

Matthew - Repentance, Discipleship, Kingdom advance

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Preacher: Jason Areington

[0:00] Thank you. Today, we're going to be going through Matthew again.! You can't bear fruit.

And God wants to, this morning, He wants to start churning up that soil in your heart. He wants to soften your heart this morning, ready to bear fruit. How often do we just rush into reading the Word? Let's, right now, just take a moment. Before God, I'm going to pray and let's respond. Lord, we want to ask, would you come have your way in us this morning?

Soften our hearts, Lord Jesus. What is it you want to say to us this morning? We don't want to just have a normal Sunday or whatever that is.

But we're going to encounter you this morning, Lord Jesus. When your kingdom comes, nothing stays the same. Let that be that in our hearts this morning. Let your kingdom come and your will be done in our hearts this morning.

[1:27] Let us be expectant, Lord. For you to move amongst us. To change our hearts and minds. Amen. So if you'd like to open your Bibles with me.

We're going to start off in Matthew 4, verse 12 to 25. Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee.

And leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, the territory of Zebulun in Naphtali. So what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled.

The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light. And for those dwelling in the region in the shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.

From that time, Jesus began to preach, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. While walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who's called Peter, and drew his brother, casting a net into the sea.

[2:37] For they were fishermen. And he said to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. Immediately, they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets.

And he called to them. Immediately, they left their boats and their father and followed him. And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.

So his fame spread throughout all Syria. And they brought him all the sick, and those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics and paralytics.

And he healed them. And the great crowds followed him from Galilee and Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

That's the word of the Lord. Now, forgive me this morning, as you can tell, I've now got a cold. So there might be a bit of sniffs and things like that. On Tuesday, I came down with the worst cold I've had in a while.

[3:52] So, please forgive me. First, I can see that in this passage, there's sort of three sections that link together.

And we've got repentance, discipleship, and kingdom advancing. This morning, I'm going to start off with repentance. Now, I'm not sure if it's just me, but sometimes I read a passage, and nothing really jumps out at me.

And then the Spirit reveals something. And I don't know if you noticed, but there's something humongous that happens here. Did you miss it? The humongous thing that happens here. Jesus'

ministry begins.

It begins with wide, open arms. Jesus' first act was to open up heaven's doors to everyone. That is huge. It's for all of us.

What great news. Jesus says, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Now, repentance is costly. It means laying down your life and humbling yourself before God and saying, I want to turn away from my old life.

[4:59] I don't want to live for myself anymore, and I give it to you. It's like Tim was talking about baptism. It's a symbol of dying to your old life and being raised into a new life.

Have you been baptized? There might be a challenge for you this morning. If you believe in Jesus, be baptized. When you come and speak to the elders this morning, say, I'd like to give us a go.

I want to do this. A 360 turn is like, turning from your old life, is like seeing Olympians run around a track and the leader turns around and starts darting the other way.

Now, I mean, if you were one of the runners, you'd probably be thinking, what is going on if I miss something? Do I need to be doing the same thing? What's going on? If you get a chance to watch any robot Olympics, I encourage you, please do.

It's the most funniest thing you've ever seen. So getting back to it, this 360 turn needs humbling.

[6:05] We need to humble ourselves and turn away from our old life. We need to give ourselves to God and declare Christ is Lord. There's a lot of things in my life I've needed to repent of and ask for forgiveness for.

And I found that I had a lot of unforgiveness in my life. I was holding on to things and things were building up. And the problem with that is it started to lead to addictions.

And I went to addictions for comfort. All because of unforgiveness. And you might not think it must mean anything, but it nearly cost my marriage.

Those addictions nearly cost me my marriage. And God used people, like the elders, to help me get through this. I had to decide to humble myself and forgive.

And everything changed. God worked to get rid of these addictions. I had to give God my wants and my needs and declare that He was Lord.

[7:22] Now the hurt and the pain of all that I had done was still there. There was still reconciliation that was needed. Now a more recent example this week, there's been a lot of things at work and friends and things like that I needed to forgive for.

And in a lot of those situations I felt, but I'm right. I'm right in this. I haven't done anything wrong in this. And then God came to me and said, what are you preaching about on Sunday?

It started tapping my heart. What is this that you're preaching about? Humble yourself. You're saying that you think you're right, but Jesus was saying, humble yourself. And so I had to do that. I realized I needed to humble myself and give it to God and declare Christ is Lord. And I felt there was a challenge within that, that God wanted me to increase my forgiving.

Sometimes I let it build up maybe to the end of the week or end of the day. But God was challenging me to say no. How about every hour, every minute, if that's what it takes?

