

Title: Matthew 16–19

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Session 14

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Abstract

In this lecture, Dr. Craig Keener provides a deep exegetical study of Matthew 17 through 19, focusing on the transfiguration, community relationships, and ethical standards of the kingdom of heaven. He explains how the transfiguration frames Jesus as the new and greater Moses whose divine authority must be obeyed. Keener then examines the practical outworking of kingdom life, detailing the biblical processes for church discipline and the essential calling of infinite forgiveness as illustrated by the parable of the unmerciful servant. Finally, he outlines Jesus' radical teachings on marriage, divorce, and singleness, illustrating that the Messiah summons his followers to recover God's original creation ideals rather than settle for concessions.

Here is the finalized outline of the source material, structured with clear, nested bullet points to ensure every point and sub-point has the proper visual indentation:

Exegetical Outline of Matthew 16–19

- **I. Introduction to Session 14 (Matthew 16–19)**
 - **A.** Posture of sitting while teaching as a rabbinic practice
 - **B.** Transition into Matthew 17: the foretaste and revealing of Jesus' glory
- **II. The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–13)**
 - **A.** Allusions to Moses and Mount Sinai (Exodus 24)
 - **1.** Six days of waiting for the glory
 - **2.** The divine voice command: "Hear Him"

- **B.** Deuteronomy 18:15 and the expectation of a Prophet like Moses
- **C.** Jesus contrasted with contemporary Greek myths and Jewish legends of glowing figures
- **D.** Jesus as greater than Moses and Elijah
 - **1.** Jesus represents the divine glory that Moses saw
- **III. Casting Out a Demon and the Power of Faith (Matthew 17:14–21)**
 - **A.** The disciples' inability to cast out the spirit due to small faith
 - **B.** Contrast of Matthew's focus on "mustard seed" faith with Mark's focus on prayerlessness
 - **C.** The sovereignty of God as the true object of faith rather than faith's size
 - **D.** Distinction between spirit possession and physical nervous conditions like epilepsy
- **IV. The Temple Tax (Matthew 17:24–27)**
 - **A.** Context of the adult male half-shekel upkeep tax
 - **B.** Jesus' status as the Son of God making him technically exempt
 - **C.** Voluntary submission to social expectations to avoid causing offense
 - **D.** Miracle of the coin in the fish's mouth as God's sovereign provision
- **V. Relationships and Discourse in the Kingdom (Matthew 18)**
 - **A.** Humility and Childlike Dependence (Matthew 18:1–5)
 - **1.** Rabbi traditions on humility vs. Jesus' model of a child
 - **2.** Finding greatness in the least and lowly
 - **B.** Warnings Against Stumbling and Seeking the Lost (Matthew 18:6–14)
 - **1.** Protecting young believers from being scandalized
 - **2.** The Parable of the Lost Sheep and Palestinian shepherding practices
- **VI. Church Discipline and Binding/Loosing (Matthew 18:15–20)**
 - **A.** Step-by-Step Biblical Procedure for Reproof

- 1. Private confrontation (Matthew 18:15)
- 2. Witness requirement (two or three) to confirm the matter (Deuteronomy 19:15)
- 3. Bringing the issue before the church assembly
- B. Historical Context of Synagogues as Local Courts
- C. Levels of Discipline and Excommunication
 - 1. Historical precedents in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Corinth
- D. Binding and Loosing as Authority for Community Discipline
- E. Presence of Christ ("where two or three are gathered")
 - 1. Direct comparison to Rabbinic teachings on the Shekinah (God's presence)
 - 2. Theological declarations of Jesus' divinity
- VII. The Duty of Unlimited Forgiveness (Matthew 18:21–35)
 - A. Peter's question and the "seventy times seven" standard
 - B. Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:23–35)
 - 1. Fictitious backdrop: Ptolemaic tax farming in Alexandria
 - 2. Hyperbole of the 10,000 talents debt (infinite value of sin before God)
 - 3. The debtor's impossible plea and the King's mercy
 - 4. The servant's refusal to forgive a fellow servant a trivial debt
 - 5. Cruelty, imprisonment, and final judgment: lessons on divine justice
- VIII. Marriage, Divorce, and Celibacy (Matthew 19:1–12)
 - A. Pharisees' debate on Deuteronomy 24:1 (School of Shammai vs. School of Hillel)
 - B. Jesus' appeal to Genesis 2 and the original Creation ideal
 - C. Moses' concession on divorce as a response to hard hearts

- **D.** Protection of women from economic vulnerability and unjust betrayal
- **E.** The "exception clause" (porneia) and its scope
- **F.** The disciples' reaction and the calling to singleness
- **G.** The graphic metaphor of "eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven"
- **IX. Jesus Blessing the Children (Matthew 19:13–15)**
 - **A.** Parents seeking a blessing for their children
 - **B.** Disciples' attempts to dismiss the children to focus on "important" kingdom business
 - **C.** The true focus of the kingdom: stopping for the lowly, marginalized, and little people