetic sorrow for one suffering, distressed, or unhappy.
 - ii) COMPASSION: sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it.
 - e) There is just a slight difference here – “a desire to alleviate.”
 - f) If we think about Jesus, in light of our perceived definitions of pity and compassion, Jesus will always fit the more expanded definition of compassion rather than pity.
 - g) It is that overwhelming desire to alleviate the suffering that really sets these two words apart from each other.
 - h) That being said, which should we strive for in our caring for others? Obviously, it would be compassion.
- 8) One other thing we do not want to miss is that these two blind men, once they received their sight, did not just tip their hats and go on their way – they followed Jesus!

- 1) The first passage of chapter 21 is a very interesting set of verses to dig into ...

Matthew 21:1–11(ESV)

The Triumphal Entry

21 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” ⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

- ⁵ “Say to the daughter of Zion,
‘Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’ ”

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. ⁸ Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of

the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”¹⁰ And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?”¹¹ And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

- 2) We have much we can talk about here to get the true picture of what is happening.
- 3) Let’s begin by looking at one of those curiosity things – why a donkey and a colt.
 - a) In the Zechariah 9:9 quote, this is what is known as Hebrew Parallelism.
 - b) In ancient Hebrew poetry, writers would state something and then restate it in different words in the next line for emphasis, rhythm, and clarity.
 - c) In particular, this is called synonymous parallelism where two phrases refer to the same item.
 - d) In this case, two animals "a donkey" = "a colt, the foal of a donkey."
 - i) The second phrase simply elaborates on the first — it's a young donkey, specifically a foal.
 - (1) This was a way of saying "a donkey — yes, a young one."
 - e) In the other 3 Gospels, this event only refers to one animal. (See Mark 11 (colt), Luke 19 (colt), John 12 (donkey))
 - f) Matthew’s wording mentions both a donkey and a colt, which reflects his close, literal use of the prophetic language of the Masoretic Text as he quotes it.
 - i) Some interpreters think he read the verse in a very concrete way, while others argue he is emphasizing the prophecy through repetition and fulfillment language rather than trying to describe two separate mounts in a modern, factual sense.
 - g) What Matthew wanted readers to see was the triumphal entry is a royal announcement:
 - i) Jesus is Israel’s king, but his kingship is marked by meekness, peace, and obedience to God’s plan.
 - ii) So, Zechariah 9:9 is not just predictive background; it is Matthew’s way of saying, “This is the Messiah you were waiting for.”
 - iii) Some scholars look at this as another incidence of Matthew’s specificity in writing to primarily Jewish readers.
 - (1) They would likely have known the Hebrew parallelism and been able to see the real reason behind Matthew’s phrasing.
- 4) Matthew’s words in context of the prophecies were absolutely clear as to who this was.
 - a) As He entered, the crowd was saying that they agreed, however, the truth is their idea was still one of the Messiah king who was to deliver them from the tyranny of Rome.
 - b) Jesus however knew His mission was totally different than that.
 - c) One commentator summed the crowd’s perception up this way:

They expected him to be a national leader who would restore their nation to its former glory; thus, they were deaf to the words of their prophets and blind to Jesus’ real mission. When it became apparent that Jesus was not going to fulfill their hopes,

many people would turn against him. A similar crowd would cry out, “Crucify him!” when Jesus stood on trial only a few days later.⁴⁴

- 5) After the entry, however, there was even more confusion. Verses 10 and 11 tell us that many were still looking at Jesus as a prophet.
- 6) But Jesus was not just another prophet; he was the prophet who was to come. Moses had prophesied,

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him... .

So, in view of what we have discussed, do you think this was or was not a “true” triumphal entry?

Why? Or Why not?

- 1) Continuing, after the triumphal entry, in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus enters the temple and cleans it of the moneychangers and merchants.

Matthew 21:12–13(ESV)

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

¹² And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹³ He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”

- 2) The “under the hood” story here is that this was basically a marketplace sanctioned by the religious establishment.
 - a) The moneychangers and the merchants were taking advantage of the pilgrims who were visiting Jerusalem for the Passover.
 - b) There was the possibility that there were kickbacks going to those who did the sanctioning.
 - c) All of this led to Jesus’ outrage at what was being done in the temple so he acted with righteous anger and drove them from the premises.
- 3) An additional problem was that this entire assemblage of merchants and moneychangers was setup in the court of the Gentiles.
 - a) When one considers the fact that this was the only place where God fearer’s and others who were Gentiles and wanted to worship could do so.
 - b) The problem was apparent, simply put, they could not.
 - c) If you also consider all those Gentiles who had perhaps traveled significant distances to worship during the Passover you can easily see the travesty of the situation.
- 1) Continuing, Jesus is in the temple ...

