

BRIEF ABSTRACTS AND SERMONS BASED ON THE FIVE DISCOURSES OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

By Bob Young

It's Sunday Again: Kingdom Principles for Righteousness

Matthew 5, Jesus' first teachings, the Sermon on the Mount, how to live as children of God.

Your relationship with others, 5:21-26, be relational – that includes forgiving, loving, open, vulnerable, connected, reconciled

Your relationship with the world, 5:27-30, be resistant, weak in the Word = weak spiritually and morally

Your relationship with God, 5:31-42, be righteous, do what is right

Your relationship with yourself, 5:43-48, be real, what will make me more like God?

It's Sunday Again: The Mission of the Kingdom

Matthew 10, Jesus' second major discourse, Jesus teaches his disciples, how to go out on the mission of the kingdom.

Chapter overview: Empowering disciples, encouraging disciples, the essence of discipleship, the expectations of the disciple

Six mission principles: (1) Jesus is the teacher, message, example, director of missions. (2) God controls and takes care of those who are on his mission. (3) Relationship with God is enhanced by boldness on the mission. (4) The result of the message is not always love, joy, and peace. (5) The messengers must reflect God's mission. (6) The results are in God's hands; the reward is certain for faithful messengers.

It's Sunday Again: The Nature of the Unexpected Kingdom

Matthew 13, in the third discourse Jesus again teaches his disciples, parables, the kingdom brings surprises, the kingdom is not predictable, the kingdom is unexpected. Seven kingdom truths.

(1) The kingdom is not coercive—persons choose to follow the King in his Kingdom. (2) The kingdom touches common, everyday life. (3) The kingdom comes silently, invisibly and then grows magnificently. (4) Kingdom power is of God; He controls, the rule and reign of the King. (5) The kingdom is common and available to all; the cost of the kingdom is high. (6) The kingdom is not possible without commitment. (7) The great challenge of the Kingdom is understanding its continual freshness and renewal.

It's Sunday Again: Life in the Kingdom

Matthew 18, fourth discourse, Jesus again teaches his disciples. Seven essentials for life in the kingdom.

v. 1, the importance of humility, absolutely essential

v. 5, the importance of receiving one another

v. 6, the importance of not causing any brother or sister to sin

v. 7, the importance of not causing yourself to sin

v. 10, the importance of every believer, every member, each has angels in God's presence

v. 15, the importance of our relationships in the kingdom, use as many people as necessary to restore relationships

v. 21ff, the absolute importance of forgiveness

It's Sunday Again: When the King Comes

Matthew 25, Jesus' final discourse, what the kingdom of heaven will be like, five parables about preparation, Jesus' final parables. Keep watch, be ready, keep watch, be ready, the King is coming. Glorious God, glorious throne. What are we to learn?

This is an invitation to kingdom participation.

Readiness is a daily task. Do good every day, be ready every day.

This is how kingdom people treat one another, this is the standard, this is the new normal.

This is prophetic parable, parabolic prophecy—beware of specifics, this is not a summary of every kingdom requirement. Don't miss the principle. Are we helping people? Are we servants? Are we ministers?

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MATTHEW 5

Sermon on the Mount: Children of God

Matthew 5:43-48, sons of God ;1 Tim. 6:11, man of God

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

Be relational (5:21-26): Be forgiving to others, building strong relationships

- Be forgiving (also see 5:38-42) – without vengeance
- Be loving, we are all walking wounded
- Be open, transparent, vulnerable
- Be connected
- Be reconciled

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD, WITH SIN

Be resistant (5:27-30): Be forceful with sin, relationship to sin

- James 1:13-16
- Resistance is illustrated in Matthew 4 and Jesus' temptations.
- The dynamic that runs through and runs the Christian life is the word of God. Live by the word of God, Psalm 119:11, 105
- A person weak in the word will be weak spiritually and morally.

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Be righteous, pure (5:31-37): Be faithful to God, be loyal, reconciled, in vertical relationship

- Be an example; Phil 4:9, 1 Cor. 11:1
- Consider the power of example
- Be right, honest (5:33-37) – no false oaths

RELATIONSHIP WITH YOURSELF

Be real, be like God (5:43-48): Be focused

Fix your eyes, 2 Cor. 4:16-18, 5:1; Heb 3:1, 12:1-2

1 John 2:15-17, what are you willing to live/die for?

The second temptation of Jesus; where we focus our view, what is our focus.