[8:32] Friends, living in unforgiveness will make your bones rot. So that's settling. It will make your bones rot. It produces unrighteous anger and the devil has a foothold in your life that can ruin your relationships, your marriages.

Don't let unforgiveness ruin your marriages or relationships. It nearly happened to me and God broke in. We're called to forgive even if we have so much pain there.

Now, again, forgiveness isn't reconciliation. It means you can forgive someone, but we may need to work on things afterwards. Maybe there's some boundaries that need to be put in place.

We're meeting with the elders to help bring about healing and reconciliation. There'll be time at the end to do some of this, to forgive, to repent.

And Sean will take us through some of this. We want us to ask God to reveal any unforgiveness in our lives. has someone hurt you?

[9:52] And then I want you to write down on a piece of paper the person's name, what they've done. And I want you to set a match alight to the paper and let it burn.

you will then need to humble yourself and say, I forgive that person. You will need to give it to God and let him avenge.

Declare Christ is Lord. Again, there might be some work that's needed afterwards. Please hear, forgiveness doesn't mean to minimize or excuse the pain that someone keeps on causing you or

has caused you.

It doesn't minimize it. But we're called to humble ourselves just as Christ did. Jesus didn't have to die for us. We deserve death and destruction, but he humbled himself and came to earth as a baby. He lived as a man and was crucified, blameless, raised to life, punching a hole through the wall of sin that is permanent. Amen? Amen? This blameless lamb of God chose to die for us while we were still sinners.

[11:13] Jesus brings heaven to earth and bridges the gap. We are forgiven, so now we forgive. We have no claim or right to our salvation by our own works.

It's a free gift. It's available for you today. He forgives us even though we don't deserve it. So how do we repent?

Hopefully you can see on the slide. Hopefully I've made it clear. Humble ourselves, give it to God and declare Christ is Lord. Now the second section I have is discipleship.

As you can see in the passages from verse 18, Jesus calls his disciples. Now Jesus can do anything. He could tell the whole world about himself in a message in the sky if he wanted to. But this moment here, it just shows a glimpse of God's love for us. Because who does he choose? He chooses us. to join in with his mission. He chooses some fishermen to be involved in his mission.

[12:26] He didn't have to, but he chose us. What is a disciple? What does it look like? Disciples are repentant followers of Jesus.

Those willing to humble themselves. Jesus came to serve, not to be served. He had every right to have people serve him like a king. But instead, he humbles himself as a baby in a manger, born in a dirty stable, lives as a man, heals those who are sick, washes people's dirty feet.

I mean, that was a job that no one wanted. One of the worst jobs to have. But Jesus was prepared to get his hands dirty. If we were to be Christ-like, then surely, we should follow his leading.

Now, I've always felt closest when I've been serving others. I love seeing other people thrive and serve well. And I used to be part of a sound and media team.

And my main aim in that was to make sure that those who are serving were able to serve the best they could. And as a teenager, it was a bit of a wake-up call because I had to wake up before 12pm.

[13:50] It was really, really difficult. I found that really hard. But I had to humble myself. The meeting was at 9am and I thought, well, if I get there at about 6pm or 6.30pm, that's going to give me the best chance to get all set up and make sure that when the band arrive, when the preacher arrives, they're not stressing.

But I had to humble myself and think, not what I want to do. I want to sleep till 12. I want to have a nice lie in. That'd be really nice. You know, I feel nice for the day. I had to give it to God.

Lord, have your way in this. Help the set up to go well. Help my heart to be like yours. Then I declared Christ as Lord. I thank you, Lord, that this is all yours.

You're the one that provides strength and wisdom. Do you want to know what it's like to be a disciple? Serve. Join a team. My favorite team is the refreshments.

Now, I don't know if you know me that well, but I absolutely love tea. I don't think there's an hour that goes by, apart from when you're standing up here, that I don't have a tea in my hand. I love the tea, the tea-making team, and coffee as well.

[15:06] I'll accept coffee, but I love the tea. Thank you for those who serve. Now, there's many other teams that you can serve in, and I'm going to need to ask for forgiveness to Nadia for this, because what I'm going to ask you to do is flood the church's inbox with, I would like to serve.

Please help me do this. I'm sorry, Nadia. Now, I know Nadia likes brownies, so I have a feeling that some brownies are on the way.

I really hope that you can forgive me if I can get some brownies. There you go. So please, flood the inbox, there's brownies going Nadia's way. You've got permission. So if you're here on a Sunday, if you just come along and you're not a member, you can still send the email, you can still ask.

