

Matthew 4:1-25

Study 1 - The Messiah begins His Ministry

Fasting alone in the desert, Tell of the days that are past

How for our sins He was tempted, Yet was triumphant at last.

Tell of the years of His labour, Tell of the sorrows He bore,

He was despised and afflicted, Homeless, rejected and poor. (Fanny Crosby 1820-1915)

Read 4:1-11

- Why does Satan tempt Jesus? Discuss what the devil's purpose is behind tempting our Lord three times. Does Satan usually wait until you're weak and vulnerable in some area to begin tempting you?

- How did the first Adam respond to testing? Why is it significant that the last Adam successfully withstood Satan's attack? What is different about each of the three temptations? Why does Satan change his tact each time?

- Jesus sets a pattern which He wants us to mimic when we are tempted, what is the pattern? Why is it a good strategy against the devil?

- Consider the importance to your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that He is sinless. How does His ability to withstand temptation prevent you from falling?

Read 4:12-17

- Why does Jesus begin His public Ministry in Galilee? If Jesus was seeking political stature, where would He likely have begun His ministry?

- How does the Lord Jesus respond to John's imprisonment? What was John's role in relation to the Lord's ministry?

- Would the people of Naphtali and Zebulun think that they were living in "darkness". What does this "darkness" look like?... Explain what the "light" was.

- Jesus is offering Israel something at this time, what is it? What must Israel do to receive what Christ offers?

- Why does Matthew use the term "Kingdom of Heaven" (V17)? Is the Kingdom of heaven different than the Kingdom of God?

Read 4:18-22

- Matthew uses the adjective "immediately" when discussing the response of the first four disciples. When we act immediately, when we are asked to do something, there is usually a reason. Imagine why the disciples responded this quickly.

- John 1:35-42, discusses the first meeting which Jesus had with these men. In the book of

John, what were the disciples originally called to? When Jesus called these men, He indicated that they would be “Fishers of men”, why is this such an important concept in evangelism?

Read 4:23-25

- Why does the Lord Jesus take the time to deal with the infirmities of the people? What does this say about His character and the way He used His time?

- At this point Jesus seems welcome in the synagogues, why would He still be allowed to teach people from this venue?

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Matthew 8:1 – 9:8 Study 2 - The King Demonstrates His Authority

Descending from Glory on high, With men thy delight was to dwell,
Contented, our Surety to die, Nor e'er didst the vilest repel - T. Hawels (1734-1820)

Read 8:1-4

- Ceremonially, Jesus made Himself ‘unclean’ by touching the leper (*See Lev. 13 for regulations concerning this disease*) . Why would He allow this to happen to Himself? The Leper has been said to represent all people, who come to Christ, as filthy people, without merit. How is this statement correct or incorrect?

- The Leper approaches Jesus and worships Him before requesting healing. What does this indicate regarding the leper’s faith?

- Matthew 5:17 & 18, reminds us that Jesus did not come to abolish the Law; how is that thought continued in this short passage. Why is this an important concept to grasp as we study more about the Lord Jesus?

- Compare this account in Matthew with the same account in Mark 1:40-45; Why does Jesus request the Lepers silence?

Read 8:5-13

- What is a centurion? Why does Jesus respond to the Centurion (likely Roman) in kindness while He said some harsh sounding things to the woman (Greek) who requested healing for her daughter in Mark 7:24-30?

- Explain why the Centurion said what he did in V9. Why does Jesus marvel at what the man said?

- Why is V11 such good news to the Gentiles? Who are the “sons of the Kingdom”?

Read 8:14-22

- The healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law seems to be almost an after thought in this rapid account of the Lord's miracles. What affect would this miracle have on the confidence of the disciples?
- Discuss what the purpose is of any miracle.
- Why does the Lord warn the "Teacher of the Law"? How would a typical "Teacher of the Law" view following a homeless man? What is the cost of following Christ today in our land?
- What do many in the world "see" when they consider following Jesus - His miracles, His Prophecies, His Power *or do they* "see", His inability to save Himself, His "abject" poverty, His meekness and lowliness of heart? What did you "see" when you asked the Lord to save you?
- Would following Jesus still be popular at this time in this Gospel?

Read 8:23-27

- What emotion would the disciples be feeling as the waves begin to toss their boat? Why do people hate to be in situations where they don't feel like they are in control?
- The disciples wake up the Lord Jesus as the storm causes them to fear, yet they seem to be amazed that He calms the waves. Suggest reasons why they would have awoken the Lord although they doubted His power to help them. In what ways does Jesus deal with the storms that you encounter in life?

Read 8:28-34

- Other gospel accounts discuss only one demon possessed man, in this account we have two mentioned. How do you reconcile the small differences between the scriptures? For some people, do these differences help or hinder their faith?
- What do you think of the demons theology? Is it better than the theology preached in many churches today?
- In Mark's Gospel we are told that Jesus asks that the former demon possessed man (men) should tell people about what the Lord did for him. We get a sense of how effective the man's testimony was in Mark 7:31-37. Why is a personal testimony such a excellent tool in witnessing to this day?

Read 9:1-8

- In this passage, we sense that the authorities were beginning to look closely at Jesus. What prompted their interest in His healing ministry?
- Is Jesus saying that because this man is a sinner, he is paralysed? Explain what he is saying?
- Why is it important that we "know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"? Who granted Jesus this authority or did He just assume this authority on His own?

