

Sermon on 3 July, 2016 at the Greyfriars Eden Epsom Presbyterian Church
Preached by Je Cheol Cook

Introduction to Matthew
Matthew 1:18-25

Let us pray. Lord, bless now your words. Allow us to speak the message of God. Help me to talk about you with power and confidence. Grant, Lord, that the Holy Spirit may touch us and guide us, so that we are able to work for you and your kingdom. Helps us to welcome your word as the living word of God and allow it to work in us. Let us not forget what we have heard but rather build on it; give us the love it takes to build, let this love work in us.

Remain the light of our days, become the goal of our love, and bestow on us through this homily a new life in your faith, a life that is both prayer and work in your love. Amen.
From next Sunday, we will be taking about the very important message of the Sermon on the Mount. Today, I want to explore basic knowledge about Jesus, introduce the book of Matthew, and introduce the topic of the sermon on the Mount.

First, the name Jesus means Saviour. Many Christians do not understand this. In Matthew 1:21, Joseph was told that Jesus would save his people from their sins. A couple of years ago, I met with a man, who worked for a rest home. He told me that he was a Christian. He had attended church in Auckland for a long time. I asked him what Jesus name meant. It was a simple question. He did not say anything. I also asked him if he knew any biblical passage about the meaning of Jesus name. He did not say anything at all. While I was teaching at bible colleges, I often asked students the same question. Many did not understand.
Who is Jesus? What does the name Saviour mean?

If someone is swimming and got into trouble, he can be saved in many ways. But we sinned against God, there is only one way we can be saved. That is through Jesus our Saviour.

Christians believe that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. Non-believers do not believe that Jesus is the Saviour. They assert that there are salvations in other religions. Buddhists believe that they can be saved through their own efforts. I heard a story from a Korean pastor, who was a Buddhist and became a Christian. He said that in all his years as a Buddhist, he could not find a way for him to save himself. Finally, he decided to be a believer of the Christ. He learned that Jesus died for our sins and anyone could be saved through the faith of Jesus, not by their own works and efforts.

Second, Jesus is Christ. While I was a student at the Laidlaw College, I met a man who was from China. He majored in English at a university in the country and came to New Zealand to learn English. And he chose to study at Laidlaw College and later he accepted Jesus as Saviour and Lord. At first, he thought that the name Jesus was his first name and Christ was his family name. Later he learned that he was wrong. What does the word Christ mean? Christ comes from the Greek word, 'Christos,' And the word originally comes from the Hebrew, Messiah. Messiah means 'a person who is anointed with oil'. In the Old Testament, we see that there are three people, who can be anointed with oil. They are priests, prophets and kings.

Priests are anointed with oil. A priest intercedes with God for the people of Israel. Priests are anointed with oil before they start their ministries with God. And prophets are anointed. A prophet is the person who will deliver the message of God on behalf of God. Our Lord would send his message through those prophets. Moses was one of the prophets. And there are many prophets in the bible, who foretold what would happen. They wrote prophetic books that would tell the people about the coming of Messiah. Finally, Kings are anointed with oil. A king is the person who rules the earthly kingdom and godly people on behalf of God. Originally God was the king of the Israel, But many Israelites wanted to have their own kings and thus God allowed them to have their kings. Kings were anointed with oil before they started their ministries. As you know, David was anointed with oil by Samuel when he was a young man. All of these three people; priest, prophet and king are anointed with oil. Their jobs are not the same. Each have different roles. However, for 400 years before Jesus was born, we see that there had been no anointed prophet, priest and king in the country of Israel. God did not appoint any of them. Israelites waited for their Messiah, who would be Priest, Prophet and King. They thought the Messiah would be like King David. Because it was prophesied that he would come from the dynasty of David.