Learn the difference between the artificial and the real (illus: fishing).

Two reasons for our existence.

First, be like God, like Jesus. Eph. 5:1, sons, children; being like God.

This is my changing and becoming like God in whose image I was made.

This is purpose of Sunday and Wednesday

Requires learning about God, Col. 1:15ff; Heb 1; John 14:8-9; Matt 1:23, 28:20

Second, bring him glory, honor and praise. What can I learn that will make me like God?

That must be our obsession.

Then, let our light shine, Matt 5; 1 Pet 2

Evangelism based on relationships, not only a program

Christianity defined by the nature of God

Gen. 1:26-27, that we return to the image of God

1 Tim 6:11, be sons and daughters of God, men and women of Christ

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MATTHEW 10

Disciples and the Mission

Matthew is literary masterpiece, Jewish background, OT quotes, thematic consistency, a servant king.

Literary factors:

- •The presence of Jesus [Matt. 1:23, 28:18-20]
- •Two divisions [Matt. 4:17, 16:21]
- •Theme of Part I [Matt. 4:23, teaching/preaching/healing]

Matthew has five discourses which are used alternately with the narrative sections of the book.

#1—Mountain Discourse

- •Listeners: Crowds, with disciples present
- •Topic: Introduction to the Kingdom of Heaven [ye have heard it said, contrasts]
- •Next: Crowds marvel, Jesus goes teaching/preaching/healing, with result in 9:35-38

#2—Mission Discourse

- •Listeners: Disciples, Jesus enlists his followers in his mission
- •Topic: Followers in the Kingdom of Heaven
- •Next: Result is increasing opposition from Pharisees

#3—Parables Discourse

- •Listeners: Crowds, with explanations to disciples
- •Topic: The Nature of the Kingdom of Heaven
- •Next: Result is offense (13:57)

#4—Relationship Discourse

- •Listeners: Disciples
- •Topic: Principles in the Kingdom of Heaven
- •Next: Result is Pharisees' testing Jesus

#5—Judgment Discourse

- Listeners: written to all
- Topic: Outcomes in the Kingdom of Heaven
- Next: Jesus' crucifixion

Introduction to Matthew 10

This chapter is not easy to outline, there are few internal markers. Can make basic observations.

Jesus establishes his authority. Then he calls the twelve to give them authority (10:1). Jesus intends to share his authority with his followers.

Intense human need moved Jesus to this decision (see 9:35-38). He personally could not meet all of the needs. He needed help with the task; he had to share the task. When more workers are needed in the harvest, Jesus has the power to send forth those workers.

How exciting to be commissioned! One wonders if the thrill and pride dampened as Jesus explained the lifestyle of those who were given this kind of task and power and authority. Not with pomp and luxury, but as servants. Not with coercive power (a recurring theme in Matthew, cf. Herod). Jesus is a servant king and his followers must be servant followers.

Some will receive this message, some will reject it. Authority is granted for the purpose of serving. Here is a manifesto of Jesus' principles, the nature of discipleship, the people of the kingdom, Kingdom followers. Jesus' first-century disciples are a paradigm for the readers, so all are Jesus' contemporaries participating in Jesus' mission. This text addresses the church as a missionary church.

The Sending of Disciples to Participate in the Mission Note the chiasmic structure suggested in the following outline: The “how” of discipleship.... (note how hard these things are)

Depending on God (5-11)

Giving others freedom to accept or reject the Lord (12-15)

Expecting and enduring persecution (16-23)

Looking to Jesus as their example, expecting the same as he received (24-25)

Remembering their great value (26-33)

Expecting conflict (34-39)

Helping others to be rewarded (40-42)

The Empowerment/Commission of the Disciples, 5-15ff

With regard to the honor possessions, go forth dependent

 With regard to the honor of power, go forth without coercion

 With regard to the honor of praise, go forth expecting opposition and persecution

[Note textually significant words: Worthy (11), peace (13), receive (14)]

At the risk of seeming simplistic, Jesus asked them to do the impossible, to dare the impractical, and to deliver the impartial!