⁴⁴ Bruce B. Barton, [*Matthew*](#), Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 410.

Matthew 21:14–17(ESV)

¹⁴ And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant, ¹⁶ and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read,

“ ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies
you have prepared praise’?”

¹⁷ And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

2) As usual, Jesus is doing what His compassion drives Him to do – heal the lame and blind.

3) The children are perhaps astute enough to see and recognize what He is doing or they are just caught up in what had happened earlier at the entry into Jerusalem.

a) One way or the other, they are crying out with that same phrase; “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

4) The chief priest and scribes were angered by this – jealousy is an insidious thing.

a) One would also probably be safe in assuming that they were angry about the cleansing of the temple as well.

5) When they bring this to Jesus’²² attention, He simply quotes Psalm 8:2.

Psalm 8:2 (NET)

^{8:2} From the mouths of children and nursing babies
you have ordained praise ...

a) I wonder if they remembered the rest of the Psalm that he did not quote.

... on account of your adversaries,
so that you might put an end to the vindictive enemy.

6) Continuing – Is Jesus out of character????

Matthew 21:18–22(ESV)

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

¹⁸ In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry. ¹⁹ And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” And the fig tree withered at once.

²⁰ When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?” ²¹ And Jesus answered them, “Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen. ²² And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”

7) Fig trees were common in Israel and were a source of inexpensive food.

a) Once planted, it took 3 years before the trees would bear fruit.

- b) The cycle of the fig tree began in March with small edible buds.
 - c) Then, in April there came large green leaves.
 - d) In May, the buds would fall off and be replaced by the normal crop of figs.
 - e) Based on that cycle, this being April, the green leaves should have indicated the presence of the edible buds.
 - f) Those edible buds were what Jesus expected to find on the tree, however there were none.
 - g) That simply indicated that this tree would not bear fruit this year.
- 8) Jesus on seeing this curses this tree.
- a) Now, to answer the question we started with – NO, it is not out of character for Jesus.
 - i) He did not curse this tree because he was angry because there wasn't any food on it for him to eat.
 - b) Instead, this was another teaching moment for the disciples.
 - i) First, there is a lesson in faith and the power that one has if one believes.
 - ii) But, second, as Bruce Barton says, this was an acted-out parable intended to teach the disciples about religion without substance.

“Jesus’ harsh words to the fig tree could be applied to the nation of Israel and its beautiful temple. Fruitful in appearance only, Israel was spiritually barren. Just as the fig tree looked good from a distance but was fruitless on close examination, so the temple looked impressive at first glance, but its sacrifices and other activities were hollow because they were not done to worship God sincerely.”⁴⁵

- 9) As for the second lesson, Matthew tells us that the disciples marveled at what had happened.
- a) Jesus then explains to them about the power of faith.
 - b) In verse 22, Jesus says:

²² And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.

Here’s a question – what are things we cannot do with this power to say to a mountain be cast into the sea?

- a) God does not grant requests that will hurt people.
- b) Or that will violate his own nature or will.
- c) Not a blank check to be filled in by believers, not a “name it and claim it” theology.
- d) Requests made to God in prayer must be in harmony with the principles of God’s kingdom.
- e) They must be made in Jesus’ name (John 14:13–14).
- f) Cannot be frivolous.

A second question is are there any limits on this power we have through faith (e.g. raising the dead, miraculous healings, or having a \$5M retirement package)?

- 1) Testing – oops it backfires ...

⁴⁵ Bruce B. Barton, Matthew, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 416–417.

Matthew 21:23–27(ESV)

The Authority of Jesus Challenged

²³ And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴ Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ²⁶ But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

- 2) After Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, the chief priest and elders are becoming very nervous about his popularity.
- 3) As we have discussed in the past, there is a huge fear on their part that Jesus might do something that would cause them to lose their standing with Rome or even lose their independence entirely.
 - a) Not to mention the ongoing jealousy that pervades the scribes, pharisees, chief priests and elders.
- 4) They are therefore, out to attempt to trap Jesus into one of two things:
 - a) First, saying something publicly that will cause the people to reject him and be rid of him that way.
 - b) Second, they would be equally satisfied if Jesus were to incriminate himself the in such away that the Roman authorities would take care of the problem for them.
- 5) This passage is just one incident of many in that effort.
- 6) Jesus, however, turns the tables on them and retorts a question to them that were they to answer convicts them of rejecting him as the Son of God or would cause them to lose favor with the crowd.
 - a) What Jesus asks is also really a question about authority – John’s authority – where did it come from?
 - b) Basically, this is a “rock and a hard place” for these guys so, they take the easy way out and don’t give an answer.
- 7) Jesus of course, in keeping with what he had said to them also was not and did not answer their questions.