

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this series about sharing from our quiet times you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will share from what they have learned from their quiet times. Every day during the past week we had a quiet time from a passage in the New Testament. Once a week we come together to share with one another what we have learned. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. We will first explain how to have a quiet time. Then we will share the important truths and lessons from our quiet times and try to answer some difficult questions. Today's topic is A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM MATTHEW 22:1 to 25:13.

(S) **POINT 1. HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME AND SHARE**

Have a time of fellowship with God or quiet time every day of the week from one of the seven assigned Bible passages. An easy quiet time method is called "The favourite truth" method. It has 5 steps. Step 1. Pray and ask God to speak to you. Step 2. Read one of the seven assigned passages. Step 3. Choose your favourite truth. It is the truth, verse or passage through which God is speaking to you, stimulating your thinking or touching your heart. Step 4. Meditate on your favourite truth. Meditate by doing the following four things. First. *Think* about the meaning of words. Second. *Ask* God what he intends to say to you. Third. *Relate* your favourite truth to your life by making a practical application. Fourth. *Write* the most important thoughts of your meditation in a notebook so that you may share them with others. Step 5. Pray your favourite truth for yourself. Then pray your favourite truth for someone in your family. Then pray your favourite truth for someone nearby. And finally, pray your favourite truth for someone far away. When you meet together with one friend or with other Christians in a house fellowship or discipleship group, take turns to share the meditation of one of your quiet times. You may also try to answer some questions from the assigned passages.

(T) **POINT 2. SHARING FROM MATTHEW 22:1 – 25:13**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from Matthew 22:1 – 25:13. Now we will use our quiet time notes to share truths and lessons from the assigned passages and discuss some questions.

**Sharing quiet times from Matthew chapter 22.**

I want to share from Matthew 22:1-14 about the parable of the wedding banquet. This parable is about the kingdom of God and God's patience and persistence. By sending prophets, God first invited the people of Israel, the Jews, to enter his kingdom, but they refused. Thereafter, through sending John the Baptist, Jesus himself, the disciples, and people like Stephen and Paul, God persisted to invite the people of Israel, the Jews, to enter his kingdom, but they still refused. Their attitude was one of indifference and hostility. They were more interested in earthly matters and material things than in God's kingdom. They persecuted and killed God's servants and finally crucified Jesus Christ. Then God sent judgement onto Israel. Titus, the son of the Roman emperor, invaded Jerusalem in AD. 70, destroyed the temple, killed more than a million Jews and burned the city. This was the end of Israel as a political unit. But the king, who is a symbol of God, wanted a wedding banquet. So he sent his servants to invite everyone to come into his kingdom. Christians throughout the centuries have been gathering both good and bad people into the Church. The Church is the present earthly manifestation of the kingdom of God.

Not everyone who enters the Church is truly saved. This will become very clear at the Last Judgement. Then the angels will separate the wicked from the righteous. The kingdom of God in its final perfect phase is called the new heaven and the new earth. It is often pictured under the symbolism of a wedding feast.

It was a Near Eastern custom that the king sent a special robe to the people he invited into his presence. They had the responsibility to wear the king's robe when they entered into his presence (Compare 2 Kings 10:22). So during this wedding feast the guests in their wedding robes reclined together on couches at tables loaded with food. They rejoiced in the presence of the king and talked to the king. However, one man did not have a wedding robe on. Maybe he regarded his own clothes as sufficient or maybe he refused the king's wedding robe. When the king asked him, he was not able to offer any excuse for not having a wedding robe on. The king ordered his servants to throw this man out into outer darkness.

What does this wedding robe signify? In Isaiah 61:10, God clothes his people with "garments of salvation" and "a robe of righteousness". In Revelation 19:7-8 at the wedding of Christ, the followers of Christ were given "fine linen clothes" to wear, which stands for the righteous acts of the saints. "The wedding robe" thus symbolises the righteousness that God gives to believers when they believe in Jesus Christ. This righteousness includes the right standing with God as well as the right way of living. It symbolises complete forgiveness of sin as well as complete renewal. The main message of this parable is verse 12-14. The emphasis is on both the responsibility and guilt of the man without a wedding robe as well as on the sovereign grace of the king who supplied the

wedding robe. This parable urges everybody to accept God's gracious invitation, lest others enter God's kingdom and you be lost. It also warns that membership of the visible Church does not guarantee salvation. Galatians 3:27 says, "Clothe yourselves with Christ!" Regeneration and renewal is absolutely necessary for entering the kingdom of God in its final phase!

