

Winning over a crisis: Understanding the 'ποιεῖν' in Matthew 7:24–27 from the nostalgia perspective



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Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 has played a pivotal role in the history of Christianity. Occupying a crucial place in Christianity, Matthew 7:24–27 was considered to be the closing entry, as well as the passage's concluding remark. In the passage, Jesus emphasises the importance of the ποιεῖν [to do] in his teachings rather than merely hearing Him. What does the meaning of the word ποιεῖν truly entail? What exactly did Jesus hope to accomplish through the word for a community that was entrenched in deep crisis? Utilising the notion of nostalgia in psychology research, this article concluded that, through Jesus' word ποιεῖν, He urged believers to lead a ποιεῖν lifestyle, in order to evoke personal nostalgia apropos of God. This personal nostalgia is then expected to build up the 'inner resource' of the gospel's readers, so that they can face the various life crises, which were portrayed as three forms of natural phenomena. Thus, the conclusion was aligned with the notion of 'God with us', which became the main theme of this gospel.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: This article demonstrates the role and benefits of empirical psychological research on nostalgia in understanding ποιεῖν in Matthew 7:24–27.

Keywords: Gospel of Matthew; crisis; poiesis; inner resource; nostalgia.

Introduction

Matthew 5–7 is often referred to as the 'The Sermon on the Mount'. It contains a long sermon of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew (hereinafter referred to as Jesus). In the history of Christianity, this sermon of Jesus has played a crucial role and has had a major influence:

'The Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew 5–7 is widely considered to be the heart of Jesus' teaching. Its influence runs through the centuries like a majestic river, giving life to new crops everywhere it goes' (Larsen 2007:13).

A number of exegetes considered Matthew 7:24–27 as the conclusion of Jesus' most important and influential sermon (cf. Davies & Allison 1988:719; Gundry 1994:133; Keener 2009:254). The phrase 'these sayings of mine' [μου τοὺς λόγους τούτους] in verses 24 and 26, therefore, refers to all of Jesus' teaching on the mount. At the conclusion of the sermon, three natural phenomena are found, that is, rain [ἡ βροχὴ], river or flood [οἱ ποταμοὶ] and wind [οἱ ἄνεμοι]. All three phenomena beat against the two types of houses, with different end results. The house that was not torn down is identified with the house built by the ones who not only heard but also ποιεῖν (commonly translated: act on) the words of Jesus. Hence, some exegetes consider Matthew 7:24–27 as emphasising the importance of obedience (cf. Hagner 1993:190; Keener 2009:254–256), that is following the teachings of Jesus and implementing them. Hearing is not enough!

The word ποιεῖν, which also appears in the closing of Jesus' sermon, is not only frequent but also very important in understanding the ecclesiology of Matthew's Gospel. Hagner (2008:178) stated that: 'The verb ποιεῖν [to do] is very important in Matthew'. If so, what is the significance of ποιεῖν [to do] in the words of Jesus for Matthew's community, who were facing a severe crisis¹?

Some exegetes state that the three natural phenomena in this text also occur at the time of judgement at the end of time (cf. Carson 1999:141; Davies & Allison 1988:722; Keener 2009:255).

¹To understand the severe crisis that was faced by Matthew's community, see Pelita Hati Surbakti (Surbakti 2017:38–40), which was also continued to be touched on the subsequent article (cf. Surbakti & Andangsari 2022:2–4).

This view has dominated existing interpretations.² Such interpretation could certainly be intended to show that hearing and executing the words of Jesus was the key to avoiding the negative consequences of the final judgement. Was this interpretation appropriate for a community, like Matthew's community, that was faced with a severe crisis? Matthew's community, which was facing a deep crisis, needed an exit from the crisis in their lives, not the threat of the final judgement. After all, was not the main theme of this gospel 'God with us?' The main argument that is most often used to support the conclusion of the main theme is the inclusion, which became the outermost frame of the gospel, namely Matthew 1:23 and 28:20 (Davies & Allison 1997:688; France 1985:48; Kupp 1996:17–27; Menken 2004:129; Viviano 2010:350). Thus, Matthew wrote his gospel to assure his readers that God is always with them, not only in the future but also now. The portrayal of God that they needed is a God who loves them and is present in their struggles, not a God who reminds them or threatens them with the coming of the final judgement.

