

By talking about the Kingdom of God, but by focusing it on the Roman Empire, what Jesus was focusing on was the systemic injustice, which are really the normal ways that life is run. The Roman Empire was no worse than any other empire we've ever had. And in fact, what we are criticizing there is really the normal life of discrimination and oppression and persecution and hierarchy, all the normalcies of life are what are being criticized. It applies to us; if Jesus was here today, we are Rome.

Matt 9:35-38

Just before this – nothing has ever been seen like this in Israel from the Pharisees (casting out demons with a command).

The word for compassion conveys the deepest compassion possible. Moved by pain/sorrow/hunger/loneliness/bewilderness ... longing for God. Pharisees saw common people as chaff to be blown away. Pharisees longed for destruction of sinners. Jesus came to save them. It's not enough to pray or give. One must go out and work.

Next—gives disciples power over unclean spirit and sends them out.

Matt 13:31-33

Also in Mark and Luke.

Before – parable of weeds

What are these weird metaphors all about? Think about it. Talk about it. Puzzle about it.

After – parable of Leaven

Matt 13:44-52

Also in the Gospel of Thomas!

Before – Matt 13:36-43 Jesus explains the meaning of one of the parables.

“hidden in the field” – in the bank

Rabbinic law – strewn things belong to the finder

Joy in finding. To be in the kingdom is worth the high price. Where's the Kingdom – where ever “thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”.

- what do we do when we “find God” hidden in our daily lives?

Sources of pearls – Red Sea and Britain. Like the hidden treasure, one had to search for pearls. Pearls were highly valued for their beauty ... like the Kingdom.

Common fishing metaphor. Drag nets catch all. Catch must be sorted at the end. The church is for all. God is involved in the last judgment, not man. We are to be inclusive.

Have you understood? -- the old and the new = scribes and the law with the teachings of Jesus. Don't abandon your gifts; use them for the work of the Kingdom.

After – Synagogue in Nazareth. Unlike Mark, this is after Matthew has demonstrated the depth of Jesus' teachings. Strong statement about the rejection by the establishment.

Matt 18:1-5

Both Mark and Luke

Before – Paying the temple tax by going back to work.

Matt 18 – ethics: Humility, responsibility; self-renunciation; individual care; discipline; fellowship; forgiveness.

Bad question. “unless you change”. Humility, dependence, trust. Service to others. Child can also mean “beginner in the faith”

After – don't be a stumbling block to children (or beginners in the faith)

Mark 4:1-20

All three synoptics have the sower

Before this – true kinship.

Secrets --- mystery religions. The people have made themselves unable to see and hear.

Isaiah 6:9-11

Quoting Isaiah – I feel like this when I look out at these crowds.

After this – light of the world.

Mark 10:13-16

All three synoptics

Before – salt of the earth; teaching on divorce

Mothers would bring children to rabbis on the first birthday. Child thinks father is always right. Short memory.

After – man who runs up to him – what must I do?

Mark 15:1-15

All 4 gospels

Before – Trial; Peter denies him 3 times.
Why silence? Crowd chooses violence instead of peace.

After – soldiers mock him with crown of thorns

Luke 10:1-12

Matthew twice; Mark once

Before: Jesus calls a few, but they cannot accept the cost of the discipleship.
70 – number of elders chosen by Moses; number in Sanhedrin; number of nations
travel light – material things not in the way of the Kingdom
Elijah
Don't reject God's invitation

After: all things handed over to me by the Father.

Didache (The Teachings of the Apostles)

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didache-roberts.html>

Chapter 11. Concerning Teachers, Apostles, and Prophets. Whosoever, therefore, comes and teaches you all these things that have been said before, receive him. But if the teacher himself turns and teaches another doctrine to the destruction of this, hear him not. But if he teaches so as to increase righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord. But concerning the apostles and prophets, act according to the decree of the Gospel. Let every apostle who comes to you be received as the Lord. But he shall not remain more than one day; or two days, if there's a need. But if he remains three days, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle goes away, let him take nothing but bread until he lodges. If he asks for money, he is a false prophet. And every prophet who speaks in the Spirit you shall neither try nor judge; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven. But not every one who speaks in the Spirit is a prophet; but only if he holds the ways of the Lord. Therefore from their ways shall the false prophet and the prophet be known. And every prophet who orders a meal in the Spirit does not eat it, unless he is indeed a false prophet. And every prophet who teaches the truth, but does not do what he teaches, is a false prophet. And every prophet, proved true, working unto the mystery of the Church in the world, yet not teaching others to do what he himself does, shall not be judged among you, for with God he has his judgment; for so did also the ancient prophets. But whoever says in the Spirit, Give me money, or something else, you shall not listen to him. But if he tells you to give for others' sake who are in need, let no one judge him.

Luke 11:1-13

Prayer Also in Matthew. “Ask” also in Matthew

Before – Mary and Martha – listening and serving

An “anti-parable”. Sacred obligation of middle east hospitality.

After – casting out demons (by Beelzebub or God). Kingdom divided

Luke 13:22-35

Also in Matthew

Before – mustard seed and leaven

Not Jews only. Not automatically. Not because you live in the right community. Upside down.

Pharisees warn him about Herod Antipas of Galilee

1. Shoulder Pharisees (wore good deeds on shoulders)
2. Wait a Little – put off good deed until tomorrow
3. Bruised or Bleeding (not look at woman on streets)
4. Pestle and Mortar or Hump-backed – cringing humility
5. Ever-reckoning (balance sheet)
6. Timid – fear of Gods wrath
7. God-loving

Fox – sly, destructive, worthless and insignificant man.

Jerusalem – unrequited love.

After – trick question from a Pharisee

Luke 14:15-24

Before – invite poor to your feast, not develop obligations.

Thinking of the great messianic banquet – Leviathan is served as dinner ... for the Jews.
Feasts were announced well ahead. Business interests, novelty, laws.

Kingdom is about feasting ... the happiest thing one can do.

After – cost of discipleship