KINGDOM of HEAVEN

A SERIES IN THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Community Group Material – *from Innocent Musonda*

Matthew 22:41-23:12

Week of Sunday, 4th August 2024

Jesus questions the religious leaders

Leader Preparation

Read Matthew 22:41-23:12, and page29 of Part 4, and pages 4- 5 of Part 5 of RUC Matthew leader notes

The passage has two main sections, the first being covered in Matt 22:41-46 and the second in Matt 23:1-12. The first part includes two questions that Jesus asked the Pharisees on who they thought the Messiah was, while the second part serves as a warning to his disciples and the crowd about the dangers of not being humble, and hypocrisy.

Group Time

In Matt 22:41-46, we see Jesus responding to the teachers of the law and Pharisees who were trying to challenge his authority and refute his deity. To counter their intentions, Jesus poses a difficult question to them as a way of silencing their tests, but more importantly, He reveals who He is and shows their error about the Messiah. This can be found in Matthew 22:42-45.

Have you ever been in a situation where someone tried to humiliate you publicly?

What was your reaction?

How did you feel afterwards.

Have you ever found yourself reprimanding someone publicly when it would have been better to approach them privately?

Exploring the Passage

READ Matthew 22:41-23:12

(Perhaps let two or three members read from different versions)

Content: Whose son is Christ?

Read Matthew 22: 41-46 again. Ask the CG members about what they thought Jesus was trying to communicate to the Pharisees.

Read Psalm 110:1, which is the scripture that Jesus Christ quoted about himself. What does this say about the divine nature of Jesus Christ? It's interesting to note that while the Pharisees referred to the Messiah as the son of God, they did not believe that he was God himself.

Jesus' second question to them challenged their superficial understanding of the Messiah. He pointed out that if the Messiah was just a secular prince, as they believed, then he could not have been called Lord by the great King David.

Delving deeper

Ask the community members what main truth/idea should be taken from Matthew 22: 41-46. What does the text mean to them? What should our response be to this?

Content: Warning the disciples

Read Mathew 23: 1-12 again. Ask the CG members what they thought Jesus was trying to communicate to his disciples in this passage.

Discuss the authority the Pharisees had as teachers of the law and the need for the people to listen and do what they said. (Matt 23 3)

- What responsibilities had God given them?
- What attitude were they supposed to display in carrying this out?

Discuss how the Pharisees did not actually serve the people but burdened them, performed their deeds to be applauded by people and loved titles and honour (Matt 23: 4-7).

- Did the Pharisees' actions demonstrate a love for God?
- Did they demonstrate a love for God's people?
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Lastly, discuss Jesus's warning to his disciples and the instruction for them to seek service (Matt 23: 11-12).

- Are these responsibilities more applicable to leaders and more mature Christians?

Delving deeper

Ask your group how the pharisees' conduct was considered hypocrisy. Are there examples of such conduct in our time? What is Jesus's warning to those who are not humble? Ask what the passage means to them individually.

- Are there particular areas where they are prone to seeking approval of their behaviour?
- Are there particular types of service that they have to work hard to make just for God?

Closing off

The study on Matt 22:41-23:12 addressed three key issues, namely: the **Divinity** of the Lord Jesus Christ, **Hypocrisy** and **Humility**. This passage reminds us of the lordship and divine nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, the need to be humble and do what we profess (no dichotomy between what we profess and do), unlike the Pharisees.

Give the group time to contemplate these five questions:

- *Do I practice what I preach?*
- *Am I unwilling to undertake for myself, what I prescribe for others?*
- *Do I unnecessarily seek to draw attention to myself in conversation?*
- *Do I revel in being paid respect?*
- *Do I misunderstand ministry by thinking it is about my greatness instead of my service of others?*

Come together in prayer to thank the Lord Jesus Christ, the king of kings, for his sacrificial love. Confess and ask God for forgiveness for times when we have not lived according to Jesus' teaching in Matt 23:1-12. Give thanks for his compassion and for bearing with our weaknesses. Ask God for strength to live according to our confession, remain humble, and ask Christ to be real and lord of our lives.