The Encouragement of the Disciples, 16-23

Jesus was a realist, and in sending out his apostles, he prepared them: sheep among wolves, with a certain attitude, expecting problems, but depending on God.

The Essence of Discipleship, 24-25

The “Center”: Like Teacher, Like Master (10:24-25)

Expect what Jesus got, don't expect to be treated better....

 Expect hostility, 16-20; expect rejection, 20-23, 34-38; Expect to win, 26-33

The Expectations of Discipleship, 26-42

Disciples sent because of their value in God's sight, without fear (opposite = faith?), 26-33

Sent because of their worth (suitability, loyalty), without peace [no peace, 34]. Instead of peace there is division and conflict, [worthy, 37-39]; such loyalty brings the great paradox of Christianity

Sent for a purpose, privileged position [receive, 40-42, || ch. 18]. If the debit side of discipleship is in view in this chapter, there is a credit—the privilege of being recognized as Jesus' representative.

•Received, as one entrusted to do Jesus' work.

•Rewarded, as righteous, in the name of, in his capacity as...

•Recognized as representatives, hospitality was taken for granted in that day, deserving no reward, not philanthropy but simply receiving someone because he is a disciple. “Little ones” (cf. ch. 18). The disciple is in the privileged position of representing Jesus who represents God, and whose reception is the test of one's attitude toward God, leading either to reward or loss.

Here is comfort for those who find the world against them because they belong to Jesus. There is little here about the content of the preaching (preach that the kingdom of heaven is at hand), the focus is almost exclusively on behavior and destiny. Discipleship is about behavior (dependence, poverty, defenseless...).

Matthew addresses behavior and destiny because disciples are images of Jesus himself: discipleship means conforming to the life of Christ and following his model. The defining property of Christ-likeness is not words, but deeds.

To be the church means to assume the commission and authority of Jesus, to live as he did, to suffer as he did; to be the church means discipleship.

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Matthew 10: Principles for Missions

Introduction

My interest in and commitment to missions has me continually seeking biblical models of missions. How was mission work done in the first century? Can we identify models of missions? What principles should guide us? What are biblical methods and goals? I have asked this question again and again in reading and studying Acts.

In studying Matthew recently, it struck me that Jesus was sending his disciples on a mission in Matthew 10. The second major discourse of Matthew, recorded in Matthew 10, gives us insight into the mission and helps us in our study of missions. What can we learn from this text? The context is the commissioning and sending of the Twelve. Jesus gives specific instructions related to the mission. These instructions and words of encouragement still provide guidance those who go forth today with the message of Jesus. I call these "principles for missions." They come directly from the text of Matthew 10.

First, Jesus is the teacher; Jesus is the example.

Missions is not about us, it is not about the workers. Missions is not the goal; the goal is to develop disciples of Jesus. The goal is to help other people become like Jesus. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. The purpose of the teacher is also the purpose of the disciple. We are not the teacher; we are the disciples. We do not direct the mission, God directs the mission. God defines the mission. God determines the purpose of the mission. The mission belongs to God. Jesus is the one who builds the church. We are not free to develop our own mission when God has given us the parameters of his mission. The primary purpose of missions relates to God's eternal purpose to bring everyone under the Lordship of Jesus. God asks of his followers (disciples) that we make more and more disciples. That is the mission!

Second, God is in control and he will take care of those who are involved in his mission.

The mission does not demand poverty, but the mission does demand sacrifice. Those involved in the mission travel light. The mission is accomplished by those who learn to depend on God. A person who is willingly involved in God's mission develops a new set of priorities. A person who is "on mission" and is focused on God's mission develops a new way of thinking about life in this world.

Third, our relationship with God is enhanced by our boldness in God's mission.

As we declare him before others, he affirms that we are his. We become more confident in sharing the message. We find it easier and easier to follow Jesus. We acknowledge God; he acknowledges us. The disciple grows closer and closer to the Master.

Fourth, the result of God's mission is not always love and joy and peace.

Sometimes the message of Jesus causes divisions. Mission demands establishing correct priorities. Mission demands that we focus on life beyond this world. Being on God's mission will at times bring difficulties and challenges into our lives. Sometimes, the result is division and conflict.

Fifth, the messengers are God's messengers.

