

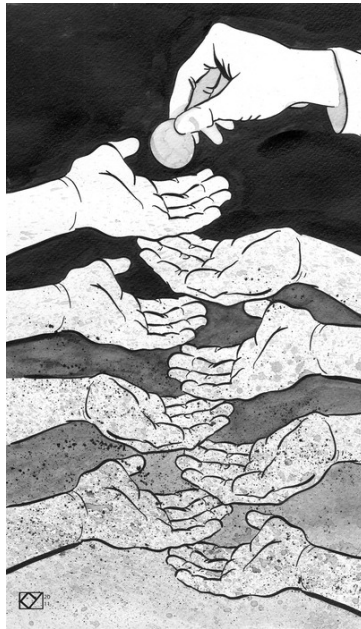
The Gospel of Matthew

Booklet 22 – Three Lessons

Lesson 59 - Matthew 20:1-16

Lesson 60 - Matthew 20:17-23

Lesson 62 - Matthew 20:24-34



Workers in the Vineyard

International ESL/Bible Lessons Intermediate to Advanced Level

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Much of the material in these lessons come from *The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. I*, by William Barclay. Daily Study Bible Series. Other content comes from Bible Commentaries, Dictionaries and on-line sources. All pictures are from Google Images.

The Gospel Of Matthew

Material for this section is from William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew: The Daily Study Bible Series*. The Westminster Press. Philadelphia. 1975.

Matthew's Gospel is carefully designed.

Section One includes The Genealogy of Jesus, The Birth Story, The John the Baptist Sequences, Baptism and Temptation of Jesus.

Section Two, from Chapters 5-7 is The Sermon on the Mount, or the Teachings of Jesus. These are gathered into a group from all the time of Jesus's ministry. These are the *words* of Jesus.

Section Three shows the actions or *doings* of Jesus.

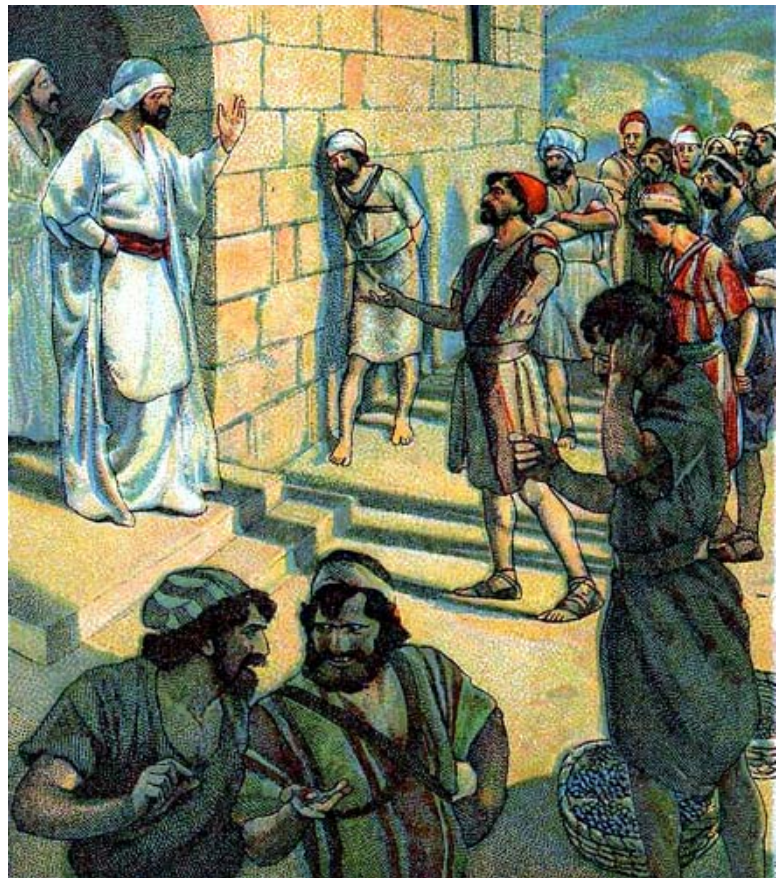
Chapter 18	Gives the greatest of ethical teaching: humility, responsibility, self-renunciation, individual care, discipline, fellowship, and forgiveness.
Chapter 19	Teaches on divorce and wealth.
Chapter 20	Hiring workers. Walking to Jerusalem. A new standard of values.

