

Week 41 Chronological

October 5: Matthew 4, Luke 4 and 5

Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness where He is tempted by the devil. He does not eat for forty days and forty nights. The devil first tempts Jesus with food, telling Him to make bread out of the stones around Him to satisfy His hunger. Jesus thwarts this attempt using Scripture. The enemy then takes Jesus up high on the pinnacle of the temple and tells Jesus to throw Himself down. After all, He will be protected since God will command His angels over Him. Jesus does not take the bait. Instead, He uses Scripture to combat the devil. The enemy then takes Jesus up to a high point and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world and promises them to Jesus if He would only bow down and worship him. This is an incredibly stupid temptation considering that Jesus is already sovereign and has authority over all kingdoms. Again, the LORD does not give in and the devil leaves Him.

Notice that Jesus uses Scripture to deny the enemy's attacks. One way to safeguard our hearts against temptation is to know the Scriptures and know what context they are to be used in. The devil uses Scripture to tempt Jesus, but Jesus knows it is out of context and hits him back with more Scripture.

After the temptation, Jesus begins His ministry. He goes to Nazareth to the synagogue on the Sabbath. He stands up and reads from the scroll of Isaiah. When he read this prophecy, he sat down and explains that this prophecy had been fulfilled that day. Everyone spoke well of Him, but others, knowing Him as a child begin to question His authority, stating that He was just a carpenter's son. Jesus explains that a prophet is without honor in his hometown, further drawing ire from the crowd.

Jesus leaves, heads to Capernaum where He begins healing people. From there, He begins calling His first disciples. He approaches Andrew and Simon, two fishermen. They had no luck the night before. Jesus gets in their boat and tells them to put out to sea a bit and drop their net. Simon is doubtful that they will catch anything because of their bad luck earlier. They are obedient and their haul is so large they require help from another boat to help haul their catch back to shore. Simon realizes the authority Jesus has and asks that He depart since he is a sinful man. Jesus tells Simon to not be afraid. From here on out, he will be catching people.

October 6: John 2-4

Jesus and His disciples are invited to a wedding in Cana. When the wine runs out, His mother approaches Him and explains there is no wine. This is a huge social faux pas in this time in history. Jesus asks her what it has to do with him, but Mary is insistent, telling the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them to. Jesus has them fill six water jars that held between 20 and 30 gallons. He then tells them to draw water out of the jars. When the master of the feast tastes the wine, he is impressed that the wedding party saved the best wine for last. In those days, it was typical to have the best wine first and then as senses were dulled, the servants would bring out the inferior wine. This is the first recorded miracle of Jesus.

At the Passover, Jesus goes to the temple. He is abhorred to see people selling oxen and sheep along with the money changers sitting there. So, he fashions a whip of cords and drives them out of the temple. This was not a hasty act. Making a whip takes a considerable amount of time. There was not so much an issue with people selling animals or changing money. Instead, it was where this business was being conducted. In those days, Jewish folks were supposed to travel to Jerusalem to make sacrifice. Rather than travel with an animal to sacrifice, they figured they could just buy an animal when they got to Jerusalem. The problem here is that the faith was being turned into a matter of convenience. If it is convenient, is it really a sacrifice?

Nicodemus, a prominent Pharisee, goes to Jesus at night. Some think that this is because Nicodemus was afraid. I submit that Jesus was very busy during the day. As we go through the Gospels, we will see several times where He works from morning until evening. Nicodemus would have been busy as well, so the best time for him would have been at night as well. Nicodemus asks how to have eternal life. Jesus explains that a person must be born again. God loves the world so much that He sent His Son. Whoever believes in Him will not die, but have everlasting life.

Jesus and the disciples depart for Galilee. They decide to take the direct route that will bring them through Samaria. Typically, Jews would go out of their way to avoid this place since Samaritans were deemed half breeds and “less than” a person. They get to Samaria and Jesus tells the disciples to go find Him food. He goes to the well and strikes up a conversation with a woman there to draw water. This woman is an outcast, we know that because she is at the well alone. Jesus asks her to draw Him some water and she is shocked. Jesus explains that He is the Messiah. She then goes off to tell everyone back in Samaria about Him. They go to Him and believe Him because of His word. The woman at the well had several husbands and was now living with a man not her husband, yet Jesus used her to advance the Kingdom and share His word. God can do great things through us if we let Him.

October 7: Matthew 8 & Mark 2

Jesus heals a leper. The leper approaches Jesus and stating that if Jesus wished, He could make him clean. Jesus responds that he will. The man is immediately healed from this terrible disease. Jesus sends him off to present himself to the priest. That is in keeping with the Levitical law. Priests were the ones that determined whether someone was clean or not. This practice is still in place in some parts of Jerusalem.

A leader for the Romans approaches Jesus about healing his servant. Jesus says that He will go to the man’s house and heal the servant. The centurion responds that Jesus does not need to come to his house, He can heal the man from where they are. Jesus remarks that He has found no one this faithful in all of Israel. Throughout the reading in Matthew and Mark we see several examples of Jesus healing people.

