

Study Questions

Matthew

Daily Bible Study *by William Barclay*

Matthew Volume II

Kick-Off
Lesson 1

- I. Distribute Books and Materials – Get Organized
- II. Ice Breaker – Get Acquainted

Lesson 2

The Six Accents in the Voice of Jesus (page 1)

up to but not including

Matt 11:1-30

Crisis (page 21)

1. The first reading, page 1, ends, "And blessed is the man who does not take offence at me." (See also Lk 7.23) Put in your own words what this means to you. (try if you like the tools on the website Blue Letter Bible:
<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G4624&t=KJV>)
(one who stumbles or whose foot gets entangled feels annoyed)
2. Barclay gives three explanations for John the Baptist's question, "Are you the one who is to come, or must we go on expecting another?". Do you agree with one more the others?
3. If Jesus loves everyone equally why would he choose to reveal his knowledge to only certain people?

Lesson 3

Crisis (page 21)

up to but not including

Matt 12:1-14

The Characteristics of the Servant of the Lord (page 37)

1. What do you think about Jesus' argument that if work to helping a sheep is allowed on the Sabbath then the rules about healing humans must not be correct (steps could be taken to keep the sick or injured from getting worse, but not to make him better)?
2. Why did the Scribes and Pharisees want to kill Jesus? How does what they hoped to gain by the death of Jesus compare with what Jesus was offering?

Lesson 4

The Characteristics of the Servant of the Lord (page 37)

up to but not including

Matt 12:15-33

Hearts and Words (page 53)

1. Concerning "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" Barclay says, "When a man reaches that stage, repentance is impossible." What "stage" is Barclay talking about
2. Do you agree with Barclay's theory in the last paragraph on page 42 that Satan's power was weakened when he was unable to tempt Jesus in the wilderness?
3. There are many ways we can be "absent" from the church and Christ. In what way do these actions weaken our church community and our individual faith?

Lesson 5	<u>Hearts and Words</u> (page 53) <i>up to but not including</i>	Matt 12:34-13:9
	<u>The Truth and the Listener</u> (page 74)	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does Jesus mean when he says, “It is an evil and <u>adulterous</u> generation which seeks a sign?” 2. Jesus has an encounter with his mother and his brothers in the latter part of Matt Chap 12. Likely they were there to persuade Jesus to come home. Put yourself in their shoes. If you had a brother that was a trained carpenter who left that trade and took off gallivanting and worse yet making enemies with mayors, state representatives and the police – what would you do 3. Do you find words to be more damaging than actions? Why is it so hard to take back a statement after it is said? 4. Why would Jesus choose to use parables to teach over other methods? 	
Lesson 6	<u>The Truth and the Listener</u> (page 74) <i>up to but not including</i>	Matt 13:10-32
	<u>The Transforming Power of Christ</u> (page 91)	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Barclay offers an explanation of “given to those who have , and ... will be taken away from those who have not.” Does his explanation help with this very difficulty saying? 2. How do you react when someone sows darnel into your faith life? 	
Lesson 7	<u>The Transforming Power of Christ</u> (page 91) <i>up to but not including</i>	Matt 13:33-52
	<u>The Barrier of Unbelief</u> (page 107)	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On page 92 Barclay explains what the Jews used to leaven there bread. We use it today in baking some breads. What is our common name for it (think San Francisco)? 2. What do you think knowing that every day a Jew in his first prayer “thanked God he had not made him a Gentile, a slave or a woman”? 3. In what way are people transformed by Christ? Can we see the transformation unfold? 4. In today’s world do people still make sacrifices to show their joy in finding God? 	
Lesson 8	<u>The Barrier of Unbelief</u> (page 107) <i>up to but not including</i>	Matt 13:53-14:27
	<u>Collapse and Recovery</u> (page 124)	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On page 107 we cover Jesus visit back home. In the order Barclay suggests; Mark first then Matthew and Luke: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark has it Chap 6:5 “And he could do no mighty work there.” • In Luke, Jesus himself addresses the issue in Lk 4:24, "No prophet is accepted in his own home country." As to “mighty works”, after the preceding statement Jesus goes on to point out that during the drought in the times of Elijah the prophet did nothing to aid Israel’s widows but healed the Leprosy of a Syrian widow and then the kind folk of Nazareth ran Jesus out of town. • Matthew says in Chap 13: 58 that Jesus in his native place “did not do many deeds of power.” 	
	What thoughts do you have on the different versions of this same story?	

