

Week 1 – Level 2

Question 1

As I was reading each of the woman in the bible and how it connects to the genealogy of Jesus, I found it interesting the following things:

Tamar – Was a widow, her 1st husband was wicked and died. Her brother-in-law wouldn't co-exist with her and he died. So she played the harlot to fool Judah, which she did and became pregnant with Judah's child and had twins, but Judah would not co-habit with her again. **Good observation. If you look into the cultural issues, Judah had sinned against her by not providing one of his sons to carry on the inheritance of her husband. On the one hand, she cleverly took matters into her own hands to assure her husband's name was honored. Not a stellar moment for Judah and an act of desperation for Tamar.**

Rahab – Was a harlot but hid Joshua and his group. Because of that her family was spared when they came back to take the city. Rahab had faith righteous before God. **Good! If you read the previous chapters you would see that Rahab showed more faith than the spies who had been sent out by Moses to survey the land. She also in desperation and fear of God did everything she could to save her family.**

Ruth – Was a Moabite woman, that really were not supposed to be with the Jewish, but she and her sister-in-law married into the Jewish family and their husbands died. She then married Boaz and had Obed, father of Jesse, who was father of David. **Good observation. You are right, Jews were not to marry anyone from Moab, yet Naomi's son did marry Ruth. Now look into the character of Ruth. Though a Gentile and outsider, she chose to embrace Naomi's God out of love for her mother-in-law. She showed compassion, obedience, faithfulness, etc.**

Bathsheba – Was Uriah wife, but David slept with her when his general was at war. Then David put him on the front lines of the war to get him killed because Bathsheba was pregnant with David's child. **Good. I often wondered if Bathsheba had a choice, or whether she compounded the sin for some reason willingly? Was she intimidate by the King? Or, was she lured by status and power? The Bible does not tell us, but the questions help us see the mercy of God all the more.**

The message I got from this is how Jesus lived his life is how is genealogy was. He was drawn to the same people that was in his family. People who were not perfect, people who were not of his nationality. His care was for the lost. **Yes, this is solid insight you can build on. Paul says, "Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong." (1 Cor. 1:26-27 NIV).** I don't think that impact would be as great if Matthew included Sarah and Rebekah. It would be almost like, yes, I know the good women in Jesus' line. Yes, we know he's perfect so what makes Him so great then. What I see is Jesus compassion

woven in the genealogy. I see me, I see my friends, I see the lost, the addict, the prostitute. What it means is we can come boldly to the cross and ask for forgiveness and we will be forgiven. **Beautifully stated.**

Question 2

- a. To be exiled you are barred from one's native country, you are taken away from you home. God allowed the Babylonians to destroy the Jewish temple and the land and have the Jews removed because they were wicked, they worshipped other Gods and they displeased God. Despite the fact they God said if you turn back to Me, I will have mercy on you, but they did not. **God can give us the desires of our heart (if they are not godly) but they come with a sickness to our soul (Psalm 106:15).**
- b. The despair was in verses 1 and 2, as they sat down and wept when they remember Zion. They were asked to sing songs of Zion, but were said because they were not there. But as the verses went on you could see hope coming back, they knew that Babylon would be destroyed and they would get their country back. What we learn about humanity? It's easier to sing songs to the Lord when times are good, it's harder to praise God or sing unto the Lord when things are bad. But at the end there is always hope. God will bring us out of the wilderness when we turn back to him. Our God is so merciful. He will deal with us and our sins, but we never really get what we deserve. **There is a wonderful book on Job written years ago by Gustav Gutierrez. He suggests the cry, "O God, where are you?" does not speak of a lack of faith but that the very fact it is a cry to God, shows that the person believes in God...he or she is experiencing the sorrow of injustice or loss. Then he challenges us....If there were no promise of heaven, would you still worship God because He is God? Of course the promise of salvation is ours, but I often think of whether I worship because I get things from God or because he is worthy of honor and glory from us? When everything in us cries out for justice and we still believe in the midst of our sorrow and pain, now that is evidence of God in our lives!**
- c. Reading Jeremiah 30-33, God does not intend the Jews to live in exile. He wants to restore them, he wants them to return to Him. He loves them. Over and over again, I will be your God and you will be My people.
- d. I think maybe what Matthew is saying is we can be in exile of God, but we can be restored. We can return to our land, we can get back what was taken from us. God can be our God and we can be his people

Denise, this is exactly what I am looking for...your insights. My comments are simply my interactions with what you see. It causes me to think more deeply.

You are laying a firm foundation! Now you can build on it as you grow in your faith and understanding of the Gospel. Really good job!

Book of Matthew Week 2

What kinds of things do Matthew and Luke agree on in their accounts? Where do they differ? The differences likely reflect the theological concerns of the author. The agreements certainly reflect the common tradition preserved by the early Church.

