



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

MATTHEW

Week 2

DAY 8

Real Treasure

Matthew 6:19-34

OPENING
up to the Word

What did you treasure or collect as a kid? What do you collect now?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What is treasure in heaven? How and why does a person store up treasure in the world to come?
 2. What is a “good eye”? (a) 20/20 vision, (b) perfect hindsight, (c) moral conscience, (d) singular focus on Jesus, (e) spiritual insight, (f) generosity.
 3. Why is it impossible to serve two masters?
 4. What does worry accomplish? Why do people worry so much over so little?
 5. What does it mean to seek first his kingdom?
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LIVING
out the Word

1. Are your “eyes” good or bad? How so?
2. How can others tell if you are serving one master over another?
3. Who worries more about money—those with much or those with little?
4. Is it possible to think you are accumulating treasure in heaven through your own efforts—yet be spiritually bankrupt?
5. Where would you like to plant a *trouble tree* to leave your day’s quota of woes? (See following story.)

“THE TROUBLE TREE”

The carpenter I hired to help me restore an old farmhouse had just finished a rough first day on the job. A flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric saw quit and now his ancient pickup truck refused to start. While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence.

On arriving home, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. After opening the door, he underwent an amazing transformation.

His tanned face was wreathed in a smile and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss.

Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me.

I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier. “Oh, that’s my trouble tree,” he replied. “I know

I can’t help having troubles on the job, but one thing’s for sure, troubles don’t belong in the house with my wife and the children, so I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning I pick them up again.”

“Funny thing is,” he smiled, “when I come out in the morning to pick ‘em up, there aren’t nearly as many there as I remember hanging up the night before.”



—Anonymous

Inspector Christian

Matthew 7:1-29

OPENING
up to the Word

Which would you rather judge and why? (a) balls and strikes at a baseball game, (b) a contentious labor dispute, (c) a beauty contest, (d) a criminal trial, (e) politicians involved in a scandal, (f) people trying to “get” into heaven. Which judge’s role would you least like and why?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What kind of judgments are warned against here? (a) job evaluations, (b) character assassinations, (c) self-evaluations, (d) being a hypocrite, (e) good and bad sermons, (f) fine points of biblical interpretation. What kind of judgments should we make?

2. Is this A.S.K. (ask, seek and knock) prayer (vs. 7-12) a blank check? What happens if we don’t A.S.K.?

3. How is the “wide gate” distinct from the “narrow gate” (vs. 13-14)?

4. How is the good distinguished from the bad? The wise from the foolish?

5. How can someone live by what they believe to be God’s rules, but not really know God?

LIVING
out the Word

1. What would you like to A.S.K. for this week?

2. At which points in your journey of faith did you come across the broad gate? The narrow gate? The speck? The sandy soil? The rock?

3. Do you truly know him, or are you just going performance-based religion in God’s name?

WINDOW
on the Word

All **particular** mandates or examples must be interpreted in the context of clear, broader-based **general** teachings. Thus we interpret sentences within paragraphs—within chapters—within the book—within the whole of Scripture. For example, the command “do not judge” (v. 1) must square with the call to evaluate character (v. 6), the call to discern sheep-like “false prophets” (v. 15), and the call to inspect a tree’s fruit (vs. 16-20).

Matthew 8:1-34

If you were suffering from a terminal illness or serious accident, at what point would you want emergency measures or life-support discontinued?

1. What was the basis for healing the leper? The centurion's servant? Peter's mother-in-law?
2. Here Jesus healed all the sick (v. 16). Is that always God's will? If not, why not?
3. What's the point about the dead burying the dead (v. 22)?
4. How did the disciples move from fear to faith?
5. How did the Lord of the wind and the waves handle the demonic spirits? What was the impact on the local economy?
6. The crowd response was mixed (vs. 1, 18, 34). Why was that?

1. We see here God's power and his care for the sick. Is it more important for a human to receive physical healing or spiritual healing? Do you know anyone who is spiritually healed, but not physically? Is everyone who is physically whole spiritually healthy?
2. As great as a child's duty is to his or her parents, the claim of Jesus on that child is greater still. What priority does God have in your schedule?
3. Think back to a furious storm in your life: Did fear or faith prevail?
4. Which crowd response (vs. 1, 18, 34) typifies you?

