

Life Group Notes 3/23/2025 Pastor Mark Warren: Kingdom Come—Living the Gospel of Matthew. Part 3

No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time.

– Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our heart and guide our discussions.

Please pre-read these notes and choose the direction that is appropriate for your group.

Be cognizant of your group's time and be sensitive. *Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.*

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 3/23. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnote speaks:

1. [On pistis and the meaning of biblical faith.](#)
2. [On the rich young ruler and Barnabas.](#)
3. [On love covering a multitude of sins...an all-day bible study.](#)

Important: At [the very end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week.

The first service saw the dedication of a child to the Lord at Grace. Take a moment to pray for that family. Now pray for each of your children. Pray for your family according to Paul's prayer over the Colossians in chapter 1: **9***For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10**so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, **11**being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have full endurance and patience, and joyfully **12**giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.*

1. Think about what an answer to this prayer looks like in your own life and in the life of every member of your family.
2. How about in the life of those for whom you pray today?

Pastor Mark says we are looking at the cost of discipleship.

1. Is there a cost?
2. What does this make you think? Were you looking forward to a message like this?
3. Do you have a testimony?

Mark takes us to revisit Matthew 7: **18***A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19*Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **20**So then, by their fruit you will recognize them. **21**Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father in heaven. **22**Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' **23**Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness!' **24**Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

1. Where does division come from?
2. Is a tree that bears bad fruit still the right species of "tree?"
3. Do both the metaphorical "good tree" and the metaphorical "bad tree" do miracles and cast out demons? Is there a difference between the miracles?
4. What is the difference?
5. Were the prophecies spoken good, real prophecies, and the miracles real? Were demons cast out?
6. Who benefited from the prophecies, the miracles and the deliverance?
7. Who did not benefit in the least, despite the prophecies, the miracles and the deliverance? Explain.
8. Look at verse 24. What is the difference between good tree and bad tree?
9. What fruit matters in the end, when it comes to our own salvation?
10. Is it possible to "get into the banquet," to be saved, without the proper wedding garments? How? (Review [last week's notes](#).)
11. What happens when you're caught by the king with the wrong outfit? Explain the division in the church.
12. Pastor says, "Belief is not enough." (See [footnote 1, below](#)) What must faith be coupled with?
13. Look up James 2: **18***But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. 19*You believe that God is one. Good for you! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. Why is it not enough to believe? Whom must you act like?
14. Look again at the end of verse 21 above: **21***Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father in heaven.* Do miracles no longer matter, then? For whom do miracles matter?
15. Why do the miracles not matter for the one "performing" them? (How would I, the one gathering a crowd by my performance, benefit from the miracles I perform?) What's missing in my own testimony? (What am I not doing? Be specific.)
16. What does the "obedience of faith" look like to you? What does it look like to your neighbor and your family?
17. Do the miracles and deliverance mentioned above exhibit faith?
18. Review 1 Corinthians 13: **1***If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a ringing gong or a clanging cymbal. 2*If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have absolute faith so as to

*move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. **3**If I give all I possess to the poor and exult in the surrender of my body, but have not love, I gain nothing. **4**Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. **5**It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no account of wrongs. **6**Love takes no pleasure in evil, but rejoices in the truth. **7**It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **8**Love never fails. What might be missing, despite the performer's real, demonstrable miracles and deliverance?*

19. Look at what Paul says here: Are the tongues real? The prophecies, the knowledge and the faith? Do the mountains actually move?
20. What is the impact on the mountain? What is the impact on the one who moved the mountain?
21. What is the reward for the person receiving the miracle and the one being delivered? Is there any reward for the performer?
22. Did Judas perform miracles with the other eleven? Explain. (Is the gift of deliverance sent for the sake of the performer? Or for the sake of the one needing deliverance?)
23. Now, try to explain the division Jesus said He is bringing.

