



COMPLETE STUDY GUIDE · GOSPEL · 28 CHAPTERS · 8 SESSIONS

The Gospel of Matthew

The King · The Kingdom · The Commission

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall give birth to a son. They shall call his name Immanuel;” which is, being interpreted, “God with us.”

MATTHEW 1:23



Eight sessions

Leader's guide

Answer guide

Full text of Matthew (WEB)

SIMPLE. ACCESSIBLE. TRANSFORMATIONAL.



CLEAR PATH BIBLE STUDIES

The Gospel of Matthew

Complete Study Guide

The King · The Kingdom · The Commission

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- 1** Eight sessions with every discussion, reflection, and recall question from the online study, and room to write.
- 2** Reference pages: the five discourses of the King, major themes, key passages, key people, and all 28 chapters at a glance.
- 3** Leader's guide with the group leader notes, a timed plan, an answer guide for every discussion question, and the recall answer key.
- 4** The full text of Matthew in the World English Bible, so nothing else is needed to do the study.

FIRST EDITION · OCTOBER 2026

© 2026 Clear Path Bible Studies. This guide is a free resource. You may print and copy it for personal and group study. It may not be sold.

Scripture quotations are from the World English Bible (WEB), which is in the public domain.

The online study, free and with no sign-in: clearpathbiblestudies.com/studies/matthew

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Contents

How to use this guide	4
Why read this Gospel	5
Before you begin	6
Your study plan	7

PART ONE The Eight Sessions

1 The King Arrives Matthew 1–4	9
2 The Sermon on the Mount Matthew 5–7	13
3 Authority and Mission Matthew 8–10	17
4 Parables of the Kingdom Matthew 11–13	21
5 The King and His Church Matthew 14–18	25
6 On the Road to Jerusalem Matthew 19–22	29
7 The King Returns Matthew 23–25	33
8 Cross, Resurrection, Commission Matthew 26–28	37

PART TWO Reference

Five Discourses of the King	42
Major Themes	43
Key Passages	45
Key People	46
The Library: all 28 chapters	47

PART THREE Leader's Guide and Answer Guide

Leading this study	50
1 The King Arrives	51
2 The Sermon on the Mount	54
3 Authority and Mission	57
4 Parables of the Kingdom	60
5 The King and His Church	63
6 On the Road to Jerusalem	66
7 The King Returns	69
8 Cross, Resurrection, Commission	72

PART FOUR The Gospel of Matthew (WEB)

The complete text, arranged by session reading	76
Eight verses to carry, and what comes next	109

PART FIVE Take it with you

110

Worked example · Go deeper · Glossary · Scripture index · Tell me what helped · Help lines

START HERE

How to use this guide

A complete, eight-session walk through the Gospel of Matthew — built for small groups, Sunday school, and personal study. Read together, observe, interpret, and leave each session with one clear thing to live out.

EVERY SESSION FOLLOWS ONE RHYTHM

1

Read together

The session's chapters and key passages. The text is in Part Four.

2

Observe

What does the passage say? Who is there, and what happens?

3

Interpret

What does it show about Jesus? What did the author want us to see?

4

Apply this week

What will I do with it this week? One thing, lived out.

On your own

This guide gives you eight weekly sessions, each with a reading plan, questions, a memory verse, and one action.

- Write your answers. Thinking on paper is slower, and it lasts.
- Finish with the recall page: answer from memory first, then check the text.

In a group

Each session fits a 60-minute meeting of 5–12 people: read together, discuss, and apply, with leader notes built in.

- The leader uses Part Three: leader notes, an answer guide, and the recall answer key.
- Participants need Parts One, Two, and Four.

Of Part Five, pages 111 and 116–123 are for everyone, and pages 112–115 are for leaders.

PRINTING FOR A GROUP

Participant pages (sessions and reference): pages 8–48. Leader's guide: pages 49–74. The text of Matthew: pages 75–109. Part Five: pages 110–123.

My progress

☐ 1 The King Arrives

☐ 3 Authority and Mission

☐ 5 The King and His Church

☐ 7 The King Returns

☐ 2 The Sermon on the Mount

☐ 4 Parables of the Kingdom

☐ 6 On the Road to Jerusalem

☐ 8 Cross, Resurrection, Commission

WHY MATTHEW

Why read this Gospel

Matthew shows, again and again, that Jesus is the King the prophets promised.

01 Meet Jesus the King

Matthew presents Jesus as the long-awaited King — the son of David, the one in whom God's promises to Israel are fulfilled.

02 Rooted in the Old Testament

Matthew often shows how Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets, and keeps pointing back to Scripture (1:22; 2:15; 5:17).

03 Jesus' teaching in five blocks

Five great discourses — including the Sermon on the Mount — gather Jesus' teaching on the kingdom, discipleship, and the life God blesses.

04 Sent to make disciples

Matthew ends with the Great Commission — the King's authority and His call to go, baptize, and teach all nations.

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall give birth to a son. They shall call his name Immanuel;” which is, being interpreted, “God with us.”

MATTHEW 1:23 • WEB

ORIENTATION

Before you begin

A quick orientation to the Gospel — who wrote it, when, for whom, and the threads to watch for as you read.

AUTHOR	Background Early church tradition attributes this Gospel to Matthew, the tax collector Jesus called (9:9). The book itself does not name its author.
DATE	When It Was Written The Gospel does not date itself. Scholars place it in the second half of the first century and disagree on the details.
AUDIENCE	Who It Was Written For The Gospel names no audience. Its steady use of the Hebrew Scriptures suggests readers who knew them well.
PURPOSE	What Matthew Shows The Gospel presents Jesus as the Messiah, the King of the Jews, and the fulfillment of the Old Testament, and it records His teaching for those who follow Him.
STYLE	How Matthew Writes Ordered and teacherly. Narrative alternates with five great blocks of Jesus' teaching, each closing with a formula such as "When Jesus had finished these words" (19:1; compare 7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 26:1).
KEY PHRASE	The Words That Echo "The Kingdom of Heaven." Matthew uses it more than thirty times. Other key words: fulfilled, righteousness, Father, disciple.
JESUS	Jesus in Matthew The son of David and son of Abraham, Immanuel ("God with us"), the suffering Servant, the crucified and risen King.
DISCIPLESHIP	What It Means to Follow Hear and do the words of Jesus, practice a righteousness of the heart, forgive, serve the least, and make disciples of all nations.

STRUCTURE

Five Discourses: 28 chapters, 8 sessions

Matthew is built around five teaching blocks framed by narrative — a pattern many readers see as echoing the five books of Moses. The six sections below show where those blocks fall.

The Coming of the King Matthew 1–4				The Sermon on the Mount Matthew 5–7			Ministry and Mission in Galilee Matthew 8–13						The King and His Church Matthew 14–18					On the Road to Jerusalem Matthew 19–23					The End and the Beginning Matthew 24–28					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Session 1				Session 2			Session 3			Session 4			Session 5					Session 6					Session 7			Session 8		

Sessions follow the teaching, not the section edges: Session 7 begins at chapter 23, inside the section on the road to Jerusalem.

THE EIGHT SESSIONS

Your study plan

EITHER WAY

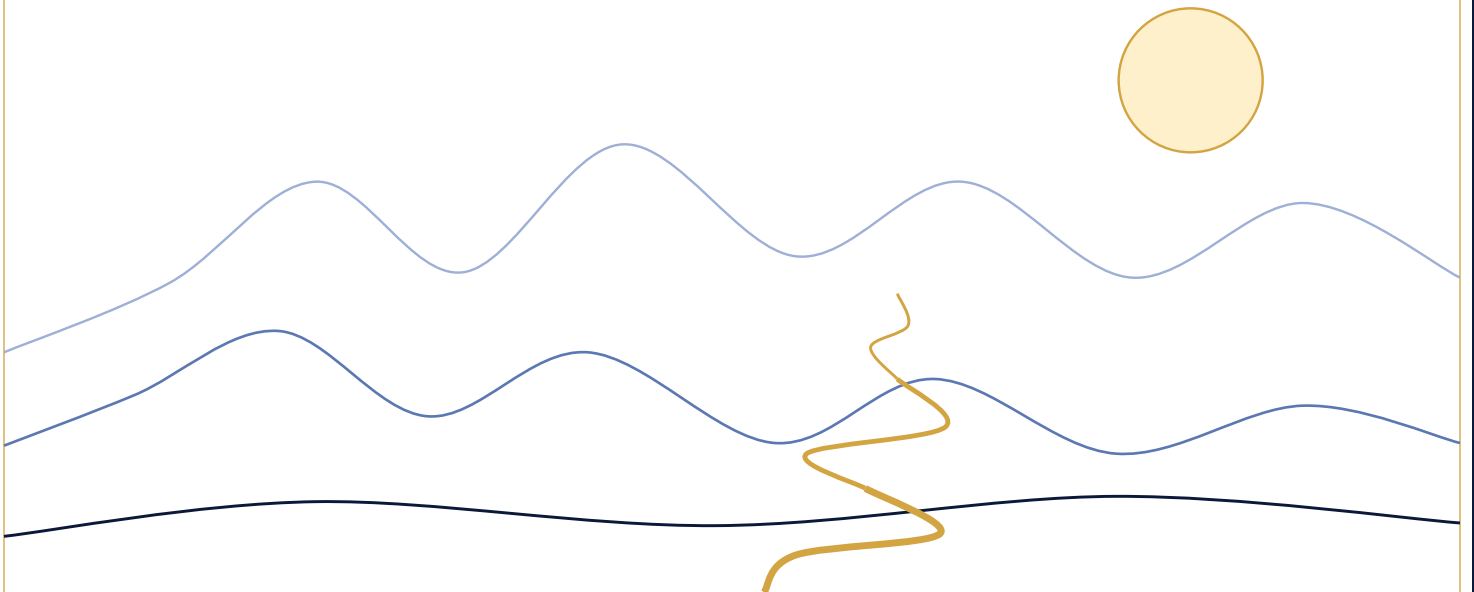
Eight sessions carry you through all 28 chapters of Matthew — from the genealogy of the King to the empty tomb and the Great Commission.

	SESSION	READ	MEMORY VERSE	SESSION PAGE	LEADER PAGE	TEXT PAGE
1	The King Arrives A royal genealogy and a virgin birth: Jesus is the son of David, Immanuel — God with us — baptized, tested, and proclaiming the kingdom.	Matthew 1–4	Matthew 1:23	9	51	76
2	The Sermon on the Mount On a mountainside the King describes the life of His kingdom: the Beatitudes, a righteousness of the heart, true prayer, and the house built on rock.	Matthew 5–7	Matthew 6:33	13	54	79
3	Authority and Mission Jesus heals, calms storms, forgives sins, and calls Matthew — then shares His authority with the Twelve and sends them into the harvest.	Matthew 8–10	Matthew 9:37–38	17	57	82
4	Parables of the Kingdom Jesus answers John's question, invites the weary to rest, and tells the kingdom's parables — it grows quietly and is worth everything.	Matthew 11–13	Matthew 11:28	21	60	86
5	The King and His Church Jesus feeds thousands, walks on water, and draws Peter's confession: "You are the Christ." He foretells the cross and forms His community.	Matthew 14–18	Matthew 16:24	25	63	90
6	On the Road to Jerusalem Jesus teaches on marriage, children, and riches, enters Jerusalem as King, cleanses the temple, and names love of God and neighbor as the heart of the Law.	Matthew 19–22	Matthew 22:37–39	29	66	95
7	The King Returns Jesus pronounces woes on hypocrisy, then foretells the end of the age — calling His people to readiness, faithfulness, and mercy to those in need.	Matthew 23–25	Matthew 25:40	33	69	100
8	Cross, Resurrection, Commission Jesus shares the last supper, is betrayed, crucified, and buried — then rises in triumph and sends His people to make disciples of all nations.	Matthew 26–28	Matthew 28:19–20	37	72	103

PART ONE

The Eight Sessions

Read, discuss, reflect, and recall. One session a week carries you through all 28 chapters.



SESSION 1 OF 8

The King Arrives

Read **Matthew 1–4** • text on pages 76–79

1

Matthew opens with a royal genealogy and a virgin birth: Jesus is the son of David, the son of Abraham, Immanuel – God with us. He is baptized, withstands temptation, and begins to proclaim, “Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”

Matthew grounds Jesus in Israel’s story, then shows the heavens opened at His baptism and the wilderness testing that He passes by answering from Scripture (4:4, 7, 10). The King has come, and His reign begins with a call to repent.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ See how Matthew presents Jesus as the promised King
- ☐ Understand “Immanuel” as the frame of the whole Gospel
- ☐ Recognize how Jesus answers each temptation with Scripture (4:1–11)

THIS SESSION’S KEY PASSAGES

Matthew 1:23	Memory verse
Matthew 1	Chapter 1
Matthew 2	Chapter 2
Matthew 3	Chapter 3
Matthew 4	Chapter 4

MEMORY VERSE

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall give birth to a son. They shall call his name Immanuel;” which is, being interpreted, “God with us.”

MATTHEW 1:23 • WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Matthew 1–4 slowly across the week. Matthew 2 includes the killing of Bethlehem’s children, so stop if it is too heavy. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Matthew 1 ☐ Matthew 2 ☐ Matthew 3 ☐ Matthew 4

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 Why might Matthew begin with a genealogy? What does it establish?

2 What does the name “Immanuel” promise, and what echoes it at the end of Matthew (28:20)?

3 How does Jesus answer each temptation, and what does that teach us?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where do you most need to know that God is “with” you right now?

② If you are in a wilderness season, how might Scripture steady you there?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Begin where Jesus began: repentance. Name one area to turn over to the King this week.