Son of Man (v. 20). *Jesus' favorite title for himself (81 times in the Gospels), but almost never on the lips of anyone else. The title suggests authority and the Messiah coming in glory (compare Mk 8:29-31 with Dan 7:13-14). The dead (v. 22) is a term that can be used spiritually and physically.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

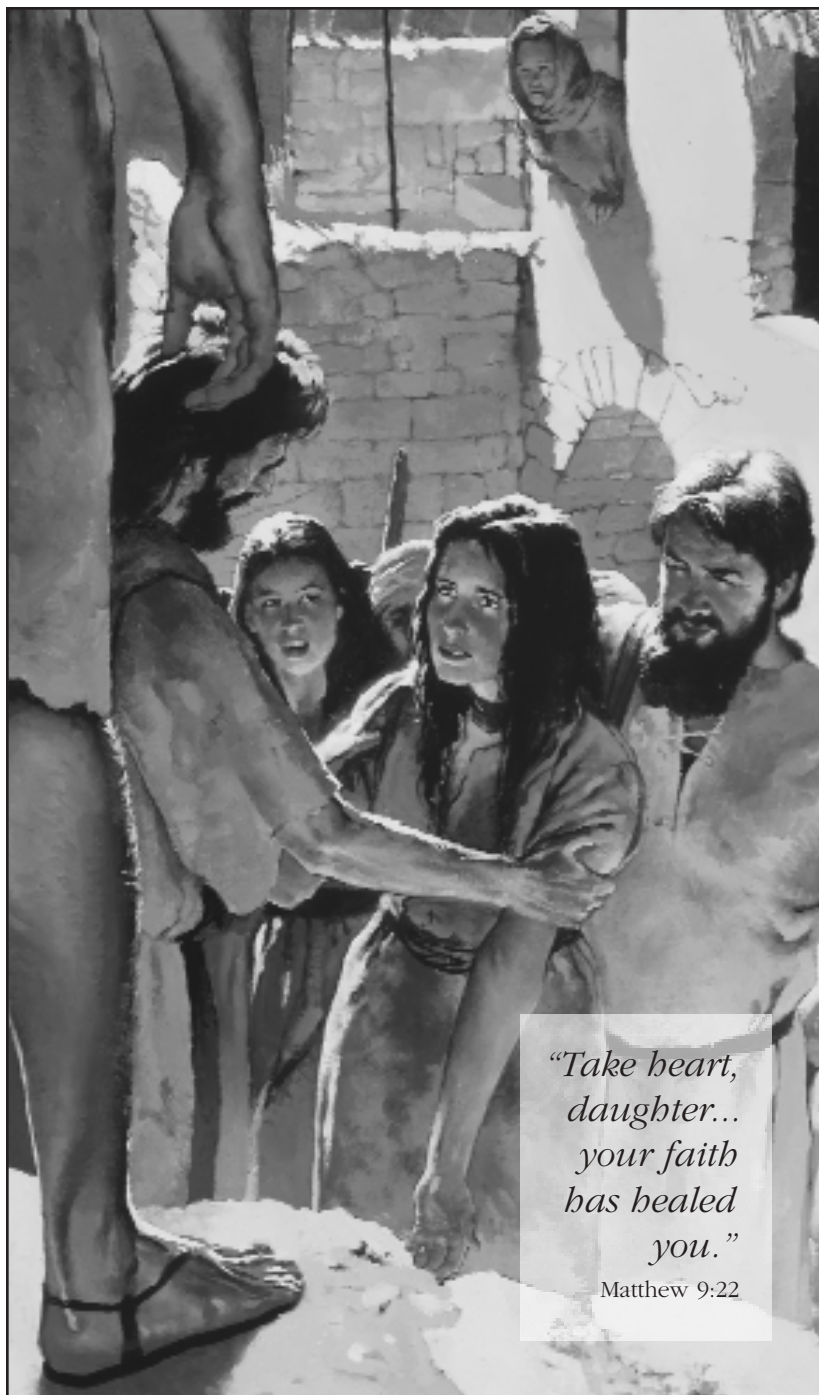
into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word



*“Take heart,
daughter...
your faith
has healed
you.”*

Matthew 9:22

Calling All Sinners!