Whether the message receives a positive response or is rejected, the messenger must not take it personally. The messenger always remembers that the mission is not about her or him. The mission is about God; the mission is about Jesus. Those who reject the message are not rejecting the messenger but are rejecting God.

Sixth, the reward is certain because God gives the reward.

God promises that faithful disciples who pursue the mission will not lose their reward. God rewards faithfulness. God blesses faithful servants; they will not lose their reward.

MATTHEW 13

The Nature of the Unexpected Kingdom

Introduction

Matthew is literary masterpiece, Jewish background, OT quotes, thematic consistency, servant king.

- The presence of Jesus [Matt. 1:23, 28:18-20]
- Two divisions [Matt. 4:17, 16:21]
- Theme of Part I [Matt. 4:23, teaching/preaching/healing]

Five discourses

#1—Mountain Discourse

- Listeners: Crowds, with disciples present
- Topic: Introduction to the Kingdom of Heaven [ye have heard it said, contrasts]
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Introduction to Matthew 13

Matthew 13; end of parables discourse (13:53)

What matters most in the kingdom: kingdom priorities

Discovering what is hidden; the surprising kingdom

Church is mentioned twice in gospels, kingdom hundreds of times. *Kingdom is bigger than the church!*

Parables confound the theologian or philosopher but delight the children and simple

The Kingdom is no novel invention that needs a PR job! Its communication isn't showy but simple.

The parables illuminate the subject of the kingdom for those who are willing to accept the message and darken it for those who reject the message of the present reality of the kingdom.

The kingdom message of Jesus was the most radical message the world has ever heard. Here is a true revolution, not launched with guns, tanks and soldiers but with a wandering preacher in Galilee.

Quote: *'The doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, which was the main teaching of Jesus, is certainly one of the most revolutionary doctrines that ever stirred and changed human thought. It is small wonder if the world of that*

time failed to grasp its full significance and recoiled in dismay from even a half apprehension of its tremendous challenges to the established habits and institutions of mankind. For the doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, as Jesus seems to have preached it, was no less than a bold and uncompromising demand for a complete change and cleansing of the life of our struggling race, an utter cleansing, without and within.... It is true that he said his kingdom was not of this world, that it was in the hearts of men and not upon a throne; but it is equally clear that wherever and in what measure his kingdom was set up in the hearts of men, the outer world would be in that measure revolutionized and made new....

Focus Text

Begin at the end. 13:52—not really a parable, perhaps an illustration, some lists of parables include it—some do not. Two lessons: (1) the Kingdom of Heaven is a combination of the old and the new treasures, (2) the Kingdom of Heaven is unpredictable, it is unexpected.

What does the Kingdom of God look like? We need images of the Kingdom of God to inspire us and to help us recognize it when it is right in front of us. Like prophets before him, Jesus uses parables to describe it. His parables speak to common ordinary folk—farmers, gardeners, merchants, fishermen, women. His Kingdom metaphors—hidden treasure, a precious pearl, a tiny seed, yeast—all work to point our minds from specifics to the infinite. Whatever the Kingdom is like, it is surprising and yet found in ordinary places. Like a seed, it is characterized by slow organic growth, it demands careful watchfulness because it is hidden and it is precious beyond measure. Yet the Kingdom is accessible anywhere, anytime, to anyone. It is found in soup kitchens or at our work. It is there for anyone who intentionally enters into Christ's reconciling work.

Basic Outline of the Parables

Chapter 13 includes 6 parables of the form, “The kingdom of heaven is like...”

The first parable (sower) is not of this form but it is nonetheless a kingdom parable.

<u>Parable</u>	<u>Expectation</u>	<u>Unexpected</u>	
Sower	Messiah rules all nations.	Individuals respond to God’s invitation.	CHOICE
Weeds	Citizens rule world with Christ.	Citizens live among people of the world.	COMMON
Mustard seed	Kingdom begins in majestic glory.	Kingdom begins in insignificance.	SMALL
Yeast	Kingdom rule is coerced.	Kingdom rule come gradually through influence.	CONTROL
Treasure	Kingdom is public, visible to all.	Kingdom is hidden, individual purchase.	COST
Pearl	Kingdom brings valued things.	Kingdom requires abandoning earthly values.	COMMITMENT
Net	K. begins w/ separation of unrighteous	Kingdom endures to separation of unrighteous	ENDURE

What is new/old in this section?

