

# Preaching Christ from the Gospels (especially Matthew)

Key truth: **THE GOSPELS ARE ABOUT THE GOSPEL**

The Gospels are proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God (cf. Mark. 1:1; John 20:30-31)

Leon Morris: "The Gospels are books about the atonement"

The Gospel according to...

1 gospel – 4 angles

## Distinctives

'I pray that you may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide [Luke] and long [Matthew] and high [John] and deep [Mark] is the love of Christ' (Eph. 3:17-18)<sup>1</sup>

Luke – the One who came to seek and save the lost (Lk. 19:10), outcasts, Gentiles

Matthew – looking back far into the OT and forward to the kingdom (Matt. 13:52)

John – A 'U'-shaped story (John 13:3) – the Son come from heaven to take us to be with him; the climax at the Cross: 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23,27; 13:1; 17:1 → 19:30

Mark – the depths of the Suffering Servant (Mark 10:45), fast paced gospel slowing down for the Cross

## A) NARRATIVE:

1. The gospel is a true **story** (cf. Mk. 1:1; Acts 10:37-43; 1 Cor. 15:1-11) – look at the flow of the whole story - the main point is the events, what Jesus accomplished then (John 20:30-31)
2. What Jesus did is not necessarily there to say we can or should do it.
  - Miracles are *attesting* (Acts 2:22). I am not Jesus. I am not the Creator who can speak to creation and it obeys. I am not going to save the world.
  - Jesus is FIRST our SUBSTITUTE and THEN our EXAMPLE
    - E.g. Matt. 26:31-46 – Peter will one day die for Jesus but first he is the sleeping one and the failure while Jesus goes to die for him and the drink the cup of God's wrath instead of him
    - 12 disciples = new Israel
  - 40 days in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-2) = perfect Israel
  - Up a mountain praying all night (Luke 6:12) = new Sinai constituting new Israel
  - 12 disciples (Luke 6:13) = new Israel
3. Be careful not to take a passage in isolation from its context in the unfolding plot of the narrative (e.g. Matt. 8-9 cf. 11:4-5; Matt. 15:24; Matt 10 cf. 28:18-20)
4. Stick with the Gospel who are in – don't need to add in what other Gospels say – stay with the one author's storyline
5. Look at what comes before: e.g. Matt 11-12 – rejection → Matt 13 – parable of rejection
6. Look at the structure – Matt. 5:3-12; 13:36-50
7. Look for contrasts – e.g. Matt. 19:13-30
8. Often multiple illustrations of same thing – e.g. Matt. 13; Matt. 24:32-25:46

## B) PARABLES – look for the twist (the 'sting in the tale') - what is the surprising truth about **JESUS**?

e.g. Luke 10:33 – double twist – not the Outsider as the neighbour but the Outsider as the one doing the neighbouring

– look for who it is addressed to and why – e.g. Luke 15:1-3

## C) TEACHING – look at who it is addressed to and why

– see the teaching in the light of the whole Gospel and esp. the Cross

– make sure you are teaching gospel not law

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<sup>1</sup> John Stott, *The Incomparable Christ*, by John Stott (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001), p. 40.

## Getting a grip on Matthew

### Read, Read, Read

In one go if possible

Multiple times – spot the repetitions and links

Read it as a STORY – one narrative

It is the narrative that tells the gospel (Matt. 26:13)

### Beginning at the end...

Matt. 28:16-20 – what elements do you see there?

### Structure:

Five teaching blocks - each concluding: “when Jesus finished teaching...”

1-4: the arrival of the king – the kingdom at hand

1. Matt. 5-7 (the king teaching – membership of the kingdom and living in the kingdom)

8-9: the king healing – a foretaste of the kingdom

2. Matt. 10 (the king sends out the 12 – proclaiming the kingdom)

11-12: The king rejected by his people

3. Matt. 13 (parables of the kingdom)

14-17: the king rejected and accepted

4. Matt. 18 (the gospel kingdom)

19-22: the king goes to Jerusalem – how to enter the kingdom

5. Matt. 23-25 (the coming of the kingdom)

26-28: The king is crowned and the kingdom is inaugurated

### Two key questions

- What do we learn about the King?
- What do we learn about the Kingdom?

A good discipleship training course would be simply to read through Matthew 1-to-1 with a younger brother and simply ask those two questions of chapter after chapter, and as we do that we gradually build up a picture of a very different King to our normal idea of a king/leader/god and a very different Kingdom to what we normally understand by a kingdom/empire/domain.

### But is Matthew teaching the gospel?

Have you ever been tempted to think, “Matthew is not such a clear gospel preacher”?