The Gospel Of Matthew

Lesson 59 - Matthew 20: 1-16 The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

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.”

Vocabulary

1. Denarius: Name of the money in the time of Jesus.
2. To grumble: To protest or complain about something in a bad-tempered but typically muted way.
3. To bear; bore; borne: To carry. To support something. To endure. To give birth.

Adjective	Noun	Verb	Adverb
Grumbly	Grumbler	To grumble	Grumbly
	Bear (animal)	To bear	

Idiomatic use of to bear from *New Oxford American Dictionary*

1. *Be borne in upon*: come to be realized by: *the folly of her action was borne in on her with devastating precision.*
2. *Bear arms*: 1) carry firearms. 2) wear or display a coat of arms.
3. *Bear the brunt of*: to carry the worst part or chief impact of something. *Education will bear the brunt of the financial cuts.*
4. *Bear the burden of*: suffer the consequences of.
5. *Bear fruit*: yield positive results: *plans for electric and solar power sharing may be about to bear fruit.*
6. *Bear someone a grudge*: *nurture a feeling of resentment against another.*
7. *Bear a hand*: (archaic) help in a task or enterprise.
8. *Bear someone malice (or ill will)*: [negative] wish someone harm.

9. Bear a resemblance (or similarity): to resemble.
10. Bear a relation (or relationship) to: [negative] be logically consistent with: *the map didn't seem to bear any relation to the roads.*
11. Bear the stamp of: be clearly identifiable with: *every work of mine must inevitably bear the stamp of my own personality.*
12. Bear witness (or testimony): to testify to: *little is left to bear witness to the past greatness of the city.*
13. Does not bear thinking about: is too terrible to contemplate.
14. Grin and bear it: Means to suffer pain or misfortune without showing your feelings or complaining.

Questions

1. How do you feel about those paid more than you are paid?
2. Is this story fair? Why or why not?
3. What does this have to do with the grape harvest in Palestine?
4. Where in your town do men gather to find a job to do for a day?

Notes

1. This parable gives us a picture of what Jesus and the disciples knew because they lived in the area. It shows us the rush to get workers and help with the grape harvest as it was coming in. Getting those grapes in from the field was imperative or the owner would lose the crop as the rains came in.

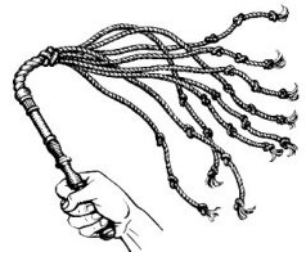
2. Pay for a day's work was small at the time, as it is now for the field workers in the USA. It was a poverty level or minimum wage.
3. Standing in the marketplace was basically the labor or job exchange. The man came first thing in the morning and joined others and the owners would come by and hire a person to do a specific job for that day. These were the lowest class of workers.
4. Slaves and servants had a master and a job. They were not in danger of starving or losing their position. Day laborers were in danger. There was no social safety net or welfare in the time of Jesus.
5. Why is this parable important to Christians?
 - If you have been a Christian for a long time, there is no special honor attached to that. All people, no matter when they come, are equally special to God. He has no seniority plan in the mind of God.
 - Jews felt they had a special place with God and looked down on Gentiles. In the economy of God there is no special race or group. *For God so loved the world... John 3:16.*
 - In addition, this parable teaches the comfort, compassion and mercy of God. Whether we come to God early as a child or old, we each get the same welcome from God.