One thing to note is the response of the people in Gadarenes. Jesus heals two demon possessed men. Jesus casts the demons into a nearby heard of pigs. The pigs run down a steep cliff and into the water where they drown. When the people of this region hear about it, they do not recognize

the miracle and ask Jesus to stay. Instead, they see a threat to their profits and beg Jesus to leave the region.

Jesus also begins fielding questions about what people can and cannot do on the Sabbath. As He and the disciples were making their way through a field of grain, the disciples plucked grain so that they could eat it. The Pharisees see this and state that this is against the Sabbath. Jesus reminds them of the time that David and his men ate the LORD's bread when they were hungry. The Pharisees were incorrect in their understanding. They thought that the Jews were supposed to serve the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for us.

October 8: John 5

In Bethesda, there was a pool that the lame and sick would gather by, hoping to be healed by its waters. One man had been an invalid for 38 years. Jesus sees him lying there and asks him an odd question, "Do you want to be healed?". I say this is odd because I would think most people would want to be healed, but human nature is funny. Sometimes, people do not actually want to be healed.

The man responds that he has no one to put him in the water. Jesus tells him to pick up his mat and go. The man is healed immediately. It is the Sabbath and carrying things on the Sabbath is against the rules. The healed man is approached by the Jews wanting to know why he is working. The man responds that a man had told him to pick up his mat and go. At the time, he did not know who Jesus was, so he could not identify Him. Later, Jesus finds the healed man in the temple and tells him to sin no more, or something worse may happen to him.

The Jews are already seeking to kill Jesus. They do not like that He is breaking the Sabbath and healing people. Jesus explains that He can do nothing apart from the Father. God has given Him the authority to do these things.

October 9: Matthew 12, Mark 3, and Luke 6

Jesus enters the synagogue. A man is there with a withered hand. The people ask Him if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath. Jesus answers their question with another question. If one of their sheep falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will they not lift it out? Of course they would. Jesus explains that doing good on the Sabbath is lawful. This only further enrages the Pharisees.

The people accuse Jesus of driving out demons under the power of the devil. Jesus explains how silly that is. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. It makes no sense.

In Luke we read the beatitudes. The poor are blessed because they will inherit the kingdom of God. The hungry are blessed because they will be satisfied. Those that mourn will laugh. God has a way of turning things around in the lives of a believer. How has He turned our lives around?

October 10: Matthew 5-7

Jesus gives instruction about sin. Sin is not just an outward act, but it is committed in the heart. Sin starts there. If someone hates another, they are guilty of murder in their heart. If someone lusts after another in the heart, he or she is guilty of adultery. God has a very high standard of perfection. We should pray that He guard our hearts from sin daily. He also gives commands that go against our human nature. Rather than hate our enemies, we are called to love them.

When we give to the needy, we should not make a spectacle of it. When I read this as a younger person, I always thought that was a silly idea, showing off with good works. However, as I have gotten older, I have seen this kind of stuff happening way too often. For a while there, people were filming themselves giving to the needy and then posting these things on social media. The intent was not to help the needy out. Instead, it was to gain accolade from others. We should not do charitable things to get praise from men. We should do it for God's glory!

The LORD teaches about judgment. The measure of judgment we use on someone is the same measure that will be used on us. He warns of the hypocrisy of trying to remove the speck of dust from someone's eye when we have an entire log in our own eye. This is not to say that we should not gently correct people, but when we do it should be from a place of love and concern, not judgment.

Matthew 7 contains some of the scariest Scripture. Jesus explains that not everyone that says to Him "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven. They will claim that they did all these things in God's name, but Jesus will say He never knew them. I think what Jesus is getting at here is the issue of paying lip service to God. If we just profess with our lips that Jesus is Lord, but do not live lives like we believe it, we are just using Jesus as fire insurance. In cultural Christian areas, there are people that think they have this cup full of grace and that is enough to get them into heaven. In reality, we need His abundant and overflowing grace.

October 11: Matthew 9 & Luke 7

John the Baptist's disciples come to Jesus and ask why His disciples are not fasting. Jesus explains that the time for fasting is not here yet. The wedding guests do not mourn while the bridegroom is still with them. There is a time for fasting, but this was not the time.

A ruler comes to Jesus and kneels before Him asking that Jesus would heal his daughter. Jesus gets up to follow him. As they are moving a woman that has been dealing with a discharge of blood for 12 years approaches Jesus. She knows that if she just touches His garment, she will be healed. She touches the garment, and Jesus feels power go out of Himself. The woman is healed. Jesus makes it to the ruler's home. Everyone laughs at Jesus because they have no faith that He can bring her back to life. Jesus took her by the hand, and she arose to life.

October 12: Matthew 11

John the Baptist is in prison, but he hears all the things that Jesus is doing. He sends some of his disciples to ask Jesus if He is the One that is to come or should they be looking for another. Jesus tells them to tell John that the blind see and the lame walk. John's disciples depart to give John the news.

Jesus denounces the unrepentant cities. Despite all the good things He has done, there are still many that do not believe Him. If He had done these things in sinful cities, then they would have repented, but because these cities were filled with the pious and religious, they do not see their need for Him. Let us never get to the point where we puff ourselves up thinking that we are perfect and holy. When that happens, we forget our need for Christ and His forgiveness.