

Matthew 20

A continuation of the lesson from chapter 19 (See 19:30, cf 20:1; 20:16)

- I. Jesus will teach that God's way is not always the way man looks at a situation (1-16).
 - A. Jesus illustrates the kingdom by using laborers hired to work in a vineyard (1).
 1. Jesus will use this same description about ten times in Matthew alone to illustrate the church (cf. 3:2; 13:24 et al.).
 - a. The ideas of harvests and vineyards are favorites of Jesus (cf. 9:37, 38; 21:33; Jn 15:1).
 - b. This was a common illustration in the Old Testament, as well (cf. Isa 5:1-6).
 2. We should understand from use of the words "hire" and "labourers" that the kingdom is a place of work (cf. Mk 13:34; 1 Cor 15:58).
 - B. The laborers are hired at various periods of the day (2-7).
 1. The wage of a "penny" was agreed upon and the men went to work (cf. 18:28; Mk 6:37).
 - a. Probably about 15-17 cents or a fair day's wage.
 - b. They were not being underpaid because they agreed to this wage.
 2. The Jews started numbering the hours from sunrise or about 6 a.m. (cf Jn 11:9).
 - a. The 3rd hour would be 9 am. The 6th would be noon. The 9th would be 3 p.m. The 11th would be 5 p.m.
 - b. We see several examples of the "third hour" used in scriptures (cf. Mk 15:25; Acts 2:15).
 - c. Also, the sixth and the ninth hours (cf. 27:45; Jn 4:6 Acts 3:1).
 - d. The "marketplace" was the meeting place of this period.
 - e. No doubt they went there to be hired.
 3. "Whatever is right" is a fair wage for the work (cf. Col 4:1).
 4. About one hour before "quitting time" he finds more standing in the marketplace.
 - a. Some have tried to make this out to be a rebuke for laziness. I think not.
 - b. When the opportunity came they went to work.
 - C. Payment was made for the day's work (8-16).
 1. Payment was made by "whatever is right" to the servants beginning from the last to the first.
 - a. Verse 10 may well correspond with 19:27 and Peter's statement.
 - b. They thought they would get more than agreed upon when they saw the generosity of the "lord of the vineyard".
 - c. "Murmured" means to complain against (cf. Lk 15:28-30; Jude 16).
 - d. This murmuring was wrong because they had not been mistreated. "I do thee no wrong."

Note: This word "Friend" is used three times (cf. 22:12; 26:50).
 2. Jesus draws a conclusion from this illustration.
 - a. Much has been taught which goes beyond the context of this passage.
 - b. He is dealing here with the young ruler's question and His disciples' concerns.
 - c. "Between the stirrup and the ground, salvation is found" is a false concept.

- (1) Jesus is not teaching “death bed” salvation.
 - (2) Note that the first time the “eleventh” hour servant was invited he joined the workers.
- II. Jesus teaches about greatness in His kingdom (17-28).
- A. Jesus tells them of His suffering, death and resurrection (17-19).
1. As we have already seen in the book bearing Matthew’s name, Jesus repeatedly reveals the information about His pending death to His closest disciples (cf. 13:11; 16:21; Jn 15:15).
 - a. He was on His way to Jerusalem to attend His last Passover feast on earth.
 - b. We should note that it would also be the last Jewish Passover authorized by God (cf. Col 2:14).
 2. Jesus reveals the clearest account of His death thus far (cf. Isa 53:3-5).
 - a. He shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests and Scribes (cf. 26:2, 3).
 - b. They will condemn Him (cf 26:66) without authority to act.
 - c. He shall be delivered to the Gentiles (cf 27:2) who had authority for capital punishment (cf. Jn 19:10).
- B. Zebedee’s wife asks a special request of Jesus (20-28).
1. She requests that James and John be allowed to sit in seats of power in His kingdom (cf. 4:21; Ps 110:1).
 - a. It appears all His followers were still confused about the kingdom (cf. Lk 17:21; Acts 1:6).
 - b. Mark reveals that the two sons had a part in this (cf. Mk 10:35-37).
 2. The cup that Jesus refers to is probably a figurative idea of the cup of poison, which was used for executions and suicides (cf. Ps 11:6; Isa 51:17; Jer 25:15).
 - a. He brings the same idea up in the garden (cf. 26:39, 42).
 - b. They would indeed drink of the same cup.
 - (1) James would be the first Apostle martyred (cf. Acts 12:2).
 - (2) John was exiled to Patmos (cf. Rev 1:9).
 - c. “Not mine to give” means that rewards will not be passed out upon request, or for favoritism. It will be passed out based upon God’s will (cf. 7:21; 12:50).
 3. The “indignation” of the ten gave Jesus a chance to do more teaching.
 - a. This shows us the ten had the same ambitions as the two but were just beaten to the punch.
 - b. He uses Himself as an example of ministering or service (cf. 18:4; 2 Cor 4:5).
- III. As they depart Jericho two blind men are healed (29-34).
- A. Jesus leaves Jericho with a multitude still following Him (29, 30).
1. Jericho is located less than 20 miles from Jerusalem.
 2. Mark tells us the name of one of these blind men (cf. Mk 10:46).
 - a. “Son of David” showed that these men recognized Him as the Messiah (cf. 12:23; 15:22; 21:9; 22:42).
 - b. Sitting along the roads would be normal for those begging.
- B. The men are healed of the blindness (31-34).
1. Interestingly, it was the multitude that rebuked the blind men. For what reason we are not told.

- a. The rebuke had no effect on them. They “cried the more”. This indicated their persistence (cf. 7:7, 8; Lk 18:3-5).
- b. Mark reveals one threw aside an outer garment to hurry to Jesus (Mk 10:50).
2. These men are asked by Jesus, “What will ye that I shall do unto you?”
 - a. He who has created all things (cf Jn 1:3) is asked to merely heal their sight.
 - b. They could/should have asked for insight rather than sight (cf. Ps 119:18; Matt 13:13; Acts 26:18).
 - c. They, like so many in our world, are only concerned about physical things.
3. Jesus’ compassion caused Him to heal their blindness.