6. Also, this parable states “implicitly two great truths which are the very charter of the working man—the right of every man to work and the right of every man to a living wage for his work.
7. The hired men did not all work the same hours, but they received the same pay. So, God does not look on the amount of our service. As long as it is all we have to give, all service ranks the same with God.
8. The supreme lesson of the parable is that *the whole point of work is the spirit in which it is done*. The laborers were two classes, one coming early with a contract to work the day, and the others coming when they could be hired, but with no contract. They would work for whatever the boss paid.
9. William Barclay writes: Many who have rewards in this life will have a lowly spot in the next life because rewards were his desire and first thought. Others / who thought not so much of pay / but of the thrill of working / and joy of serving/ will be great in the Kingdom of God. It is a paradox of the Christian life / that he who aims at reward / loses it, / but he who forgets reward / finds it.

The Gospel Of Matthew

Lesson 60 - Matthew 20: 17-23 Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time

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!”



A Mother's Request

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.”

Vocabulary

1. To condemn: To sentence someone to punishment, generally death.
2. Mocked: To make fun of someone in a contemptuous manner.
3. Flogged: To beat someone with a whip or a stick. Public punishment.
4. Crucified: To put someone to death by nailing that person on a cross.

Questions

1. Why does Jesus have to tell the disciples three times that he is going to die?
2. What question did the woman and her sons have for Jesus (v.20)?
3. What is the difference between worldly and spiritual ambition?
4. Do you think the two disciples had any idea what they were asking?

Notes

1. Matthew, Mark and Luke all tell this story. Mark, the earliest writer says: *They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus*

leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. The atmosphere must have been tense and fearful.

2. Remember Jesus knew that he was in danger. He had removed his disciples and himself on a long teaching journey into Tyre, Sidon and the Decapolis. In these areas, Herod and the religious leaders could not stop him from teaching, healing and preaching. Now Jesus is walking right into Jerusalem, and he knows he will be arrested and killed.
3. Jesus faced:
Chief priests and scribes who feared and hated; Disloyal friends; Injustice of the system that must appease Rome; Physical punishment and humiliation of being scourged; Mocking and humiliation; Crucifixion and death; and finally, Resurrection and triumph
4. Who is this woman who came with her sons? A listing of women found at the cross is found in Matthew, Mark and John. Here we have a hint of who the woman might be. Look at the last column. Each disciple calls this woman by a different name or title, but it is the same woman. She is the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Her name is Salome, and she is mother to James and John. This means that James and John were full cousins to Jesus; it may well

mean that they felt that this close relationship entitled them to a special place in the kingdom. (Barclay, p. 229.)

Let's compare:

Matthew 27:56	Mary Magdalene	Mary the mother of James and Joseph	Mother of the sons of Zebedee
Mark 15:40	Mary Magdalene	Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses	Salome
John 19: 25	Mary Magdalene	Mary the wife of Clopas	His mother's sister
	Jesus's mother		

5. Barclay in his *The Gospel of Matthew: Daily Bible Series* tells us that this is one of the most revealing passages in the New Testament. It sheds light in three directions:
6. Direction one: It tells us three things about the disciples. First it tells of their ambition for they were still thinking in terms of personal reward and distinction. That includes personal success without personal sacrifice. *Every man has to learn that true greatness lies, not in dominance, but in service; and that in every sphere the price of greatness must be paid.*
7. That is the debit side of James and John. On the credit side is the *invincible faith in Jesus*. He had just told them he was going

to die, and they believed, even in this time of darkness and ominous words, Jesus would have the victory.

8. These disciples had unshakable loyalty in Jesus. They never turned back or left or betrayed, but stayed loyal. This is quite a balance.
9. Direction two: It sheds light upon the Christian life. Could they drink the cup and what was that cup?
10. Life treated James and John very differently. James was the first to die a martyr (Acts 12:2). So, his cup was martyrdom. Now John lived to a great old age in Ephesus and died a natural death when he must have been near 100 years old. His cup was the constant discipline and struggle of the Christian life.
11. There is no single cup for the Christian to drink. To drink the cup simply means to follow Christ wherever he may lead, and to be like him in any situation life may bring.
12. Direction three: This passage shows the kindness, honesty and trust Jesus had in men. He never doubted the trust and loyalty of James and John. But Jesus would not allow false pretenses because He understood completely that he was in grave peril.

