

Chronological Week 43

October 19: Matthew 15 and Mark 7

The elders are upset that Jesus's disciples do not ritualistically wash their hands before eating. The problem is that the washing of the hands has merely become a tradition amongst the faithful. It is not something they do to make themselves closer to God. They use it as a symbol to show everyone how holy and good they are. They display false piety. They present a clean appearance, but on the inside, they are rotting. Jesus explains that it is not what goes into the person that defiles him. Instead, it is what comes out of the person. "What comes out of the mouth comes from the heart." That is the source of our evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, etc. That is why we cannot trust our hearts!

A Gentile woman approached the LORD about healing her son from a demon. At first, Jesus denies the request, but she makes an appeal. The dogs get the crumbs that fall from the master's table. The woman recognizes Jesus's authority, and He heals her son.

Jesus once again feeds a great multitude of people. This time it is only 4,000 people. I find it interesting that in this feeding, they have more food to start out with. Instead of the five loaves of bread and two fish, they have seven loaves and a few small fish.

October 20: Matthew 16 and Mark 8

Jesus is asked to give a sign that He is the Messiah. Jesus rebukes that generation for demanding a sign. They should be able to identify who He is already. He warns them about the yeast of the Pharisees. They are not spreading the truth about Him, but only lies. However, He knows that their little bit of sowing seeds of discord will make the people hate Him. Those that hear are confused because they think He is actually talking about bread. He reminds them of the bread He gave to the 5,000 and the 4,000. After He gives this explanation, they finally understand.

After, Jesus speaks with the disciples and ask who the people say He is. The people say that He is John the Baptist, some Elijah, Jeremiah, or another prophet. Jesus asks who they say He is. Simon confesses Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Today, people equate Jesus with a good teacher or a nice guy, but they miss the boat. Jesus is not just some guru; He is the Messiah!

The LORD then predicts His death and tells the disciples that if they truly want to follow Him, they will have to take up their cross and follow Him. To truly follow Jesus, we must die to ourselves daily and do what He has called us to do. How are we dying to self?

October 21: Matthew 17 and Mark 9

Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up to a high mountain. While on the mountain, Jesus is transformed into His glorious self. Then Elijah and Moses appear and begin talking with Him. Peter comes to Jesus and says that it is good for him to be there so that he can construct tents for them to stay in. While this is happening, a cloud covers them and a voice in the cloud says "this

is My beloved Son. I take delight in Him. Listen to Him.” This terrifies the disciples and they drop to the ground in fear. Jesus tells them to not be afraid and get up. When they get up, Moses and Elijah are nowhere to be found. It is just them and Jesus.

It is then revealed that John the Baptist was the Elijah that had been prophesied about. He was sent to make the pathway straight and call people to the LORD, but they did not recognize it and he was killed.

While in Capernaum, the folks that collect the double drachma tax for the temple ask the disciples if their Teacher pays the tax. They say yes. Jesus asks them if kings make their children pay taxes or strangers. They answer correctly that kings do not take taxes from their family. The temple in Capernaum was there for Jesus. They were there to worship God. Still, Jesus pays the tax so that they are not offended by Him.

October 22: Matthew 18

The disciples were pretty competitive with one another. Throughout their walk with Christ, they often tried to determine which one was the most favored. They come to Jesus asking who the greatest is in the kingdom of heaven. I am certain the answer shocked them all. Jesus brought a child over and had him stand among them. Jesus proclaimed that unless a person becomes like a child, he or she will not enter the kingdom of heaven. They must adopt childlike humility.

Jesus then teaches the parable of the sheep. A man has 100 sheep, but one of them strays. So, the man leaves the 99 and goes to find the lost one. When the lost sheep is found, there is much rejoicing. This is not to say that the other 99 were not important. They were safe and secure, so no need to worry about them.

He also teaches them one of my favorite stories about forgiveness. There is a man (we’ll call him Ernie) that is heavily in debt. It was such a hefty sum, there was no way that Ernie could pay it back. He throws himself at the mercy of the master and the master wipes his debt out. On his way home the Ernie sees a guy (we will call him Bert) that owes him a paltry sum of money. Rather than just say, “Hey Bert! Don’t worry about that \$10 debt anymore.” Ernie goes after him and starts choking him out demanding his pay. When the master finds out about this, he has Ernie thrown in the slammer to be tortured until he could pay everything he owed. As believers, we have been forgiven much, so we too should be forgiven.

October 23: John 7 and 8

We read an interesting interaction between Jesus and His brothers. They chide Him, telling Him to go into Judea and do all these works so that everyone can see. Their reasoning is that no one seeking public recognition does things in private. They say this because they do not believe that Jesus is really the Messiah. Jesus could have gone into the public square and done a whole lot of signs and wonders. The problem is that some people may have come to believe in Him, but the majority would still deny His Lordship.

Jesus goes to the festival of Tabernacles, but He goes secretly. The crowd at the festival is looking everywhere for Him. When the festival was halfway through, Jesus goes into the temple complex and begins teaching. Everyone is amazed at His teachings and His knowledge. They want to know how this is possible since He had no formal training. Jesus explains that the teaching is not His own, it comes from the One that sent Him.

Some people in Jerusalem make the argument that Jesus cannot be the Messiah since they know where He comes from. Jesus answers this argument explaining that they know Him and where He is from, but He has not come on His own. They do not know the One who sent Him, but He does.