PRAYER

*King Jesus, You are Immanuel — God with us.
Reign in my life, and meet me in my
wilderness. Amen.*

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

1 What does the name “Immanuel” mean? (1:23)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ☐ A God saves | ☐ B God with us |
| ☐ C Anointed One | ☐ D Son of David |

2 What is Jesus’ first preached message? (4:17)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ A Prepare the way of the Lord | ☐ B Keep the traditions of the elders |
| ☐ C Follow the Law and the Prophets | ☐ D Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. |

3 How does Jesus answer each of the three temptations in the wilderness? (4:1–11)

4 Who comes seeking the newborn King, and how do they respond? (2:1–11)

5 Without looking back, write Matthew 1:23.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader’s guide, page 53.

SESSION 2 OF 8

The Sermon on the Mount

Read **Matthew 5–7** · text on pages 79–82

2

On a mountainside the King describes the life of His kingdom: the Beatitudes, a righteousness of the heart, true prayer, treasure in heaven, and a house built on the rock of obedience.

This is Jesus' teaching on life in the kingdom. Jesus reaches past behavior to the heart, teaches us to pray to our Father, calls us not to be anxious, points us to the Father who knows what we need, and warns that hearing is not enough — we must build our lives on His words.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Grasp the Beatitudes as the kingdom's surprising blessings
- ☐ See how Jesus deepens the Law from action to heart
- ☐ Understand prayer and trust in the Father

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Matthew 6:33 Memory verse

Matthew 5 Chapter 5

Matthew 6 Chapter 6

Matthew 7 Chapter 7

MEMORY VERSE

“But seek first God’s Kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well.”

MATTHEW 6:33 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Matthew 5–7 slowly across the week. These chapters include hard words about lust, divorce, and forgiveness, so stop if it is too heavy. If you are in crisis, call or text 988 in the U.S. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Matthew 5 ☐ Matthew 6 ☐ Matthew 7

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 Which Beatitude challenges you most, and why?

2 What does it look like to seek God's kingdom "first" in a real week?

3 What is the difference between hearing Jesus' words and building on them?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where might your righteousness be more outward than inward?

② If a worry is crowding out the kingdom, what would seeking it first change?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Pick one teaching from these chapters and practice it deliberately this week — build on the rock.

PRAYER

Father, let my righteousness flow from the heart. Teach me to seek Your kingdom first. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

1 In the Beatitudes, who does Jesus say inherits the earth? (5:5)

☐ A The gentle

☐ B The powerful

☐ C The wealthy

☐ D The wise

2 What does Jesus say to seek first? (6:33)

☐ A Food, clothing, and a safe place to live

☐ B Wisdom and understanding

☐ C God's kingdom and His righteousness

☐ D Peace with all people

3 What is the difference between the wise and foolish builders? (7:24–27)

4 How does Jesus teach His disciples to pray? (6:9–13)

5 Without looking back, write Matthew 6:33.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 56.

SESSION 3 OF 8

Authority and Mission

Read **Matthew 8–10** · text on pages 82–85

3

Jesus heals, calms storms, forgives sins, and calls Matthew the tax collector — then shares His authority with the Twelve and sends them out. The King’s power and His mission go together.

Matthew gathers Jesus’ mighty works — over sickness, nature, demons, and sin — to show His authority. Then Jesus multiplies that mission, sending ordinary disciples to carry the kingdom, warning them it will cost.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ See the scope of Jesus’ authority
- ☐ Understand discipleship as being sent
- ☐ Reckon honestly with the cost of following

THIS SESSION’S KEY PASSAGES

Matthew 9:37–38 Memory verse

Matthew 8 Chapter 8

Matthew 9 Chapter 9

Matthew 10 Chapter 10

MEMORY VERSE

“The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest.”

MATTHEW 9:37–38 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Matthew 8–10 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Matthew 8 ☐ Matthew 9 ☐ Matthew 10

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 What do Jesus' miracles reveal about who He is?

2 Why does Jesus call a tax collector — and eat with sinners?

3 What instructions and warnings does He give the sent-out Twelve?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

- ① Jesus sends the Twelve in Matthew 10. Where might He be asking you to carry His good news in your home, work, or neighborhood?

- ② What might following Jesus cost, and what keeps you following?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Pray the “Lord of the harvest” prayer daily this week — then ask Jesus what step of obedience He is asking of you.

PRAYER

Lord of the harvest, send out laborers, and make me willing to go. Give me courage to carry Your kingdom where You place me. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1** What astonishes Jesus about the centurion? (8:10)
 - ☐ A His wealth
 - ☐ B His loyalty to Rome
 - ☐ C His rank
 - ☐ D His great faith
- 2** Why does Jesus say He eats with tax collectors and sinners? (9:12–13)
 - ☐ A To win the crowds to His side
 - ☐ B Because the sick need a physician
 - ☐ C Because they had already repented and kept the Law
 - ☐ D To get them to pay their taxes
- 3** What does Jesus tell the disciples to pray for, seeing the crowds? (9:37–38)

- 4** What warning does Jesus give the Twelve as He sends them out? (10:16–22)

- 5** Without looking back, write Matthew 9:37–38.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 58.

SESSION 4 OF 8

Parables of the Kingdom

Read **Matthew 11–13** · text on pages 86–90

4

Jesus answers John's question, invites the weary to rest, and tells the kingdom's parables: the sower, the weeds, the mustard seed, the hidden treasure. The kingdom grows quietly and is worth everything.

Opposition grows, yet Jesus' invitation widens: come and rest. In parables He shows a kingdom that starts small and hidden but grows and is priceless — and in the sower He shows how the word is received.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Hear Jesus' invitation to the weary
- ☐ Understand the kingdom's hidden, growing nature
- ☐ Examine the soils of the heart

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Matthew 11:28 Memory verse

Matthew 11 Chapter 11

Matthew 12 Chapter 12

Matthew 13 Chapter 13

MEMORY VERSE

"Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest."

MATTHEW 11:28 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Matthew 11–13 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

☐ Matthew 11 ☐ Matthew 12 ☐ Matthew 13

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 How does Jesus respond to John the Baptist's question?

2 What does the parable of the sower reveal about receiving the word?

3 Why is the kingdom worth selling everything to gain?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

- ① If you are carrying a burden, what would it mean to bring it to Jesus for rest?

- ② Which soil best describes your heart in this season?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Name one “thorn” crowding out God’s word in your life, and take a step to clear it.

PRAYER

Jesus, I come to You as I am. Make my heart good soil, and let Your kingdom grow in me. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

1 What does Jesus offer the weary and burdened? (11:28–29)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ A A life without trouble | ☐ B Honor among the people |
| ☐ C Rest for their souls | ☐ D Wisdom to teach others |

2 In the parable of the sower, what is the seed? (13:18–23)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ A The word of the kingdom | ☐ B Money and worldly success |
| ☐ C Good works done in secret | ☐ D The twelve disciples |

3 What do the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl teach? (13:44–46)

4 How does Jesus respond to John the Baptist's question? (11:2–6)

5 Without looking back, write Matthew 11:28.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 62.

SESSION 5 OF 8

The King and His Church

Read **Matthew 14–18** · text on pages 90–95

5

Jesus feeds thousands, walks on water, and draws Peter's great confession: "You are the Christ." He foretells the cross, is transfigured in glory, and teaches His community to live in humility and forgiveness.

At a turning point in the Gospel, Peter confesses Jesus as Messiah — and Jesus then begins to point to the cross. Glory and suffering are bound together. Then He shapes His church: humble, restoring the strayed, forgiving without limit.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ See Peter's confession as a turning point in the Gospel
- ☐ Hold together Jesus' glory and His cross
- ☐ Learn the marks of His community

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Matthew 16:24 Memory verse

Matthew 14 Chapter 14

Matthew 15 Chapter 15

Matthew 16 Chapter 16

Matthew 17 Chapter 17

Matthew 18 Chapter 18

MEMORY VERSE

"If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

MATTHEW 16:24 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Matthew 14–18 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Matthew 14 ☐ Matthew 15 ☐ Matthew 16 ☐ Matthew 17 ☐ Matthew 18

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 Why does Jesus speak of the cross right after Peter's confession?

2 What does the Transfiguration reveal, and to whom?

3 How does Jesus teach us to handle sin and forgiveness in the church?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① What would “taking up your cross” look like this week?

② Is there anyone you find it hard to forgive?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Take one concrete step toward forgiveness that Jesus lays on your heart. Forgiving does not mean returning to someone who is unsafe.

PRAYER

Jesus, You are the Christ. Teach me to take up my cross and to forgive as I've been forgiven. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1 What does Peter confess Jesus to be at Caesarea Philippi? (16:16)**
 - A** Elijah come back to prepare Israel for the Lord
 - B** John the Baptist risen from the dead
 - C** The Christ, the Son of the living God
 - D** A teacher sent from God
- 2 How many times does Jesus say to forgive? (18:21–22)**
 - A** Seventy times seven
 - B** Seven times
 - C** Three times
 - D** As often as deserved
- 3 What must anyone who would come after Jesus do? (16:24)**

- 4 What happens at the Transfiguration, and what does the voice say? (17:1–5)**

- 5 Without looking back, write Matthew 16:24.**

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 65.

SESSION 6 OF 8

On the Road to Jerusalem

Read Matthew 19–22 · text on pages 95–99

6

Jesus teaches on marriage, children, and riches, predicts His death, enters Jerusalem as King, cleanses the temple, and silences His opponents – naming love of God and neighbor as the heart of the Law.

The King moves toward the cross, overturning expectations – the last first, the great one a servant. He enters Jerusalem to shouts of “Hosanna,” confronts the misuse of the temple, and gathers the whole Law into love.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Trace Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem
- ☐ See the kingdom’s reversal of values
- ☐ Center the Law on love of God and neighbor

THIS SESSION’S KEY PASSAGES

Matthew 22:37–39 Memory verse

Matthew 19 Chapter 19

Matthew 20 Chapter 20

Matthew 21 Chapter 21

Matthew 22 Chapter 22

MEMORY VERSE

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. A second likewise is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

MATTHEW 22:37–39 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Matthew 19–22 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Matthew 19 ☐ Matthew 20 ☐ Matthew 21 ☐ Matthew 22

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 What makes it hard for the rich young man to follow Jesus?

2 What does the triumphal entry reveal about the kind of King Jesus is?

3 How do the two great commandments reframe all the others?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① What, if anything, is hard for you to let go of as you follow Jesus?

② Who is the “neighbor” God is calling you to love right now?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Choose one relationship and love that person concretely this week, as yourself.

PRAYER

King Jesus, I welcome You. Teach me to love God with all I am, and my neighbor as myself. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1** What are the two greatest commandments? (22:37–39)
 - ☐ A Offer sacrifices and keep the Sabbath
 - ☐ B Pray daily and give to the poor
 - ☐ C Honor your parents and do not steal
 - ☐ D Love God and love your neighbor
- 2** Why does the young man go away sad? (19:21–22)
 - ☐ A He was rebuked in public
 - ☐ B He had great possessions
 - ☐ C He was told to go away
 - ☐ D He did not believe Jesus
- 3** How does Jesus enter Jerusalem, and what do the crowds cry? (21:6–9)

- 4** On the road to Jerusalem, how does Jesus define greatness — and what does He say the Son of Man came to do? (20:26–28)

- 5** Without looking back, write Matthew 22:37–39.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 68.

SESSION 7 OF 8

The King Returns

Read **Matthew 23–25** · text on pages 100–103

7

Jesus pronounces woes on hypocrisy, then foretells the end of the age. In the parables of the virgins and the talents, and the picture of the sheep and the goats, He calls His people to readiness, faithfulness, and mercy.

Jesus warns that outward religion can hide a hard heart, then lifts our eyes to His return. How we wait matters: staying ready, using what we're given, and serving "the least of these my brothers," for the King says what is done to them is done to Him (25:40).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Hear Jesus' warning against hypocrisy
- ☐ Anticipate His return with watchfulness
- ☐ Hear how the King counts mercy shown to the needy as done to Him (25:40)

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Matthew 25:40 Memory verse

Matthew 23 Chapter 23

Matthew 24 Chapter 24

Matthew 25 Chapter 25

MEMORY VERSE

"The King will answer them, 'Most certainly I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'"

MATTHEW 25:40 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Matthew 23–25 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Matthew 23 ☐ Matthew 24 ☐ Matthew 25

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 What is the danger Jesus names in the religious leaders?

2 What do the parables teach about how to wait for His return?

3 How does the sheep-and-goats picture reshape how you see what is done for “the least”?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where might your faith be more outward than real?

② Who might you serve this week the way 25:35–36 describes?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Serve one person in need this week, remembering what Jesus says in 25:40. Whichever way you read “my brothers,” mercy to someone in need is what Jesus honors.

PRAYER

Lord, keep me ready. Let me use what You’ve given and serve as You have taught. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1** What does Jesus call the scribes and Pharisees in chapter 23, and what is His complaint?

- 2** In the parable of the talents, what does the master condemn? (25:24–30)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ A Burying the talent out of fear | ☐ B Taking risks with the master's money |
| ☐ C Earning interest from bankers | ☐ D Asking the master questions |

- 3** In the sheep and goats, what does the King say about what was done to “the least of these my brothers”? (25:40)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ A Nothing came of it | ☐ B It was a private matter |
| ☐ C It was done to Him | ☐ D It was a ritual duty |

- 4** What is the point of the ten virgins parable? (25:1–13)

- 5** What does Jesus say will not pass away? (24:35)

- 6** Without looking back, write Matthew 25:40.

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 71.

SESSION 8 OF 8

Cross, Resurrection, Commission

Read **Matthew 26–28** · text on pages 103–108



Jesus shares the last supper, is betrayed, tried, crucified, and buried – then rises in triumph. The risen King declares, “All authority has been given to me,” and sends His people to make disciples of all nations.