After seeing the given overview, how should the authors grasp the importance of the ποιεῖν of Jesus' words for readers who were experiencing a deep crisis? Important to take note of is the fact that the authors will not be illustrating the importance of the idea of 'the ποιεῖν of Jesus' teaching' from the perspective of 'the rhetorical nature of the gospel and the main theme of the gospel'.³ Instead, the authors will be highlighting the importance of the idea of 'ποιεῖν' from the perspective of 'personal nostalgia' as an 'inner resource' in human beings that is very powerful in solving crises in life.

Personal nostalgia, as a notion that can become an 'inner resource' behind the word ποιεῖν in Matthew 7:24–27, was discussed by Surbakti and Andangsari (2022:5) in their most recent research. However, the research was not focused on the meaning of the word ποιεῖν in Matthew 7:24–27, but rather on the notion of personal nostalgia behind the word ποιεῖν as a way of demonstrating how important the ποιεῖν of God's will is in facing an identity crisis.⁴ The main theme of Matthew's Gospel hints at a form of personal nostalgia that would only be perceived by people who did not only hear but especially ποιεῖν the teachings of Jesus.

A more comprehensive review of the idea of personal nostalgia behind the word ποιεῖν will form the focus of this article. In order to achieve this, the article will first explain what nostalgia is. The authors will then describe the severity of the crisis faced by Matthew's community. This will be followed up with the authors showing that the ποιεῖν of Jesus'

²In Matthew's context the threat is predominantly eschatological, ... (Hill 1972:153).

³These two elements had already been illustrated in understanding the issue of divorce in Matthew 19:9 (cf. Surbakti 2020:80–81).

⁴For Jesus, doing God's will was the best way to face many crises in life, including identity crisis. By doing God's will every disciple will know who they are and who God is, so that is why at the end of the sermon on the mount, Jesus said that everyone who hears his words and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock (Mt 7:24–27). Besides historical nostalgia, by doing his words, they will also have the personal nostalgia regarding God, so that is why by doing Jesus' words faithfully, they will know who is God that always be with them. That is 'nostalgia as an inner resource' means' (Surbakti & Andangsari 2022:5).

teachings is the best method to build up the inner resource necessary to face the challenges in life, as portrayed by the metaphor of the three natural phenomena. In this way it will be demonstrated that the ποιεῖν of Jesus' words is part of a pastoral approach aimed at helping the readers of this gospel to go through the crisis in question.

In this way, the authors come to the conclusion that the timing of the three natural phenomena in Matthew 7:25 and 27 is not strictly eschatological because they could occur anytime in everyday life before the day of final judgement arrives (cf. France 2007:297; Hill 1972:153; Lockyer 1963:158–159). The key for one to 'not fall' is to listen to, and, above all, ποιεῖν the words of Jesus. The perspective of personal nostalgia in the study of psychology confirms the hypothesis as stated here.

The Gospel of Matthew as a pastoral gospel

The Gospel of Matthew as a pastoral gospel has been proposed for a long time. This is because several studies of the gospel considered it to be teeming with pastoral content, such as the works of Powel (1995) and Pope Francis (2020). This pastoral notion is also seen in the following sentence, 'With his remarkable pastoral style and ..., Matthew shows, ...' (Bosch 1991:58). The most recent study, published by Surbakti and Andangsari in 2022, indicated that there is a pastoral motif in the notion of ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων in Matthew 22:32 (2022). The given studies reinforce William G. Thompson's (cf. Harrington 2001:62) conclusion that Matthew, the evangelist, was a pastoral theologian. The foregoing explanation further strengthens our conviction that the pastoral gospel was provided for those who were facing a severe crisis. This reality also made the authors think that the end-time judgement and punishment is not the main idea highlighted in Matthew 7:24–27.