Our Lord sent Jesus as the Lord and Saviour for his people. Jesus Christ was known as Priest, Prophet and King. That is why he is called the Priest of priests, the Prophet of the prophets and King of the kings. Many Jews did not believe Jesus was real Messiah. Because they thought that the Messiah rule the country as David did. But Jesus was different from what they expected. Some believed that Jesus was Christ or Messiah, while others disagreed that Jesus was Christ. However, the bible says Jesus is Christ. He was sent to the world to save his people from their sins. And he is the Priest, Prophet and King.

Third, if we know about our Lord Jesus Christ, we will understand what the book of Matthew is about. As we know, the book was written by Matthew, who was one of the disciples of Jesus. Matthew was a tax collector. In those days, tax collectors were known as sinners, because often they told lies to collect more grain or money. And thus most Jews did not like and associate with them. But our Lord Jesus accepted Matthew. He forgave his sins. The Lord Jesus also forgave others such as prostitutes, who were also called sinners. In John 8:7, "if any one of you have never sinned, then go ahead and throw the first stone..." We learned of a woman who caught in adultery. People would judge and not forgive. But Jesus did. As we know, we are all sinners before we know about Jesus. But we come to Jesus and he gives our salvation. After Matthew was saved, he became one of the disciples of Jesus Christ and wrote the book. The first Gospel in the New Testament named Matthew was originally written for the Jews and contained the birth and ministry of Jesus.

Fourth, I want to tell you about the Sermon on the Mount. What **is** the Sermon on the Mount? After Jesus was baptized and tempted by Satan, he started his ministry. Our Lord overcame the scheme of Satan and came to his disciples to deliver the message of God. He went to the mountainside and talked about his kingdom here on earth as well as in the future. The sermon contains the significant aspects in the ministry of Jesus. John Stott, a pastor and biblical scholar, says, "the Sermon on the Mount is probably the best known part of the teaching of Jesus, though arguably it is the least understood, and certainly it is the least obeyed" (The Message of the Sermon on the Mount, 1973, P. 15). The Sermon on the Mount is like the essence of the message of God. Through it, we can understand what our Lord Jesus was trying to say to his

people. Jesus started speaking about the blessings, which are called 'Beatitudes, which contained supreme happiness that could not be compared with any other things on the earth. He spoke of Beatitudes, keys to real happiness, Jesus and the Law, Private worship toward God, build on the Rock, Hidden treasure, the Golden Rule, By their Fruit, Judge not, Narrow to the gate? The Sermon on the Mount is like a bridge between the earthly kingdom and the Kingdom of God. Through the message, we have a chance to understand the message of God in a nutshell. For this reason, I would like you to understand how our Lord is trying to speak to his people from the New Testament to our modern times. The bible is still a living document. All of the stories are vivid and we can apply the message of God to our ministries today. What we need to do is to understand what the bible told his people and in what way we can use them in our lives today.

Finally, the message of God is his promise to his people for all time. What happens if we do not keep a promise? We cannot trust the person who breaks it. Promises should be kept. All of the message in the bible was accomplished. The message from the Old Testament was fulfilled in the New Testament. All of the prophetic books in the Old Testament said that Messiah was coming. And all of the books in the New Testament said that Jesus was Messiah. He was the Christ, whom they were expecting. Isaiah 7:14," Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign, The virgin will be with a child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." The book of Matthew 1:23 also deals with the same message. God's promise never changes. It was given to his people. We still have the same message and share this with believers and non-believers that Jesus was sent to the world to save his people from their sins. This is the wonderful message that we can give the rest of the world. That is why we are called to do so. From next Sunday, we are going to explore the message of God based on the Sermon on the Mount.

Let us pray. Father, we give You thanks for Your goodness. We give You thanks that You set Your Scriptures before us. We pray, O God, open our eyes that we might be surprised. Open our eyes and our hearts, that we might fully know what has been done for us. Open our eyes and our hearts that we might see Your Son...incarnate, crucified, risen. Open our eyes and our hearts, O God, that as we come to this table we might see Your Son...and we might marvel. Father, all this in Christ's holy name we pray. Amen