The following day, the scribes and the Pharisees bring a woman caught in adultery to Jesus. Their intent was to trap Him, they do not care about the law. If they truly cared about the Levitical law, then they would have brought the male she was engaged in adultery with. He would also have faced the death penalty for this sin. The scribes and Pharisees say to Jesus that the Law of Moses commands the woman be stoned and ask what He says about it. Jesus responded that the one that was without sin could cast the first stone. After some time, the entire crowd leaves. Jesus asks the woman where her accusers are and tells her that He does not condemn her. He also commands her not to sin anymore. The One that was without sin did not cast the stone at the woman.

Another debate rises between Jesus and the Jews. They ask how He has seen Abraham when He is not even 50 years old. Jesus responds, "I assure you: Before Abraham was, I am". This makes the crowd mad, and they grab stones, ready to execute Him. Jesus evades the attack and leaves the temple complex.

October 24: John 9 and 10

Jesus passes a man that was born blind. The disciples ask Him whose sin is responsible for the man's inability to see. Was it his sin or his parents' sin? In those days it was believed that if a person suffered a physical ailment, it was the result of his or her sin. This man had always been this way, so the question from the disciples is valid. Jesus responds that neither the man's sin nor his parents' sin caused him to be blind. Instead, it was done so that God's works could be done in him. With that, Jesus healed the man from his blindness. Now that the man is changed, his neighbors question what has happened. Some dismissed that it was the blind man they knew, they figured it was just someone that looked like him. The man kept proclaiming that he was the blind man they know.

His neighbors bring him to the Pharisees. They ask how Jesus healed him. The Pharisees do not believe that Jesus actually healed the man, so they call the man's parents. The Pharisees ask about their son's blindness. The parents are afraid of being banished for speaking about Messiah, so they respond that "he is of age, ask him." The man continues proclaiming Jesus and he is thrown out. Jesus finds him and explains that he has seen the Son of Man. What I admire about this man is that he had no problem proclaiming Jesus. Even when his parents did not want to support him, he continued to express faith in Christ. Not once did he shy away from his faith, even when the authorities were trying to shut him up.

Jesus moves to a shepherd motif, explaining that the good shepherd must enter the pen through the entrance. They cannot just climb over the wall. Jesus also explains that His sheep hear His voice and follow. As believers, it is imperative that we hear Jesus's call over the noise of the world. The world seeks to drown His voice out, but we must be still and listen for Him.

Another attempt is made at taking Jesus's life. The Jews gather stones and are ready to let loose. Jesus asks them what good work they are stoning Him for. They say that they are not stoning Him for a good work, but for His blasphemy. Jesus again affirms that He is the Son of God and evades their attempt to kill Him.

October 25: Luke 10

Jesus appoints 70 others to go into the towns where He Himself was about to go. He explains that He is sending them out like sheep among the wolves. Just like when He commissioned the 12 disciples, Jesus tells this group to not take a money bag, travel bag, or sandals. They are to remain in the house they are welcomed into for the duration of their stay rather than moving from house to house. The 70 people return to Jesus with joy, stating that even the demons submitted to them.

An expert in the law asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus explains it is easy. He just needs to love the LORD your God with all his heart, mind, strength, and soul, and to love his neighbor. The man asks the pointed question of who his neighbor is. Jesus then tells the story of the good Samaritan. A man is beaten while on his way to Jericho from Jerusalem. The robbers stripped him and left him half dead. A priest was heading down the same road, but he refuses to get close to the man since he did not want to defile his ritual cleanliness. A Levite also saw him but ignored him for the same reason. A Samaritan came across the man and had compassion on him. He bandaged the man, put him on his own animal, and walked him into the next town, putting the wounded man up with the innkeeper, promising to reimburse what expenses the man incurs. Jesus asks who the man's neighbor was. The expert responds, "The one who showed mercy to him." Jesus tells him to do likewise.

Jesus and the disciples travel and enter the home of Martha and Mary. Martha is buzzing around trying to make sure that the disciples are well taken care of. Mary, her sister, is sitting at His feet, learning from Him. Martha asks Jesus why He doesn't care that Mary is doing no work. She then demands that He give an order to Mary to help. Jesus gently rebukes Martha, explaining that Mary has made the right choice. My hope and prayer is that we do not get so busy to the point that we forget to spend time with God. Here is Martha so focused on serving the Messiah, that she completely misses out on spending time with Him!

October 26: Luke 12 and 13

A crowd assembles around Jesus. He warns His disciples about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. What is said in the dark will be heard in the light. What has been whispered will be proclaimed from the rooftops. We might be able to hide things from other people, but we cannot hide anything from God! Jesus also explains that when they acknowledge Jesus before men, then He

will acknowledge them before the angels of God. However, if they deny Him before men, Jesus will do the same. At the end of the day, we must ask ourselves who we would rather please, God or man.

A man approaches Jesus, trying to get his brother to give him his half of his inheritance. Jesus asks why they would ask Him to arbitrate in such a way. The LORD tells the parable of the foolish rich man. This man has a great crop from his field, so much that he does not have enough room to store it all. So, he tears down his barns to build bigger ones so that he can enjoy the rest of his life. However, that very night God demands his life from him. The man hoarded his goods, thinking he could keep it all to himself. At the end of the day, none of it mattered because he died that very day.

Some people come to Jesus concerning the plight of some Galileans. Pilate had taken some of these Galileans and used their blood to mix with sacrifices. Jesus asks if they think these Galileans were more sinful than the other Galileans. He explains that everyone is sinful. Everyone must repent or they will perish.

Pharisees warn Jesus to get out of that region because Herod is looking to kill Him. They are not really looking out for His best interests. Instead, they are trying to shuffle Him along outside of their area so that they do not have to deal with Him.