Nostalgia and its positive effects

The word 'nostalgia' is derived from two syllables in classical Greek, that is, *nostos* [returning home] and *algos* [suffering] (Hepper et al. 2012:102; Sedikides & Wildschut 2020:2). Therefore, nostalgia can be interpreted as suffering because of longing for a home or hometown. Various stories of classical Greek heroism reveal that this type of 'suffering' often afflicted soldiers who were at war, and soldiers who were suffering in a period shortly after the war was over. In addition, various psychological studies on nostalgia indicated that almost all of them linked the word nostalgia to the writing of Homer in one of his two very famous Greek epic poems, the *Odyssey* (Hepper et al. 2012).

While the root words for nostalgia existed thousands of years ago, the word 'nostalgia' was first constructed as a medical term around 1688 by Johannes Hofer (1669–1752), a medical student at the University of Basel in Switzerland, in his dissertation on nostalgia (cf. Routledge et al. 2013:808; Sedikides & Wildschut 2018:48). The subjects of his research at that time were a number of Swiss soldiers who served in

France and were suffering from their yearning to return home (Batcho 2013:2). Batcho (2013:2–3) concluded that the Swiss army at that time experienced what the Jews experienced in Psalm 137:5–6. Since then, nostalgia has been declared a disease; even a kind of ‘cerebral disease’ (Routledge et al. 2013:808).

In the 19th century, the medical world’s view of nostalgia started to change. Nostalgia was no longer seen as a disease of the brain (Routledge et al. 2013:808), but nostalgia was still considered a disease related to nerves, and similar to depression. Then, nostalgia was still judged as something ‘abnormal’. At some point, Sedikides and Wildschut from the University of Southampton, through a number of studies, proved that nostalgia was not a neurological disease, let alone a brain disease. No, nostalgia was, apparently, considered to be an important source of mental health. Therefore, nostalgia can become some kind of inner resource that is needed by humans while facing a crisis.

Indeed, the effect of nostalgia can be positive or negative but, in general, the effect is positive (Routledge et al. 2013:809). Surbakti and Andangsari presented at least six publications on the results of empirical research on nostalgia from 2008 to 2018, with a total of 1741 respondents from various countries (cf. 2022:2). The results of these studies revealed that the positive effects of nostalgia were overwhelmingly dominant. These positive effects included: Reduced anxiety over the threat of death; strengthening oneself when facing threats to one’s existence; stimulating improvement in social relations, self-esteem and a sense of optimism; reduced stress levels in people who had an unclear ‘meaning in life’, etc. (Surbakti & Andangsari 2022:2).

Nostalgia consists of two types, namely ‘personal nostalgia’ and ‘historical nostalgia’ (Marchegiani & Phau 2013:24). ‘Personal nostalgia’ is one’s recollection of a memory that one experienced in the past. Meanwhile, ‘historical nostalgia’ is a memory that is experienced indirectly. However, these memories are remembered and passed down through generations, with possibly varying interpretations.

Previous research also found that most nostalgic objects were related to people, in addition to events in life, which ranked the second most (Routledge et al. 2013:809). In addition, several results of empirical research regarding nostalgia concluded that the feeling is usually evoked when humans experience crises in their lives, such as loneliness and several other negative emotions (Routledge et al. 2013:809). In another study, it was proven that nostalgia emerged, and had a profound effect, when a person’s existence is threatened (Juhl et al. 2010:313). The authors summarise this situation of the nostalgia emergence as a depiction of a life crisis.

Identity crisis and Matthew’s community

Many scholars have concluded that Matthew’s community was in Antioch in Syria (hereinafter referred to as Antioch)

(cf. Surbakti 2017:30). The book was written around 85 CE. When it was written, the first readers of the gospel were in a situation of deep crisis. Deriving from various sources, Surbakti and Andangsari (2022) have reconstructed the situation of the first readers of this gospel quite well. After presenting some analyses, they inferred that:

It can be concluded that at the time this Gospel was written, Matthean Community was in the midst of the three enormous power bases that place them under considerable pressure, which came from the Formative Judaism, the Roman power (*Holocaust*⁵), and the Law Free mission. Thus, it can be concluded that this community was experiencing a great identity crisis, which was very reasonable. (pp. 3–4)

The three forces mentioned above were pressing down on the community, and caused a profound identity crisis. Bosch (1991:58) describes quite well a number of questions that can be associated with an identity crisis regarding the Matthew community:

What should its identity be in the coming years? Can it continue as a moment within Judaism? What attitude should it adopt toward the Law? Can it give up on viewing Jesus as more than just a prophet? And can it give up on a mission to fellow Jews?

