

## **Bible Study Lesson Summary, Oct. 22, 2017**

*This Sunday, Oct. 22, your readings should be Chapter 44-45 of Genesis, Psalm 28, and Matthew 15:21-39.*

### **The Gospel of Matthew**

#### **Matthew 12:38-50**

I have to laugh when reading Jesus' version of the story of Jonah. Most commentators only read the Book of Jonah and are very careful to say that it was a fish that swallowed Jonah because that is what the book says. I trust that Jesus knew what he was talking about when in verse 40 he says it was a whale. Jonah was very big in the Middle Ages. He is actually one of the biggest figures painted on the Sistine Chapel. There might be several reasons why that is the case but the fact that he prefigured the Resurrection is the most important. That was their focus. As St. Paul would say, if there is no resurrection, we are idiots. Sorry that is a loose quote. Vs. 42 is worth thinking about because it shows that OT people could be in front of the line to heaven, ahead of many who hear Jesus. Vs. 43-45 is good spiritual direction material. Don't just block out sin. Fill in the empty spot with the Lord's work or you could end up in worse trouble, being discouraged by more sin. In Vs. 46-50 we have the definition of the new family of God. Remember that the Jewish people figured they were the chosen ones. They received that by the bloodline. Mary is not being put down here because she did the will of the heavenly Father perfectly.

#### **Matthew Chapter 13:**

All but the last part of this chapter has to do with parables. First he gives a parable, sower and the seed. Then he quote Isaiah to let them know that many of them will not accept the word but, like Isaiah, he will still preach it. Then in Vs. 16-17 he takes the focus back away from the OT prophets and puts it back on himself. Then he finishes the sower parable. This is what is called sandwiching, which was a common practice back then. You use the beginning and end of a story to be the bread. Then you put the meat in the middle. In this case the meat is that his parables are more important than OT prophecy. Then he gives three more parables about the kingdom of heaven. If you were at last week's class you should have underlined the word Kingdom as he uses it. These are ways of understanding a very important image that Jesus uses to help us understand God and his family. It can best be understood in the context of kingdom language. Those three parables are the bread for another sandwich. Then he reemphasizes the importance of his parables. Then he finishes the weeds parable for the other slice of bread. Then to top off this teaching he gives another parable about the kingdom, adds that a good scribe will be able to use OT and NT teach. The Chapter ends with Jesus going back to his home territory of Nazareth and being rejected. Vs. 58 says he did not work many mighty deeds there because of their lack of faith. It is not that he needed their faith to have the strength to do a miracle. It is just that he wants them to understand that God rewards faith.

#### **Matthew Chapter 14:**

This is Herod Antipas, the son of the one who killed the Holy Innocents. Lust is one of his driving forces. He marries up and takes his brother's wife who seems very willing to play into it until the lust of her new husband turns to the daughter. This is a very dysfunctional family.

The feeding of the five thousand shows Jesus to be a man of God like Elisha who miraculously feed one hundred men. (2 Kings 4:42-44) Even more so, it shows Him to have the power of God to feed them like God gave them manna from heaven. These are critical in order for the apostles to believe in His ability to change bread into His body and feed the world. But the walking on the water story shows that the apostles are not ready for this yet, not even Peter. But Peter is still ahead of the pack. Peter stepping out of the boat is a reminder that as they go out as missionaries they will need to trust in Jesus. Jesus strengthens their faith with more miracles at Gennesaret.

**Matthew Chapter 15:** In this first part of the chapter Jesus is doing some clarifying some the OT laws. He knows that some of them have been twisted around and others are taken too far. This is something that the Church has had to do during all the centuries since Pentecost. Jesus is showing how to going about this kind of interpretation. Verses 18-20 give a summary of the previous part of the chapter and clarifies what Jesus sees as unclean.

