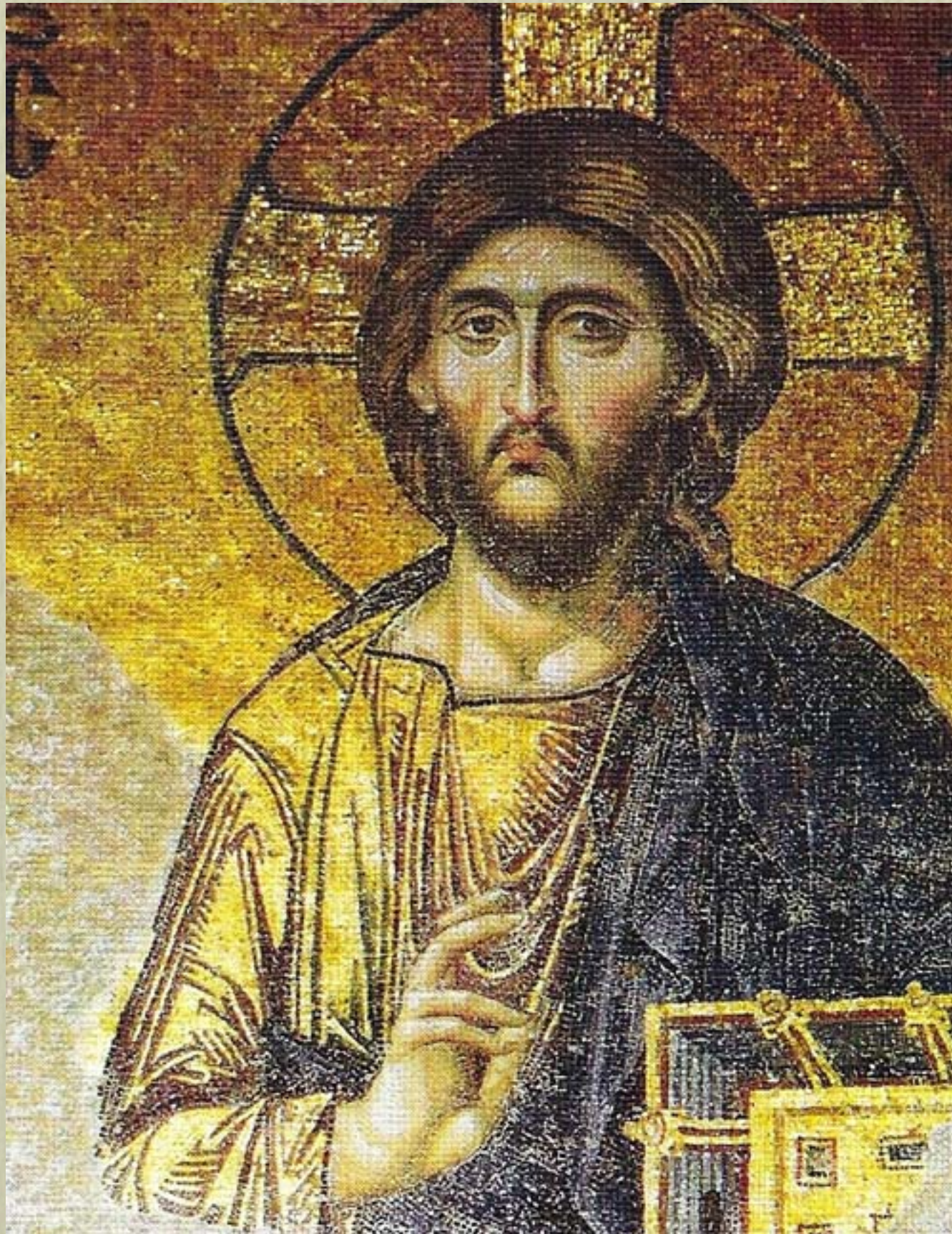


II. Matthew 17:1 - 20:19



Transfiguration : Matthew 17:1-3 (Mark 9:2-4)



Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and *his brother* John and led them up a high mountain (see 4:8-10), by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, *and his face shone like the sun*, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

The Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him'(Exodus 34:30).

Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son (Psalm 2:7), the Beloved; with him I am well pleased (3:17); listen to him!”

When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.”

And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

Matthew 17:9-13 (see Mark 9:9-13)

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Tell no one about the **vision** (ὄραμα) until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

The disciples asked him, “Why, then, do the scribes say that Elijah must come first? (Malachi 3:23 LXX)” He replied, “Elijah is indeed coming and will restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come (11:10, 14), *and they did not recognise him*, but they did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands.” *Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist.*

Matthew 17:14-18 (see Mark 9:14-27)



When they came to the crowd, a man came to him, knelt before him, and said, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; he often falls into the fire and into the water. I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him.” Jesus answered, “You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be **with you**? Bring him here to me.” And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly.

The Transfiguration Raphael 1520

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Matthew 17:19 (Mark 9:28)

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?”

Matthew 17:20 (Mark 11:23)

He said to them, “Because of your little **faith**. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed (13:19), you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”

The Son of Man must suffer, die and rise again (2)

Matthew 17:22-23 (Mark 9:30-32)

As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them,
“The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands,
and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised.”
And they were greatly distressed.