Matthew 9:9 - 38

Study 3 - Power Aplenty

Thou, O Christ, art all I want, More than all in Thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint, Heal the sick and lead the blind
Just and holy is Thy name - I am all unrighteousness
False and full of sin I am, Thou art full of truth and grace. (Charles Wesley 1707-1788)

Read 9:9-13

- Read more about Matthew's (Levi's) call in the other gospels (Mark 2:13-17, Luke 5:27-32). Why do the disciples respond so quickly to the Lord's call. What will Matthew be losing and gaining by saying 'yes' to Jesus?
- Discuss why Jesus didn't come for "righteous" or "good" people but for sinners? What was it about Matthew that made the Scribes and the Pharisees so negative?
- Why does having fellowship with "sinners" still seem difficult for us today? What does this tell us about the nature of our hearts?

Read 9:14-17

- Write out V16 & 17 in your own words and explain what the Lord's analogy means.
- How do people today try to mix the Law & the Gospel. Is it possible to combine the two?

Read 9:18-26

- How was Jesus interrupted twice in this passage? How do you respond to interruptions?
- In other Gospels we learn that this man is a synagogue ruler named Jarius. What is he risking by coming to Jesus like this. What do you like about Jarius?
- Has your faith ever been stretched by your circumstances? How is the faith of both Jarius and the woman being stretched by trusting in the Lord?
- Is faith always rewarded by healing? Why or why not?
- How does Jesus view death. Is His view of death different than the crowd of "mourners"? Do you find that you sometimes slip into a secular view of death, with its fear and avoidance?
- How can we take comfort from how Jesus approaches death?

Read 9:27-34

- Why does Jesus ask whether the men believe that He can heal them?
- Why don't those who have been healed seem to obey the Lord's request of silence? Is gratitude and enthusiasm ever an excuse for disobedience? What effect will wide publication of the Lord's miracles have on His ministry soon?

- How do the crowds respond to the Lord's ministry? Are they true believers or just curious on-lookers? Why do the Pharisees say that Jesus performs miracles with Satan's help?

Read 9:35-38

- Why is it important that we have a Saviour who has compassion on the multitudes?
- This passage is often used, correctly, to motivate workers towards evangelism. Who, ultimately, is responsible for more workers being sent? What action are we commanded to take?
- Often, as we earnestly pray about a need in the mission field, or ministry, and are concerned by it, who does the Lord of the Harvest wish to send? Why does this happen?

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Matthew 10:1-42

Study 4 - Jesus Prepares His troops.

Jesus, I my cross have taken, All to leave and follow Thee.

Destitute, despised, forsaken - Thou from hence my all shalt be.

Perish every fond ambition - All I've sought and hoped and known!

Yet how rich is my condition - God and heaven are still my own! (Henry Lyte 1793 -1847)

Read 10:1-16

- Discuss whether the disciples had any 'authority' up until this time. Why are they commanded not to go into Samaritan or Gentile towns?
- Present a word picture of what the typical disciple would look like, act like, & think like. What did you use as your source for what the average disciple is like?
- Why are the disciples commanded not to bring along extra provisions for their travels? What attribute is the Lord trying to develop in them? Is this a natural approach to a task?
- Do we 'over prepare' our people for missions (primarily around Financial Support)?
- Compare what Jesus is saying here with how Paul approached missions (Acts 18:2,3 & 2 Thess 3:7,8).
- Why does the Lord prepare them for a future hour of persecution? Have you had to rest on these verses in your experience? Explain how the somewhat contradictory statement can be correct; "be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves".

Read 10:17-25

- How can families turn against each other as indicated in these verses?

- Has the Lord given you the correct words to say as you encounter persecution? Is this only true in times of persecution or have you sensed His leading at other times when you have witnessed for Him?

- Look at V23. Discuss what this prophecy might mean.

- What point is the Lord Jesus trying to make in V24 & 25?

Read 10:26-33

- In these few verses, the disciples are exhorted to “not fear”, or “do not be afraid” several times. What might have caused them some anxious moments? Usually does it help your fear to be told to not be afraid?

- What are some of your favourite “DO NOT FEAR” verses?

- Why should we be greatly encouraged to understand just how much our Father is aware of what’s happening? Do we wrestle with understanding how much God is really in control?

Jesus, and shall it ever be, a mortal man ashamed of Thee?
Ashamed of Thee, Whom angels praise,
Whose glories shine through endless days? (Joseph Griggs 1720 -1768)

- V32 & 33 remind us of our tendency to betray Jesus (not unlike Peter). Does this mean that you can lose your salvation if you are not a bold witness for the Lord? Explain your response.

Read 10:34-42

- Reconcile how the ‘Prince of Peace’ can claim to cause what occurs in V34? At what time in the past, present or future do you see Jesus as being the “Prince of Peace”

- How can we measure our love for Jesus Christ against our love for our families. Why does Jesus discuss the cost of following Him.

- What has it “cost” you to follow Jesus?

- My love for God can be measured in how I treat others. Should we ever desire some kind of compensation for serving unselfishly?

Matthew 11:1 – 30
Study 5 - Doubts, Woes & Rest

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest:

Lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast."

I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad;

I found in Him a resting place, and He has made me glad - Horatius Bonar (1808 - 1889)

Read 11:1 - 19

- What prompts John's question to Jesus? Why does Jesus point to His miracles as a response to John's question?

- Why does the Lord Jesus quote portions of Isaiah 35:5,6 in His reply? The Lord ministered to the poor and afflicted - how is this different than how men act if they are trying to make a name for themselves?

- Why does Jesus contrast His ministry with John's. How are their ministries the same and how are they different? On the scale of prophets, how does Jesus rank John the Baptist?

- Explain V11.

- From Genesis to Malachi, the Messiah's coming is foretold. John is NOT a reincarnation of Elijah, but what of Elijah does he possess?