(S) I want to share from Matthew 22:21 about a Christian's relationship to the government of his country. Jesus says, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's." What are the duties of a Christian in relationship to his government? The Roman coin, that was used to pay taxes, had the following inscriptions on it: "Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of the divine Augustus" and "Highest priest". The words on the coin are offensive to Christians, because no ruler in the world is divine and he is also not the highest priest. Nevertheless, Jesus says, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's". Jesus teaches that honouring God does not mean that I must dishonour the rulers of my country by refusing to pay taxes. The taxes are used for certain privileges, which all people enjoy, like a relatively orderly society, police protection, good roads, courts, etc. Therefore, the rulers of my country should be given what is their due. But, only what is their due! The divine position and honour, which the Roman emperor claimed for himself, was not his due and should be refused. Divinity and supreme high priesthood belongs only to God. By saying, "Give to God what is God's", Jesus says that the trust, obedience, service, gratitude and glory, which are due to God, should constantly be given to God. Thus, whenever the will of the government of my country does not clash with God's will, the government of my country should be respected and obeyed. For example, I must pay my taxes; I must obey the traffic rules and I must never get involved with corruption, crime, drugs or the sex industry. However, whenever the will of the government of my country clashes with God's will, then according to Acts 5:29, I and all other Christians must rather obey God than man.

#### **Sharing quiet times from Matthew chapter 23.**

(T) I want to share from Matthew 23:8-10 about the people who are called "Rabbi", "teacher" or "father". Jesus certainly does not mean to say that no one should be a teacher or a father, either in an ordinary or spiritual sense. Jesus certainly does not condemn the function of leadership. Jesus himself instituted the apostles as leaders with authority (Matthew 18:18) and the church elders as overseers and shepherds of the flock (Acts 20:28). Jesus still gives spiritual gifts of leadership to many Christians today (Romans 12:8, 1 Corinthians 12:28). What Jesus condemns in this passage is the yearning for the position of leadership. The Pharisees considered themselves far more worthy of respect and honour than the crowd of ignorant people. They called the people "the cursed mob that does not know the Law" (John 7:49). Learned Jews loved to be called "Rabbi", which means "teacher". Members of the Sanhedrin were called "fathers" (Acts 7:2). Jesus condemned this attitude of arrogant pride and this longing for recognition above other people. No one has the right to look down upon any other person. That is why I think it is better not to give human titles and distinctions to Christians. Jesus says that it is the best if we continue to call one another "brothers" and "sisters".

(S) I want to share from Matthew 23:23 about the giving of one tenth of your income to God and God's work. Some Christians believe that Jesus is teaching here that Christians should give one tenth of their income to the Church or God's kingdom. They usually base their teaching on Malachi 3:10, which says, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

First. The bringing of tithes (one tenth) is part of the Old Testament Ceremonial Law. The Ceremonial Law consisted of laws that regulated how God's people during the Old Testament period should approach God and worship God. They stipulated rules and regulations in four areas. There were laws concerning the holy people, the priests and Levites. There were laws concerning the holy places, the Tent of Meeting and the temple. There were laws concerning the holy times, the fasts and the feasts. And there were laws concerning the holy actions, like circumcision, eating clean foods, bringing animal sacrifices, bringing the first fruits of the harvest and bringing the tithes to the storehouses in the temple.

Second. Jesus Christ has fulfilled the Ceremonial Law of the Old Testament during his first coming, his life on earth, his death on the cross, his resurrection and his enthronement in heaven. The Ceremonial Law was fulfilled symbolically by the tearing of the curtain of the temple in Matthew 27:51, it was fulfilled by the teachings of Jesus and the apostles throughout the New Testament and these laws finally stopped at the destruction of the temple in AD. 70. Colossians 2:14 teaches that by his death *Christ cancelled the Ceremonial Law* with its requirements and set believers free from all its regulations. The ceremonial laws have no more value. And Ephesians 2:15 teaches that by his death *Christ abolished the regulations of the Ceremonial Law*, which had divided the Jews from the Gentiles. The ceremonial laws may never be reintroduced into the Christian Church and thereby bring new divisions among believers of different churches. Instead of thinking *how much of my money will I give* to God and the spreading of his kingdom, I now consider *how much of God's money may I keep* to meet my needs and that of my family. The clear teaching of the New Testament is that Christians are set

free from the regulation of giving one tenth of their income to the Church. This Old Testament regulation may not be reintroduced into the New Testament Church.