DAY 11

Matthew 9:1-34

Which of the following are you more likely to do for yourself, or to leave it to your spouse or parent, or to hire it out? (a) make your bed, (b) make a meal, (c) patch your clothes, (d) call a physician, (e) dispense mercy to sinners.

1. Identify all whom Jesus healed in chapter 9.
2. Of those Jesus interacted with, who speaks (a) their mind? (b) their heart? (c) as a fool, (d) as a believer? (e) with actions to back up their words? (f) with no words, only actions?
3. What surprising plot twist, or moral of the story, do you see in the healing of the paralytic? In the choosing of Matthew? In the question of fasting? In the raising of the dead? In the healing of the blind and the mute?
4. What image of Jesus do you get from these brief accounts?
5. How do the various interactions and plot twists relate to Jesus' mission statement in verse 13?

1. When is fasting appropriate for Christians, if ever?
2. When is *feasting* appropriate for Christians?
3. Where do you, your family or friends need Jesus' healing touch?
4. How have you received and obeyed Jesus' call for "mercy, not sacrifice" (v. 13)? From whom could you "go and learn" this?

BlaspHEME (v. 3). Usually, a word that means to curse, to treat with contempt or to regard the sacred as irrelevant to life; here the term means to claim perks or powers that belong exclusively to God. **Wineskins** (v. 17). Made from goatskins and if new (not previously used), their elasticity fit the expanding wine as it fermented. However, old already stretched wineskins had no room for the expanding wine and so were prone to burst.

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
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DAY 12

Mission Possible

Matthew 9:35–10:42

OPENING
up to the Word

What experience have you had with door-to-door salesmen? Ever aspire to be one? Why or why not?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How will the disciples' mission compare to what Jesus was doing, teaching and praying (Mt 8-9)?

2. How is the disciples' mission like harvesting (9:37-38)? Like a shrewd snake or innocent dove (10:16)? Like family betrayal and murder (10:21, 35-36)? Like the sparrow in God's sovereign care (10:29-31)? Like taking up a cross (10:38)?

3. How could the Prince of Peace not bring peace, but a sword?

4. What strengths or resources did Jesus give his disciples to overcome these obstacles and threats from government, religious powers, even family?

5. What time fram did Jesus give his disciples for this early mission? (Hint: Note clue words—*when, if, whoever* and *anyone*.)

LIVING
out the Word

1. Under such troubling circumstances, why take up your cross and follow Christ?

2. What difficulties do you have talking about your faith with family? With total strangers? With best friends? With your boss?

3. When have you experienced the sword of division (vs. 34-36)? How has God helped you overcome those obstacles and threats?

4. Should we have the same mission assignment today as the first disciples? Why or why not?

WINDOW
on the Word

Samaritans (v. 5) were ethnically a mixture between Israelites and their Gentile neighbors and were a hated racial group in Jesus' day. **Beelzebub** (v. 25), a term of derision (literally, "lord of the flies") that spoofed **Baal-Zebal** ("Exalted Baal") and came to signify Satan, is here applied to Christ.

THE TWELVE DISCIPLES

DISCIPLE	FROM	FACTS
Simon Peter	Galilee	Fisherman, brother of Andrew (Mk 1:16, Lk 6:14)
Andrew	Galilee	Fisherman, brother of Simon Peter (Mk 1:16, Lk 6:14, Jn 1:40)
James	Capernaum	Fisherman, brother of John, son of Zebedee (Mk 3:17, Lk 6:14)
John	Capernaum	Fisherman, brother of James, son of Zebedee (Mk 3:17, Lk 6:14)
Philip	Bethsaida	Fisherman, friend of Nathaniel (Lk 6:14, Jn 6:5)
Bartholomew (Nathaniel)	Cana in Galilee	Fisherman, friend of Philip (Mt 10:3, Lk 6:14, Jn 1:45)
Thomas (Didymus)	Unknown	Fisherman, known as "Doubting Thomas" (Lk 6:15, Jn 11:16, Jn 20:24)
Matthew (Levi)	Capernaum	Tax collector, son of Alphaeus, possibly brother of James (Lk 6:15, Mt 9:9)
James	Capernaum	Son of Alphaeus, possibly brother of Matthew (Mt 10:3, Mk 15:40)
Judas (Lebbaeus, Thaddaeus)	Unknown	Son of James the son of Alphaeus (Lk 6:16, Mt 10:3, Mk 3:18, Jn 14:22)
Simon (the Zealot)	Unknown	A member of the Zealots, a Jewish revolutionary party (Lk 6:15, Ac 1:13)
Judas Iscariot	Kerioth in Judea	Betrayer of Jesus (Lk 6:16, Jn 18:2-5)