- Jesus uses the phrase "He who has ears, let him hear" also in Revelation 2 & 3 as He describes the 7 Churches. Why is His call to listen important in Matthew and in Revelation? Are there similarities in both passages?

- If you believed in the ministry of John the Baptist, should you automatically believe in the One who follows John? Explain your answer.

Read 11:20-24

- Jesus pronounces "woe" to 3 towns. What towns does He denounce? Why does He do this? Should this catch the attention of the inhabitants of these communities?

- Tyre, Sidon and Sodom do not appear to Jesus as having as great a responsibility before God as the cities where He ministered. Discuss how God assigns responsibility based upon 'light received' (or *privilege*).

- North America & Europe have been greatly blessed by the Lord. Do you believe a similar 'woe' could be spoken against our society as we move away from our Lord? Explain your response.

Read 11:25-30

- Explain V25 & 26, from the point of view of privilege and responsibility.

- What aspects of Jesus' person and work can only be understood by the Father? What aspects can we understand?
- What does 'Coming to Jesus' entail? Is free submission to the 'Yoke of Jesus' possible to a *natural* person?
- A yoke is always for two animals. Who else is struggling at our side as we submit to the yoke?

Matthew 12:1 – 50

Study 6 - Israel begins to Resist her King

Thine arm, O Lord, in days of old was strong to heal and save;
 It triumphed o'er disease and death, o'er darkness and the grave;
 To Thee they went, the blind, the dumb, the palsied and the lame,
 The leper with his tainted life, the sick with fevered frame. - Edward Plumptre (1821-1891)

Read 12:1 - 8

- It would seem as if the Pharisees have been looking for opportunities to attack the Lord's ministry. What do they pounce on in these verses? (See Deut. 23:25)
- Why is the strict observance of the Sabbath something the Pharisees endorse? What motivated their adherence to this Law?
- Suggest reasons why God didn't condemn David's act when he ate the "showbread".
- What do the Pharisees miss when they legalistically apply their interpretation of the Law?
- The Lord calls Himself the "Lord of the Sabbath". Why is this a correct term?

Read 12:9-14

- Did the Pharisees ask Jesus an honest question in V10, or did they already have a preconceived answer?
- Without really accusing them of hypocrisy, Jesus reveals their double standard. How can we fall into rationalizing our actions while condemning similar actions in other people? Discuss areas in your own life where this has been true.
- How can "righteous" people become convinced that murdering someone else is okay?

Read 10:15-37

- To what things do people attribute miracles to today?

- What was so evil about the Pharisees assertion regarding the power behind Jesus?
- Why do the Pharisees work so hard trying to discredit the Lord Jesus? Who is the source of the power by which their children drive out demons (V27)?
- Explain the Lord's analogies:
 - the kingdom divided:
 - The strong man:
 - the good vs the bad tree:
- What do you think V31 & V32 mean?

Read V38-50

- What motivates the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law to request a miraculous sign? Why is this a ridiculous request?
- What should the Pharisees learn from studying Jonah's experiences? What prophetic point was Jesus trying to make?
- What point is Jesus making in V46-50. Are blood relationships as important as spiritual relationships?

Matthew 13:1 – 58

Study 7 - Parables with a Kingdom View

Sowing the seed by the wayside high, Sowing the seed on the rocks to die,
 Sowing the seed where the thorn will spoil, Sowing the seed in the fertile soil;
 Oh what shall the Harvest be? Oh what shall the Harvest be? - Emily S. Oakey (??-??)

Read 13:1 - 23

- The Lord seems to change His style of speaking to the crowds, why does He now resort to speaking in Parables?
- Explain the parable of the four soil types.
- Does God desire that people harden their hearts, close their eyes, and stop their ears? What does God really wish to do if people do not do these things?
- In V17 the disciples are called 'blessed' by Jesus. Have we been 'blessed' as they have been blessed?
- Describe the Kingdom of Heaven.

Read 13:24-43

- Explain the parable of the good seed and the weeds. What is its application for us today? Why do the disciples need an explanation?

- What further do we discover about the Kingdom of Heaven from the parable of the Mustard Seed and the Parable of the Yeast?

- What would your reaction be if you were listening to Jesus telling parables whenever you heard Him speak?

Read 13:44-52

- Again, explain what additional insights you've gained regarding the Kingdom from the Parables of the Hidden Treasure, The Pearl Merchant and the Fishing Net.

- Why does Jesus use Parables which seem to be drawn from every aspect of Jewish society? Does this help us understand the Parables today?

Read 13:53-58

- Why do different people react differently to Jesus. Is this still true today?

- What causes people to esteem Him or to take offense at Him?

Matthew 14:1 – 15:39

Study 8 - A Great Prophet dies, Food for all - twice!, Faith

There's nothing like the old, old story, Grace is free, grace is free!

Which saints and martyrs tell in glory, Grace is free, grace is free!

It brought them thru' the flood and flame, By it they fought and overcame,

And now they cry thru' His dear Name, Grace is free, grace is free! Emma M. Johnston (??-??)

Read 14:1 - 12

- If you read this part of the story about John the Baptist for the first time, what would your reactions be?

- Have you at times regretted a statement that you made (*like Herod being sorry*)? What two choices do you have when you have said something you later regretted?

- Millions of followers of Jesus have been martyred over the centuries. What might be the motivations behind their executions?

Read 14:13-21

- When bad things happen to good people how do we usually respond? How does our Lord respond?

- In which ways do you sense the Lord's compassion in this passage?
- The disciples recognized the peoples need, yet the disciples were unable to act upon their knowledge. As people prepare for the Lord's ministry and become aware of great needs, this story should be a source of encouragement, why?

