



THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

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Part 10 Kingdom Values (Matthew Chapters 19-20)

Main Idea: in these chapters, Jesus speaks bluntly about a number of lightly important subjects-- marriage and divorce eternal life true greatness in eternal judgment. As you read through this passage notice the main points of Jesus' teaching.

I. MATTHEW CHAPTERS 19-20

A. Teaching about divorce (19:1-12)

(Matt. 19:1-20:34 NIV) NIV Matthew 19:1 When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan. 2 Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. 3 Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" 4 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' 5 and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." 7 "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" 8 Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. 9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." 10 The

disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." ¹¹ Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. ¹² For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others-- and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."

Setting: Jesus left Galilee where he spent most of his time speaking about his kingdom and demonstrating that he is the Messiah. He is now in Perea, the region just east of the Jordan River. His ministry in Perea lasted only a few months. It is from here that he will make his final journey to Jerusalem just prior to the passion week

Divorce: in these verses, Jesus explains the matter of divorce. He describes the binding nature of marriage and the very high standard permitting divorce only in extreme circumstances. He did this because there were two incorrect views about divorce held by the Jewish rabbis. The Shammai Rabbis interpreted the law rigidly and permitted a man to divorce his wife only if she was guilty of sexual immorality. The Hillelite Rabbis took a holy pragmatic approach and permitted a man to divorce his wife for any reason.

Celibacy: Since not everyone can handle celibacy (verse 11) Jesus is not requiring it here instead he makes it entirely a matter of personal choice. But in no way does Christ suggest that celibacy is superior to marriage.

B. Let children come to me (19:13-15)

¹³ Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." ¹⁵ When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Children: These children were too young to exercise personal faith. God often shows a special mercy to those who because of age or a mental deficiency are incapable of either faith or willful unbelief.

C. The rich young man (19:16-30)

¹⁶ Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" ¹⁷ "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." ¹⁸ "Which ones?" he inquired. Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, ¹⁹ honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" ²⁰ "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" ²¹ Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." ²² When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. ²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" ²⁶ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." ²⁷ Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" ²⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."

Keeping the commandments: Jesus is teaching here of course is about the law not the gospel. Before showing this young man the way to life Jesus impresses on him

both the high standard required by God and the absolute futility of seeking salvation by his own merit. The young man should have responded as the disciples do in verse 25 and confessed that keeping the law perfectly is impossible but instead the young man confidently declares that he qualifies for heaven because he kept the law.

Sell what you have: Jesus is not setting forth terms for salvation but exposing the young man's true heart. The young man's refusal to obey here reveals two things; first, he is not blameless as far as the law was concerned because he is guilty of loving himself and his possessions more than his neighbors. Second, he lacks true faith which involves a willingness to surrender all at Christ's bidding. Jesus is not teaching salvation by simply giving your money away but he is demanding that this young man give him first place. Unfortunately, the young man failed the test.

D. Laborers in the vineyard (20:1-16)

NIV Matthew 20:1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ² He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. ³ "About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴ He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' ⁵ So they went. "He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. ⁶ About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?' ⁷ "'Because no one has hired us,' they answered. "He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.' ⁸ "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.' ⁹ "The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. ¹⁰ So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ¹² 'These who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.' ¹³ "But he answered one of them, 'I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?' ¹⁴ Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. ¹⁵ Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶ "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Equality in the Kingdom: In this story of the vineyard Jesus is explaining about equality in his Kingdom. When he says the last will be first and the first will be last he is saying that everyone will enjoy the full blessings of heaven. The thief on the cross will enjoy the full blessings of heaven alongside those who have labored their whole lives for Christ. Such is the grace of God. Nevertheless, those who labored for God will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10).

E. Jesus foretells his death the third time (20:17-19)

¹⁷ Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, ¹⁸ "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death ¹⁹ and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"

Going to Jerusalem: Jesus now turns to Jerusalem as he begins his final journey to the Cross. This is the third time Jesus tells his disciples about his death. previously three of his disciples overheard Jesus discussing his death with Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration (Luke 9:31). This time however he adds more details.

F. A mother's request (20:20-28)

²⁰ Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. ²¹ "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." ²² "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered. ²³ Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father." ²⁴ When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵ Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Greatness in the Kingdom: In this passage, the mother of Zebedee's sons, namely James and John (Mark 10:35ff), approached Jesus and asked if her sons could sit on his right and on his left in his Kingdom. This was obviously a self-seeking request to Jesus. Jesus then explains that the greatest glory goes to those who suffer the most for Christ. Then he again explains that in his Kingdom, in order to be great, one must have a servant's heart. See also Philippians 2:3-4.

G. Jesus heals two blind men (20:29-34)

²⁹ As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰ Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" ³¹ The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" ³² Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. ³³ "Lord," they answered, "we want our sight." ³⁴ Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

What do you want from me? In the midst of this noisy crowd Jesus hears the cry of these two blind men. He asks them "what do you want me to do for you?" Even though Jesus knew what the two blind men wanted he asked them to verbalize it. In doing so we see that he responds to those in great need who cry out for help. This again demonstrates another principle in his Kingdom that we also are to help those in need. It also points out that we are dependent on God to meet our needs and we are to lift them up to him. Pray expresses our dependency on God (cf. Matt. 6:9-13).

II. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Some Christians have gone through a divorce before reading what the Bible said about it and now they carry a load of guilt. Based on Jesus' teaching about his Kingdom how would you comfort someone like this?

2. The rich young ruler based his security on his riches instead of trusting in Jesus for his security. How can Christians today know if they are inadvertently putting their trust in something else other than in Jesus?

3. What is your understanding of why Jesus often used children to illustrate what his Kingdom is like?

4. Jesus taught that everyone will enjoy the full blessings of heaven. The thief on the cross will enjoy the full blessings of heaven alongside those who have labored their whole lives for Christ. How would you explain this to someone who said this is unfair?

5. Jesus said, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant." What exactly did Jesus mean by this and how would you see it practiced in real life?

6. Optional leader's question(s).