Now turn to Matthew 19:**17**"Why do you ask Me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." **18**"Which ones?" the man asked. Jesus answered, "'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, **19**honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself.'" **20**"All these I have kept," said the young man. "What do I still lack?" **21**Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me." **22**When the young man heard this, he went away in sorrow, because he had great wealth. **23**Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. **24**Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Also Mark 10:17-27)

1. What do you see?
2. Is the exchange Jesus offers the young man a step into less riches? Or into greater riches? Explain?
3. Which has greater value in real time, the young man's riches? Or treasures in heaven? Explain.
4. Do you actually believe this? Do you have a testimony?

Review 2 Corinthians 9:**6**Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. **7**Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not out of regret or compulsion. For God loves a cheerful giver. **8**And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. **9**As it is written: "He has scattered abroad His gifts to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." **10**Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your store of seed and will increase the harvest of your righteousness. **11**You will be enriched in every way to be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will produce thanksgiving to God. **12**For this ministry of service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanksgiving to God.

1. Now say which has greater value. What do the treasures Paul lists above look like?
2. For what purpose are we made stewards of great riches?
3. Who benefits from the riches we steward?

4. What purpose do riches serve?
5. Whom is the abundant giver imitating? (Who gave first and so, overwhelmed our own misgivings?)

Pastor Mark takes us to glance at Zacchaeus. Look up Luke 19: **1***Then Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2*And there was a man named Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector, who was very wealthy. **3***He was trying to see who Jesus was, but could not see over the crowd because he was small in stature. 4*So he ran on ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see Him, since Jesus was about to pass that way. **5***When Jesus came to that place, He looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, hurry down, for I must stay at your house today.” 6*So Zacchaeus hurried down and welcomed Him joyfully. **7***And all who saw this began to grumble, saying, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinful man!” 8*But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, half of my possessions I give to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will repay it fourfold.” **9***Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham. 10*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

1. What do you see? Sing the song.
2. What compelled a chief tax collector to climb a tree? Did he even know who Jesus was?
3. Did Jesus compel Zacchaeus to sell all his goods?
4. Why was Zacchaeus' offer sufficient?
5. What compelled him to offer it?
6. Did he have to quit his job as chief tax collector?
7. Look at verse 7. Who grumbled?
8. Who did not grumble?
9. Did Jesus actually go to be the guest of a sinful man? Explain.
10. Who is not a sinful man?
11. When did salvation come to the house of Zacchaeus.
12. How? In what manner?
13. What happens when Jesus comes to your house?

Look up Matthew 10: **34***Do not assume that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35*For I have come to turn 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

36*A man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'* **37*****Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me;** 38*and anyone who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. **39***Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*

1. Take a moment to compare Luke's account to Matthew's. Luke 12: **49***I have come to ignite a fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! 50*But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! **51***Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but division. 52*From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. **53***They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."*
2. Compare the two and contrast them. What is repeated?
3. What changes?

4. Is this animosity even biblical? Explain.
5. How does Jesus “have a baptism” ahead of him, yet to be performed?
6. What baptism has He already experienced?
7. What baptisms did John the Baptist describe that Jesus would baptize us with?
8. Look up Micah 7: **5***Do not rely on a friend; do not trust in a companion. Seal the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your arms. 6**For a son dishonors his father, a daughter rises against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies are the members of his own household.* What do you see in this prophecy?
9. Do you have a testimony?
10. How well can you explain this division?

Look at the highlighted portion, Matthew 10:37, above. Pastor Mark asks, “What is this saying? We’re supposed to fight with each other in our homes? We’re not supposed to have peace in our homes? We have to keep reading, because, remember, we are talking about our affections.”

1. Can you explain this?
2. Have you seen families divided over the gospel? Do you have a testimony?
3. Revisit the verses: **37***Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me;* **38***and anyone who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.* Are we not supposed to love our family?
4. Who gains if I love Jesus more than I love my son? Who loses? How?
5. What does this look like? Do you have a testimony?
6. Mark cries out, “This seems so confusing. I don’t get it.” Do you?