Read 14:22-36

- Why would Jesus choose to walk to the disciples on the water? Do all of His miracles have a purpose? What is the purpose of miracles?
- What role does faith play in the successful implementation of a miracle?
- Peter teaches us a lesson about how strong our faith may be. What matters more: the strength of our faith -or- the strength of our God?
- Gennesaret seems to be thrilled (and well organized) for the Lord's arrival. Many would have been brought to Jesus because of the faith of those people who brought them (not the sick person's own faith). Would healing occur by their own faith or the faith of those who brought them?

Read 15:1-20

- Discuss what is meant by the term "traditions". Generally in the Bible is this term positive or negative?
- The Lord followed Moses' Law faithfully but did not regard the Pharisees traditions highly. Have you had to separate what God's Word says from the traditions you are accustomed to? What happens to your relationships with people within the tradition, as you start following God's Word?
- What do Verses 16 -20 mean to you?

Read 15:21-39

- Explain why Jesus initially ignored the woman's pleas. What is meant by V26 & 27?
- Do you think that the result of the healings (V31) - 'people praised God', is the outcome which all genuine miracles and genuine faith should produce?
- Discuss what you see as similar and different in the feeding of the 5000 men compared to the feeding of the 4000 men.

Matthew 16:1 – 28
Study 9 - Warning, Confession, Prophecy

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;

She is His new creation by water and the Word:

From heaven He came and sought her to be His holy Bride

With His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died. Samuel J. Stone (1839-1900)

Read 16:1 - 12

- In Chapter 12:38-40 Jesus describes what the sign of Jonah would be. What is this sign?

- What's odd about having both the Pharisees & Sadducees approaching Jesus? Is there any similarity to the ecumenical movement's members today?

- What "*signs of the times*" should the observant person have noticed when the Lord walked on earth? What signs do you perceive in our day?

- Why do the disciples fears about food seem misplaced?

- What is the yeast of the Pharisees? How does this yeast affect the bread? Does this same 'yeast' still work within the church today?

Read 16:13-20

- Is the question "who do people say the Son of Man is?" still important? Explain your answer.

- Why does Jesus ask the disciples for their personal response, after first asking them for the results of a public opinion poll?

- Explain your view of what is being said in verses 17-19. What do some groups believe Jesus is stating here?

- What kind of "church" is being discussed here?

Read 16:21-28

- Why would the Lord teach the disciples what was to happen to Him in the future?

- In the light of Jesus' ministry and work why does the Lord refer to Peter as a "stumbling block" or "an offense"?

- How, even when we are concerned for others, can our thinking not be focussed on God's will?

- Why is "denying ourselves" humanly speaking, such a hard accomplishment?

- What is meant by the phrase "take up your cross"?
- Explain the 'economics' of buying your own soul. Is it possible and what is the soul's value?
- Was Jesus promising immortality to some of the disciples in V28? Explain your response.

Matthew 17:1 – 27

Study 10 - Glory Firsthand

With Moses and Elijah nigh the incarnate Lord holds converse high
 And from the cloud the Holy One bears record to the only Son
 With shining face and bright array Christ deigns to manifest today
 What glory shall be theirs above who joy in God with perfect love. Trans- John Neale (1818-1866)
 Read 17:1 - 13

- Why does the Transfiguration occur? Why is the Lord seen with Moses and Elijah?
- The Father speaks; why are His words so important at this time?
- Was it possible for the disciples to understand what they had seen, yet? Why will they be able to recount this event more accurately after the resurrection?

Read 17:14 - 21

- Compare this account with Mark 9:14-29. What additional information does Mark's account relate to us?
- Compare this passage with what is said in Matt.10:1. Why are the disciples powerless against this evil spirit?
- Mark's gospel captures a quote from the boy's father "...if you can do anything". What do you think propelled this man to seek a cure from Jesus? Faith, peer pressure, or something else? Why?
- Is our faith based upon it's amount (mustard seed or less) or it's object? In the past, had the disciples cast out demons based on their authority, or the Lord's? Do demon's ever act beneficially towards man?
- Daniel 10:13 suggests that the angels of Satan have different ranks. How does our passage agree with Daniel's suggestion?

Read 17:22-27

- Jesus warns His disciples again of what lies ahead. How do they react this time? How is this reaction different than in Matt 16:21-28?

- Read Exodus 30:13-16. What is the purpose of this tax? Why does Peter sort of lie?
- Jesus speaks before Peter does. Explain Jesus' thinking. Can you think of any miracles which are more unusual than this in the Bible?

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Matthew 18:1 – 19:30

Study 11 - Warnings, Conduct & Questioning

I choose the path of heavenly truth, and glory in my choice
 Not all the riches of the earth could make me so rejoice.
 Thy precepts and Thy heavenly grace I set before my eyes;
 Thence I derive my daily strength, and there my comfort lies. Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Read 18:1 - 6

- What prompts the disciples to ask this question? Is the desire to be "*great*", natural in every man?
- What is the original source of the desire to be greatest? In our day, how do people, companies & nations, try to insure that they are "*great*" and everyone had better realize it?
- In Jesus' eyes, how do we become "*great*"? How did He prove His greatness?

Read 18:7-9

- Explain these verses. How have some groups / individuals applied these verses?
- What does this passage teach us about allowing those things that cause us to stumble, to remain in our lives?

Read 18:10-14

- Where is V11 in the NIV, RSV and some other modern translations? Compare to Luke 19:10. As a mission statement, how clear was Jesus on His mission?
- Jesus reminds us that the Father and His shepherd will actively pursue lost sheep. What do we learn about our attitudes to others through this passage?

