

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 05

Narrator: Matthew & Paul

Primary Scriptures: Matthew 13-20

Story Summary: Miscellaneous chapters in Matthew

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Matthew 13:17, 22, 35, 58; 16:16-18, 24-26; 17:20; 19:17, 21-22

As noted in other study guides, the majority of the verses in *Matthew* are found in *Luke* and *Mark*. The primary scriptures for this section are Matthew 13-20. Of those chapters, the main scriptures not found in *Luke* or *Mark* are:

- Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 Parable of the weeds and its explanation
- Matthew 13:33 Parable of the yeast
- Matthew 13:44-53 Parables of the hidden treasure, pearl, net, and house owner
- Matthew 14:28-31 Peter walking on the water
- Matthew 16:17-19 Jesus giving Peter the keys to the kingdom
- Matthew 17:20 Faith as small as a mustard seed
- Matthew 17:24-27 Payment of the Temple tax
- Matthew 18:12-35 Parable of lost sheep, forgiveness of sinning brother
- Matthew 20:1-16 Parable of landowner's payments to his workers

Matthew was with Jesus during his ministry, but Mark and Luke were not. Matthew gives us unique information on nine parables, three subjects, and two instances regarding Peter.

You might come to two other conclusions. These are exactly the sorts of stories and information you would expect to hear from an eyewitness. And, the fact that Matthew agrees with Luke and Mark on so many other passages lends credibility to those too.

The parable of the lost sheep is an example of understanding context. Jesus told the parable while explaining the value of a child. Children in the Roman world had little value and no legal standing, so Jesus used them as an example of people who are spiritually helpless and dependent. Also, when he says a man owned a hundred sheep, the crowd would be amazed. Anyone owning that many sheep was incredibly wealthy. The loss of one would be negligible.

Jesus indicates that God, who is immeasurably wealthy, considers every person to be invaluable. So valuable, that God is not willing that any of his spiritual children is lost.

Discussion Questions:

1. Of the four Gospel writers, who were eyewitnesses to the bulk of Jesus' ministry, and who were not?
 2. What kind of information might an eyewitness relate?
 3. In the Parable of the Lost Sheep, what information about God might the listeners have learned?
 4. A parable is an illustration or story that is designed to teach a lesson. The Gospels portray at least fifty of Jesus' parables, which comprises about one-third of all of his recorded teachings. Why did Jesus use parables?
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1. Matthew and John were eyewitnesses: Mark and Luke probably were not. 2. An eyewitness might relate small details and small stories, and might put information in better chronological order. 3. God is a loving god who loves every one of his spiritual children; God will go to great lengths to recover any of his lost children. 4. Everyday stories often impart spiritual truths easily without getting lost in religious jargon or intricacies; parables are easy to remember; people with no formal religious training could gain truth quickly and easily.

Application Questions:

1. Jesus often taught using stories and parables instead of using theological discourse. How might you explain an aspect of God's nature using a story?
2. Which do you remember better: the parables of Jesus or Paul's writings? Why?
3. In the parable of the lost sheep, the owner valued every sheep highly. When you think of taking the Gospel to the whole world, do you value the people in faraway countries as much as people in your own city? Why?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. Matthew 20:1-16 is a parable of a wealthy boss who pays his workers the same amount even though they worked a drastically different number of hours. If that happened to you, how would you feel if you were hired early in the day? Late in the day? The parable is about the nature of God. Do you think that God treats people fairly? What do you mean when you say something is not fair?
2. Matthew 14:28-31 is the story of Peter walking on the water. Do you have a situation in your life where you could step far out of your comfort zone because you trust in Jesus? How much faith would that require? Peter started to sink when he began to doubt. What sorts of things in your life cause you to doubt the power of Jesus? How do you think Jesus feels about that?