The combination of physical suffering with pressure from the consolidating leadership in Formative Judaism and the Law-Free⁶ version of Christianity made this identity crisis even more serious. In this particular situation, the writer of the gospel came to explain that Jesus Christ, whom they followed, is the promised leader – the Immanuel (cf. Mt 2:6). Many polemical narratives between Jesus and the leaders in Judaism that negatively characterised the traditional leaders were also part of the gospel writer’s attempt to legitimise the leadership of Jesus.⁷

Therefore, the conclusion that identified the gospel as a rhetorical leadership struggle within Judaism was perfectly well-founded (Surbakti 2017:41–42). This is also the reason for the portrayal of Jesus as the fulfilment of prophecy in the Old Testament (OT) being such a prominent theme in this gospel. It all boiled down to establishing the identity of the community. This is consistent with the main theme of the gospel, namely ‘God with Us’.

The writer of the gospel concluded that a personal experience with God, who was truly present in their life, would develop an inner resource that is very useful in dealing with crises. This is what the authors identified as ‘personal nostalgia’ in the context of Matthew’s gospel. In empirical psychological research, it has been proven that the main object of nostalgia is related first to people, and then to events in life (Routledge et al. 2013:809). The memory that is expected to emerge for

5. Because of the great distress experienced by the Jews, including the first readers of this gospel, during the Jewish war of 70 CE, Donald. C.P. Senior identified the situation as the *holocaust*. (cf. Senior 1996:8).

6. In the New Testament, there was a clear distinction between James’ Christianity and Paul’s Christianity. David C. Sim identified the former as ‘Law-Observant’ (LO), and the latter as ‘Law-Free’ (LF). (cf. Sim 1998:7).

7. What is Matthew doing with his polemics? The author of Matthew seeks specifically to delegitimize the traditional, established leadership of the Jewish community and thus legitimate his own group and its authority’ (Saldarini 2001:169).

the Matthean community, based on the main theme of this gospel, is the memory of God's presence in their lives. God's presence would become the 'personal nostalgia' that strengthens their identity. Through this 'personal nostalgia' the community would be better equipped to face any crisis in life, in the present as well as in the future. So, it can be said that the Matthean community would be better prepared to tackle any crises, whether it be in the present or in the future, because of 'personal nostalgia'.

The existence of 'historical nostalgia' in this gospel has been shown by Surbakti and Andangsari (2022) to be present when examining the idea of 'ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων' in Matthew 22:32. Meanwhile, although not explicitly stated, the idea of 'personal nostalgia' also appeared when Jesus used a child when teaching his disciples in Matthew 18:2 (cf. Sinambela, Surbakti & Andangsari 2021). Adopting this perspective, the authors are increasingly convinced that nostalgia as an inner resource is what prompted Jesus to conclude his Sermon on the Mount by highlighting the importance of the ποιεῖν of his teachings.

Between knowing and doing in Jewish religiosity

The idea of contrasting between '(only) knowing or hearing' and 'doing', the Torah has been a prominent discourse in Jewish religiosity from the beginning. The expectation to not only hear or cognitively know God's Torah, but to also act on it, has always been a concern for the members of the community. For example, in the OT (cf. Ez 33:32 and Lv 26:3), the rabbis also shared this concern. Generally, the rabbis considered that carrying out the Torah was more essential (cf. ARN 24a; b. Sanh. 106b; Yoma 86a; Pesiq. Rab Kah. 27:9; Lev. Rab. 35:7; Num. Rab. 14:10) (see Keener 2009:255). This idea also emerges in the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. But whereas the rabbis positioned God's Torah as the object of human obedience, Jesus positioned 'his words' as the object.