### **The Book of Psalms**

**Psalm 21:** A tribute to David the King but more importantly I see this psalm as Jesus speaking to His Father and letting Him know how wonderful he feels being treated as king. It is a little odd because He is speaking of Himself in the third person but I think this is a sign of the kind of humility He wants us to feel for the gifts we receive. It would have been odd for David to be speaking of himself in the third person but then he was writing these psalms for the people to sing.

**Psalm 22:** This is the psalm that was Jesus' praying as He hung on the cross. The part that was reported to be said out loud was the first line: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" But the whole psalm is description of Jesus' feelings as He hung on the cross. "They stare at me and gloat; they divide my garments among them; for my clothing they cast lots." It sounds pretty accurate for having been written before 500 B.C. Supposedly it was not uncommon to introduce a psalm by just reciting the first line. You also have to remember that hanging on a cross puts pressure on the lungs so short sentences would be all he could say at a time and that would have been with great difficulty and a lot of extra pain because he would have had to push himself up against the nail through his feet so the pressure would be off his arms.

**Psalm 23:** The beautiful song of how the Father comforts His Son, Jesus, and each of us. Notice that we usually think of Jesus as the Good Shepherd because of his parables. But he reflects the Father who Jesus is referring to the ultimate Good Shepherd.

**Psalm 24:** This is a song of praise for the king of glory, but (vs.10) "Who is the king of glory?" It is the Lord, or God the Father, from who Jesus received His kingship and who He will return it to after all things are made subject to Him.

**Psalm 25:** Like psalm 22, this is written to describe Jesus' feelings as He went through His passion.

**Psalm 26:** This may have been written about King David, who wasn't always innocent, but he was good; but it truly describes Jesus, who was truly innocent. Verses 4-5, "I do not sit with deceivers..." Jesus did sit with them but called them to conversion, so He did not become one with them. This prayer of innocence would have fit Jesus until He took on our sins in the Garden of Gethsemane.

**Psalm 27:** Vs. 4; "One thing I ask of the Father; this I seek; to dwell in the Father's house all the days of my life..." Now you should know why our Ascension window shows Jesus happier at that moment than at the Resurrection.

**Psalm 28:** Besides being a prayer for help is also seeks justice. Vs. 4; "...give them what they deserve." Until I realized that these psalms were really the prayers of Jesus, this kind of statement made me very nervous. I don't consider myself the one to be asking for vengeance, for it might come back to me since I am not perfect. My imperfection would also create imperfect justice.

Knowing that Jesus and God are handling it gives me more comfort. It is a little like King David who was given a choice of three punishments. He chose the one from God because he felt God would be more merciful than a human attacker.

## **The Book of Genesis**

**Gen. 31:** In verse 19, “Rachel had meanwhile appropriated her father’s household idols.” The trouble this causes, is surely one of Jesus’ reasons for saying the two (husband and wife) must become one. This doesn’t just apply to intercourse. He hopes and prays they will become one in faith, in Him. There will be a constant theme in the Old Testament of the problems that come from bringing the idols of the family of the bride or groom into the new family of God and how it causes disasters. By the way, carrying the bride across the threshold is from an old Roman custom that makes it okay for the bride to leave her own family’s household’s gods and pray to the gods of the groom. The act was to appease her household gods by showing them that she could not worship them because she had been kidnapped and so wasn’t free to pray to them anymore. Verse 54, “He then offered a sacrifice on the mountain and invited his kinsmen to share in the meal.” Memorial stone, altar, mountain, rock are some of the key words to watch for. They blend together and become the focus point of God’s plan for the Eucharist. This meal as a part of a sacrifice on a mountain (altar) should sound familiar. The problem with the household gods can also be a reminder that even though the line of the Chosen People can be sinful, what is outside that main line tends to be worse.

**Gen. 32:** Jacob has become another foreshadowing of Christ. Jacob precedes his message with gifts from his flocks. Jesus precedes his message with miracles. Jacob’s wrestling with an angel is a taste of Jesus’ battle with temptation. Jacob wins against a good angel and gets a blessing. Jesus wins the battle against an evil angel and wins but it means the battle is not over.