2. On page 120 Barclay states "But whatever way we approach the miracles of Jesus, one thing is certain. We must never be content to regard them as something which happened ; we must always regard them as something that happens." Do you agree with this statement?

Collapse and Recovery (page 124)

Lesson 9

up to but not including

Matt 14:28-15:20

Faith Tested and Faith Answered (page 140)

1. Near the beginning of this week's readings, Barclay makes the statement, "Ingratitude towards God and towards Jesus Christ is the ugliest of all sins; and there is no sin of which men are more often and more consistently guilty." Do you think this is true? In your life? How do you feel about that?
2. Give a few examples of why the state of the heart is more important than the state of people's ritual observances? Does this mean we don't need to attend mass on Sunday?

Faith Tested and Faith Answered (page 140)

Lesson 10

up to but not including

Matt 15:21-16:12

The Scene of the Great Discovery (page 155)

1. The Canaanite woman was asking for Jesus' help. We today also ask for Jesus' assistance and intercession. The Canaanite approached Jesus with love, faith, persistence and cheerfulness. What does this tell us about our own prayers to Jesus?
2. The Pharisees and Sadducees together ask Jesus for a sign from heaven. Jesus tells them they will be given no sign except the sign of Jonah. First, what is odd about the pairing of these two groups? Second, what is the sign of Jonah, see page 58, and what should the Pharisees and Sadducees have learned about Jesus from it?

The Scene of the Great Discovery (page 155)

Lesson 11

up to but not including

Matt 16:13-19

The Great Rebuke (page 171)

1. Peter's answer to Jesus' question, "who do you say I am?" together with Jesus' affirming reply is the most western style evidence we have from the gospels of Jesus relationship with God. What does Peter's answer "You are the Anointed One, the Son of the living God." tell us. What did Peter just proclaim?
2. Why would Jesus ask the disciples who he was in the town of Caesarea?

- Lesson 12** **The Great Rebuke** (page 171) **Matt 16:20-17:8**
up to but not including
- Teaching the Way of the Cross** (page 191)
1. Just six verses previously Peter is praised for his insight into who Jesus really was but now we have "Get behind me, Satan!", Matt 16:23. What are we learning about the man Peter?
 2. Why was it so difficult for the disciples to grasp the meaning of Jesus being the Messiah?
 3. ? Jesus prayed to be certain his next step was God's will. In what way would our lives and the world be different if we had no will but the will of God?
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- Lesson 13** **Teaching the Way of the Cross** (page 191) **Matt 17:9-18:4**
up to but not including
- Christ and the Child** (page 205)
1. On page 194 Barclay discusses the difference between Jesus and the human organization Jesus established. Barclay ends that discussion with the lament, "It is at once our condemnation and our challenge that, even yet, though men have lost their faith in the Church, they have never lost a wistful faith in Jesus Christ." What are your thoughts concerning this?
 2. Does the fact that the Jews were expecting a conquering Messiah explain why they didn't recognize John the Baptist as the forerunner to Christ?
 3. What is Jesus telling us we must do in 18:3? "Amen, I say to you, unless you become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."
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- Lesson 14** **Christ and the Child** (page 205) **Matt 18:5-18**
up to but not including
- The Power of the Presence** (page 221)
1. Jesus uses a story about a shepherd and lost sheep to tell us about the love of the Father. Barclay says the story tells us five things about God's love (pgs 216 & 217). Which of the five is most meaningful to you and why?
 2. Matthew 18:15-18 gives us the steps we should take when someone sins against us. In what way do these steps reflect the life of Christ?
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- Lesson 15** **The Power of the Presence** (page 221) **Matt 18:19-19:9**
up to but not including
- The Realization of the Ideal** (page 239)
1. Barclay discusses the Canaanite woman's request of Jesus back on pages 140-144. This week our author "talks" through asking something from God and what is required of that prayer to guarantee an answer. How are these two similar?
 2. ? Are all prayers fully answered, why or why not? Can it be difficult to see the answer?
 3. In lesson 14 we read about what we should do when sinned against. Lesson 15 tells us how to forgive. Is it possible to do one but not the other?