Several rabbinic writings also showed that knowing without obedience to do God's Torah can lead to several negative consequences, or even punishment (cf. Sifre Deut. 32.5.12; b. Sanh. 106b; Yoma 86a; Deut. Rab. 7:4) (Keener 2009). As mentioned here, the idea of 'doing or not doing' the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:24–27, in our opinion, is not in the context of judgement, but rather in the context of a pastoral approach, namely how to make the readers of this gospel successful in facing crises in their lives. Furthermore, James 1:22 clearly states that the idea is not in the context of condemnation, but is related to the virtues of authentic Christian spirituality. What, then, is the significance of Jesus' words in overcoming life's crises?

ποιεῖν as the indicator of the virtues of the *Poiesis* way of life

It is indisputable that the idea of 'ποιεῖν' the sayings of Jesus' held a very strong position in the Gospel of Matthew (cf.

Hagner 2008:178). In the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus used the word 'ποιεῖν' instead of 'πράξιν'. The word 'ποιεῖν' occurs 22 times⁸ in the Sermon on the Mount. Nine of those 22 times, the Scripture refers to the key ideas of following Jesus' teachings, or doing God's will.⁹ In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus uses the word 'πράξιν' only once (Mt 16:27).

The authors, therefore, begin this discussion with a conclusion that Matthew's Gospel is a rhetoric about a leadership struggle within Judaism. As such, this pastoral gospel is intended to legitimise the new leader – namely Jesus (cf. Mt 2:6) – while at the same time delegitimising traditional leadership (cf. Saldarini 2001:169; Surbakti 2017:42; Surbakti & Andangsari 2022:4). The failure of traditional leaders in this gospel is because they teach but do not practice the word of God/λέγουσιν γὰρ καὶ οὐ ποιοῦσιν (cf. Mt 23:3). Therefore, what is meant by 'the righteousness that surpasses the scribes and Pharisees' (ἡ δικαιοσύνη πλεῖον τῶν γραμματέων) in Matthew 5:20 is related to 'ποιεῖν' God's word, not just hearing it (Surbakti 2017:89). It is, therefore, no exaggeration that Matthew 5:20 is considered as the introduction, or even the main theme, of the entire Sermon on the Mount (cf. Davies & Allison 1988:499; Schweizer 1975:177). In the context of the leadership battle, the 'ποιεῖν' of Jesus' words was the best way to win the leadership battle within Judaism at that time. This is because this was the fundamental weakness of the traditional leaders in first-century Judaism (Mt 23:1–3; cf. 5:20).

Although the word ποιεῖν is prominent in this gospel, Jesus was not the first to introduce this word. Much earlier, Aristotle (384–322 BCE) had also used the word. According to Aristotle, there are three human activities that will bring knowledge or understanding, namely *theoria*, *praxis* and *poiesis* (cf. Groome 1980:153, 156; Volanen 2012:53). They are the contemplative life, the practical life and the productive life, respectively. Aristotle was not the first user of these three ways of life. Before Aristotle, Pythagoras had also used and distinguished between them (Burnet 1952). However, the *poiesis* way of life has long been associated with the way of knowing. The *poiesis* way of life is, of course, a way of life that prioritises *poiesis*.

The lives of *praxis* and *poiesis* have similarities and differences. In Nicomachean Ethics 1140 b 1–5, Aristotle distinguished *praxis* (action) and *poiesis* (making):

[... A]ction and making are different kinds of thing, since making aims at an end distinct from the act of making, whereas in doing, the end cannot be other than the act itself.

On the other part, when distinguishing *praxis* and *poiesis*, Aristotle also uses the analogy of building a house, as Jesus did in Matthew 7:24–27, '... the house and the builder have nothing in common, but the art of the builder is for the sake of the house (Pol. 1328 a 27–35)'. The result of the *poiesis* way of life is the product of activity rather than the activity itself,

8. Matthew 5:19, 32, 36, 46, 47*2; 6:1, 2*2, 3*2; 7:12*2, 17*2, 18*2, 19, 21, 22, 24, 26.

9. Matthew 5:19, 7:17*2, 18*2, 19, 21, 24, 26.

while the end of *praxis* is the activity itself (Bernasconi 1986:111–139). This is why *poiesis* is often associated with ‘making’. So what does this have to do with nostalgia in Matthew’s Gospel?