The story reaches its center: the King gives His life as a ransom and rises again. Matthew ends with the promise that echoes 1:23, “I am with you always,” now extended to the whole world through the Great Commission and Christ’s unending presence.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Walk through the passion and resurrection in Matthew
- ☐ See the cross and empty tomb as the Gospel’s climax
- ☐ Hear the Great Commission as Jesus’ charge to His disciples

THIS SESSION’S KEY PASSAGES

Matthew 28:19–20 Memory verse

Matthew 26 Chapter 26

Matthew 27 Chapter 27

Matthew 28 Chapter 28

MEMORY VERSE

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:19–20 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Matthew 26–28 slowly across the week. Matthew 26–27 includes the arrest, flogging, crucifixion, and Judas’ death, so stop if it is too heavy. If you are in crisis, call or text 988 in the U.S. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Matthew 26 ☐ Matthew 27 ☐ Matthew 28

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 What stands out in Matthew's account of the cross?

2 How does the resurrection change everything for the disciples — and for us?

3 What does the Great Commission ask of you, and what promise accompanies it?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① What does Jesus' death and resurrection mean for you personally?

② Who is one person you can help follow Jesus?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Take one step in the Great Commission this week — share, invite, or encourage one person.

PRAYER

Risen King, all authority is Yours. Send me to make disciples, and be with me always. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1** In Matthew's account, what does Jesus give as they eat? (26:26–28)
 - A** Oil for their lamps
 - B** Bread and a cup: "this is my body"
 - C** Staffs for the journey
 - D** Seats at His right and left
- 2** In the Great Commission, what authority does the risen Jesus claim? (28:18)
 - A** Authority over the temple and the priests
 - B** Authority to forgive sins only
 - C** Authority over Galilee and Judea
 - D** All authority in heaven and on earth
- 3** What does the Great Commission send disciples to do? (28:19–20)

- 4** What is Jesus' final promise in Matthew? (28:20)

- 5** Without looking back, write Matthew 28:19–20.

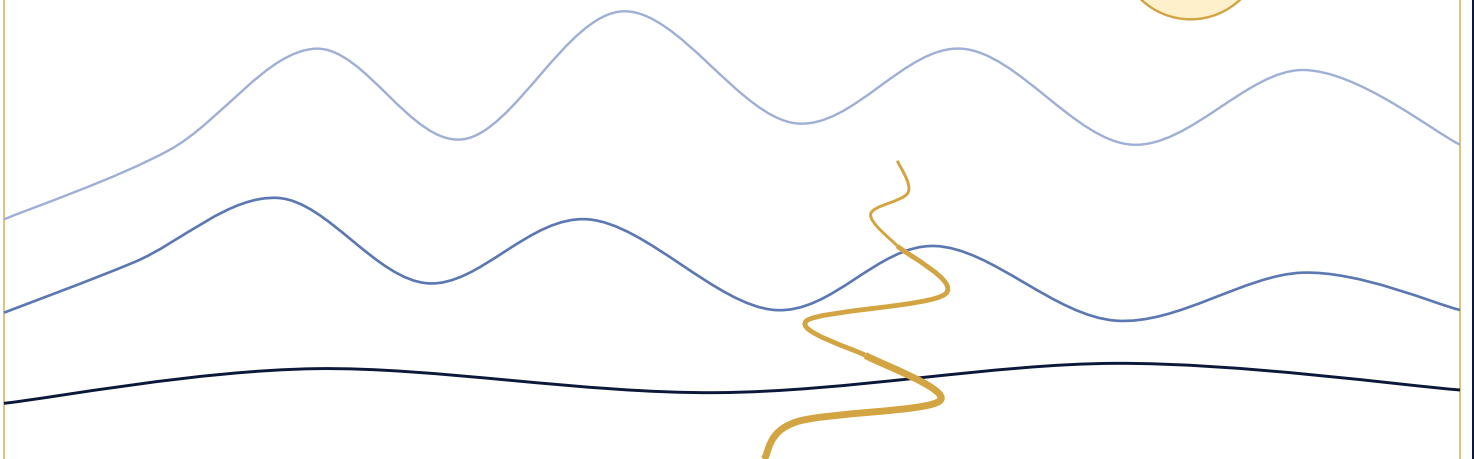
NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 74.

PART TWO

Reference

The discourses, the themes, the passages, the people, and every chapter at a glance.



THE FIVE DISCOURSES · MATTHEW

Five discourses of the King

Matthew gathers Jesus' teaching into five great blocks — a pattern many readers see as echoing the five books of Moses.

1	The Sermon on the Mount Matthew 5–7	WHAT HAPPENED	On a mountainside Jesus teaches the Beatitudes, the higher righteousness, prayer, and the two foundations.
		WHAT IT REVEALS	The King describes the life of His kingdom — a righteousness that goes past outward obedience and reaches the heart (5:17–20).
		FOR YOU	Don't just admire the Sermon on the Mount — build your house on it. Hear these words and do them.
2	The Mission Discourse Matthew 10	WHAT HAPPENED	Jesus sends out the Twelve with authority, instructions, and a warning that following Him will cost.
		WHAT IT REVEALS	The King shares His mission with His people. To follow Jesus is to be sent.
		FOR YOU	Ask where Jesus may be sending you, and do not be afraid (10:28–31). In 28:20 He promises, "I am with you always."
3	The Parables of the Kingdom Matthew 13	WHAT HAPPENED	Jesus tells the parables of the sower, the weeds, the mustard seed, the treasure, and the net.
		WHAT IT REVEALS	The Kingdom of Heaven grows quietly, often hidden, and is worth everything (13:44–46).
		FOR YOU	Which soil feels closest to your heart right now? Receive the word deeply, and treasure the kingdom above all you own.
4	Life in the Community Matthew 18	WHAT HAPPENED	Jesus teaches on humility, the lost sheep, confronting sin, and limitless forgiveness.
		WHAT IT REVEALS	The King cares how His people treat one another — with humility, restoration, and mercy.
		FOR YOU	Forgive as you have been forgiven. Go after the one who strays. Guard the little ones.
5	The Olivet Discourse Matthew 24–25	WHAT HAPPENED	Jesus foretells the end of the age, tells the parables of the virgins and the talents, and pictures the judgment of the nations, the sheep and the goats.
		WHAT IT REVEALS	The King is coming again. History is going somewhere, and how we live now matters then.
		FOR YOU	Stay ready. Use what you've been given, and serve "the least of these my brothers" — Jesus says it is done to Him (25:40).

"...he taught them with authority, and not like the scribes." — Matthew 7:29

MAJOR THEMES

The threads running through Matthew

The ideas Matthew returns to again and again — each one a window on who Jesus is.

01 The kingdom of heaven

Matthew 4:17

Jesus' central message: God's reign is at hand (4:17). Matthew speaks of it as already at work (12:28) and as still to come in fullness (25:31–34).

03 Jesus the Son of David

Matthew 1:1

Matthew opens with a royal genealogy. Jesus is the rightful King in David's line, the Messiah Israel awaited.

05 The higher righteousness

Matthew 5:20

Jesus calls for a righteousness deeper than the scribes' — one that reaches the heart's motives, not just outward behavior.

07 Mercy, not sacrifice

Matthew 9:13

Jesus tells the religious to learn what "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice" means: worship that has lost its mercy has lost its heart. The King welcomes sinners and the outcast.

09 Faith and little faith

Matthew 8:26

Matthew highlights faith that astonishes Jesus — and rebukes the disciples' "little faith" in the storm, never a sick person's.

11 Judgment and readiness

Matthew 25:13

The King will return to judge. Matthew urges watchfulness, faithful stewardship, and mercy to those in need.

02 Fulfillment of Scripture

Matthew 1:22

Again and again Matthew shows Jesus fulfilling the Law and the Prophets — He is the goal the whole Old Testament was reaching toward.

04 Immanuel — God with us

Matthew 1:23

From the first chapter to the last verse, Matthew frames Jesus as God present with His people — "I am with you always."

06 Hearing and doing

Matthew 7:24

True discipleship is not admiring Jesus' words but building a life on them. The wise build on the rock of obedience.

08 The Father in heaven

Matthew 6:9

Matthew's Jesus speaks often of "your Father" — inviting disciples into trusting, intimate relationship with God.

10 The cost of discipleship

Matthew 16:24

To follow Jesus is to take up a cross, lose your life to find it, and value the kingdom above everything else.

12 The church and forgiveness

Matthew 18:21

Matthew records Jesus speaking of the church (16:18; 18:17) — a community marked by humility, restoration, and limitless forgiveness (18:21–22).

13 Opposition to the King

Matthew 23:13

Some of the religious leaders, especially the scribes and Pharisees, oppose Jesus, and He pronounces woes on hypocrisy — a warning that outward religion can mask a hard heart. Jesus speaks as a Jew to Jews.

14 Resurrection and mission

Matthew 28:18

The risen King holds all authority and sends His people to make disciples of all nations — the story opens outward to the world.

KEY PASSAGES

Passages worth knowing well

Fourteen pivotal texts that carry the heart of Matthew's Gospel. Read them, mark them, return to them.

Matthew 1:22–23	Immanuel, God With Us Names the heart of Matthew: in Jesus, God Himself has come to be with His people.
Matthew 4:17	The Kingdom Is Near Jesus' opening message and the theme of the whole Gospel.
Matthew 5:3–12	The Beatitudes The kingdom's surprising blessings — who Jesus calls truly blessed.
Matthew 5:13–16	Salt and Light The disciple's calling to a visible, world-shaping life.
Matthew 6:9–13	The Lord's Prayer Jesus teaches His people how to pray to their Father.
Matthew 6:33	Seek First the Kingdom Jesus' answer to anxiety: seek God's Kingdom first.
Matthew 7:24–27	The Wise and Foolish Builders Hearing Jesus' words is not enough — we must build on them.
Matthew 11:28–30	Come to Me, and Rest The King's tender invitation to the weary and burdened.
Matthew 16:15–16	You Are the Christ Peter's confession: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
Matthew 18:20	Where Two or Three Gather Christ's promised presence when His people gather in His name (see 18:15–20).
Matthew 22:37–39	The Greatest Commandment Love God, love neighbor — the Law fulfilled in love.
Matthew 25:40	The Least of These Jesus says what is done for "one of the least of these my brothers" is done to Him.
Matthew 27:50–51	The Torn Curtain At Jesus' death the temple veil is torn in two, from top to bottom (27:51).
Matthew 28:18–20	The Great Commission The risen King's authority and His charge to make disciples of all nations.

KEY PEOPLE

The faces of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew is full of real people who met Jesus — some who believed, some who doubted, some who were changed forever. Here are the ones worth knowing.

Jesus

The Messiah, son of David, Immanuel — God with us, the crucified and risen King.

Joseph

A righteous man who obeys God's word and protects the child and His mother.

Mary, mother of Jesus

The virgin engaged to Joseph, through whom the King is born (1:18–25).

John the Baptist

The forerunner who prepares the way and baptizes Jesus.

The Magi

Wise men from the east who follow the star and worship the newborn King.

King Herod

The threatened king who seeks to destroy the child — the world's resistance to the true King.

Peter

The disciple who confesses Jesus as the Christ, walks on water, begins to sink, and denies Jesus three times.

The Twelve disciples

The men Jesus calls, teaches, and sends out with His authority.

The Pharisees

A Jewish teaching movement that cared deeply about the Law. In Matthew, some of them clash with Jesus over how to live it, and He warns them about hypocrisy (chapter 23).

The centurion

A centurion whose faith makes Jesus marvel (8:10).

The Canaanite woman

A Canaanite mother whose persistent faith Jesus praises.

Judas Iscariot

The disciple who betrays Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.

Pilate

The Roman governor who washes his hands and says he is innocent of this blood (27:24), then delivers Jesus to be crucified (27:26).

Mary Magdalene

Among the first witnesses of the resurrection, sent to tell the disciples.

ALL 28 CHAPTERS · A CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER JOURNEY

The Library

Read any chapter in full in the World English Bible. The Observe, Interpret, and Apply steps are described on page 4 and built into each session.