Pastor says, we have to run this through the sieve of each of those teachings we’ve been studying. Last week it was distractions: “I have to go here.” “First, I’ve got to do this.” This week it’s our affections. “I’ve stored up so much.” “I’ve been blessed with all this wealth...” He says, “These are the things that take precedent, or that we prioritize over following Jesus simply.”

1. Does this help you?
2. To what degree are you distracted by obligations or affected by your own possessions?
3. Look at the testimonies we’ve examined in this series, those of Matthew, Peter, and here, Zacchaeus. What do they each have in common?
4. What did they not have in common?
5. Has the tension Jesus foretells arisen in your own household?
6. In your surroundings? Explain.
7. Pastor asks, “Are you OK with that tension?” Answer him.
8. He compares this tension with the effect of someone turning on bright lights in the room of one in deep sleep in darkness with the shades drawn. Is this apt? Explain.
9. Review the parable of the four soils in Mark 4, Matthew 13 and Luke 8. What issue does the seed have in growing in each of the four soils?
10. What interferes with the seed’s growth and fruit bearing promise?
11. Review John 15: **16***You did not choose Me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will remain—so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. 17**This is My command to you: Love one another.* What hinders us most from bearing fruit? What hinders you?

12. When division erupts in our families, how are we to respond? (Pastor suggests we review Matthew 5: [43](#) *You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor' and 'Hate your enemy.'* [44](#) *But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,* [45](#) *that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.* Does this help? Fit this with what Paul taught us above from 1 Corinthians 13. Remember, real, godly, biblical love is assessed and measured by the qualities Paul lists.)

13. Are you getting good at this yet?

14. How and in what circumstances does "...love covers a multitude of sins" apply? Whose sins get covered? Who covers your own sins? You or your friend?

15. Whose sins do you cover? When?

16. What is the difference between "covering sins" and enabling sin?

17. What is the difference between a "Christlike love," and a "Christlike look?"

Mark suggests, "Be patient. Extend grace. Be faithful."

1. What would you add?

2. What does this look like?

3. How would this change the dynamics of your own situation?

4. Whom do you know that is good at this?

Pastor Mark asks, "What are we holding on to? What are the affections to which we are clinging as the rich young ruler?"

1. Answer him.

2. What steps have you taken to achieve release?

3. What does release even look like?

He asks, "Does Jesus really need us to give Him all our affection? Is He that 'egotistical'?"

1. Answer him.

2. Who needs it?

3. Why do we need this?

4. What is Jesus offering us when He says in John 8: [36](#) "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed?" What does true freedom look like to you?

5. Mark reminded us of the banquet to which we are all invited, of which he spoke in last week's message (see last week's notes). Quoting psalm 16:11 he said, "[God], you will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Describe what this promise looks like.

6. Mark says, "In His presence we find something that makes us more fully alive...to think, dream or imagine. It's as if He has something for us...But in order to 'get that thing' you have to be willing to rid yourselves of those things that grab your heart and prevent you from receiving the life that I have for you." Explain.

7. He continues, "You're saying, 'The cost is high.'" Write out the reward.

8. Look up Mark 10: [28](#) Peter began to say to Him, "Look, we have left everything and followed You." [29](#) "Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for My sake and for the gospel [30](#) will fail to receive a hundredfold in the present age—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, along with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. [31](#) But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first." Now write out the reward again. What does a hundred fold increase look like in real terms?

9. When does the hundredfold increase happen? In heaven or today?

10. When do the persecutions happen (v. 30)? Is the division spoken of a sign of error? Or is it a sign of the truth of the Biblical worldview? Why did Jesus warn us that we'd see struggles in this world (John 16: **33**"*I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take courage; I have overcome the world!*"?)

11. To what degree does this verse encourage you in your tribulations?

Mark calls us to look at what might be holding us back. "Is it money? Is it a career? Is it possessions? Is it a family? Is it housing?"