Read 18:15-20

- What process does Jesus lay out for settling disputes between believers?
- At any time is it permissible to take another believer to court? Scripturally support your position.

- Verses 18-20 should be remembered in the context of the passage. How does this “Binding” & “Loosing” occur in Heaven and earth, and what do these terms mean?

Read 18:21-35

- In the last passage we read about settling our problems by going to our brother alone. In this passage we see infinite forgiveness. Should I just forgive the individual who offended me without taking the steps outlined in the passage above? Explain your thinking.
- Why would Jesus use an immense debt, the sum of which was unpayable?
- Did the servant deserve grace or justice?
- If this parable means that God has cancelled my great debt that I couldn't even begin to pay, how does Jesus feel I should act toward my brother / sister who has wronged me?

Read 19:1-12

- What position on divorce most closely resembles our country's view:
 1. Pharisee's position on divorce.
 2. Moses' position on divorce.
 3. Jesus' position on divorce.
- The disciples rationalized that if marital unfaithfulness was the only legitimate way to obtain a divorce it would be better off not to marry. What are the dangers inherent in this position?
- Celibacy, the Lord teaches, is not for the general population, only for those “who are born that way”; does this agree with your understanding of other passages? What would society say about this train of thought?

Read 19: 13-30

- Is Jesus endorsing a “works” mentality by counselling the young man to sell his possessions and give to the poor? Explain your position.
- If the young man is unwilling to give to the poor, does he truly love his neighbour? What was his idol?
- Explain why wealth pulls man away from the kingdom of God.
- Peter asks an honest question (*however, the question is a product of our sinful, selfish nature*) that we all sometimes ask; “*what's in it for me?*”. What is Jesus' response?
- What has to be our motive as we leave things behind to serve our Lord?

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Matthew 20:1 – 21:45

Study 12 - Who Has Authority?

Cure your children's warring madness; Bend our pride to your control
Shame our wanton selfish gladness, Rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom. Grant us courage.

Lest we miss your Kingdom's goal. Harry Fosdick (1878-1969)

Read 20:1 - 16

- What is the point that Jesus is making in the Parable of the Workers?

- Is it important to notice that only the first workers that were hired discussed their pay? Explain your response.

- Explain what is meant in V16.

Read 20:17-28

- Compare the reaction of the disciples this time, when Jesus predicts his death (see Matt 17:22,23 & Matt 16:21-28).

- Consider the word "*then*"(V20); it would seem that soon after discussing His death for the third time, the mother of James and John wished to see her sons honoured in the kingdom. What does she want this status for? How do the other disciples react? Explain both positions.

- What does "*drinking the cup*" entail? Can anyone actually drink of the cup that the Lord drank? Would anyone actually desire & choose this course of life?

- Jesus seems always to have a servant focus. How can a person act as a servant in our day & age?

Read 20:29-34

- Matthew's account of the healing of blind Bartimaeus and his companion seems to conflict with Mark 10:46-52 & Luke 18:35-43. What are the differences and can these discrepancies be resolved?

- What does the term "*Jesus, Son of David*" imply?

Read 21:1-11

- Why is it so important that Jesus fulfills every small prophecy concerning His life & His ministry?

- Picture yourself on the road, with your cloak on the ground, for the colt to walk on, waving a palm branch. What would you be feeling? What would you be thinking?

- Why does Jerusalem appear to be ignorant of who Jesus is? Did they notice His birth either?

Read 21:12-17

- What motivates the leaders to indignation?
- At this point in His life and work, why does Jesus attack the temple money changing system? What's different in this encounter than the last time (John 2:13-16)?
- Jesus, forcibly removed those things which hindered the Jew from approaching to God. Do we ever, through the Holy Spirit, have to perform a similar task, and why?

Read 21:18-27

- Explain the meaning of what is the Lord's only 'negative' miracle. Why is the disciple's question so odd?
- In V22 the Lord seems to be saying that "*whatever you want God will give to you, as long as you believe, when you pray*". Is this what the Lord is saying? Using examples from our culture, list the dangers of this type of doctrine.
- By what authority does Jesus speak? Explain the Pharisee's reasons for not responding to Jesus.
- Jesus often responds to the Pharisee's questions with a question of His own. Do you think that the Pharisees are used to being asked questions that question their authority?

Read 21:28-32

- Explain the Parable of the Two Sons.
- In which ways have the Priests and the Elders lost out?

Read 21:33-46

- Jesus continues to talk to the Priests and Elders about authority. How does He view the authority of the religious leaders?
- Explain the interpretation of the parable.
- Nathan confronts King David re: his sin, by telling a parable, and David responds with a similar condemnation as the Jewish leaders did (2 Samuel 12:5 & 6). David immediately sought God's forgiveness when confronted with sin (*and the parable's interpretation*) how do the Jewish leaders respond to Jesus' pointed parables?

Matthew 22:1 – 23:37

Study 13 - The Pharisee's Go Three Rounds Against the King! & are knocked out!

Master, we would no longer be loved by the world that hated Thee,

But patient in Thy footsteps go, Thy sorrow as Thy joy to know.

We would and O confirm the power - with meekness meet the darkest hour,

By shame, contempt, however tried, for Thou was scorned and crucified. Anonymous

Read 22:1 - 14

- Who is Jesus targeting by telling this parable? Who are the first servants and what was their fate (V3,4,6)? Who are the next invitation recipients and what is their response?

- What is the acceptable clothing for this banquet? What does this clothing represent?

- Who invites & who does the choosing (V14)?