THE COMING OF THE KING

- 1 The Genealogy and Birth of Jesus
- 2 The Magi, Egypt, and Nazareth
- 3 John the Baptist and the Baptism
- 4 Temptation and the First Disciples

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- 5 The Beatitudes and the Higher Righteousness
- 6 Giving, Prayer, and Treasure in Heaven
- 7 Judging, Asking, and the Two Foundations

MINISTRY AND MISSION IN GALILEE

- 8 Healings and the Cost of Following
- 9 Authority to Forgive and to Heal
- 10 The Twelve Sent Out
- 11 John's Question and Jesus' Invitation
- 12 Lord of the Sabbath
- 13 The Parables of the Kingdom

THE KING AND HIS CHURCH

- 14 John's Death; Feeding and Walking on Water
- 15 Tradition, Faith, and Compassion
- 16 Peter's Confession and the Cross Foretold
- 17 The Transfiguration
- 18 Life in the Community of the King

ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

-
- 19** Marriage, Children, and Riches
 - 20** Workers, Servanthood, and Sight
 - 21** The Triumphal Entry and the Temple
 - 22** Questions and the Greatest Commandment
 - 23** Woes to the Religious Leaders
-

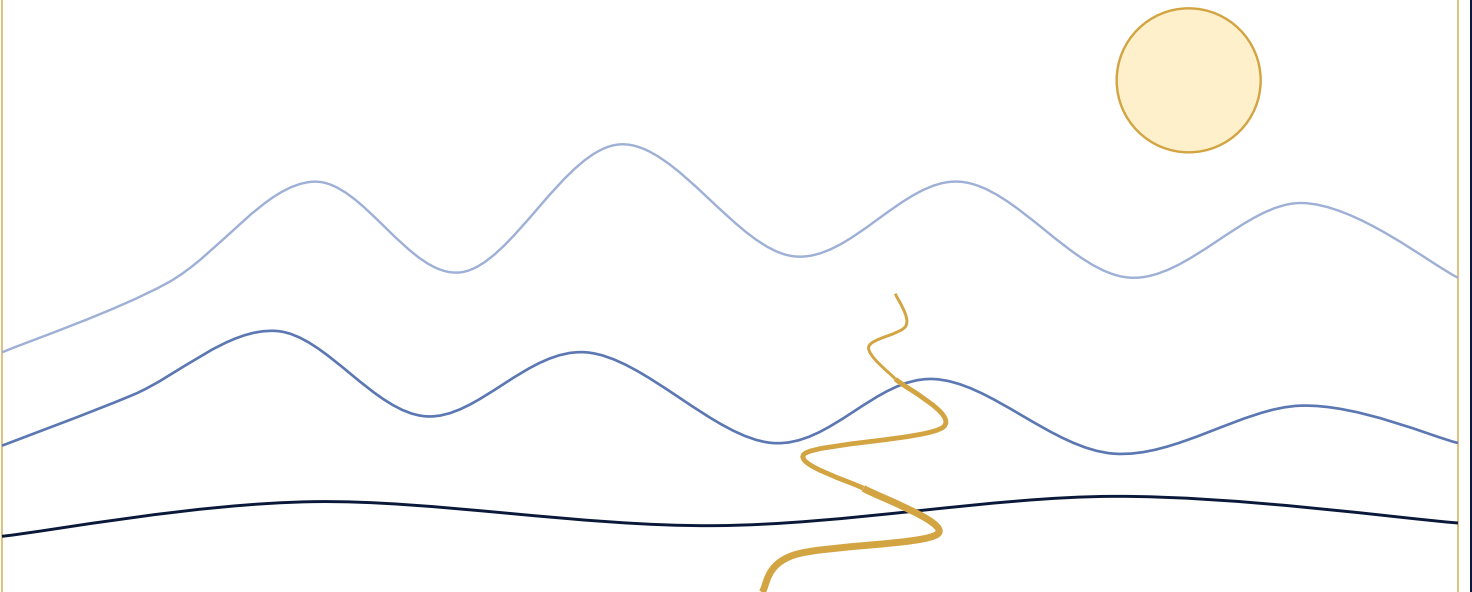
THE END AND THE BEGINNING

-
- 24** The End of the Age
 - 25** Readiness and Judgment
 - 26** The Last Supper and the Arrest
 - 27** The Crucifixion
 - 28** The Resurrection and the Great Commission
-

PART THREE

Leader's Guide and Answer Guide

Group leader notes, a timed plan, an answer guide, and the recall answer key for every session.



LEADER'S GUIDE

Leading this study

You do not need to be a Bible teacher to lead this study. You need to have read the passage, to ask the questions, and to leave room for people to answer them.

Before you meet

- Read the session's chapters twice, once straight through and once slowly.
- Read that session's leader page. Note the things to watch for.
- Decide which questions matter most for your group. You will rarely finish all of them, and that is fine.
- Pray for the people who will be in the room, by name.

In the room

- Read Scripture aloud before discussing it. Let the text speak first.
- Ask the question, then wait. Silence usually means people are thinking.
- When an answer drifts, ask, "Where do you see that in the passage?"
- Keep to the time plan loosely. Protect the closing minutes for reflection and prayer.

How to read a leader page

Group leader notes	How to open, the places where this session commonly goes off course, and where the session should land.
Timed plan	A suggested use of the hour, drawn to scale.
Answer guide	What the passage supports for each discussion question, with verse references, and a follow-up question to use if the group stalls.
Reflection notes	Reflection questions are personal and have no answer to check. Each has a short note on what it is for and how to lead it.
Recall answer key	The recall practice answers. Online, option order may differ: match by answer.

USING THE ANSWER GUIDE

The answer guide is there so you can lead with confidence. It is not a script to read aloud. Let the group do the finding; use the guide to confirm, to fill a gap, or to bring the conversation back to the text. Questions marked **PERSONAL** have no single right answer. For those, the guide gives what the passage offers and what a good answer tends to include.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 1 OF 8

The King Arrives

Matthew 1–4 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 9–12 · memory verse Matthew 1:23

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “When you hear the word king, what’s the first picture that comes to mind?”
Let two or three people answer before you read. You’ll return to it: Matthew’s King is born to Mary, a virgin betrothed to Joseph, and is tested in the wilderness.

WATCH FOR

1. The genealogy. Someone will want to skip it or will get lost in the names. Keep it to one point — Matthew is planting Jesus in Israel’s story, and the women in the list (1:3, 5, 6) are worth noticing. Don’t try to explain every name.
2. The temptations turning into a debate about how the devil works. Steer it back to what Jesus does: He answers each test with Scripture (4:4, 7, 10).

PUSH TOWARD

“Immanuel” — God with us — is given in 1:23, and Jesus’ last words in Matthew answer it: “I am with you always” (28:20). Ask the reflection question straight: where do you most need to know God is with you this week? Give the room silence; don’t fill it.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 122.

5	10	25	10	10
Open	Read the passage and the big idea	Discussion questions	Reflection in pairs	“one thing to live out” and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 Why might Matthew begin with a genealogy? What does it establish?

Matthew opens with “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (1:1). The list runs from Abraham (1:2) to King David (1:6) and on to Joseph, “the husband of Mary, from whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ” (1:16). Verse 17 counts the generations in three sets of fourteen and ends with the Christ. Before any event is told, the reader learns that Jesus belongs to a long line of named people, and that He is called son of David and son of Abraham.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Who is named in 1:1, and how does 1:16 describe Jesus?

2 What does the name “Immanuel” promise, and what echoes it at the end of Matthew (28:20)?

Matthew gives the name as “They shall call his name Immanuel” (1:23) and explains it as “God with us.” It comes with the word to Joseph that the child is “of the Holy Spirit” (1:20) and that He will save His people from their sins (1:21). Near the end of the book, in 28:20, Jesus says “Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” The promise that God is with His people stands at the start of the Gospel and again at its close.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What does 1:21 say Jesus will do, and how does 1:23 explain the name Immanuel?

3 How does Jesus answer each temptation, and what does that teach us?

In 4:4, 4:7 and 4:10 Jesus answers each time from Scripture, using the words “It is written.” He answers the challenge about bread with “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of God’s mouth.” He answers the leap from the temple with “You shall not test the Lord, your God,” and the offer of the kingdoms with “You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only.” The devil also quotes Scripture (4:6), and Jesus answers it with another verse (4:7). Then the devil leaves and angels serve Him (4:11). Each time Jesus meets the test by standing on what God has written.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What words does Jesus use to introduce each of His answers in 4:4, 4:7 and 4:10?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where do you most need to know that God is “with” you right now?

This question asks where each person most needs to know that God is with them, using the name Immanuel in 1:23 as the starting point. Let people answer from the session’s reading or from their own days, and leave room for silence. Joseph’s dream in 1:20, where he is told not to be afraid, is a good place to return to if the room is quiet.

2 If you are in a wilderness season, how might Scripture steady you there?

This asks each person to name a hard place and then look at what Jesus did in His own. Point to 4:1, where the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, and to the three verses where He answers from Scripture. Nobody needs to describe their situation in detail, and a short answer or a shared silence is fine.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

-
- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 What does the name “Immanuel” mean? (1:23)</p> <p>B God with us</p> <p>Immanuel, “God with us,” frames the whole Gospel — echoed in Jesus’ final promise.</p> | <p>2 What is Jesus’ first preached message? (4:17)</p> <p>D Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.</p> <p>Jesus’ opening message announces the arrival of the kingdom of heaven.</p> |
| <p>3 How does Jesus answer each of the three temptations in the wilderness? (4:1–11)</p> <p>With Scripture — “It is written” (4:4, 7, 10).</p> | <p>4 Who comes seeking the newborn King, and how do they respond? (2:1–11)</p> <p>The Magi — wise men from the east — follow the star and worship Him, offering gifts.</p> |
-
- 5** Memory verse
- Matthew 1:23, printed on page 9.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 2 OF 8

The Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5–7 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 13–16 · memory verse Matthew 6:33

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “Which is harder — doing the right thing, or wanting to?” That’s one thread of the Sermon, and it gets people talking before the text gets heavy.

WATCH FOR

1. Treating the Beatitudes as a checklist to rank yourselves by. They describe the people Jesus calls blessed, not a scoreboard.
2. Running out of time. Three chapters is too much to cover evenly. Pick the Beatitudes, the Lord’s Prayer, and the two builders; let the rest be the session’s reading.
3. Matthew 5:27–32 and 5:38–42 are read at home this week, and someone in the room may carry a divorce, an affair, sexual harm, or an abusive home. Do not ask anyone to share their story. Neither 5:39 nor 5:32 tells anyone to stay in danger or to harm their body. Jesus’ words about the eye and the hand (5:29–30) are strong picture language about taking sin seriously. If anyone seems distressed or mentions harming themselves, speak with them privately and help them reach a pastor or counselor, or call or text 988 in the U.S.
4. Read 6:14–15 with the prayer it follows, not as a threat. Forgiving takes time, and it does not mean trusting an unsafe person again. Do not use 7:21–23 to measure anyone’s standing. If someone is afraid they have not done enough, offer to talk privately and return to the Father who gives good gifts (7:11). 6:33 and 7:7–11 are not guarantees that every prayer gets the answer asked for. Some here have prayed hard and lost something, so let a “why not?” stand without a quick answer, and never suggest anyone lacked faith. Worry that goes beyond ordinary worry is a matter for a doctor or counselor, and being anxious is not a failure of faith.

PUSH TOWARD

The memory verse — seek first the kingdom (6:33) — pairs with the reflection question about anxiety. Ask people to think of one worry, silently or on paper, that would loosen if the kingdom came first. Then the closing picture: hearing isn’t building. Which one teaching will each person practice this week?

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 122.

5	10	15	15	15
Open	Beatitudes	Lord’s Prayer and anxiety	Two builders and discussion	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 Which Beatitude challenges you most, and why? PERSONAL

There is no single right answer. Jesus begins to teach on the mountain while His disciples are with Him (5:1–2), and each Beatitude pairs a person with a promise, such as “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (5:7) and “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (5:8). Faithful readers understand the Beatitudes in different ways, so let each person speak from the verse that stays with them. Some may stop at 5:11, where the blessing is for people who are reproached “for my sake.” Each person can share as much or as little as they choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Which promise in 5:3–12 stands out to you, and what does it say?

2 What does it look like to seek God's kingdom “first” in a real week? PERSONAL

There is no single right answer. Jesus says to “seek first God's Kingdom, and his righteousness” (6:33). The verses around it give the setting. He says “don't be anxious for your life” (6:25) and points to the Father who feeds the birds (6:26) and who “knows that you need all these things.” Seeking first sits beside the warning that “You can't serve both God and Mammon” (6:24) and the prayer “Give us today our daily bread” (6:11). The promise is that “all these things will be given to you as well,” and the Father already knows what you need (6:32). People can describe one ordinary choice in their week and say as much about it as they wish.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What does 6:33 say to seek first, and what does it promise?

3 What is the difference between hearing Jesus' words and building on them?

The wise man and the foolish man both hear. Jesus says of the first, “Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine, and does them” (7:24), and of the second, “Everyone who hears these words of mine, and doesn't do them” (7:26). The rain, floods and winds come to both houses (7:25, 27), and the house on the rock stands while the house on the sand falls. The difference is doing the words. In 7:21 Jesus says the one who enters the Kingdom of Heaven is “he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

IF THE GROUP STALLS In 7:25 and 7:27, what do the two houses have in common, and what is different?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where might your righteousness be more outward than inward?

This asks each person to look quietly at where they act for other people's eyes. Point to 6:1, 6:5 and 6:16, then to the Father who sees in secret (6:4, 6:6). It is a private inventory, so offer a minute of silence and invite sharing only from those who want to.

2 If a worry is crowding out the kingdom, what would seeking it first change?

This asks people to name a worry in the light of 6:25–34. Read 6:26 and 6:32 slowly and let the Father's care be the answer on the table. Some may share a worry and others may keep it to themselves, and either is fine.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

1 In the Beatitudes, who does Jesus say inherits the earth? (5:5)**A** The gentle

The kingdom's surprising blessings: the gentle inherit the earth (5:5).

3 What is the difference between the wise and foolish builders? (7:24–27)

The wise hear Jesus' words and do them, building on rock; hearing alone is sand.

5 Memory verse

Matthew 6:33, printed on page 13.

2 What does Jesus say to seek first? (6:33)**C** God's kingdom and His righteousness

Seeking the kingdom first reorders every anxiety and ambition.

4 How does Jesus teach His disciples to pray? (6:9–13)

The Lord's Prayer — addressing God as Father, praying for His name, kingdom, and will, then for daily bread, forgiveness, and deliverance.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 3 OF 8

Authority and Mission

Matthew 8–10 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 17–20 · memory verse Matthew 9:37–38

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “Tell about a time someone unexpected was invited to the table.” It sets up the dinner with tax collectors and sinners (9:10) without announcing it.

WATCH FOR

1. The miracles becoming a list. Matthew gathers them to make one claim — authority over sickness, nature, demons, and sin — so ask the first question once and let the list answer it. Never read 9:22 or 9:29 as saying the sick lack faith.
2. Chapter 10's warnings (“I send you out as sheep among wolves”) landing as fear. Read them as honesty about cost, next to the promise that goes with them.
3. Matthew 10:34–39 speaks of division inside a family. Some here have family who oppose their faith, and some have family who have hurt them. Do not take these verses to mean that a broken relationship proves anyone is faithful, or that anyone must cut off family. Let stories be heard without fixing them, and no one has to share.