Lesson 16 **The Realization of the Ideal** (page 239)

up to but not including

Matt 19:10-26

A Wise Answer to a Mistaken Question (page 256)

1. On pages 252 through 255 our author discusses the difficulties a rich man has attaining eternal life. Religious belief and church attendance are at an all time low in western Europe and none too health in North America. Are there parallels to be found in the rich man discussion and the waning religious participation? Why are the two similar or dissimilar?
2. In the Great Refusal Jesus tells the man that to be complete he must sell his belongings, give to the poor, and follow him. What is Jesus telling the man about his view of religion??

Lesson 17 **A Wise Answer to a Mistaken Question** (page 256)

up to but not including

Matt 19:27-20:28

Love's Answer to Need's Appeal (page 274)

1. Barclay says, "It is always true that the Christian will receive far more than ever he has to give up." This is a nice platitude but do you really truly believe it. Discuss in your answer how and why you believe this or why you have difficulty believing.
2. On the road to Jerusalem Jesus again told the disciples that the cross was what lay ahead for him. What, if any hope can be found in this reading?
3. To share in the triumph of Jesus we must drink from the cup. What does the cup represent in your life?

Lesson 18 **Love's Answer to Need's Appeal** (page 274)

up to but not including

Matt 20:29-21:14

The Knowledge of the Simple in Heart (page 289)

1. On pages 280 and 281 are described to visual messages contained in the symbolic actions on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. One a picture from Zechariah foretelling a king of peace at a time when Judah was ruled by Persians. The other a reenactment of a of the leader of a successful revolt entering the capital. Barclay attributes both to Jesus' plan. But only the king of peace message was the actions of Jesus. The revolutionary triumph was the responding action of the crowd. What are your thoughts? Comment.
2. Can we approach Jesus with imperfect faith?

- Lesson 19** **The Knowledge of the Simple in Heart** (page 289) **Matt 21:15-32**
up to but not including
- The Vineyard of the Lord** (page 304)
1. In commenting about Jesus', "ask in prayer with faith you will receive" Barclay lists three things that this promise contains (pgs 298 and 299.) Turn this around and ask yourself, in what frame of mind must I pray to receive these? How must I structure my prayer to assure I get this in return?
 2. When we hear the saying "out of the mouths of babes" we are reminded of the blunt honesty children can have. Where does this honesty come from and why do we tend to lose it as adults?
 3. Do prayers give us the ability to do things, the ability to accept things, and the ability to bear things?
- Lesson 20** **The Vineyard of the Lord** (page 304) **Matt 21:33-22:22**
up to but not including
- The Living God is God of the Living** (page 320)
1. Barclay lists 3 things the Parable of the Vineyard tells us (each with multiple subtopics.) Which was the most meaningful to you and why was that?.
 2. What did Jesus mean when he said "render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things which are God's"?
- Lesson 21** **The Living God is God of the Living** (page 320) **Matt 22:23-23:14**
up to but not including
- Missionaries of Evil** (page 337)
1. What did you learn from our author's discussion concerning Jesus question to the Pharisees about Psalm 110?
 2. Do the commandments "You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind" and "You must love your neighbor as yourself" cover the complete definition of religion? What about the other eight commandments? Reading CCC 2083 and 2196 will help you answer this question.
 3. The Scribes interpreted the law into 50 volumes of rules and regulations and the Pharisees dedicated their live to the meticulous observance of each one yet mistakenly thought the Messiah was the Son of David while Peter, a lowly fisherman, knew the Messiah to be the son of the living God. What enabled Peter to have this insight that was missed by the Scribes and Pharisees?
- Lesson 22** **Missionaries of Evil** (page 337) **Matt 23:15-Chap 24**
up to but not including
- The Interweaving of the Strands** (page 353)
1. There have been times in our group discussion that we've mentioned other Christian denominations with a somewhat derisive tone. What did you learn from Barclay's discussion of sectarianism, specifically his quote for the Indian Christian Premanand?
 2. Chapter 23 paints a grim picture of what the Scribes and Pharisees had become. Do you think their original intention was to make religion difficult for the everyday person to follow?