Read 22:15-22 (Round I - Trap I)

- Who were the Herodians? Why do you think they join the Pharisees as they lay this trap?

- Consider what the ramifications would be if Jesus answered "yes" to their question? How about a "no" response?

Read 22:23-33 (Round II - Trap II)

- Who were the Sadducees? How does knowing who the Sadducees were, make their question all the more insincere?

- The point Jesus makes to the Sadducees underscores how the covenants which God made with the Patriarchs were not fulfilled in their lifetimes. What's the use of a promise if you don't see it's fulfillment?! What promises were made to these three men, and do these promises affect you, today, in any way?

Read 22:34-46 (Round III - Trap III)

- Jesus responds to the lawyer with a short answer. Think through the commandments and discuss how His summary of the greatest commandment is correct.

- How does Jesus show that the Messiah must exist before King David? The same passage is used in Hebrews 1:13; what point does the author of Hebrews try to make regarding the Messiah to his readers?

Read 23:1-12

Giving unrestrained expression to the pent-up criticism of a lifetime, He exposed their (the Pharisees) hypocritical practices in sentences that fell like strokes of lightning and made them a scorn and laughing-stock, not only to the hearers then, but to all the world since. - James Stalker (The Life of Christ)

- Jesus says that the Pharisees, as they taught the Mosaic Law, taught correctly. However our Lord does not endorse their practices. How can we encounter the same difficulty between belief and practice?

- Over time, what seems to motivate the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law?

Read 23:13-36

- Jesus pronounces seven (or eight, see Verse 14) woes on the Pharisees. What is a “woe”?
- Summarize each of the woes, and comment on why Jesus may have been concerned, and is warning them and us, about these aspects of the Pharisees practice.

Read 23:37-39

- Why, after Jesus pronounces His woes, does he turn His attention to Jerusalem?
- Consider what the “*desolate house*” may represent. Jesus closes this portion with saying “*blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*”. Why is this phrase here, and is it prophetic?

Matthew 26:1 - 35 Study 14 - The Plot

On that night of nights most solemn, Jesus called His own

Round the table of remembrance, all alone.

Then this feast of feast He ordered, feast of grace divine;

Sacred symbols He appointed, bread and wine

Thus His death of deaths is shadowed, in this simple way

Looking backward, pointing upward, to that day. Thomas Baird (1863-1933)

Read 26:1 - 5

- Jesus, again warns the disciples regarding His future. Why has Jesus tried so hard to make the future clear to the disciples?
- What action would you have advised Jesus to take as the Passover begins? Can you see any leaders of Israel dissenting to the plans laid in Caiaphas' palace?

Read 26:6-13

- Read John's Gospel (12:1-11) and relate what more you now know of the situation in these verses. Why does Matthew seem to say all the disciples were indignant, while John points at Judas Iscariot?
- What would have motivated the woman to worship the King in this way? How does Jesus take any simple acts, done solely for Him, and fill them with unimaginable importance?

Read 26:14-19

- Why do you believe Judas takes this opportunity to begin his betrayal of Jesus?
- Scripture, indicates many betrayals. At it's root, a betrayal is the breaking of a trust. Discuss other betrayals in the Bible.
- Theologians have speculated for many years how someone who had been with the Lord Jesus and

had witnessed His entire ministry could now betray Him. Discuss what you know or have read about Judas with your study group. (*Consider Ex 21:32, Ps 41:9*)

- In this Gospel, the story of how the Upper Room is located seems miraculous, yet somehow vague (see *Mark 14:12-17, & Luke 22:7-17 for more info*). What differences did you notice between Gospel accounts?

Read 26:20-35

- Why does Matthew not mention the Messiah washing the feet of the disciples?
- Attempt to be prepared to discuss the Jewish observance of the Passover. What is the sequence of events?
- How does Jesus introduce the modern Lord's Supper into the ancient ritual of the Passover? Are the two remembrances distinct from each other or does one observance eliminate the need for the other?
- Was the bread, "*His Body*"? Was the cup "*His Blood*"? Explain your answer.
- What further New Testament information is given, to help us celebrate and participate in the Lord's Supper.
- Often, our Communion Service will seem solemn, serious, and even sad. From this portion of Matthew, should we expect at times, to have a solemn focus on the Lord?

Matthew 26:36 - 27:32 Study 15 - The Garden & Night Court

Kneeling on the earth He prays, Man of sorrows all alone!

Yet in depth of agony, still He comforteth His own.

Pale, the blood sweat o'er Him flows, to the Father's will He bows.

Judas kisses and betrays: Crowds in fury onward roll

Lo! He speaks the healing word, and the smitten ear is whole

Prisoner, He is led alone, friend and lover both are gone. Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

Read 26:36-56

- Summarize the events in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- Do the disciples seem aware of what their Master was suffering, as He prayed?
- V54 & V56 allude to the fulfilment of scriptures. What scriptures needed to be fulfilled?

Read 26:57-68

- Usually when a person is arrested, it's based upon a clear notion of what crime has been committed. It appears that in Jesus' case they didn't know what to charge Him with. What 'crime' did they eventually settle on?
- What do you imagine was the problem with the false witnesses testimony?
- The Pharisees were sharper than the disciples in many ways. They realized that Jesus had been claiming to be the Messiah, the Son of God. Why could Jesus not remain silent when asked about His origin?
- What makes the Sanhedrin and other leaders treat the Messiah as in V67 & V68?

Read 26:69-75

- Three stages to denial: i) deny something and leave the scene ii) Use oaths to emphasize your denials iii) Curse and make a scene. Can we fall into the same trap as Peter?
- What should we do if we see ourselves at stage i or stage ii?