CHOICE--Kingdom choice, kingdom power is not coercive, the kingdom of God is chosen, seed sown; not born into the kingdom

COMMON—Kingdom exists in common life

SMALL—kingdom begins in small, insignificant ways; kingdom expands little by little

CONTROL--The kingdom power is of God, the rule of God, the control of God, weeds growing together; fish gathered; the kingdom power is great results from small beginnings, remarkable growth

COST—kingdom is available to all, but cost is high

COMMITMENT--The kingdom price is invaluable

ENDURANCE—the kingdom exists not for itself

CHALLENGE--The kingdom challenge is freshness

Conclusion

Although the kingdom is hidden, it can be found; and when it is, one should make whatever sacrifice is necessary to obtain it. ‘Anyone who counts the cost of discipleship has completely failed to grasp the greatness of the reward’ Granted the kingdom’s value and its sure triumph, one must strive to overcome every obstacle in the way of obtaining it.

If it dominates your life and leads to sacrifice, you will be the winner 'The sole point being made is that the kingdom is worth everything.

Of course, it is possible to see this the other way around where the one doing the seeking for treasure and paying everything is Jesus. Both can be true. The kingdom principle is that sacrifice for something worthwhile is no sacrifice at all and will be rewarded. Missionaries often say at the end of their ministry, 'I sacrificed nothing.' The kingdom is a source of great joy and riches but not always like some would want! God doesn't promise you a BMW or a mansion on earth, but he does promise you treasure you may not see or value. God meets us in the hidden place when things are tough and the treasure we find there makes it all worthwhile.

The kingdom CAN be understood. And when understood right there will always be new things to say but the good old story will never cease to excite. We will say new things that are relevant to our society in terms of our communication, but we will never change the message.

The kingdom is the oldest story yet new every day!

We will learn to work out for ourselves the way that the kingdom can be hidden yet revealed!

If we seek the kingdom all other things will be added to us

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MATTHEW 18

Seven Essentials for Life in the Church
Text: Matthew 18

Introduction

This is the fourth of the five teaching sections—the Matthew discourses. We can see this as we look at 19:1 and its parallels, thus it provides our beginning point.

Seven Essentials

v. 1, importance of humility, absolutely essential

v. 5, importance of receiving one another

v. 6, importance of not causing any brother/sister to sin

v. 7, importance of not causing yourself to sin

v. 10, importance of every believer, every member in congregation.

- Every believer has angels in the presence of God.
- Note: Look at Jesus' illustration

v. 15, importance of our relationships one with another in the church

- Another way of saying how important every person is in the church
- The process suggested here is focused on the importance of people/relationships—involve as many people as necessary to restore the relationship.
- In the context of this paragraph, v. 18-20, applies to the church and the disciplinary action

v. 21ff, absolute importance of forgiveness

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MATTHEW 25

When the King Comes

We are in the last of the five discourses (26:1, last summary statement, thus is our beginning point). We can see the last word in last teaching section in Matthew: eternal life, lit., life eternal.

This discourse includes five parables on preparation—

- 24:37 as it was....so it will be
- householder 24:42....
- 25:1 like....
- 25:14 like....
- 25:31 = parabolic prophecy.

Check out parallel constructions from 24:37 to 25:30

24:37, as it was...

24:42, therefore keep watch

24:43, householder

Conclusion, 24:51, with gnashing of teeth

25:1, koh will be like...

25:13, therefore keep watch

25:14, it will be like...

Conclusion, 25:30, with gnashing of teeth

25:31, when the son of man comes....

Our text is the last parable: 25:31-46, Glory as God himself, glorious throne, picture of king

Before him would be gathered (divine passive)....

25:34, only time Jesus ever refers to himself as King

What an invitation, final invitation

Inherit your place in the kingdom.

Four times in same order, these things are listed—hunger, thirst, stranger, clothing, sick, prison.

Good people don't remember all the good things they do.

This is a summary of how the King's followers treat people.

All of life, this is the standard, this is normal.

These are examples. How know that? Two "C"s: context and common sense. Are we helping people? Are we servants? Are we ministers?

We have influences we never know about.