Let someone else deal with the other bits. Just be willing and humble yourself to ask the question. Humble yourself. Give it to God and declare Christ as Lord.

Now, the final section is kingdom advancing. You can see in verse 23, Jesus ministers to the great crowds. Now, when God's kingdom comes, things don't stay the same.

[16:26] Mountains move, the dead are raised and the sick are healed. Do you believe this morning that God's kingdom is living and active today? As it was back then.

Do you believe that God can heal you today? Our God created all things and in him are all things. God heals and he can heal you today.

You might be thinking, but I've been sick for a long time. I keep praying with no results. I'll tell you this morning, I've been there.

I prayed for my dad to be healed for about 10 years. He had arthritis and weight issues. He ended up getting lymphoma and he had to go through chemo.

every meal he had, he had a handful of tablets that he would take and a bottle of morphine next to his bed that he would, or next to his table that he would have to take a slug just to stop the pain.

[17:30] And Boxing Day 2014, my dad collapsed in our living room and he died in my arms. I prayed and prayed and prayed.

I said, God, would you let him stand up in the name of Jesus? Please heal him. Friends, he didn't stand up.

My dad died there in my lounge. And I struggled with that. I thought it was my fault. I thought it was down to me. I thought it was, I prayed for him, but he didn't get healed. I struggled with that.

I thought it was my fault. But, a few weeks, a little while later, I realized it was never about me and my prayer.

One day, I was driving to work and I saw a sunrise and God clearly spoke to me and he said to me, guess what? Your dad is the best place he can be.

[18:31] He is healed and he is running free. Amen. My dad was healed that day.

Not in the way that I thought, but he was healed that day. It's not ours to know the how or the why someone is healed or the answer to prayer.

It's not for us to know. We are called to pray. We're called to humble ourselves, to give it to God and declare Christ his Lord.

Now, all the bad decisions that Adam and Eve make, Jesus keeps on undoing it all. Forgiving sin, healing sickness, setting captives free. Now, we mustn't mistake unforgiveness for hurt.

You can feel pain and deeply feel the pain, but still forgive and love the person. It's really hard to hear for those who have been hurt.

[19:37] Really hard for those who have been hurt. Jesus understands your pain and he sympathizes with it. He was beaten, he was mocked, he was rejected, repeatedly hurt emotionally and physically.

He felt grief, broken relationships. One of his closest friends decided to hand him over to be put on trial without doing anything wrong.

Why am I telling you this? Because it's not about us. It's never been about us. And what we do, it's about Jesus' love for us. I'm going to say it again, Jesus' love for us.

It's the most liberating thing to know. It's not about us. It's Jesus' love for us. If you need healing today, there will be a time in a bit to pray.

Maybe, maybe, I'm going to just take a pause for the moment. There might be things in your life that you need healing for.

[20:54] It might not be physical, it might be emotional, it might be addictions. things in your life. I'm going to pray right now for God to just start to reveal.

You might want to close your eyes, you might want to just put your hands up. I'm going to start to pray now as we just, Lord, would you come and reveal, reveal these things, Lord, that are getting in the way.

You don't want this for us, Lord Jesus. You gave us freedom. We can say no. we can be healed. There is power in the name of Jesus. Lord, reveal these things in people's hearts this morning. Is there any unforgiveness in people's hearts?

Is the person sitting next to them the person they need to forgive this morning? God, just start to speak to your heart. Just be quiet for a moment.

[22:18] All of us can respond to this. You cannot discount yourself from this. All of us can respond to this. Amen. Now, in James 5, if you want to open up your Bibles to James 5.

It's James 5, 14 to 16. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call for the elders of the church. Let them pray over them.

Anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick. And the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. The elders have oil at the front every week.

Now, we believe in scripture, we believe that it is true. If you want this specific prayer, please come in the time that we have. Please come and receive this prayer.

[23:52] You can be prayed for by people around you, yes, but if you want specific prayer, please come to the front. Amen. Amen. Amen. Please don't let these opportunities pass you by.

Whatever reason or capacity you are here this morning, you can respond. None of us can say that we are good. The only person who can is Jesus.

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. He took all of the sin for us.

He didn't have to. Assemble ourselves this morning. Let's give it to God and declare Christ as Lord.

What I'm going to do in the moment is I'm going to ask the band to come up.

I'm going to start to pray. And I'm going to read some more scripture.

[25:08] And then we're going to have some time to respond. A bit of prayer. A bit of song. Would you all stand with me? Would you all stand Would you Philippians 2, 1-11 says, So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being one of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.

Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every other name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Amen.