Read 27:1-14

- At this stage, Jesus is sent to the Roman Governor. Explain the process of condemning someone to death in Judea which is under Roman authority.
- Review the value of 30 pieces of silver. What strikes you as amazing (especially as you read V9)?
- Why do the Jews choose to charge Jesus with claiming to be the "*King of the Jews*"?

Read 27:15-26

- Often we think of Pilate as weak and easily manipulated. Discuss what additional character traits are indicated in this passage.
- The crowd choose Barabbas over Jesus. Today, people choose other things rather than Christ. What are some excuses that people will make rather than choosing Jesus?
- Pilate washed his hands, symbolically, to show that he had no guilt in the upcoming crucifixion. Discuss whether this kind of symbolic action could remove Pilate's guilt for abandoning justice and his convictions.

Read 27:27-30

- Read & discuss the Old Testament prophecies which you think best foreshadow the events found in these four verses.

Matthew 27:32 - 28:15

Study 16 - Tragedy & Triumph

See, from His head, His hands, His feet, Sorrow and love flowed mingled down,

Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, Or thorns compose so rich a crown? Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Read 27:32-44

- Why did the Romans force the condemned to carry their own cross?

- Jesus is offered wine, mixed with gall. What is this concoction and why does our Lord refuse to drink it?

- John's Gospel mentions the Jews being offended by Pilate's notice. Why did the wording bother the religious leaders? Why does Pilate post this plaque (*the charge against the Messiah*) on the cross?

- Does Jesus continue to fulfil prophecies during this period, at the end of His life, while on the cross? If so which ones?

- It's hard to understand how people could mock the Christ, while He is on the cross. Many however, believe that had we been there, we may have acted in a similar fashion. Do you agree or disagree with this viewpoint?

Read 27:45-56

- Explain how it is possible that God could / would forsake His Son?

- Were the miraculous events surrounding the Lord's death (*darkness, earthquake, dead raised to life, the ripped curtain*) provided to help those witnessing this event come to faith, or did God have another purpose in these miracles?

- Speculate & discuss why Matthew only records Jesus saying V46, while the other Gospels mention so much more.

- V50 says that Jesus "*gave up His Spirit*" (KJV "*yielded up the Ghost*"). How was the death of our Lord different than how anyone else has ever died?

- Which of God's attributes are displayed while His Son is dying for our sins?

Read 27:57-66

- What more do we learn of Joseph of Arimathea from the other gospels? Why would he choose to be identified with Christ after (from the world's view) his Master and all that He had stood for had come to ruin?

- Why do so many, to this very day, seem to focus on the death of the Lord, and wish to be associated with Him in His death? What important transaction took place while Jesus died?

- Is it important that the Gospels record that, beyond all doubt, Christ died?
- Write the Lord's obituary for your newspaper.
- What allegedly motivates the Jewish leadership to ask that a guard be posted?

Read 28:1-15

- Why did the first day of the week become important to the early church?
- Consider whether a first century witness & testimony still have credibility today. Why is this witness so key to our faith in a risen Saviour?
- Why does this great event not cause the leadership to respond in faith? What choices do people have when they encounter any miracle of the Lord's?

Matthew 28:16-20

Study 17 - The Great Commission & Review

“Go, preach my gospel” saith the Lord; “Bid the whole world My grace receive”;

He shall be saved trusts My word, And he condemned who'll not believe.

I'll make your great commission known; and ye shall prove my gospel true.

By all the works that I have done, by all the wonders ye shall do.

Teach all the nations my commands; I'm with you till the world shall end;

All power is trusted in my hands; I can destroy, and I can defend. Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Read 28:16 - 20

- Matthew is a kind author. He mentions that “*some doubted*”. Are doubts permissible even when miracles occur? Do you have “*doubts*” that you deal with?
- What does Jesus provide for those who doubted His resurrection (see John 20:24-31)? Does He provide anything that helps you conquer doubting?
- Discuss what is contained in the “Great Commission” stages:
 1. Go
 2. Make Disciples
 3. Baptize
 4. Teach the new disciples
- How can we fulfill this final commandment, where we live and work?
- Why does Jesus provide the encouragement found in V20?

Matthew in Review:

- How did you see Christ as Messiah in this Gospel?

- Did you grow in your faith / appreciation for Jesus / or in some other way by studying this Good News?

Study 18 - "And Now the End is Near"

Our Times are in Thy hand; Father we wish them there!

Our Life, our souls, our all we leave entirely to Thy care. William F. Lloyd (1791-1853)

Please note that this study is intended to be a "free-wheeling" discussion

1. From your perspective the purpose of prophecy is:
 - a) To answer our curiosity regarding future events.
 - b) To help deal with our fears and concerns as the world changes.
 - c) To demonstrate God's control over future events.
 - d) To give validity to the prophets teachings.
 - e) To strengthen our faith.
 - f) To warm our hearts to the things of God.
 - g) Prophecy has no current affairs value.

Discuss any other thoughts you may have on prophecy's purpose:

2. From your perspective the dangers of any prophecy may be:
 - a) People have misused their interpretations of prophecy.
 - b) The events surrounding the fulfilling of prophecy does not seem to bring the world to Christ.
 - c) A false anticipation may be raised surrounding Christ's soon return.
 - d) Current events are not always linked to specific prophecy.
 - e) Prophecy can be used to force adherence and conformity to bizarre doctrinal stands.

Discuss any other dangers which you may have noticed surrounding this issue:

3. What would God's Word be like if foretelling future events were not included:
 - a) The Bible would just be a book of ancient history.
 - b) My faith is strengthened by seeing prophecy fulfilled, so my faith in God would be weakened.
 - c) Living in a prophetic time keeps me in the Bible, so I'd be less inclined to study the Bible.
 - d) I think the Bible would be just as valuable if all prophecy's were removed from it's pages.
 - e) The Bible would be very dry and God would seem aloof from human affairs.