***Poiesis* as a way to know that ‘God is with us’**

Through the use of the word ποιεῖν at the end of his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus emphasised the importance of the *poiesis* way of life. However, the word ποιεῖν in Matthew 7:24–27 is translated as ‘to do’ (cf. KJV, NKJ, RSV) or ‘to put them into practice’ (cf. NIV) or ‘to act on them’ (cf. NAB, NAS) and not ‘to make. Regardless of the various translations, what exactly is the most important point of a *poiesis* way of life for a community in the midst of a deep crisis?

As a rhetorical product, it has been concluded that the *poiesis* way of living the words of Jesus is a positive way, if not the best way, to realise the main theme of this gospel. By using *poiesis*, the knowledge that God is with us will be realised both for the one who practices it and for the one who is subjected to the action of the *poiesis* way of life. This conclusion is in relation to the idea that *poiesis* is part of the way of knowing something:

For Aristotle *poiesis* is a way of relating to reality in which a concrete artifact or thing is produced. The product embodies a certain kind of knowing, and its production involves a knowing process (cf. Groome 1980:155).

Thus, the product of the *poiesis* way of life in this text is the knowledge that God is truly present with humans. The disciples will only truly know and believe that God cares for them, just as God cares for the birds of the air and the lilies of the field (cf. Mt 6:26–30), if they ποιεῖν Jesus’ words. If the disciple did not ποιεῖν, it did not mean that the natural essence of God would change. They would only understand the nature of God better if they faithfully ποιεῖν the words of Jesus. How can one know God well without ever having the experience that he is a God who is present and close to humans? The experience is only possible if humans faithfully ποιεῖν the words of Jesus.

As mentioned above, the ultimate goal of *poiesis* is the product. As disciples become more active in the *poiesis* way of life, the knowledge of, and intimacy with, God would become clearer and stronger. This is the product of the *poiesis* way of life in this gospel. It is this intimacy with God which becomes a ‘personal nostalgia’ that will be very useful when one later faces a crisis in life. Therefore, the authors conclude that the expectation of ποιεῖν words of Jesus in Matthew 7:24–27 is for each disciple to have a ‘personal nostalgia’ for God. This personal nostalgia then becomes the inner resource that builds the house, namely the disciples, and keeps it from collapsing when several natural phenomena, namely the challenges and difficulties of life, happen to them.

***Poiesis* as a way of life that involves past experiences**

In order to further convince the readers of the nostalgic involvement in the *poiesis* way of life, the authors will now show that the *poiesis* way of life does involve past events. In addition, in the case of the house-building analogy in Matthew 7:24–27, the end goal is a solid house that does not collapse when hit by several natural phenomena. Hence, the by-product of a *poiesis* way of life, in the words of Jesus, is a solid ‘house’. A solid house is born out of a *poiesis* way of life that has acquired knowledge and/or developed intimacy with God. While Aristotle stated that ‘the art of the builder’ is what determines the outcome (cf. Pol. 1328 a 27–35), Jesus said that it is the *poiesis* or non-*poiesis* way of living his words that determines the outcome. Lehner’s (2021) commentary on ‘*poiesis* of peace’ could help the readers to understand what exactly Jesus highlighted in Matthew 7:24–27.

In everyday life, the *poiesis* way of life was associated with artists and works of art (cf. Burnet 1952:98; Groome 1980:153). Art is the human creative process of experiencing, understanding and communicating reality creatively through symbols and metaphors (Pulvirenti & Gambino 2013:83). Therefore, art is a dynamic and complex process that involves various things, including imagination, to finally produce a work that can be enjoyed by many people. Imagination contains a process that is also highly dynamic, because it also involves various things. This caught Lehner’s attention, who linked *poiesis* with imagination as part of one of the qualities of an artist. What is even more interesting is that, to quote Nussbaum (2001:124), artists and artworks in ancient times were the most important ethics teacher (Lehner 2021:154). Some wisdom was effectively transmitted by artists through their works. However, it seems that even today artists still play an important role in influencing the formation of behaviour, even culture, in society. Therefore, the authors also take into consideration the idea of imagination, as part of the artist’s qualities, and the important role of the artist in shaping human behaviour and culture as also being part of the motif of Jesus’ sentence emphasising *poiesis*. This is in line with what has been mentioned here – that for Aristotle, the product of the house is related to the artistic ability of the person who built the house (Pol. 1328 a 27–35).