Great Expectations

Matthew 11:1-30

OPENING
up to the Word

When you meet Christ, what is the first nagging question or doubt you want answered?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What current events or nagging doubts do you suppose prompted John's questions of Jesus?
2. How does Jesus comfort John? Or does he?
3. How does John compare to others (vs. 11-14)?
4. What misunderstandings surrounded both John and Jesus (vs. 16-19)? What test would set their record straight?
5. How do Korazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum compare to the other cities (vs. 20-24)?
6. To whom does God reveal his plans for judgment? Why and how does this happen?
7. What is the effect of taking on Jesus' yoke (vs. 28-30)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. What questions about Jesus did you need answered unconditionally before you submitted to him as Savior and Lord? Or perhaps you still have unresolved questions?
2. Whose yoke are you taking on? With what effect on your soul?

WINDOW
on the Word

This **kingdom of heaven** (v. 12, Matthew's term for kingdom of God) has been interpreted three ways: (a) the forcefully advancing kingdom is the freely-given relationship between God and humankind, (b) the reign of God that would violently overthrow the government of Rome, (c) the realm of God that belongs only to those disciples who obey religious rules and regulations. A **yoke** (vs. 29-30) was a specially fitted beam of wood that harnessed animals, often a younger and an older animal, allowing them to work together. This term symbolizes bondage in two forms: (a) physical slavery under the Egyptians (Ex 6:6-7) and spiritual bondage that was too burdensome to bear (Ac 15:10). **Tyre** and **Sidon** were commercially magnificent, pagan shipping centers (see Isa 23 and Eze 26-27). **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** became proverbs for wickedness for divine judgment (vs. 23-24; see Ge 18:16-19:29; Eze 16:44-63).

Breaking All the Rules

DAY 14

Matthew 12:1-50

What gets your blood boiling? (a) a family rule is broken, (b) a biblical teaching is violated, (c) someone breaks their vow, (d) someone's criticism hits home, (e) a family member reveals your secrets.

1. What were Jesus and his disciples doing on the Sabbath (vs. 1-14) and why?
2. What is the Christian view of Sabbath-keeping? (a) doing good always beats keeping rules, (b) pleasing God, not man, is the key, (c) Jesus is our Sabbath rest.
3. What's wrong with spreading good news about Jesus (vs. 14-21)? How did/does Jesus fulfill Isaiah 42:1-4?
4. How are the works of God and of Beelzebub/Satan alike (vs. 22-29, 43-45)? How are they different?
5. What is Jesus' point about good trees and bad trees? What is the unforgivable sin (vs. 31-32)?
6. Why a "sign"? What's wrong with that? What sign(s) did he give anyway?
7. How is Jesus like Jonah? Like Solomon?
8. Who are Jesus' true relatives (vs. 46-50)?

1. Is it possible to worship a day of worship instead of the Lord?
2. Suppose all your words—good and bad—had been deposited in a *speech bank* over the last year. Would you have a positive balance or a negative balance? How can words be that powerful?
3. Think about the meaning of the empty tomb. Compare this sign (vs. 39-40) with the miraculous sign Jesus gave in John 2:18-22.

Beelzebub (vs. 24, 27). See 10:25 and related note under day 12. **Sign** (vs. 38-39). A miracle that points to the identity of the miracle-worker. **Adulterous** (v. 39). Used here spiritually to mean cheating on God.

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