PUSH TOWARD

The “Lord of the harvest” prayer (9:37–38). Pray it together at the end, then ask the reflection question — where is Jesus sending you — in your home, your work, your street? The “one thing” is to pray that prayer daily and act on one prompting.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 122.

5	10	15	15	15
Open	Read and big idea	Authority (chapters 8–9)	Mission and cost (chapter 10)	Prayer of the harvest and reflection

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 What do Jesus' miracles reveal about who He is?

Matthew sets the miracles side by side, and each one shows a different reach of Jesus' authority. He cleanses a leper with the words “I want to. Be made clean.” (8:3), and when evening came He “cast out the spirits with a word” (8:16). Jesus has just rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm (8:26). The men ask, “What kind of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (8:27). In 9:6 He heals the paralyzed man so that people may know “the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” The crowd saw it, marveled, and “glorified God” (9:8).

IF THE GROUP STALLS What question do the men ask in 8:27, and what has just happened in the boat?

2 Why does Jesus call a tax collector — and eat with sinners?

Matthew 9:9 says Jesus saw a man called Matthew at the tax collection office and said, “Follow me.” Matthew got up and followed Him. The reason Jesus gives comes when the Pharisees ask why He eats with tax collectors and sinners (9:10–11). He answers, “Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick do” (9:12), and then, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (9:13). He also sends them to the words “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.”

IF THE GROUP STALLS In 9:12–13, whom does Jesus say He came for, and what does He ask the Pharisees to go and learn?

3 What instructions and warnings does He give the sent-out Twelve?

Jesus gives the Twelve authority over unclean spirits and over every disease and sickness (10:1). He sends them to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (10:6) with the message “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” (10:7) and the instruction “Freely you received, so freely give” (10:8). He is plain about the cost: “I send you out as sheep among wolves” (10:16), and they will be brought before governors and kings (10:17–18). The warnings come with promises. When they are delivered up, it is “the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you” (10:20), and not one sparrow falls “apart from your Father’s will” (10:29), so “You are of more value than many sparrows” (10:31).

IF THE GROUP STALLS Which promises in 10:19–20 and 10:29–31 sit right beside the warnings?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Jesus sends the Twelve in Matthew 10. Where might He be asking you to carry His good news in your home, work, or neighborhood?

This question turns the sending into a place. Point to 10:7–8, where the Twelve are given plain work to do, and let each person name one setting where they might carry it. Nobody has to say more than they choose.

2 What might following Jesus cost, and what keeps you following?

This asks for an honest look at cost and worth together. Use 10:38–39 as the frame and make room for hard answers and good ones, without pressing anyone to share.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

1 What astonishes Jesus about the centurion? (8:10)

D His great faith

A centurion’s faith astonishes Jesus — faith, not background, moves Him.

2 Why does Jesus say He eats with tax collectors and sinners? (9:12–13)

B Because the sick need a physician

“I desire mercy, and not sacrifice” — Jesus came for sinners, like a doctor for the sick.

-
- 3** What does Jesus tell the disciples to pray for, seeing the crowds? (9:37–38)

That the Lord of the harvest would send out laborers — the harvest is plentiful.

- 5** **Memory verse**

Matthew 9:37–38, printed on page 17.

-
- 4** What warning does Jesus give the Twelve as He sends them out? (10:16–22)

They go as sheep among wolves and will face hatred — following Him will cost.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 4 OF 8

Parables of the Kingdom

Matthew 11–13 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 21–24 · memory verse Matthew 11:28

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “What’s something small that turned out to matter more than anyone expected?” A mustard seed of a question for a mustard-seed chapter.

WATCH FOR

1. John the Baptist’s question (“Are you he who comes, or should we look for another?”) being treated as failure. Jesus honors him. Let this be the permission slip for honest questions in the room.
2. The sower parable turning into diagnosing other people’s soil. Keep the reflection question personal: which soil describes my heart this season?
3. Matthew 12:31–32 frightens some readers into thinking they have done something unforgivable. If someone says they fear that, do not debate it in the group. In the scene, leaders are calling Jesus’ work Satan’s (12:22–24), which is not the same as being afraid of having rejected God. Offer to talk privately or help them reach a pastor or counselor. Keep the weeds and the net (13:24–30, 47–50) about God’s patience and God’s own sorting. They are not a chance to name who is a weed.

PUSH TOWARD

“Come to me, all you who labor” (11:28) is the memory verse. Ask what burden someone might bring to Jesus this week. Then the “one thing”: name a thorn that crowds out the word, and take one step to clear it.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 122.

5	15	15	10	15
Open	John’s question and Jesus’ invitation	The sower	The small-and-priceless parables	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 How does Jesus respond to John the Baptist's question?

John was in prison when he heard of the works of Christ and sent his disciples to ask, "Are you he who comes, or should we look for another?" (11:3). Jesus tells them to report what they hear and see, and He names "the blind receive their sight" and the good news preached to the poor. He adds, "Blessed is he who finds no occasion for stumbling in me." As the messengers leave, He speaks to the crowds about John and calls him "much more than a prophet" (11:9). He adds that no one born of women has arisen greater than John the Baptist (11:11). The text does not say why John asked, and it gives Jesus' reply in 11:4–6.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What does Jesus tell John's disciples to report, and what does He say about John in 11:7–11?

2 What does the parable of the sower reveal about receiving the word?

The farmer sows, and the seed lands in four kinds of ground (13:3–8). Jesus explains that on the roadside the evil one "snatches away that which has been sown" (13:19), and on rocky places the one who receives the word with joy "has no root in himself" (13:21) and stumbles under oppression. Among thorns, "the cares of this age and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word" (13:22). On good ground the one who "hears the word, and understands it" (13:23) bears fruit, some a hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty. The parable shows what happens to the word in each kind of heart, and Jesus ends it with "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (13:9).

IF THE GROUP STALLS What happens to the seed on the roadside, on the rocky ground and among the thorns in 13:19–22?

3 Why is the kingdom worth selling everything to gain?

In 13:44 a man finds treasure hidden in a field, and "In his joy, he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field." In 13:46 a merchant finds "one pearl of great price" and sells all that he had to buy it. Both stories say the Kingdom of Heaven is like this, and both people give up everything because they have found something worth more. The text gives joy as the man's motive. The mustard seed, which becomes greater than the herbs (13:31–32), and the yeast that works "until it was all leavened" (13:33) are two more pictures of the Kingdom of Heaven. Readers differ on what each one stresses, and the group can say what it sees in the words.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What does the man do in 13:44 and the merchant in 13:46, and what moves the man to do it?

NOTES

Reflection questions

- 1 If you are carrying a burden, what would it mean to bring it to Jesus for rest?
This question sits under the invitation of 11:28–30. Read those verses slowly, leave a moment of quiet, and let people name a burden in general terms if they wish. Nobody needs to explain.
- 2 Which soil best describes your heart in this season?
Keep this about one's own heart. Read 13:19–23 together, then let each person say which soil sounds most like this season, or simply listen. Do not invite anyone to name another person's soil.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 What does Jesus offer the weary and burdened? (11:28–29)</p> <p>C Rest for their souls</p> <p>“Come to me... and I will give you rest” — the King's tender invitation.</p> | <p>2 In the parable of the sower, what is the seed? (13:18–23)</p> <p>A The word of the kingdom</p> <p>The seed is the word; the soils are the conditions of the heart that receives it.</p> |
| <p>3 What do the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl teach? (13:44–46)</p> <p>The kingdom is worth selling everything to gain: the finder acts in his joy (13:44) and the pearl is of great price (13:46).</p> | <p>4 How does Jesus respond to John the Baptist's question? (11:2–6)</p> <p>He points to His works — the blind see, the lame walk, the poor hear good news.</p> |
| <p>5 Memory verse</p> <p>Matthew 11:28, printed on page 21.</p> | |

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 5 OF 8

The King and His Church

Matthew 14–18 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 25–28 · memory verse Matthew 16:24

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “When has getting exactly what you hoped for turned out differently than you imagined?” Peter gets his confession right, and from that time Jesus begins to speak of a cross.

WATCH FOR

1. Skipping past why Jesus talks about the cross after Peter's confession (16:21). That's a turning point in the Gospel; sit on it. Glory and suffering are bound together.
2. The forgiveness teaching (18:21–35) staying abstract. The reflection question asks “Is there anyone you find it hard to forgive?” Ask it, then protect people from having to answer out loud.
3. The steps in 18:15–17 are for ordinary disputes between members. They are not an instruction for someone who has been abused or threatened to confront that person alone or to sit before the church, and no one should be told they must. The cross in 16:24 is Jesus' call to follow Him. It is never a call to stay in danger or to be harmed. If someone describes being hurt at home, listen, believe them, and help them reach a pastor or counselor. In the U.S. the National Domestic Violence Hotline is 1-800-799-7233 (text START to 88788), and 988 is open for crisis.

PUSH TOWARD

The “one thing” is a concrete step of forgiveness, or a prayer to be able to forgive. Reconciliation is not required, and it is not safe for everyone. Invite each person to write one name privately. Close by praying for the courage to take the step.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 122.

5	15	10	15	15
Open	Peter's confession and the cross	Transfiguration	The church and forgiveness	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 Why does Jesus speak of the cross right after Peter's confession?

Peter says, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (16:16), and Jesus tells him the Father revealed it (16:17). After the command to tell no one (16:20), Matthew writes, "From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things" (16:21). The suffering comes from the elders, chief priests and scribes, and ends with Jesus being killed and raised the third day. Peter objects, Jesus answers "You are a stumbling block to me" (16:23), and then He tells His disciples what following Him involves: "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (16:24). The text gives no stated reason for the timing and places the confession and the cross side by side.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What does Jesus say must happen to Him in 16:21, and what does He say to those who follow Him in 16:24?

2 What does the Transfiguration reveal, and to whom?

Jesus takes Peter, James and John up a high mountain by themselves (17:1). "His face shone like the sun" (17:2), and Moses and Elijah appear talking with Him (17:3). The three see who He is. A voice from the cloud says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him." (17:5). The three fall on their faces, afraid, until Jesus touches them, and when they look up they see "no one, except Jesus alone" (17:8). He then tells them to say nothing until the Son of Man has risen from the dead (17:9).

IF THE GROUP STALLS Who is with Jesus on the mountain, and what does the voice say about Him in 17:5?

3 How does Jesus teach us to handle sin and forgiveness in the church?

For a brother who sins against you, Jesus gives steps, and the first is "go, show him his fault between you and him alone" (18:15), and if he listens, "you have gained back your brother." If he refuses, one or two more go with you (18:16), and after that the matter goes to the assembly (18:17). Peter then asks how often to forgive, Jesus answers "until seventy times seven" (18:22), and the king in the parable says the servant should have shown mercy "even as I had mercy on you" (18:33). Christians read the binding and releasing words of 18:18 in different ways, so the group can stay with what the steps and the parable plainly show.

IF THE GROUP STALLS In 18:15–17, what is the first step, and what is the aim if the brother listens?

NOTES

Reflection questions

- 1 What would "taking up your cross" look like this week?
This asks for something concrete and ordinary. Read 16:24–25 together and let people name one small place this week where following Jesus means setting their own way aside. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.
- 2 Is there anyone you find it hard to forgive?
Start with Peter's question in 18:21–22 and the king's compassion in 18:27 before turning to 18:35. Invite people to hold a name in silence if they would rather not say it, and offer to pray for whoever comes to mind. Forgiving is not the same as trusting again or staying near someone who harms. If a name feels too heavy, receive that and move on without comment.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 What does Peter confess Jesus to be at Caesarea Philippi? (16:16)</p> <p>C The Christ, the Son of the living God</p> <p>Peter's confession is a turning point in Matthew, and from that time Jesus begins to speak of the cross (16:21).</p> | <p>2 How many times does Jesus say to forgive? (18:21–22)</p> <p>A Seventy times seven</p> <p>Limitless forgiveness marks the community of the King. Forgiving someone is not the same as trusting them again or staying near harm.</p> |
| <p>3 What must anyone who would come after Jesus do? (16:24)</p> <p>Deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Jesus.</p> | <p>4 What happens at the Transfiguration, and what does the voice say? (17:1–5)</p> <p>Jesus' face shines like the sun, Moses and Elijah appear with Him, and a voice from the cloud says, "This is my beloved Son... Listen to him."</p> |
| <p>5 Memory verse</p> <p>Matthew 16:24, printed on page 25.</p> | |

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 6 OF 8

On the Road to Jerusalem

Matthew 19–22 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 29–32 · memory verse Matthew 22:37–39

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “What would be hardest for you to give up if Jesus asked?” Don’t press for answers; the rich young man will do the asking.

WATCH FOR

1. Making the rich young man about money only. Ask the discussion question as written — what makes it hard for him — and let the room widen it to whatever anyone is holding.
2. Matthew 19:3–12, on marriage and divorce, touching real pain. Churches read it differently, and this session does not settle it. Read it slowly and do not ask anyone to share their own story. Some here may have been divorced, widowed, abandoned, or harmed in marriage, or may be single not by choice. Nothing in this passage ranks anyone’s worth or asks anyone to stay where they are harmed.
3. The triumphal entry as a happy parade. Matthew’s King arrives on a donkey and goes straight to confront the misuse of the temple. Keep both in view.

PUSH TOWARD

The two great commandments (22:37–39) gather everything. The reflection question — who is the neighbor God is calling you to love right now — pairs with the “one thing”: choose one relationship and love that person concretely this week, as yourself.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 122.

5	15	15	10	15
Open	Rich young man	Entry and confrontation	The great commandments	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 What makes it hard for the rich young man to follow Jesus?

The man asks what good thing he must do for eternal life (19:16), and says he has kept the commandments from his youth (19:20). Jesus answers, “go, sell what you have, and give to the poor” (19:21), and adds, “come, follow me.” Matthew writes that “he went away sad, for he was one who had great possessions” (19:22). Jesus then tells His disciples, “a rich man will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven with difficulty” (19:23), and when they ask who can be saved, He says, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (19:26).