- Lesson 23** **The Day of the Lord** (page 359)
up to but not including **Matt 24:1-41**
- Ready for the Coming of the King** (page 369)
1. On page 362 there are listed 4 things about believers in Jesus (a.k.a. Christians.) Which of the four was most meaningful for you? Why??
 2. What are the dangers of following a false prophet?
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- Lesson 24** **Ready for the Coming of the King** (page 369)
up to but not including **Matt 24:42-26:13**
- The Last Hours in the Life of the Traitor** (page 386)
1. Matthew doesn't say but the other Gospels report that the "costly perfume" was pure nard an extract from a plant root found in Nepal. So very costly indeed! Does the discussion in the book make you feel comfortable with the offset of "a lovely thing" on one hand and "this waist" on the other?
 2. What should we be doing with the gifts God has given to us?
 3. In God's Standard of Judgment on page 378 verse 32 reads "and all the nations will assemble before him." Who does all the nations include?
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- Lesson 25** **The Last Hours in the Life of the Traitor** (page 386)
up to but not including **Matt 26:14-30**
- The Collapse of Peter** (page 400)
1. Our book extracts the story of Judas and tells it as a whole. Why do you think Judas betrayed Jesus? Barclay doesn't discuss it here but in his *Gospel of Mark* he says, "It is almost certain that Judas was a fanatical nationalist and that he had seen in Jesus the one person who could make his dreams of national power and glory come true." Researchers believe Iscariot is a form of the title sicarii, meaning "dagger-men," a group of ultra-Zealots who carried a knife with them at all times to be prepared to assassinate traitors and capitulators.
 2. What are your views on the commentary regarding the traitor's kiss? Does this explanation make sense?
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- Lesson 26** **The Collapse of Peter** (page 400)
up to but not including **Matt 26:31-68**
- The Man who Sentenced Jesus to Death** (page 415)
1. What do you think of the fact that apparently Peter preached about his denials (see pg 493)? What do you suppose Peter's message might have been, his point in preaching about his failure?
 2. When we follow the thread of Peter through Matthew's Gospel we see that Peter loved Jesus but had imperfect faith. He followed Jesus at once when called and knew him to be the Son of the living God, yet Peter didn't always get it right and denied Jesus three times. If you were to examine your faith journey would you see yourself in Peter?

The Man who Sentenced Jesus to Death (page 415)

Lesson 27

up to but not including

Matt 27:1-50

The Blazing Revelation (page 432)

1. The Coptic Church ranks both Pilate and his wife, Claudia Procula, as Saints. What are your thoughts about that? Note: the Coptic Church just like the Eastern Orthodox Church participated in the First Council of Nicaea and use the Nicene Creed today just like we do. That is to say that in the in the 4th century (AD 325) we were all one Church.
2. Luke 23:2 tells us of the charges brought against Jesus by the Sanhedrin. What were the charges and why did they need to be fabricated?
3. Simon of Cyrene was pressed into service to carry the cross for Christ. This could not have been an enjoyable task. Has Christ ever asked you to carry a cross that wasn't comfortable? How did you handle it?

The Blazing Revelation (page 432)

Lesson 28

up to but not including

Matt 26:14-30

END of the BOOK (page 442)

1. Matthew reports several events that coincided with Jesus death on the cross. He reports that the temple veil was torn in two. What is he saying? What is the meaning of that barrier, the veil being torn completely in two?
2. Why did Joseph of Arimathaea ask Pilate for Jesus' body? What made it a brave act?