The Liberty of God's Children Matthew 17:24-27

When they reached Capharnaum, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and said, 'Does your teacher not pay the temple tax?' (double drachma = half-shekel) He said, 'Yes, he does.' And when he came home, Jesus spoke of it first, asking, 'What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their sons or from others?' When Peter said, 'From others,' Jesus said to him, 'Then the sons are free. However, so that we do not give offence to them, go to the sea and cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin [στατῆρα]; (a shekel) take that and give it to them for you and me.'

Fourth list of Sayings (Disciples/Mission/Parables)

The community discourse : God's 'little ones' welcomed and forgiven

Matthew 18:1 - 19:2

The church is in a special way God's household.

Jesus teaches his disciples how to live as members of God's household (10:25), for the church is a community of Jesus' brothers and sisters (12:50).

Everything in Jesus' covenant community is based on the intimacy which God offers Jesus' disciples in their relationship to him, an intimacy shared with Jesus who is 'among them' (18:20). Note the constant mention of the 'Father' (18:10,14,19,35).

Matthew 18:1-5 (Mark 9:33-37)

*At that time the **disciples** came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a **child**, whom he put among them, and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes **humble** like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

Matthew 18:6-9 (see Mark 9:42-47)

If any of you put a stumbling block (σκανδαλιζω) before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. *Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks!* Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling block comes!

If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell (γέεννα) of fire. (see 5:29-30)

‘Let us resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance (σκάνδαλον) in the way of another’(Romans 14:13).

Matthew 18:10-14

Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven.

Roman 'genius' (spirit of the gens) ; Greek 'daimon'

Matthew 18:12-13 (see Luke 15:3-7)

What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray.

Matthew 18:14

So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

Matthew 18:15-18

If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.

But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (There is nothing more that can be done)

1 Cor 5:1-5 (living with his father's wife);

2 Cor 2:5-11 (excluded in view of reconciliation)

Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (see Matthew 16:19)

Matthew 18:19-20

Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. (see 7:7-11)

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon (died 135AD) says: 'When two are seated and discuss the Torah, the Shekinah resides among them'(The Sentences of the Fathers, III,3). A Tractate of the Mishna

Matthew 18:21-27

Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy times seven. (Genesis 4:24 Lamech)

For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents (60 million denarii) was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.” And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. (see 6:12: forgive us our debts)

Matthew 18:28-35

But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, “Pay what you owe.” Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you.” But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, “You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?” And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.’

Matthew 19:1-2 (Mark 10:1)

Surrounded by crowds, Jesus is on the road from Galilee to Judea,
healing as he goes

When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee
and went to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
Large crowds followed him, *and he cured them there.*

We have just completed the fourth teaching section in which Matthew focused on how the community of Jesus' disciples is to work for and maintain unity.

Now, as Jesus journeys to Jerusalem, the contrast between those who are for him and those who are against him becomes more and more stark. The reader is invited to choose in favour of God's Messiah.

A: Journeying with Jesus to Jerusalem : Matthew 19:3 - 20:34

Matthew 19:3-6 (Mark 10:2-9)

Some Pharisees came to him, and to test him they asked, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife *for any cause?*’ (see Rabbi Hillel, died 10AD)

He answered, ‘Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning “made them male and female,” [see Genesis 1:27]

and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”? [Genesis 2:24]

So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.’

Matthew 19:7-9 (Mark 10:4-6)

They said to him, 'Why then did Moses **command** us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?' see Deuteronomy 24:1-4

He said to them, 'It was because you were so hardhearted that Moses **allowed** you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

And I say to you whoever divorces his wife, *except for unchastity*, and marries another commits adultery.' (= Matthew 5:32) see Mark 10:11-12

(Shammai 50BC to 30AD)

(see 1 Cor 7:12-16)

Matthew 19:10-12

His disciples said to him, 'If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.'

But he said to them, 'Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given.'

For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone make room for (χωρεῖν) this who can.'

Matthew 19:13-15 (Mark 10:13-16)

Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might *lay his hands on them and pray*.

The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” And he laid his hands on them *and went on his way*.



We must look to God in trusting humility

Matthew 19:16-22

(Mark 10:17-22)

Then someone came to him and said, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” And he said to him, “Why do you *ask me about what is good?* There is only one who is good. *If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.*” He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; honour your father and mother; also, *You shall love your neighbour as yourself* (Leviticus 19:18).” The *young man* said to him, “I have kept all these; *what do I still lack?*” Jesus said to him, “*If you wish to be perfect* (see 5:48), go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, *follow me.*” When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Matthew 19:23-26

(Mark 10:23-27)

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel [κάμηλος ; hawser: κάμιλος] to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, “Then who can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.”

Matthew 19:27-30

(Mark 10:28-31)

Then Peter said in reply, “Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?”

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, *at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory* (see 25:31; and Daniel 7:9), *you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life.

But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.

Matthew 20:1-9

For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out in the middle of the morning, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.

When he went out again about noon and in the middle of the afternoon, he did the same. About an hour before sunset he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about an hour before sunset came, each of them received the usual daily wage.

Matthew 20:10-16

Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am **generous**?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

The Son of Man is going to be **crucified** and rise again (III)

Matthew 20:17-19 (Mark 10:32-34)

While Jesus was going up to **Jerusalem**, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and said to them on the way, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the **chief priests and scribes**, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the **Gentiles** to be mocked and flogged and **crucified**; and on the third day he will be raised.”