There are so many things that were in agreement in these verses. I'm not sure if there were differences as much as filling in the gaps. I will explain the following:

1. Jesus was led by the spirit - In both Matthew and Luke they both talked about Jesus being led in the Spirit, what Luke said too was Jesus were not only led in the Spirit, but also was full of the Spirit.
2. The devil/tempter said, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread. Jesus answered, in Matthew Man does not live by bread only, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Luke said the same but did not expound by every word.....
3. Matthew chose to put the devil taking Jesus to the Holy City first, with Luke showed Jesus the kingdoms of the world. But the description of that time was pretty much the same.
4. When the devil led him up to a high place some added on where, "showed him in a flash all the kingdoms of the world, Luke said. Most everything in these verses both in Matthew and Luke are much the same. Showing Jesus in the flash and grandeur was difference, Luke says flash, Matthew says grandeur.
5. In verse 11, Matthew said the devil left him and angels ministered to his needs, where Luke said the devil completed every temptation, then he departed him until a more opportune time, and Mark said with wild animals, and angels He was ministered by angels.

What would be lost to our understanding of Jesus' temptation if we only had Matthew's account? What would be lost to our understanding if we only had Luke's account? How would you explain these differences and similarities to a new believer who had heard that such differences prove that the New Testament Gospels are not reliable?

Each one of them filled in the blank where the other did not. We would not have known that Jesus was full of the spirit and not just led, we would not know that the

kingdoms of the world was showing in the flash. We knew the devil left Jesus, but it was good to know that angels ministered to his needs after that. I am sure Jesus needed that desperately. I would explain to a new believer just as I have in this writing. Nothing is changed in each gospel just further explanation.

What does this account tell us personally about temptation and how to overcome it?

Personally, when I am tempted, I need to go to God and ask Him for his help. Jesus could not do it alone in the wilderness, at the end angels came and ministered to him. I need to do the same, I cannot do it alone.

Pay attention to Joseph, to God, to the other people mentioned in each story, especially what they say and do. Looking at all these interactions between people and the observations of Matthew, what do learn about God? What do you learn about Joseph? Do any of the characters act as positive examples of attitudes and behavior that one should emulate? Explain. Do any of these characters act as negative examples of attitudes and behavior one should avoid? Again, explain your observations.

I learn that God is control at all times and knows what is going on even when we don't. Joseph impresses me because despite everything he was obedient to God. He trusted God in this and did what was right.

John the Baptist is a character I would like to emulate. He was obedient from the beginning. I believe he heard from God at all times. He wasn't afraid to say what he wanted to say, but was righteous anger at times. The devil, Herod were attitudes and behaviors I will not follow. I do not want to be deceitful or tempting God or challenging God. I want to be pleasing to him at all times, I want to walk obediently as Joseph and John the Baptist did.

Book of Matthew Week 3

Level 2 - Question 2

- a. Exploring the teaching: Using the definitions above, who do you think would be God's enemies? Let's explore this idea. What does James 4:1-10 say about this issue? How does God treat his enemies (see Matt. 5:45; be sure to think through what this action says about God's character)? What does Romans 5:5-8 add to our understanding of why Jesus does not retaliate against those who hate and harm him?

James says that if we are a friend of the world then we are an enemy of God. And even though someone is a friend of the world God will still make his sun rise whether they are good or evil. His character is perfect. He loves everyone unconditionally and it does not matter who you are or what you have done, he loves you anyway. Romans 5 says because he loved us so much He gave His Son to us to die so we may live. It doesn't matter who we are He loves us.

- b. Turning toward application: This focus is not a matter of mere behavioral change or an exhortation for you or other to pull themselves together and

simply “stop it!” Nor, is the message that “God did his part, now do yours.” Rather, we need to think about the God-ward and grace-based character trait that we should as followers of Christ seek to grow. Who have you considered your ‘enemies’ and what makes them enemies (or opponents) of you? Can you think of ways in which you consciously or unconsciously showed anger or even hatred for them? In what ways do we as human beings try to justify our hatred of our enemies? What are some of the practical ways you can begin to love your enemies as Jesus has loved you?

I can only think of one person right now and God is working with me on this. My daughter-in-law’s mother. She has in the past said some negative things against my son and myself and even though it was a long time ago, it tends to creep up periodically and there has been times during a family gathering, I will not even speak to her. There have been other times I have been upset about something she has done and expressed that anger to my son, which then can cause problems between my daughter-in-law and him. I try to justify it by saying, well she talks about me. Of course, the Holy Spirit immediately convicts me and I have to repent. I have been practicing more about being nice to her when we are in the same setting, but I know that God wants me to do even more than that and step out of my comfort zone and do more for her. Compliment her on her clothing, hair or how nice she looks. I am a work in progress on this one.

Level 1

- a. What one thing have I learned from this lesson and/or class discussion that caught my attention and has the potential to impact my personal or spiritual development? As I speak honestly with the Lord, I share with Him what it is about these insights that touches me so deeply and/or challenges how I am living my life. Do I learn something about the Lord I never saw before, about myself, about my life circumstances that need to be addressed? As I listen to the Lord without judgment, I let His Spirit draw me closer to Him. I thank Him for this gift of insight and Presence.

