

BA Commentary: Matthew 17-20

Matthew 17 – Glory Revealed, Faith Tested

Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up the mountain and reveals His **glory**—radiant, holy, and unmistakably divine. This is the **Transfiguration**, and it's not just a spiritual moment—it's a theological declaration:

“This is My beloved Son... listen to Him.” (v. 5)

God isn't suggesting we listen to Jesus. He's **commanding it**.

But right after this, the disciples descend into chaos—a demon-possessed boy, powerless disciples, a desperate father. The mountaintop didn't prepare them for the **valley of unbelief**.

Jesus rebukes their lack of faith:

“This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” (cf. Mark 9:29)

Principle: Proximity to Jesus doesn't equal power.

Discipleship requires devotion, not just attendance.

Real power comes from prayer-fueled intimacy with the Father—not ministry performance.

Matthew 18 – Greatness in the Kingdom Starts Low

The disciples ask:

“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” (v. 1)

Jesus doesn't point to a warrior or scholar—He grabs a **child**.

Why? Because children don't pretend. They're dependent, trusting, and low.

Principle: Kingdom greatness isn't built on charisma. It's built on **humility**.

Jesus then delivers a ruthless warning about sin:

“If your hand or your eye causes you to sin, cut it off... tear it out.” (vv. 8–9)

This is Jesus saying: **Don't manage your sin. Kill it. Fast.**

He follows this with the **Parable of the Lost Sheep**, showing the Father's heart for the one who wanders. And then the brutal **Parable of the Unforgiving Servant**, where a man is forgiven much—but refuses to forgive another.

Key truth: You can't live forgiven and still hold others hostage.

Kingdom men forgive boldly—because they've been forgiven completely.

Matthew 19 – Jesus on Manhood, Marriage, and Money

This chapter hits like a sledgehammer. First up—**marriage**:

“What God has joined together, let no man separate.” (v. 6)

Jesus doesn’t allow for easy outs. He calls men to **covenantal faithfulness**.

Marriage isn’t a contract to break—it’s a covenant to die for.

Then He confronts another idol—**wealth**.

The rich young ruler checks all the spiritual boxes, but when Jesus tells him to give everything up and follow, he walks away sad (v. 22).

Because Jesus didn’t want his performance.

He wanted his **allegiance**.

Principle: Obedience is the true currency of faith.

You can’t serve two masters—not even if one is religious success and the other is Jesus.

Matthew 20 – The Great Reversal

Jesus tells a parable about vineyard workers—some worked all day, others just an hour.

But all got paid the same. Why?

“Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to Me?” (v. 15)

This is grace that offends entitlement.

In the kingdom, God’s generosity doesn’t play by our rules.

Then James and John’s mom makes a power move: “Let my sons sit at Your right and left.”

Jesus replies:

“Can you drink the cup I’m going to drink?” (v. 22)

They say yes. They don’t understand.

Jesus ends the power-play with this kingdom mic drop:

“Whoever wants to be great must be your servant... Just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve.” (vv. 26–28)

Biblical masculinity is not domination. It’s cruciform leadership.

Leadership in the kingdom doesn’t stand over others—it stoops to serve.

Theological Themes in Matthew 17–20

Jesus is the divine Son of God, affirmed by the Father (17:5)

Faith is required in the valley, not just the mountain (17:14–20)

Humility, not hierarchy, is the foundation of the kingdom (18:1–4)

Holiness demands war on sin, not tolerance of it (18:8–9)

Forgiveness reflects the gospel we claim to believe (18:21–35)

Marriage is sacred and sovereignly designed (19:3–6)

Obedience > performance (19:16–30)

Servant-hearted sacrifice is the model for leadership (20:26–28)

Masculine Implications

A godly man walks down the mountain and into the mess.

He doesn't coast on appearances—he cultivates private holiness.

He leads by laying his life down, not flexing his strength.

He fights sin, guards his marriage, and surrenders his comfort.

He forgives, even when it hurts.

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Final Application

Ask yourself:

What area of my life still operates by entitlement, not obedience?

What sin am I managing that Jesus told me to **cut off**?

Do I love mountaintop moments more than the mission in the valley?

Am I leading like Jesus—by serving?

This is kingdom manhood.

It doesn't need applause.

It doesn't demand attention.

It dies to self—and rises in Christ.