What do we do with Matt. 5:17-20 or 25:31-46 ?

### 4 Themes – all related to the gospel

- Kingdom
  - What are we hearing about the kingdom? (authority, power, principles, economic rules, a call to giving, something we establish, our own privatised kingdoms)
  - Kingdom of heaven = Kingdom of God = eternal life (Matt. 19:16-30)
  - Matt. 3:2; 4:17//v19; 13:11 cf. 13:16-17, 12:42; Matt. 18:23-27; 22:2
  - The kingdom is all about King Jesus, all about the gospel (cf. Acts 20:18-35 – see the different ways the *content* of Paul’s preaching is described)
  - The Kingdom is inaugurated at the Cross: Matt. 16:13-28; 27:11-53
  - Kingdom living now will look like the Cross – humiliation, suffering, servanthood, humility (e.g Matt. 18:1-4)
- Fulfilment – Matt. 1:22; 2:6, 15, 17, 23; 3:3, 15; 4:1-11, 14; 5:18; 21:4; 26:31, 56
  - Who is the fulfilment focused on?
  - Not about man – zeal of the Lord will accomplish this – Jesus will accomplish this
  - Connects us into the story of creation, Adam the king, the fall of the king, death and wrath, promise of a new Adamic king to reverse the fall, deal with wrath, the failure of the Israelite kings

- Righteousness - Matt. 3:15; 5:3, 20; 9:10-13; 11:25-30; 22:10,11
  - o The law makes us crawl to Christ
  - o Our sin qualifies us for Christ
  - o Sinners enter the banquet in garments we have been given – not our own filthy rags
- Being – 3:7-11,13-17; 5:43-48; 6; 7:15-20; 12:33-35; 25:31-33
  - o Our works are fruit of our nature
  - o We all start as children of the devil
  - o Our nature is only changed by the sovereign ‘impossible’ action of God (Matt. 19:26)
  - o We are to come to Christ, die in him, ‘lose’ our life and find a new life and identity in Christ as children of the Father (Matt. 16:24-26)
  - o As children of the Father we can then be taught how to live as his children – the Christ-like/Son-like life – but our doing is a *mark* of our being not the basis

Looking at Matt. 19:13-26

Q. What do we learn about the *King* and his *kingdom* and the *relationship between the two*?

Q. How could you preach this passage in an ungospel way and in a gospel way?

### Conclusion

Big command of Matthew’s gospel: Matt. 11:28-30

We don’t want to be like the preachers of Matt. 23 – laying on heavy burdens, shutting the door of heaven in people’s faces

We want to be like the servants in Matt. 22 – inviting sinners to the free banquet of the Son

Make sure it’s all about Jesus

E.g. Matt. 9:27-31 – the focus is on the one in whom they have faith not on the faith itself

E.g. Luke 15:11-32 – the focus is not on the prodigal son and what he does but on the father and the 3 great shocking things he does

### Resources:

- Talks by David Jackman on the 5 teaching blocks: [Ch. 5](#), [Ch. 10](#), [Ch. 13](#), [Ch. 18](#), [Ch.24-25](#)
- D. A Carson, *Bible Expositors Commentary: Matthew*, Zondervan (2 Volumes)

Some more themes in Matthew:

- Word – Matt. 7:24-27; 13:1-23; 15:6; 22:9; 28:20
  - o The kingdom will be established through Jesus’ word
- Nature and character of God – Matt. 1:23; 5:9, 43-48; 7:11; 11:27-29; 18:27; 28:19
- Future-focus – Matt. 7:21-27; 10:15; 13:34-43//47-50; 18:35; 24-25; 28:20
  - o The Kingdom is basically a future reality – the king has come and is with us; you can enter into it now; it is ‘at hand’; but it has not yet come (e.g. Matt. 25)
- [Mission](#) – 1:3, 5, 6 (nations); 2:11-12 (nations worship); 28:16-20 (worship, all nations).
  - o Cf. Matt 8:5-13; 15:21-28; 24:14
- Offence/conflict
  - o The increasing conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities (e.g. Matt. 12) and the prophesied conflict even within families (e.g. Matt. 10)
  - o The offence of Jesus (Matt. 11:6; 13:57; 15:12; 26:31,33)
  - o Stumbling/sin/falling away (Matt. 5:29-30; 13:21,41; 18:6-9; 24:10)
  - o The offence/stumbling block to Jesus (Matt. 16:23)
- [Similarity with the Books of Chronicles](#) – Idolatry, Genealogies, David & Solomon, Kingdoms, Adam, Now-and-not-yet, Temple