

New Hope Global Sermon: A New Series on Matthew

Introduction

I have been going through the Gospel of Matthew for my Scattered Flock devotions. There is so much to gain from a study of this gospel that I felt it was important to go deeper through a sermon series for 4 reasons.

First, each of the four gospels have unique distinctives: Mark is the action-based shorter version of Jesus' ministry; Luke is a Gentile doctor's look at Jesus through the lens of inclusivity (particularly of women, the poor and Gentiles) and issues of healing. John's gospel is focused on Jesus' claims of divinity back by his demonstration of those claims. These three are used most often in wider evangelistic outreach to Gentiles, non-believers and non-Jews. As a result, for many Gentile Christians, Matthew's gospel is the least known of the four. For better familiarity's sake it is a good gospel to consider.

Second, there's a more contemporary reason found in the author himself and his distinctives. Matthew was a tax collector and his call from Jesus shows us God's mercy and outreach to those who are the despised, wealthy people in our society, whom many call traitors. Jewish tax collectors represented the Roman government and used their job to enrich themselves at their people's expense. They were a group of social outcasts or even untouchables – certainly by the Pharisees and other



religious people. In our broken world, each of us can think of groups of people whom we consider in that category today – because of their gain at others' expense, their hypocrisy, their fringe pursuits and their detriment to the health and well-being of the society in which they live. Matthew's call as an apostle is a picture of the mercy of God we need today.

Third, this gospel is also a testimony to Matthew's transformed life as an Apostle. Matthew weaves Jewish scriptures prolifically through his presentation to prove to Jewish readers the true identity of Jesus the King. He expressly reaches out to the very people who despised him. It's a powerful example of what transformation looks like for any disciple of Jesus Christ.

And fourth, staying close to Jesus' teachings, his person and his heart should always be at the forefront of our minds.

Matthew's Model

The Scattered Flock posting for 2/1/21 highlighted these issues:

Bible verses: Mt. 9:9-13⁹

As Jesus left Capernaum he came upon a tax-collecting station, where a traitorous Jew was busy at his work,^[a] collecting taxes for the Romans. His name was Matthew. "Come, follow me," Jesus said to him. Immediately Matthew jumped up and began to follow Jesus.

¹⁰ Later, Jesus went to Matthew's home to share a meal with him. Many other tax collectors and outcasts of society were invited to eat with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹ When those known as the Pharisees saw what was happening, they were indignant, and they kept asking Jesus' disciples, "Why would your Master dine with such lowlives?"

¹² When Jesus overheard this, he spoke up and said, “Healthy people don’t need to see a doctor, but the sick^[b] will go for treatment.” ¹³ Then he added, “Now you should go and study the meaning of the verse: I want you to show mercy, not just offer me a sacrifice.^[c]

For I have come to invite the outcasts of society and sinners, not those who think they are already on the right path.” (Passion)

Song: I Have decided

I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus,
No turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, still I will follow, Though none go with me, still I will follow,
Though none go with me, still I will follow; No turning back, no turning back.

(Words and music: Anonymous)

Prayer:

Thank You for the blessing of Matthew’s call. It shows Your great mercy and all-inclusiveness, Lord. And it gives us Matthew’s model of inviting his friends to meet Jesus right from the beginning. May this story multiply mightily through Your people worldwide because so many need both your mercy and Matthew’s model. Thank You, Lord.

Matthew’s Distinctives

Michael Wilkins (in the *NIV Application Commentary*,) says:

Matthew’s Gospel has held a favored place in the history of the church because of its extended collection of Jesus’ teaching ministry, especially the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew has collected the most complete compilation of Jesus’ teachings, exhortation, prophecies and parables found anywhere in the Scripture (p. 31-32).

Therefore, the distinctives in this gospel are significant as themes to anchor the repeated teachings of Jesus and get to the heart of Matthew’s model in his gospel. Commentator Wilkins lists these distinctives:

- Jesus is the incarnate Son of God the Father
- Jesus “refers to God as his Father some 23 times, fifteen of which are unique to this Gospel” (p. 27).
- Jesus is the true Messiah
- Jesus is the promised King of Israel
- Jesus is the Son of David, “the name of the great king occurs” (17 times)
- Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man, as a humble Servant, as the Suffering Servant, as the glorious King and Judge (p. 28).
- Jesus is Lord. This is particularly momentous when people see his miraculous deeds , call on him as Lord and worship him (Wilkins, Idem).
- The promises of salvation are to a particular people (Israel) and to all the people of the earth.
- The bridge between Old and New Testaments – Matthew demonstrates repeatedly that Old Testament hopes, prophecies and promises have now been fulfilled in the person and ministry of Jesus (p, 29).
- The great commission for evangelism and mission. “Jesus” commission to ‘make disciples of all nations’ Mt/28:19 is unique to Matthew’s Gospel (Wilkins Idem.)
- A new community of faith. “Matthew, alone among the evangelists uses the term *ekklesia*, which later became the term that designates the church” (p.30).
- The role of Peter. Matthew narrates five incidents about Peter found nowhere else in the Gospels (p 31).
- Kingdom-life disciples –the Sermon on the Mount
- Mission-driven disciples
- Community-based disciples.

All these distinctives give us the apostle Matthew's perspective on who Jesus is and who he is calling his disciples to be. As we go through this gospel, may we become all that Jesus has intended, by the power of His Spirit. And become the model to our nations that Matthew was to his. Amen.

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