IF THE GROUP STALLS What does the man say he has done in 19:20, and what does he do after Jesus answers in 19:21–22?

2 What does the triumphal entry reveal about the kind of King Jesus is?

Matthew says this happened “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet” (21:4), and quotes “your King comes to you, humble, and riding on a donkey” (21:5). The crowds spread their clothes and branches on the road and shout, “Hosanna to the son of David” (21:9). In the temple Jesus drives out those who bought and sold and says, “My house shall be called a house of prayer” (21:13). The blind and the lame then come to Him there, and He heals them (21:14). The King in this passage receives praise as the son of David, holds the temple to its purpose, and heals those who come.

IF THE GROUP STALLS In 21:5, what word describes the King, and what is He riding?

3 How do the two great commandments reframe all the others?

A lawyer asks which commandment is the greatest, testing Him (22:35–36). Jesus answers, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (22:37), and calls it “the first and great commandment” (22:38). He adds, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (22:39). Then He says, “The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments” (22:40). Jesus had already named that command to the rich man (19:19).

IF THE GROUP STALLS In 22:40, what depends on these two commandments?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 What, if anything, is hard for you to let go of as you follow Jesus?

This asks for honest self-examination in light of 19:21–22, where the man leaves holding great possessions. Let the group widen it to whatever anyone is clinging to, and read 19:26 aloud so the question ends with what God can do. Never press anyone to answer.

2 Who is the “neighbor” God is calling you to love right now?

Look at 22:39 together, then at 20:32–34, where Jesus stops for two men who are shouting, asks what they want, and touches their eyes. Invite each person to think of one real person and one concrete act of love this week. Sharing is optional.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

1 What are the two greatest commandments? (22:37–39)**D** Love God and love your neighbor

All the Law and Prophets depend on loving God fully and neighbor as self.

3 How does Jesus enter Jerusalem, and what do the crowds cry? (21:6–9)

On a donkey, as crowds shout “Hosanna to the son of David!” — a humble King (21:5).

5 Memory verse

Matthew 22:37–39, printed on page 29.

2 Why does the young man go away sad? (19:21–22)**B** He had great possessions

His wealth held him back from following — the cost of the kingdom.

4 On the road to Jerusalem, how does Jesus define greatness — and what does He say the Son of Man came to do? (20:26–28)

Greatness is serving; the Son of Man came “to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (20:28).

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 7 OF 8

The King Returns

Matthew 23–25 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 33–36 · memory verse Matthew 25:40

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “What does it look like to wait well for something?” The parables are about how to wait, not when.

WATCH FOR

1. Chapter 23 becoming a chance to criticize religious people we know, or any group of people. These are Jesus' words to fellow Jews about particular leaders (23:1–3). The reflection question turns it inward — where might my faith be more outward than real.
2. The end-times chapters pulling the group into timelines. Jesus says no one knows the day or hour (24:36) and tells His disciples to watch (24:42; 25:13) — stay with the readiness parables and the sheep and goats.
3. Matthew 25:31–46 ends with “eternal punishment” and “eternal life” (25:46). Do not use it to frighten anyone or to settle debates about judgment. Readers differ on who “the least of these” are, and this session does not settle it. Read the passage as Jesus gives it and stay with its question about what we do for people in need. Offer to talk privately with anyone who is anxious about judgment.

PUSH TOWARD

“because you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (25:40). Ask where the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick and the prisoner (25:35–36) show up in each person's actual week, then the “one thing”: serve one person in need, remembering what Jesus says in 25:40.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 122.

5	10	15	15	15
Open	The woes	The readiness parables	Sheep and goats	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 What is the danger Jesus names in the religious leaders?

The danger Jesus names is hypocrisy. Of the scribes and Pharisees He says, “they say, and don’t do” (23:3), and “they do all their works to be seen by men” (23:5). In 23:23 He says they left undone “the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith.” In the cups and tombs of 23:25–28 He shows the gap between what people see and what is inside: “you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”

IF THE GROUP STALLS In 23:5–7, what do the leaders do so that people will see them?

2 What do the parables teach about how to wait for His return?

Jesus says plainly that the timing is hidden: “no one knows of that day and hour, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (24:36). Waiting well means being ready, as the wise virgins were, who “took oil in their vessels with their lamps” (25:4) while the bridegroom delayed (25:5). It also means doing the work given. In the talents, the man entrusts his goods “to each according to his own ability” (25:15), and the faithful servants hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (25:21). Faithful readers differ on how the events of chapter 24 fit together, but 25:13 gives all of them the same word: “Watch therefore.”

IF THE GROUP STALLS In 25:1–12, what separates the wise virgins from the foolish ones when the bridegroom comes?

3 How does the sheep-and-goats picture reshape how you see what is done for “the least”?

The King names real needs: hunger, thirst, a stranger, nakedness, sickness, and prison (25:35–36). Neither group saw it that way at the time, and the righteous ask, “when did we see you hungry, and feed you” (25:37). The King answers, “because you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (25:40). The King says the same about the least in 25:45 to those who did nothing, though that verse leaves out the words “my brothers.” Believers read “my brothers” in different ways, some as any person in need and some as His own followers, and in both readings the King stands with the least.

IF THE GROUP STALLS In 25:37–39, what do the righteous say, and what does the King answer in 25:40?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where might your faith be more outward than real?

This turns chapter 23 inward. Read 23:25–26 aloud, where the inside of the cup is cleaned first, and give a moment of quiet before anyone speaks. Do not press anyone to share, and let each person decide how much to say.

- 2** Who might you serve this week the way 25:35–36 describes?
Ground this in an ordinary week. The needs in 25:35–36 are concrete, and the righteous in 25:37–39 did not know they were serving the King. Ask for one real person or place, keep it small, and leave guilt out of the room. Do not press anyone to decide who “the least” are or to measure their standing before God by a list of acts. The passage asks what we do when someone in need is in front of us.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

- 1** What does Jesus call the scribes and Pharisees in chapter 23, and what is His complaint?
Hypocrites. He pronounces woes on leaders whose outward religion masks a hard heart.
- 2** In the parable of the talents, what does the master condemn? (25:24–30)
A Burying the talent out of fear
The servant who buried his talent is called wicked and slothful (25:26) — faithfulness uses what is given.
- 3** In the sheep and goats, what does the King say about what was done to “the least of these my brothers”? (25:40)
C It was done to Him
“you did it to me” — the King counts it as done to Him.
- 4** What is the point of the ten virgins parable? (25:1–13)
Stay ready — be prepared for the bridegroom’s coming, for you don’t know the day or the hour (25:13).
- 5** What does Jesus say will not pass away? (24:35)
“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”
- 6** Memory verse
Matthew 25:40, printed on page 33.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 8 OF 8

Cross, Resurrection, Commission

Matthew 26–28 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 37–40 · memory verse Matthew 28:19–20

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “What’s one thing from these eight sessions you don’t want to forget?” Let the whole group answer; it’s the last session.

WATCH FOR

1. Rushing the cross to get to the resurrection. Read Matthew’s account slowly; let the first discussion question (“what stands out”) take real time.
2. The Great Commission landing as pressure. Read it with its promise — “I am with you always” — which echoes “God with us” in 1:23.
3. Matthew 26–27 includes the arrest, the flogging and crucifixion, and Judas’ death (27:3–5). Tell the group before reading and let anyone listen without following along. If anyone seems distressed or mentions harming themselves, speak with them privately and help them reach a pastor or counselor, or call or text 988 in the U.S. Do not use Judas’ end as a lesson about suicide or about where anyone who has died by suicide stands before God. Someone here may have lost a person that way.
4. Matthew 27:25. The people answer, “May his blood be on us, and on our children!” This verse has been used for centuries to blame Jewish people, with terrible results. Jesus, His disciples and the crowds around Him are Jewish, and the Roman governor orders the crucifixion (27:26). Read it as one crowd’s words in one scene, not a verdict on the Jewish people, and do not let it become a charge against any people today.

PUSH TOWARD

The reflection question — who is one person you can help follow Jesus — is the whole study’s send-off. The “one thing”: share, invite, or encourage one person this week. When the first reflection question comes up, let Matthew speak first: the Son of Man came “to give his life as a ransom for many” (20:28), and His blood is “poured out for many for the remission of sins” (26:28). Christians explain how this works in different ways, and the study stays with what Matthew says. No one has to settle a theory to say what these words mean to them. Close by praying for each name.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 122.

5	15	10	10	20
Open	The cross	The resurrection	The Commission	What we carry from Matthew, and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 What stands out in Matthew's account of the cross? PERSONAL

There is no single right answer. Matthew shows Jesus praying in Gethsemane, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me" (26:39), and then going on to the cross. He answers nothing to the accusations of the chief priests and elders (27:12–14), and the sign over His head reads "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS" (27:37). When He dies, the centurion and those with him say, "Truly this was the Son of God" (27:54). Let people name whatever held their attention, and no one needs to explain the choice.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Which verse in 26:36–46 or 27:27–54 held your attention, and what does it show about Jesus?

2 How does the resurrection change everything for the disciples — and for us?

At His arrest, "all the disciples left him and fled" (26:56). At the tomb the angel says, "He is not here, for he has risen, just like he said" (28:6). The women, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (28:1), "departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy" (28:8). As they go to tell the disciples, Jesus meets them and they "took hold of his feet, and worshiped him" (28:9). On the mountain in Galilee the eleven "bowed down to him, but some doubted" (28:17), and Jesus came to them and spoke (28:18). His promise of presence runs "even to the end of the age" (28:20), and the group can hear that as reaching them too. The disciples who fled in 26:56 are now worshiping and being sent.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Who leaves the tomb with fear and great joy in 28:8, and who doubts in 28:17?

3 What does the Great Commission ask of you, and what promise accompanies it?

PERSONAL

There is no single right answer to what it asks of you personally, and the text gives the frame. The commission rests on Jesus' word, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth" (28:18). Then comes the charge, "Go and make disciples of all nations" (28:19), with baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them "to observe all things that I commanded you" (28:20). Traditions practice and understand baptism in different ways, and the passage places it inside the charge to make disciples. The promise is "Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

IF THE GROUP STALLS In 28:18–20, what does Jesus say before the command, and what does He say after it?

NOTES

Reflection questions

- 1 **What does Jesus' death and resurrection mean for you personally?**
This asks the group to bring the cross and the empty tomb home. Two verses can anchor it: 28:6, where the angel says He has risen, and 27:54, where the centurion speaks. Let people answer in a sentence or two, and do not press anyone to say more than they choose. Let 20:28 and 26:28 carry the answer: His life "a ransom for many," His blood "poured out for many for the remission of sins." Receive whatever people say in their own words, and do not require a particular theory of the cross.
- 2 **Who is one person you can help follow Jesus?**
Use 28:19–20 as the frame. Jesus sends the eleven even though some doubted (28:17), so no one needs to feel ready, and He promises to be with them always. Ask for one name, offer to pray for it, and let anyone pass who is not ready to name someone.

ANSWER KEY

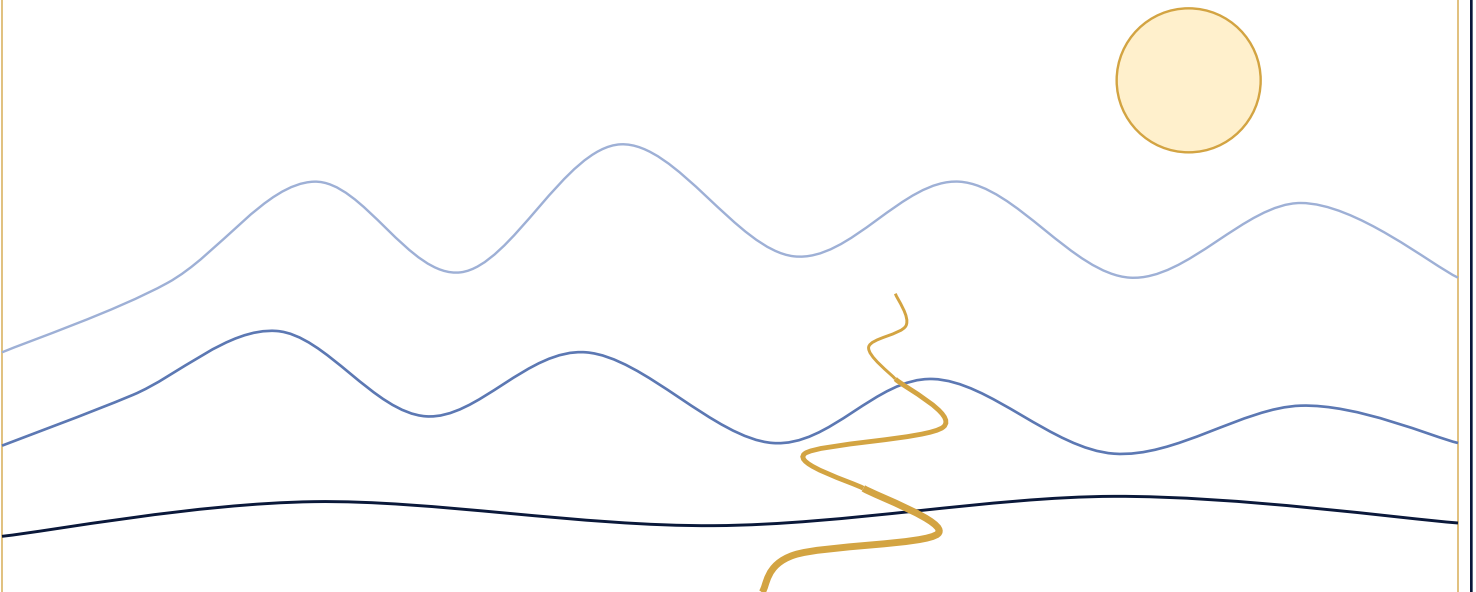
Recall practice

- 1 **In Matthew's account, what does Jesus give as they eat? (26:26–28)**
 B **Bread and a cup: "this is my body"**
 Jesus gave them bread and the cup, saying "this is my body" and "my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins" (26:26–28).
- 2 **In the Great Commission, what authority does the risen Jesus claim? (28:18)**
 D **All authority in heaven and on earth**
 All authority is His — the ground of the command to make disciples of all nations.
- 3 **What does the Great Commission send disciples to do? (28:19–20)**
 Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching — with His presence always.
- 4 **What is Jesus' final promise in Matthew? (28:20)**
 "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" — the promise of 1:23 carried to the last verse.
- 5 **Memory verse**
 Matthew 28:19–20, printed on page 37.