Consider other ways in which God's Word would be lessened if prophecy were not included:

4. To date; what prophecies have excited, and renewed your interest in prophecy:
 - a) Every Middle East strife and conflict.
 - b) Seeing God fulfill prophecy in ancient times is so neat!
 - c) The re-establishment of the nation of Israel.
 - d) The prophetic utterances surrounding Christ's first coming.
 - e) The prophetic descriptions surrounding His death and resurrection.
 - f) Prophecies which speak of His soon return and establishment of His kingdom.
 - g) Prophecies related to the chaotic state of future world events.

Are there other areas of prophecy which have motivated your study of this area?

-
5. How do you think Jesus and all the other prophets should use their gift of fore-telling?
- To scare people into obedience.
 - To show off.
 - To help the undecided believe with a rational, explainable faith.
 - To help underpin people's faith in God's ultimate control.

Read Matthew 24:1-46
Study 19 - The Sands of Time are Sinking

Every eye shall now behold him, robed in dreadful majesty
Those who set at naught and sold Him, Pierced, and nailed Him to the tree!
Deeply wailing, shall the true Messiah see. John Cennick (1717-1755)

1. Below is a list of things, some of which must happen before the end of the age.
Cross out those items on this list which are not mentioned in this chapter:

- Rumours of war
- Persecution of disciples
- Proliferation of False Christ's
- Formation of United Nations
- Famines in various places
- One taken, one left Behind
- Hatred by all nations of followers of Christ
- Many false prophets who deceive many people
- Nations against Nations, Kingdoms against Kingdoms
- Formation of European Common Market
- Earthquakes in various places
- Turning away from the faith (Apostasy)
- A Terrible time of trouble
- Development of Nuclear technology
- Gospel preached throughout the world
- Astronomical Calamities
- Increase in wickedness
- Appearance of Son of Man
- Mark of the Anti-Christ
- Mourning of Nations
- Abomination in the "Holy place"
- The beast's number
- Great signs and miracles by "Miracle Workers"
- One major World currency
- Re-establishment of Israel
- Fleeing from Judea quickly
- One World Government
- Temple must be destroyed
- Armageddon
- "As it was in the days of Noah"

- As best you can, please indicate a chronological sequence for the above events
- Be prepared to discuss the significance of some items in your list.

2. Why does Jesus disclose this future event to His followers (V6)

3. How can we best keep watch (v42)?

Read Matthew 25:1-13
Study 20 - Waiting, Waiting, Waiting!

With my lamp well trimmed and burning, swift to hear and slow to roam,
Watching for Thy glad returning, to restore me to my home;

Come, my Saviour! O my Saviour, quickly come!. John Samuel Bewley Monsoll (1811-1875)

1. Up till Chapter 25, we have encountered many parables, select a reason(s) why Jesus resorts to parables when foretelling the future:

- a) Jesus loved to tell stories
- b) People remembered stories much better than a doctrinal thesis.
- c) The stories obscured the meaning of the underlying message, unless you tried to understand it.
- d) Jesus liked to confuse people.
- e) He liked to use everyday events to explain difficult eternal principles.

2. Would you agree with the following statement: "The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids is about spiritual preparation"? - Yes / No / Maybe

3. If you answered "No" to question 2, you must complete this statement:
I think that the parable of the Ten Bridesmaids is about

4. If you answered "Yes" to question 2, you must select the appropriate response for this question:
The five well prepared bridesmaids got ready in which spiritual ways:

- a) Anticipated the soon return of the Bridegroom
- b) Knew the Bridegroom wouldn't delay His return while giving them more time.
- c) Realized that the other five bridesmaids were responsible for their own preparation.
- d) The five bridesmaids were nasty young ladies who didn't realize that sharing is a virtue.

5. Assuming that Spiritual Preparation is the message of this parable, how do you prepare to meet your Bridegroom:

- a) Keep yourself "pure and untainted" from the world.
- b) Party hard 'cause the Bridegroom may come at any time
- c) Establish a proper focus on what is useful and meaningful, what will last through eternity.
- d) Live a life that demonstrates your desire to please the Bridegroom.
- e) Study and communicate with the Bridegroom frequently, so that you will have a sense of His timing.

Read 25:14-30

6. A talent could be defined as any resource given to us by God, be it a fine singing voice, skill in music, a speaking or teaching prowess, ability with tools or cooking, or numbers. Really any skill we may possess is a talent given by God. Describe how the talents you have been given might be further used by the Lord.

7. The servants are expected to give an accounting of their spiritual talent's usage. Pick a reason(s) why Jesus may remind us of this upcoming review:

- a) Motivate us to not put off till tomorrow what should be done today.
- b) Make me feel guilty.
- c) To plan our lives to optimize the usage of our talents
- d) To confirm that our time spent in service to the master is to be accountable.
- e) The story of the Talents is just a story to get us scurrying about in useless busyness.

Read 25:31-46

8. This passage has often motivated Christians to be involved in social services activities: The focus of such service is to be what?

- a) Desire to serve your fellow man.
- b) Humanitarian awards.
- c) Desire to serve and exalt Christ.
- d) A step toward political office.
- e) Big rewards heaven.
- f) All of the above.

9. The passage lists several arenas where service in the Name of Jesus Christ can occur. Consider other potential avenues where service to our Master may be a possibility (especially focus on your own God-given talents as seen in Verses 14-30).