Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – January 12, 2020

Let’s read Matthew!

Matthew 1:1

What is a gospel and why should we read it?

**What’s happening in the book?**  Matthew tells the Jesus story.

A gospel is not a biography, a “Life of Christ,” or complete history.

A gospel is not a data base of Jesus stories to recreate history.

A gospel is a narrative of THE gospel, the historical account of Jesus’ life and death for sinners. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

It is a non-fiction account of real people / events.

It has a unique, specific purpose, a set agenda.

It has a point of view, a set of assumptions.

It boasts precision editing (doesn’t contain everything).

It is authoritative, as it is God’s Word.

It is rooted in the TANAKH, the Jewish Bible.

**What’s the challenge in the story?** How is Matthew unique?

Of the “many” narratives about Jesus, only four made it into our Bible. Those which did not failed basic tests of authenticity, authority, and consistency with the rest of our Bible, especially the TANAKH.

Mark is a shorter action account, with Jesus portrayed as Servant.

Luke, a gentile, writes of Jesus’ compassion for all. Acts prequel.

John presents Jesus as God’s Word made flesh, powerful, loving.

Matthew is organized around five discourses of Jesus, Israel’s promised Messiah, who fulfills God’s mission to show grace to all nations while being rejected by Israel.

**What are the key elements in the story?** What do we look for?

1. Look for whole “sermons” from Jesus Himself. There are five of them, and we will read them whole, not in pieces. Matthew 5-7, 10, 13, 18, 23. And be ready to enjoy lots of parables.

2. Look for a genealogy that traces Jesus’ right to King David’s throne.

3. Look for many Old Testament fulfillment quotations.

4. Look for many references to the prophets and Jewish history.

5. Look for many references to the Law of Moses and how it is fulfilled and correctly interpreted by Jesus.

6. Look for many confrontations with Jewish leaders on their misinterpretations of TANAKH.

7. Look for the gradual unfolding of a narrative which shows outcasts and gentiles receiving and believing in Jesus while official Israel rejects Him.

8. Look for the way God’s promise to bless ALL nations through Abraham (Genesis 15:3) begins to be fulfilled in what we call the Great Commission.

**What’s the big idea (main point) of the story?**

The Gospel of Matthew is an account of the life of Jesus

as the rightful but rejected King of the Jews

and resurrected Sovereign Savior of the world.

**So how do we apply these things practically today?**

First, let’s read Matthew! And do so thoughtfully and prayerfully.

Second, let’s be grateful and thank God for the creative ways He presents His Son in the four gospels.

Third, let’s rejoice in Matthew’s gospel by taking in its uniqueness and then sharing its message with all, especially unbelievers.