PART FOUR

The Gospel of Matthew

The complete text in the World English Bible, arranged by session.



WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

The Gospel of Matthew

The complete text, arranged by session. Verse numbers are small and raised; each session's reading begins with a tinted heading.

SESSION 1 READING

Matthew 1–4

The King Arrives · session on page 9

MATTHEW 1

The Genealogy and Birth of Jesus

¹The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. ²Abraham became the father of Isaac. Isaac became the father of Jacob. Jacob became the father of Judah and his brothers.

³Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron. Hezron became the father of Ram. ⁴Ram became the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon. Nahshon became the father of Salmon.

⁵Salmon became the father of Boaz by Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed by Ruth. Obed became the father of Jesse. ⁶Jesse became the father of King David. David became the father of Solomon by her who had been Uriah's wife. ⁷Solomon became the father of Rehoboam. Rehoboam became the father of Abijah. Abijah became the father of Asa. ⁸Asa became the father of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat became the father of Joram. Joram became the father of Uzziah.

⁹Uzziah became the father of Jotham. Jotham became the father of Ahaz. Ahaz became the father of Hezekiah. ¹⁰Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh. Manasseh became the father of Amon. Amon became the father of Josiah. ¹¹Josiah became the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the exile to Babylon. ¹²After the exile to Babylon, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel. Shealtiel became the father of Zerubbabel. ¹³Zerubbabel became the father of Abiud. Abiud became the father of Eliakim. Eliakim became the father of Azor. ¹⁴Azor

became the father of Zadok. Zadok became the father of Achim. Achim became the father of Eliud.

¹⁵Eliud became the father of Eleazar. Eleazar became the father of Matthan. Matthan became the father of Jacob. ¹⁶Jacob became the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, from whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. ¹⁷So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the exile to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the carrying away to Babylon to the Christ, fourteen generations.

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ was like this: After his mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, before they came together, she was found pregnant by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, intended to put her away secretly. ²⁰But when he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take to yourself Mary, your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹She shall give birth to a son. You shall name him Jesus, for it is he who shall save his people from their sins."

²²Now all this has happened that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

²³"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall give birth to a son. They shall call his name Immanuel," which is, being interpreted, "God with us."

²⁴Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took his wife to himself; ²⁵and didn't know her sexually until she had given birth to her firstborn son. He named him Jesus.

MATTHEW 2

The Magi, Egypt, and Nazareth

¹Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, ²“Where is he who is born King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east, and have come to worship him.” ³When King Herod heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he asked them where the Christ would be born. ⁵They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is written through the prophet,

⁶“You Bethlehem, land of Judah,
are in no way least among the princes of Judah:
for out of you shall come a governor,
who shall shepherd my people, Israel.”

⁷Then Herod secretly called the wise men, and learned from them exactly what time the star appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem, and said, “Go and search diligently for the young child. When you have found him, bring me word, so that I also may come and worship him.”

⁹They, having heard the king, went their way; and behold, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, until it came and stood over where the young child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. ¹¹They came into the house and saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Opening their treasures, they offered to him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²Being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country another way.

¹³Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.”

¹⁴He arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt, ¹⁵and was there until the death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

¹⁶Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked by the wise men, was exceedingly angry, and sent out, and killed all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all the surrounding countryside, from two years old and under, according to the exact time which he had learned from the wise men.

¹⁷Then that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, saying,

¹⁸“A voice was heard in Ramah,
lamentation, weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she wouldn't be comforted,
because they are no more.”

¹⁹But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, ²⁰“Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the young child's life are dead.”

²¹He arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in the place of his father, Herod, he was afraid to go there. Being warned in a dream, he withdrew into the region of Galilee, ²³and came and lived in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets that he will be called a Nazarene.

MATTHEW 3

John the Baptist and the Baptism

¹In those days, John the Baptizer came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ²“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” ³For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
make the way of the Lord ready!
Make his paths straight!”

⁴Now John himself wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then people from Jerusalem, all of Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him. ⁶They were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁷But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, "You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

⁸Therefore produce fruit worthy of repentance!

⁹Don't think to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I tell you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

¹⁰"Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down, and cast into the fire. ¹¹I indeed baptize you in water for repentance, but he who comes after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor. He will gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire."

¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴But John would have hindered him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?"

¹⁵But Jesus, answering, said to him, "Allow it now, for this is the fitting way for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him. ¹⁶Jesus, when he was baptized, went up directly from the water: and behold, the heavens were opened to him. He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming on him. ¹⁷Behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

MATTHEW 4

Temptation and the First Disciples

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry afterward. ³The tempter came and said to him, "If

you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

⁴But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of God's mouth.'"

⁵Then the devil took him into the holy city. He set him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and,

*'On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you don't dash your foot against a stone.'*"

⁷Jesus said to him, "Again, it is written, 'You shall not test the Lord, your God.'"

⁸Again, the devil took him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory. ⁹He said to him, "I will give you all of these things, if you will fall down and worship me."

¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "Get behind me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only.'"

¹¹Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and served him. ¹²Now when Jesus heard that John was delivered up, he withdrew into Galilee. ¹³Leaving Nazareth, he came and lived in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

*¹⁵"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
toward the sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles,*

*¹⁶the people who sat in darkness saw a great light,
to those who sat in the region and shadow of death,
to them light has dawned."*

¹⁷From that time, Jesus began to preach, and to say, "Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

¹⁸Walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers: Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁹He said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers for men."

²⁰They immediately left their nets and followed him. ²¹Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them. ²²They immediately left the boat and their father, and followed him.

²³Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News of the

Kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people. ²⁴The report about him went out into all Syria. They brought to him all who were sick, afflicted with various diseases and torments, possessed with demons, epileptics, and paralytics; and he healed them. ²⁵Great multitudes from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and from beyond the Jordan followed him.

SESSION 2 READING

Matthew 5–7 The Sermon on the Mount · session on page 13**MATTHEW 5**

The Beatitudes and the Higher Righteousness

¹Seeing the multitudes, he went up onto the mountain. When he had sat down, his disciples came to him. ²He opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

³*“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

⁴*Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.*

⁵*Blessed are the gentle,
for they shall inherit the earth.*

⁶*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after
righteousness,
for they shall be filled.*

⁷*Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy.*

⁸*Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God.*

⁹*Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God.*

¹⁰*Blessed are those who have been persecuted for
righteousness’ sake,
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

¹¹“Blessed are you when people reproach you, persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, for my sake. ¹²Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For that is

how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

¹³“You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its flavor, with what will it be salted? It is then good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under the feet of men. ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill can’t be hidden.

¹⁵Neither do you light a lamp, and put it under a measuring basket, but on a stand; and it shines to all who are in the house. ¹⁶Even so, let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

¹⁷“Don’t think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I didn’t come to destroy, but to fulfill. ¹⁸For most certainly, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not even one smallest letter or one tiny pen stroke shall in any way pass away from the law, until all things are accomplished. ¹⁹Whoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and teach others to do so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall do and teach them shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. ²⁰For I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way you will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

²¹“You have heard that it was said to the ancient ones, ‘You shall not murder;’ and ‘Whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ ²²But I tell you that everyone who is angry with his brother without a

cause will be in danger of the judgment. Whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ will be in danger of the council. Whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of Gehenna.

²³“If therefore you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are with him on the way; lest perhaps the prosecutor deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be cast into prison. ²⁶Most certainly I tell you, you shall by no means get out of there, until you have paid the last penny.

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery;’ ²⁸but I tell you that everyone who gazes at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you. For it is more profitable for you that one of your members should perish, than for your whole body to be cast into Gehenna. ³⁰If your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off, and throw it away from you. For it is more profitable for you that one of your members should perish, than for your whole body to be cast into Gehenna.

³¹“It was also said, ‘Whoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce,’ ³²but I tell you that whoever puts away his wife, except for the cause of sexual immorality, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries her when she is put away commits adultery.

³³“Again you have heard that it was said to the ancient ones, ‘You shall not make false vows, but shall perform to the Lord your vows,’ ³⁴but I tell you, don’t swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; ³⁵nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶Neither shall you swear by your head, for you can’t make one hair white or black. ³⁷But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’ Whatever is more than these is of the evil one.

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹But I tell you, don’t resist him who is evil; but whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰If anyone sues you to take away your coat, let him have your cloak also. ⁴¹Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴²Give to him who asks you, and don’t turn away him who desires to borrow from you.

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷If you only greet your friends, what more do you do than others? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁸Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

MATTHEW 6

Giving, Prayer, and Treasure in Heaven

¹“Be careful that you don’t do your charitable giving before men, to be seen by them, or else you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

²Therefore when you do merciful deeds, don’t sound a trumpet before yourself, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may get glory from men. Most certainly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you do merciful deeds, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand does, ⁴so that your merciful deeds may be in secret, then your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

⁵“When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Most certainly, I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut

your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. ⁷In praying, don't use vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking. ⁸Therefore don't be like them, for your Father knows what things you need, before you ask him. ⁹Pray like this: 'Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. ¹⁰Let your Kingdom come. Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us today our daily bread. ¹²Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. ¹³Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.'

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

The closing line of the Lord's Prayer — "For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen." — is not in the earliest manuscripts. It is an ancient and beloved addition, kept here as in many Bibles, with this note.

¹⁴"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you don't forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

¹⁶"Moreover when you fast, don't be like the hypocrites, with sad faces. For they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen by men to be fasting. Most certainly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face; ¹⁸so that you are not seen by men to be fasting, but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

¹⁹"Don't lay up treasures for yourselves on the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal; ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves don't break through and steal; ²¹for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²²"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be

full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

²⁴"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can't serve both God and Mammon. ²⁵Therefore I tell you, don't be anxious for your life: what you will eat, or what you will drink; nor yet for your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶See the birds of the sky, that they don't sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. Your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you of much more value than they?

²⁷"Which of you, by being anxious, can add one moment to his lifespan? ²⁸Why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don't toil, neither do they spin, ²⁹yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today exists, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, won't he much more clothe you, you of little faith?

³¹"Therefore don't be anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?', 'What will we drink?' or, 'With what will we be clothed?' ³²For the Gentiles seek after all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But seek first God's Kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore don't be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day's own evil is sufficient.

MATTHEW 7

Judging, Asking, and the Two Foundations

¹"Don't judge, so that you won't be judged. ²For with whatever judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with whatever measure you measure, it will be measured to you. ³Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but don't consider the beam that is in your own eye? ⁴Or how will you tell your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye;' and behold, the beam is in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite! First remove the beam out of your own

eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye.

⁶“Don't give that which is holy to the dogs, neither throw your pearls before the pigs, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

⁷“Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or who is there among you, who, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, who will give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! ¹²Therefore whatever you desire for men to do to you, you shall also do to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

¹³“Enter in by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter in by it. ¹⁴How narrow is the gate, and restricted is the way that leads to life! Few are those who find it.

¹⁵“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. ¹⁶By their fruits you will know them. Do you gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Even so,

every good tree produces good fruit; but the corrupt tree produces evil fruit. ¹⁸A good tree can't produce evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that doesn't grow good fruit is cut down, and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Therefore by their fruits you will know them. ²¹Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²²Many will tell me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many mighty works?’ ²³Then I will tell them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you who work iniquity.’

²⁴“Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house on a rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it didn't fall, for it was founded on the rock. ²⁶Everyone who hears these words of mine, and doesn't do them will be like a foolish man, who built his house on the sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

²⁸When Jesus had finished saying these things, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹for he taught them with authority, and not like the scribes.

SESSION 3 READING

Matthew 8–10 Authority and Mission · session on page 17

MATTHEW 8

Healings and the Cost of Following

¹When he came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. ²Behold, a leper came to him and worshiped him, saying, “Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean.”

³Jesus stretched out his hand, and touched him, saying, “I want to. Be made clean.” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. ⁴Jesus said to him, “See that you tell nobody, but go, show yourself to the priest,

and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

⁵When he came into Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking him, ⁶and saying, “Lord, my servant lies in the house paralyzed, grievously tormented.”

⁷Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.”

⁸The centurion answered, “Lord, I'm not worthy for you to come under my roof. Just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I am also a man under authority, having under myself soldiers. I tell

this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and tell another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and tell my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

¹⁰When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to those who followed, “Most certainly I tell you, I haven’t found so great a faith, not even in Israel. ¹¹I tell you that many will come from the east and the west, and will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, ¹²but the children of the Kingdom will be thrown out into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” ¹³Jesus said to the centurion, “Go your way. Let it be done for you as you have believed.” His servant was healed in that hour.

¹⁴When Jesus came into Peter’s house, he saw his wife’s mother lying sick with a fever. ¹⁵He touched her hand, and the fever left her. She got up and served him. ¹⁶When evening came, they brought to him many possessed with demons. He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick; ¹⁷that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, “He took our infirmities, and bore our diseases.” ¹⁸Now when Jesus saw great multitudes around him, he gave the order to depart to the other side.

¹⁹A scribe came, and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.”