Imagination itself is related to ‘perception’, ‘remembering’, and ‘empathy’. Therefore, imagination involves past experiences, the reality faced in the present, as well as various possibilities and hopes for the future. Lahner (2021) states:

An artist who paints a sunset will rely on previous perceptions of a sunset and secondly will also create something new: ... Perception is directed towards an object and imagination expands the actual existence of an object and creates openness for new and multifarious possibilities. (p. 146)

Therefore, the authors considered that past memories are also involved in the word ποιεῖν in Matthew 7:24–27. If Jesus stated that the object of ποιεῖν is his words as the best way to

explore the theme of 'God with Us', then *poiesis* could not but also involve past experiences. Based on the interpretation of Matthew 18:2 (cf. Sinambela et al. 2021) and Matthew 22:32 (cf. Surbakti 2019; Surbakti & Andangsari 2022), the research shows that the *poiesis* way of life that involves the 'memory' of the past has indeed been vividly evoked in this gospel. Thus, the *poiesis* way of life associated with personal nostalgia about God is perfectly reasonable. This is because *poiesis* involves memories of the past as well as projections for the future.

Furthermore, as mentioned here, Lockyer (1963:157) considered that the natural phenomena in this text were situated in everyday life, not eschatology, identifying the house to be 'the whole life'. Therefore, the effort to build a house in this text was identical to the effort of building all aspects of life. It is interesting that, when describing the process of 'building' a life, Lockyer (1963:158) links the three aspects with imagination as one of the qualities of an artist above, '[...] building up of character, habits, **memories**, **expectation** [...]'. The believers would build a house 'by daily adding to their powers of service, **their knowledge of God**, their victories over faults, their joys and **hopes** [...]' (Lockyer 1963:158). It is clear that Lockyer, in an effort to build a life that is resilient to various challenges, involves the past (memories). This process, ultimately, leads to knowledge and intimacy with God. The idea of imagination in the *poiesis* way of life reinforces the personal dimension of nostalgia that would become an 'inner resource' in facing every crisis in the future.

Next, if *poiesis* was previously linked with artists and art products that can influence many people while being enjoyed by many people, then this was also what Jesus expected from the disciples. If artists were the most important ethical teachers in shaping human behaviour, and even culture (cf. Lehner 2021:154), then this quality was also what Jesus expected from the disciples. The expectation of Jesus for his disciples to become the salt and light of the world (Mt 5:13–16), which was the starting material of the Sermon on the Mount, could illustrate this idea.

Conclusion

The notion of 'personal nostalgia' should have helped the readers to understand what exactly Jesus wanted to highlight in the text that concluded the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 7:24–27). The hope of evoking personal nostalgia within the readers' minds caused Jesus to strongly emphasise the importance of the $\rho\omicron\iota\epsilon\iota\nu$ of his words. In his pastoral approach to the community during any time of deep crisis, Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew considered 'personal nostalgia' to be the 'inner resource' that would help them face and even solve a crisis. Faithful obedience to the ' $\rho\omicron\iota\epsilon\iota\nu$ of Jesus' teachings' is the best way to find the fundamental knowledge of, and familiarity with, 'God is With Us', which would then become a powerful personal nostalgia in times of crisis later on. In conclusion, the authors argue that the timing of the three natural phenomena in the text is not entirely eschatological.

They could happen at any time in everyday life prior to the day of final judgement.

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Competing interests

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Authors' contributions

The authors declare that this research is a joint cooperation research. Each author was responsible for checking, validating and writing this article.

Ethical considerations

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