As I have discussed this with the Lord over the past few weeks, He has been dealing with me spiritually about how I treat people that I don’t necessarily care for. Of course, people I do care for I treat well, but for the ones that I don’t like their personality or how they act, I tend to have negative things come out. God has been dealing this with me and showing me no matter what, I am to love these people. Do something kind for them, say something nice to them. It has been highlighted very strongly on how to do this and why I should is evident in these teachings. It doesn’t matter who you are God loves you. I need to hold onto this and practice love more often. I thank God he is showing me this and working with me daily on how to change. He is giving me so much insight on this and I can’t wait to hear Him say, “well done, my faithful servant”.

Book of Matthew Week 4

Blind Men

What does the character say to illumine their character	What does the character do to illumine their character	What others say about them that illumine their character
"Son of David, have mercy on us!" They recognized that Jesus was the Messiah and they knew if he was they could heal them.	The blind men followed Jesus when they saw he performing miracles and recognized He was the Son of God.	Jesus, by asking them if they believed he could heal them and them answering yes, highlighted their faith

In a couple of sentences, try to explain what Jesus is doing and why he chose to do this for the 12 disciples.

I believe that Jesus gave the disciples power and authority to cast out demons, heal the sick as a fore front of what we are to do today. He showing us how it is supposed to be done and that we have the power and authority to do it. Why he chose the 12 disciples? They were people from all different lifestyles. People we all could relate to in our life. Showing you don't have to be special to be given the power and authority because God believes we are special.

Book of Matthew Week 5

Level 1

- a. What one thing have I learned from this lesson and/or class discussion that caught my attention and has the potential to impact my personal or spiritual development?
 - a. **What I have learned so far from this lesson is the uncompromised compassion Jesus had for everyone. I am starting to feel the compassion He had and sometimes it is so heartbreaking. I walked into Walmart the other day just to pick up my prescriptions and as I walked in I felt a heaviness that was beyond comprehension. It was such a sadness that I wanted to cry. I couldn't wait to get out the store, but after I did I immediately went into prayer for everyone in the store. This class has heightened my compassion for people and I am starting to feel some of what Christ felt at times.**

Level 2

1. Parable of the Sower and types of Soil
 - a. What do you think is the specific need, question, problem, or situation Jesus is addressing? He is talking about how we receive information and what we do with it when we receive that information.
 - b. What do you think is the spiritual meaning of the story? The spiritual meaning is receiving Christ as our savior and once we do, what do we do with that information. How we receive it, is how we walk in Christ daily. It is either secured in our heart or it is just on the outside with no growth, or it starts to grow but doesn't have the foundation or the roots to continue.
2. Parable of the Tares
 - a. What do think is the specific need, question, problem, or situation Jesus is addressing? The problem is the tare or the weeds being in with the wheat (good crop) and how it affects the whole harvest. And how we take care if it during harvest.
 - b. What do you think is the spiritual meaning of the story? Spiritual we have to live in a world that has evil or temptations, how we deal with that is up to us. We must be aware of the evil that roams the earth and when it's time get rid of the things that are not of God, we have to be careful that what we get rid of is not of God. Sometimes what my look like tares, may be something that needs more growth.
3. Parable of the Mustard Seed
 - a. What do you think is the specific need, question, problem, or situation Jesus is addressing? This situation is talking about taking something that may seem insignificant and nurturing and growing it to something big.
 - b. What do you think is the spiritual meaning of the story? Spiritual you can talk to someone, or do a kind act for someone, or show love to someone and it may seem simple and small, but that can nurture and grow into something that can bring someone to Christ. One small deed can create a large God.
4. Parable of the Leaven
 - a. What do you think is the specific need, question, problem, or situation Jesus is addressing? Jesus was talking about taking meal and hiding it until it is done.
 - b. What do you think is the spiritual meaning of the story? I think what the spiritual side of this is taking the word and hiding in your heart until you need it.
5. Parable of the Hidden Treasure
 - a. What do you think is the specific need, question, problem, or situation Jesus is addressing? This situation taking a treasure finding it and then hiding it for the future.

- b. What do you think is the spiritual meaning of the story? Jesus is talking about the kingdom of heaven, which is a treasure and when we find it we can tell others about it as our testimony and others can see our joy for what is to come but with that joy comes a price. The price may mean big sacrifices that God ask of us.
6. Parable of the Merchant Seeking Pearls
- a. What do you think is the specific need, question, problem, or situation Jesus is addressing? Jesus is talking about wanting something so valuable you would pay anything for it and sell all you have for it.
 - b. What do you think is the spiritual meaning of the story? Jesus talks about the Kingdom and the great sacrifices that we have to take in order to be in the Kingdom of Heaven. Some may give up their life to be in the kingdom.
7. Parable of the Large Fishing Net = Dragnet
- a. What do you think is the specific need, question, problem, or situation Jesus is addressing? This address weeding out the good from the bad.
 - b. What do you think is the spiritual meaning of the story? Jesus addresses the end time and what will happen when he comes back. The believes will be then separated from the wicked and the wicked be cast in the furnace of fire forever.