Third. But is Jesus not teaching the Pharisees to give tithes? Jesus condemned the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. They brought tithes of small herbs, which were not required by the Old Testament Law, but neglected the important teaching of the Old Testament to show justice, mercy and faithfulness. Jesus said that the Pharisees should do both. But remember, Jesus said this at a time when he had not yet been crucified. As long as Jesus Christ had not yet been crucified, the regulations of the Ceremonial Law had not yet been blotted out and the regulation of tithing was still valid. After the crucifixion of Jesus, the Ceremonial Law with all its regulations are cancelled and abolished. New Testament giving is not based on “tithing”, but on principles found in 1 Corinthians 16 and 2 Corinthians 8-9.

#### **Sharing quiet times from Matthew chapter 24.**

(T) I want to share from Matthew 24:1-14 about the sign of the Second Coming of Jesus?

While looking at the earthly temple building, Jesus predicts to his disciples that this temple building will soon be destroyed. His disciples ask him two questions, “When will this happen?” and “What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” Jesus answers both questions, but uses the imminent destruction of Jerusalem as a picture of the future great tribulation just before the Second Coming of Christ.

The first preliminary sign of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is verse 14. The gospel will be proclaimed in the whole world as a testimony to all nations. Throughout this present age, there will be many catastrophic events like wars, famines, earthquakes and persecutions. But Jesus Christ will not return before the gospel has been preached to every group of people in the whole world.

The second preliminary sign of his Second Coming of Jesus Christ is verse 15. There will come a Great Tribulation just before the Second Coming of Christ. Jesus speaks about this future great tribulation in terms of the past tribulation of Jerusalem and the imminent future tribulation of Jerusalem. The prophet Daniel had prophesied more than 550 years before, that “a detestable thing that causes the desolation or depopulation” of the temple will be set up. This prophecy of Daniel was literally fulfilled in the past when in 167 BC a foreign king, called Antiochus IV, plundered Jerusalem, burned a part of the city, broke down its walls, erected a pagan altar over the altar in the temple, offered pigs on it, dedicated the temple to the god Zeus and forced Jews to eat pork. But Jesus shows that this prophecy of Daniel will have another fulfilment. Very soon, another foreign king will do the same to Jerusalem and the temple. The prophecy of Jesus was literally fulfilled when in 70 AD Titus, the son of the Roman emperor Vespasian, and the Roman armies carried the image of their emperor, whom they worshipped as a god, on their standards into Jerusalem and into the temple. They burned the city, destroyed the temple and killed more than one million Jews. So, just as the pagan altar and the pigs offered on it in the temple in the second century BC pointed forward to the idolatrous legions of Rome, so the idolatrous legions of Rome foreshadowed the great and final violation by the antichrist of everything that is sacred. That is why Jesus says in verse 29, “Immediately after the distress of those days” the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the age will take place.

The third and only real sign of his Second Coming of Jesus Christ is verse 30. Jesus Christ himself will suddenly and unexpectedly come on the clouds accompanied by angels. The heavenly bodies will turn dark and be shaken. Angels will shout, blow trumpets and gather the elect of Christ. This will be the Day of the Lord. All the dead will be resurrected. The Christians will first welcome Christ in the air. Then all believers in Christ will be judged and rewarded and all unbelievers will be judged and condemned. The universe and the earth will be cleansed by fire and completely renewed. Christ and all Christians will descend as the New Jerusalem onto the new earth. Because no one can know or predict when Jesus Christ returns, Christians should always be ready and expect his Second Coming is going to happen. Christians should also live holy lives and be faithful in doing their assigned tasks in the world.

#### (S) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Divide Matthew 25:14 – 28:20 into seven passages. Every day have a quiet time from one passage. Record the meditations of all your quiet times in a notebook. Once a week meet with a friend or with a house fellowship or discipleship group and share from your quiet times.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www. etc

Third. Listen on short wave radio from SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to “Discipleship training on the air”.