1. Answer him.
2. Mark spoke of his "dream home," where he lives currently. When does one know one is willing to relinquish all?
3. Do you have a testimony?
4. Look at Paul's testimony to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11: **23***Are they servants of Christ? (I am speaking as if I were out of my mind.) I am so much more: in harder labor, in more imprisonments, in worse beatings, in frequent danger of death. 24*Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. **25**Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked. I spent a night and a day in the open sea. **26**In my frequent journeys, I have been in danger from rivers and from bandits, in danger from my countrymen and from the Gentiles, in danger in the city and in the country, in danger on the sea and among false brothers, **27**in labor and toil and often without sleep, in hunger and thirst and often without food, in cold and exposure. **28**Apart from these external trials, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. **29**Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not burn with grief? What do you see?
5. What did Paul actually relinquish? Make a list.
6. Compare yourself with Paul. How do you fare?
7. Did all apostles, as Paul did, give up everything?
8. Are you willing if called to do what Paul did? How do you know? How will you know?
9. How did Paul know he was to give up everything? How personal was His call?

Mark concludes, "The cost of following Jesus can *feel* like we're giving something up...but for Zacchaeus, he found a life that he never dreamed he could possibly have by following Jesus. Matthew left his booth to go on this 'wild' adventure, being a part of an unfolding story of God with us, Messiah come to earth." He asks, "What are we missing out on by holding too tightly to our own affections? What adventure, what peace, what joy are we not experiencing because we've said, 'These temporal things are more important than following Jesus?'"

1. What do you think? Answer Mark.
2. What thought comes to your mind?
3. Mark says, "There is a reward for letting go." What is the reward?
4. What does that reward look like for you in real, practical terms? Write it down.

Follow up application:

1. Use the [Soap study below](#) to pursue your own understanding.
2. Pick a prayer you are praying. Jot down what an answer to that prayer looks like.
3. List those affections that restrain you by your own priorities. Which are you willing to dismiss?
4. Write down how you can loosen any unconstructive bonds.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Footnotes:

1. **On *pistis* and the meaning of biblical faith**—The Greek word πίστις (*pistis*) means faith, belief, conviction, i.e. absolute and resolute assurance. It is from the Greek word πιστεύω, *pisteuo*, to believe which is drawn from the Greek word πείθω, *peitho*, to persuade. There is much fruitless debate as to whether “faith” and “belief” are synonyms. The Greek does not allow *pistis*/faith/belief to happen without one being persuaded...and persuasion can only be where the action it compels is present, and unfeigned. If you truly believe, you act according to what you know to be true despite what you see. The controversy is a waste of time. If you do not act...you cannot prove that you believe. The foundation of your house is built on sand.
2. **On Barnabas and the rich, young ruler**—There is ancient and reasonable conjecture that the rich young ruler we learned of above is none other than Barnabas, the apostle of Acts, Levite from Cyprus, who is mentioned in Acts chapter 4:[36](#)*Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (meaning Son of Encouragement),* [37](#) *sold a field he owned, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.* There are many compelling reasons that make this claim credible, not the least of which is this: a Levite, following the Law as the rich young man claimed to do, was not allowed by that Law to possess lands and goods *in the promised land*. A Levite who obeyed the Law could find a workaround to that restriction by having lands and goods on Cyprus. Here’s a great article on this subject:
https://www.academia.edu/36824565/Was_Apostle_Barnabas_the_Gospels_rich_young_man
3. **On love covering a multitude of sins, an all-day bible study**—The theme of love that covers sin is one worth taking the time to pursue. The BibleHub cross references to Proverbs 12:12 offer one of the richest thematic Bible studies I’ve seen. Take the time this week and check it out: <https://biblehub.com/proverbs/10-12.htm>

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP method** (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—Write what God is saying. / **P**ray—Write what your response is.) to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Matthew 10:34-39
Tuesday: Luke 12:49-53
Wednesday: Micah 7:4-6
Thursday: Micah 7:7-9
Friday: Matthew 7:18-27
Saturday: John 15:16-19
Sunday: 1 Corinthians 13:1-4

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.