The Gospel Of Matthew

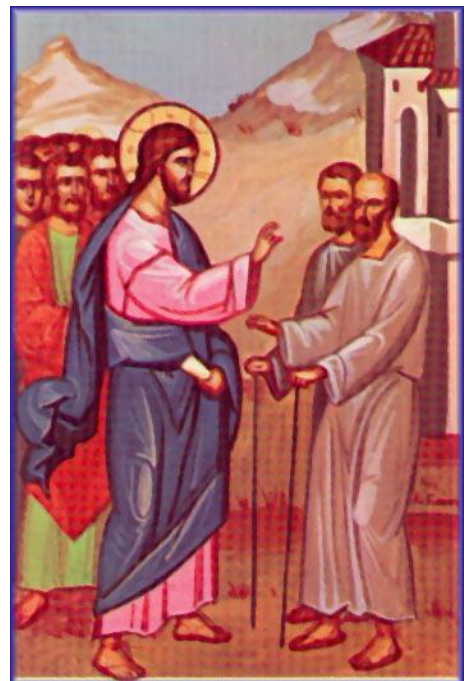
Lesson 61 - Matthew 20: 24-34 A New Standard or The Christian Revolution

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.” / 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.”

Two Blind Men Receive Sight

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.

Vocabulary

1. Indignant: Feeling or showing anger at what is perceived or felt as unfair treatment.
2. To lord it over: Act in a superior and domineering manner toward (someone).
3. Compassion: sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others. *The victims should be treated with compassion.*

Questions

1. What is the standard of success that Jesus uses that is different from that of the world?
2. Why would these values of Jesus be ‘revolutionary’?
3. Who do you know who sacrifices to help others?
4. What did Jesus say his purpose was (v. 27-28)?

5. Do you think James and John could also say that, at least at this time?
6. What does it mean for Jesus to give his life as a ransom for many?

Notes

1. The other disciples were indignant about the request of James and John to sit at the right and left hand of Jesus in the Kingdom of God. That is a human and understandable reaction. They also were ambitious and thought in terms of worldly power. Jesus understood what was going on in their minds and thoughts.
2. Jesus answered his disciples that success in their world came to the people who could manage and control others. It was power and success for people. A man gives a command and others obey. This is the world of Jesus with Caesar, Herod and military commanders. It is also the world of rich and powerful men and slaves and servants.
3. Barclay explains: *"But among my followers service alone is the badge of greatness. Greatness does not consist in commanding others to do things for you; it consists in doing things for others; and the greater the service, the greater the honor. Jesus uses a kind of gradation. 'If you wish to be great, ' he says, 'be a servant; if you wish to be first of all be a slave.'"*

4. *Here is the Christian Revolution; here is the complete reversal of all the world's standards. A complete new set of values has been brought into life.*
5. The strange thing is that instinctively the world itself has accepted these standards. The world knows quite well that a good man is a man who serves his fellow-men. The world will respect, and admire, and sometimes fear, the man of power; but it will love the man of love.
6. A ransom is something paid or given to liberate a person from a situation from which it is impossible for him to free himself. Therefore what this saying means is quite simply — the great tremendous truth that without Jesus Christ and his life of service and death of love, we could never have found our way back to God; and we must walk in the steps of him who loved to the uttermost. (p. 234-235)
7. Jesus is walking to Jerusalem and telling his disciples what is coming to him. Then he teaches about serving and loving others. In the story of the healing of the two blind men, he shows his compassion and love.



8. These men were waiting for Jesus. They were interrupting a serious discussion and teaching. Now they have walked into Jericho and are leaving that place.
9. Geography is important in truly understanding the Bible. Jericho is 3,500 feet below in sea level and Jerusalem is 2550 feet above sea level. So Jesus and the disciples had to take the dangerous route across the mountains.
10. Mentioning Jericho: Jericho is actually mentioned 7 times in the New Testament in all of the gospels
 - The Good Samaritan Story
 - Healing of Blind Bartimaeus (into Jericho)
 - Meeting the woman at the well
 - Healing the two blind men (leaving Jericho)