**Gen. 33:** The first thing to note in this chapter is how kindness is better than strength. The second is the continuation of the memorial stone (altar) concept in verse 20.

**Gen. 34:** Coming right after the peacemaking chapter, this gives another lesson. For both sides are not very nice. Shechem rapes Dinah. This is not a good approach to work towards marriage. His family then tries the peaceful approach, but they are more into greed than peace, so even the acceptance of circumcision was just a concession to get more livestock (verse 23: Would not the livestock they have acquired—all their animals—then be ours?). This is also like being baptized for the wrong reasons. But then the sons of Israel are pushing way past justice. Without laws and a way to enforce them, there is always trouble. Also notice that much of the current Middle East culture still fits this clan justice theme. If you shame someone in a family, you shame the whole family and so your whole family must pay.

**Gen. 35:** In vs. 10, God renames Jacob, Israel. The wrestling angel had done the same in 32:29. Verses 9-15: We are back to the image of a memorial stone with oil poured on it as a sign of a covenant or promise from God. Verse 19: “...and the same monument marks Rachel’s grave to this day.” It is still there. Mothers go there to pray before childbirth to this day. This mourning by Rachel is what was referred to in Matthew 3:18. So it is not just about a mother losing a child but a mother and child being separated by death. Verse 22: Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father’s concubine. Our century is not the only one with sexual issues to deal with. This is to be seen as a power-play on the part of Reuben, challenging his father.

**Gen. 36:** Notice that God has not abandoned Esau, even though he is not in the line of those chosen to bring the Word. He still prospers but he has become a part of the Canaanites by marriage. They will be enemies of the Israelites.

**Gen. 37:** Joseph becomes the next Christ figure. There is no Judas but there is a John (Benjamin), a Peter (Reuben) and nine others. There is a cloak, a father that sends the son, and salvation that will come from the one who is betrayed, when he who was thought to be dead ends up saving them.

**Gen. 38:** The sin of Onan is very controversial. Different churches have different things that they interpret from it. The most obvious is the literal. He didn't do what he was supposed to do, provide an heir for his deceased brother's family so they would have a protector under the law. The Catholic Churches take this further. That masturbation is wrong because like with Onan, it is a selfish, self-centered act. That has been the tradition of the church for almost 2000 years now. It will not change, not even in this generation that is trying to say that all sexual pleasure is good. It is not hard for a 2000-year-old church to figure out the flaws in that thinking. It just looks around at all the people who are addicted to pornography.

The story of Tamar and her father-in-law is a possible foreshadowing or at least a lesson that Jesus would have learned to help him teach the Pharisees when confronted with the woman caught in the act of adultery. The lesson being that you had better not judge unless you have not sinned. Who are the only sinless ones? Jesus and Mary. If you look back the chapter 1 of Matthew you will see that is listed, Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron....

**Gen. 39:** Joseph, as a Christ figure is tempted. They were told to sin or suffer horrible consequences. Neither sinned. Both received the consequences but "the Lord was with him and brought success to all he did." (Gn.39:23) Think in terms of the Father in heaven putting His Son in charge who is being tempted to side with Satan like in the three temptations of Christ. Also we have Jesus (Joseph) being condemned even though He had not sinned.

**Gen. 40-41:** The main thing to notice here is that it sets up an amazing "coincidence". The OT Joseph, son of Jacob, interprets dreams. In the NT Joseph, son of Jacob (see Mt.1:16), has dreams and interprets them. Also note that in Gen. 41:46 we see that Joseph, a Christ figure, was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Also verse 41:42 is a reference that will help understand a culture that has a second who takes charge like Jesus putting Peter in charge as pope.

**Gen. 42-43:** Just notice the sadness of the father at the loss of his son. This is to help us understand God, who will lose His Son. We also have family asking forgiveness of the leader, who is their brother. This is just like us asking our brother through baptism for forgiveness.