²⁰Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

²¹Another of his disciples said to him, “Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father.”

²²But Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.”

²³When he got into a boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴Behold, a violent storm came up on the sea, so much that the boat was covered with the waves, but he was asleep. ²⁵They came to him, and woke him up, saying, “Save us, Lord! We are dying!”

²⁶He said to them, “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” Then he got up, rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm.

²⁷The men marveled, saying, “What kind of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

²⁸When he came to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, two people possessed by demons met him there, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that nobody could pass that way. ²⁹Behold, they cried out, saying, “What do we have to do with you, Jesus, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?” ³⁰Now there was a herd of many pigs feeding far away from them. ³¹The demons begged him, saying, “If you cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of pigs.”

³²He said to them, “Go!”

They came out, and went into the herd of pigs: and behold, the whole herd of pigs rushed down the cliff into the sea, and died in the water. ³³Those who fed them fled, and went away into the city, and told everything, including what happened to those who were possessed with demons. ³⁴Behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus. When they saw him, they begged that he would depart from their borders.

MATTHEW 9

Authority to Forgive and to Heal

¹He entered into a boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city. ²Behold, they brought to him a man who was paralyzed, lying on a bed. Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, “Son, cheer up! Your sins are forgiven you.”

³Behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man blasphemes.”

⁴Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? ⁵For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven;’ or to say, ‘Get up, and walk?’

⁶But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins—” (then he said to the paralytic), “Get up, and take up your mat, and go to your house.”

⁷He arose and departed to his house. ⁸But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

⁹As Jesus passed by from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax collection office. He said to him, “Follow me.” He got up and followed him.

¹⁰As he sat in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his

disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw it, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

¹²When Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick do. ¹³But you go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

¹⁴Then John’s disciples came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples don’t fast?”

¹⁵Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

¹⁶No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch would tear away from the garment, and a worse hole is made. ¹⁷Neither do people put new wine into old wine skins, or else the skins would burst, and the wine be spilled, and the skins ruined. No, they put new wine into fresh wine skins, and both are preserved.”

¹⁸While he told these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped him, saying, “My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.”

¹⁹Jesus got up and followed him, as did his disciples. ²⁰Behold, a woman who had a discharge of blood for twelve years came behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment; ²¹for she said within herself, “If I just touch his garment, I will be made well.”

²²But Jesus, turning around and seeing her, said, “Daughter, cheer up! Your faith has made you well.” And the woman was made well from that hour.

²³When Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the flute players, and the crowd in noisy disorder, ²⁴he said to them, “Make room, because the girl isn’t dead, but sleeping.”

They were ridiculing him. ²⁵But when the crowd was put out, he entered in, took her by the hand, and the girl arose. ²⁶The report of this went out into all that land.

²⁷As Jesus passed by from there, two blind men followed him, calling out and saying, “Have mercy on us, son of David!”

²⁸When he had come into the house, the blind men came to him. Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

They told him, “Yes, Lord.”

²⁹Then he touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith be it done to you.” ³⁰Their eyes were opened. Jesus strictly commanded them, saying, “See that no one knows about this.” ³¹But they went out and spread abroad his fame in all that land.

³²As they went out, behold, a mute man who was demon possessed was brought to him. ³³When the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke. The multitudes marveled, saying, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!”

³⁴But the Pharisees said, “By the prince of the demons, he casts out demons.”

³⁵Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people. ³⁶But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were harassed and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the laborers are few. ³⁸Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest.”

MATTHEW 10

The Twelve Sent Out

¹He called to himself his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every sickness.

²Now the names of the twelve apostles are these. The first, Simon, who is called Peter; Andrew, his brother; James the son of Zebedee; John, his brother; ³Philip; Bartholomew; Thomas; Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus; Lebbaeus, who was also called Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Zealot; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

⁵Jesus sent these twelve out, and commanded them, saying, “Don’t go among the Gentiles, and don’t enter into any city of the Samaritans. ⁶Rather, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷As you go, preach, saying, ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!’

⁸Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons. Freely you received, so freely give. ⁹Don’t take any gold, silver, or brass in your money belts. ¹⁰Take no bag for your journey, neither two coats, nor sandals, nor staff: for the laborer is worthy of his food. ¹¹Into whatever city or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy; and stay there until you go on. ¹²As you enter into the household, greet it. ¹³If the household is worthy, let your peace come on it, but if it isn’t worthy, let your peace return to you.

¹⁴Whoever doesn’t receive you, nor hear your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. ¹⁵Most certainly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

¹⁶“Behold, I send you out as sheep among wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. ¹⁷But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you. ¹⁸Yes, and you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the nations. ¹⁹But when they deliver you up, don’t be anxious how or what you will say, for it will be given you in that hour what you will say. ²⁰For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

²¹“Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child. Children will rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. ²²You will be hated by all men for my name’s sake, but he who endures to the end will be saved. ²³But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next, for most certainly I tell you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man has come.

²⁴“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his lord. ²⁵It is enough for the disciple that he

be like his teacher, and the servant like his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household! ²⁶Therefore don’t be afraid of them, for there is nothing covered that will not be revealed; and hidden that will not be known. ²⁷What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in the ear, proclaim on the housetops. ²⁸Don’t be afraid of those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.

²⁹“Aren’t two sparrows sold for an assarion coin? Not one of them falls on the ground apart from your Father’s will, ³⁰but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹Therefore don’t be afraid. You are of more value than many sparrows. ³²Everyone therefore who confesses me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. ³³But whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven.

³⁴“Don’t think that I came to send peace on the earth. I didn’t come to send peace, but a sword. ³⁵For I came to set a man at odds against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶A man’s foes will be those of his own household. ³⁷He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me isn’t worthy of me. ³⁸He who doesn’t take his cross and follow after me, isn’t worthy of me. ³⁹He who seeks his life will lose it; and he who loses his life for my sake will find it. ⁴⁰He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. ⁴¹He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward. He who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive a righteous man’s reward.

⁴²Whoever gives one of these little ones just a cup of cold water to drink in the name of a disciple, most certainly I tell you he will in no way lose his reward.”

SESSION 4 READING

Matthew 11–13 Parables of the Kingdom · session on page 21**MATTHEW 11**

John's Question and Jesus' Invitation

¹When Jesus had finished directing his twelve disciples, he departed from there to teach and preach in their cities. ²Now when John heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples ³and said to him, "Are you he who comes, or should we look for another?"

⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶Blessed is he who finds no occasion for stumbling in me."

⁷As these went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸But what did you go out to see? A man in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. ⁹But why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet. ¹⁰For this is he, of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.' ¹¹Most certainly I tell you, among those who are born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptizer; yet he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. ¹²From the days of John the Baptizer until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. ¹³For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. ¹⁴If you are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, who is to come. ¹⁵He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

¹⁶"But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces, who call to their companions ¹⁷and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you didn't dance. We mourned for you, and you didn't lament.' ¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' ¹⁹The Son of

Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children."

²⁰Then he began to denounce the cities in which most of his mighty works had been done, because they didn't repent. ²¹"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. ²³You, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, you will go down to Hades. For if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in you, it would have remained until today. ²⁴But I tell you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, on the day of judgment, than for you."

²⁵At that time, Jesus answered, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you hid these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to infants. ²⁶Yes, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in your sight. ²⁷All things have been delivered to me by my Father. No one knows the Son, except the Father; neither does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and he to whom the Son desires to reveal him.

²⁸"Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

MATTHEW 12

Lord of the Sabbath

¹At that time, Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the grain fields. His disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ²But the Pharisees,

when they saw it, said to him, “Behold, your disciples do what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.”

³But he said to them, “Haven’t you read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him; ⁴how he entered into God’s house, and ate the show bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for those who were with him, but only for the priests? ⁵Or have you not read in the law, that on the Sabbath day, the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless? ⁶But I tell you that one greater than the temple is here. ⁷But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ you wouldn’t have condemned the guiltless. ⁸For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

⁹He departed from there, and went into their synagogue. ¹⁰And behold there was a man with a withered hand. They asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?” that they might accuse him.

¹¹He said to them, “What man is there among you, who has one sheep, and if this one falls into a pit on the Sabbath day, won’t he grab on to it, and lift it out? ¹²Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day.” ¹³Then he told the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out; and it was restored whole, just like the other. ¹⁴But the Pharisees went out, and conspired against him, how they might destroy him. ¹⁵Jesus, perceiving that, withdrew from there. Great multitudes followed him; and he healed them all, ¹⁶and commanded them that they should not make him known: ¹⁷that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

¹⁸“Behold, my servant whom I have chosen;
my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased:
I will put my Spirit on him.

He will proclaim justice to the nations.

¹⁹He will not strive, nor shout;
neither will anyone hear his voice in the streets.

²⁰He won’t break a bruised reed.

He won’t quench a smoking flax,
until he leads justice to victory.

²¹In his name, the nations will hope.”

²²Then one possessed by a demon, blind and mute, was brought to him and he healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. ²³All the multitudes were amazed, and said, “Can this be the son of David?” ²⁴But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “This man does not cast out demons, except by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons.”

²⁵Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. ²⁸But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then God’s Kingdom has come upon you.

²⁹Or how can one enter into the house of the strong man, and plunder his goods, unless he first bind the strong man? Then he will plunder his house.

³⁰“He who is not with me is against me, and he who doesn’t gather with me, scatters. ³¹Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. ³²Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in that which is to come.

³³“Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴You offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

³⁵The good man out of his good treasure brings out good things, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings out evil things. ³⁶I tell you that every idle word that men speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. ³⁷For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

³⁸Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.”

³⁹But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet. ⁴⁰For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of

the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹The men of Nineveh will stand up in the judgment with this generation, and will condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, someone greater than Jonah is here. ⁴²The Queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation, and will condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, someone greater than Solomon is here.

⁴³When an unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and doesn't find it. ⁴⁴Then he says, 'I will return into my house from which I came out,' and when he has come back, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵Then he goes, and takes with himself seven other spirits more evil than he is, and they enter in and dwell there. The last state of that man becomes worse than the first. Even so will it be also to this evil generation."

⁴⁶While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, seeking to speak to him. ⁴⁷One said to him, "Behold, your mother and your brothers stand outside, seeking to speak to you."

⁴⁸But he answered him who spoke to him, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹He stretched out his hand toward his disciples, and said, "Behold, my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰For whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother."

MATTHEW 13

The Parables of the Kingdom

¹On that day Jesus went out of the house, and sat by the seaside. ²Great multitudes gathered to him, so that he entered into a boat, and sat, and all the multitude stood on the beach. ³He spoke to them many things in parables, saying, "Behold, a farmer went out to sow. ⁴As he sowed, some seeds fell by the roadside, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵Others fell on rocky ground, where they didn't have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of earth. ⁶When the sun had risen,

they were scorched. Because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Others fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Others fell on good soil, and yielded fruit: some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty. ⁹He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

¹⁰The disciples came, and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"

¹¹He answered them, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but it is not given to them. ¹²For whoever has, to him will be given, and he will have abundance, but whoever doesn't have, from him will be taken away even that which he has. ¹³Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they don't see, and hearing, they don't hear, neither do they understand. ¹⁴In them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says,

*'By hearing you will hear,
and will in no way understand;
Seeing you will see,
and will in no way perceive:*

*¹⁵for this people's heart has grown callous,
their ears are dull of hearing,
they have closed their eyes;
or else perhaps they might perceive with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their heart,
and would turn again;
and I would heal them.'*

¹⁶"But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷For most certainly I tell you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which you see, and didn't see them; and to hear the things which you hear, and didn't hear them.

¹⁸"Hear, then, the parable of the farmer. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the Kingdom, and doesn't understand it, the evil one comes, and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown by the roadside. ²⁰What was sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word, and immediately with joy receives it; ²¹yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while. When oppression or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. ²²What was sown among

the thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of this age and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. ²³What was sown on the good ground, this is he who hears the word, and understands it, who most certainly bears fruit, and produces, some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty.”

²⁴He set another parable before them, saying, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵but while people slept, his enemy came and sowed darnel weeds also among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶But when the blade sprang up and produced fruit, then the darnel weeds appeared also. ²⁷The servants of the householder came and said to him, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where did these darnel weeds come from?’

²⁸“He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and gather them up?’

²⁹“But he said, ‘No, lest perhaps while you gather up the darnel weeds, you root up the wheat with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the harvest time I will tell the reapers, “First, gather up the darnel weeds, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.” ’ ”

³¹He set another parable before them, saying, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; ³²which indeed is smaller than all seeds. But when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches.”

³³He spoke another parable to them. “The Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, until it was all leavened.”

³⁴Jesus spoke all these things in parables to the multitudes; and without a parable, he didn’t speak to them, ³⁵that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying,

*“I will open my mouth in parables;
I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.”*

³⁶Then Jesus sent the multitudes away, and went into the house. His disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the darnel weeds of the field.”

³⁷He answered them, “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, ³⁸the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the children of the Kingdom; and the darnel weeds are the children of the evil one.

³⁹The enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰As therefore the darnel weeds are gathered up and burned with fire; so will it be at the end of this age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will gather out of his Kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and those who do iniquity, ⁴²and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

⁴⁴“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in the field, which a man found, and hid. In his joy, he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.

⁴⁵“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who is a merchant seeking fine pearls, ⁴⁶who having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

⁴⁷“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a dragnet, that was cast into the sea, and gathered some fish of every kind, ⁴⁸which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach. They sat down, and gathered the good into containers, but the bad they threw away. ⁴⁹So will it be in the end of the world. The angels will come and separate the wicked from among the righteous, ⁵⁰and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.” ⁵¹Jesus said to them, “Have you understood all these things?”

They answered him, “Yes, Lord.”

⁵²He said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been made a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who is a householder, who brings out of his treasure new and old things.”

⁵³When Jesus had finished these parables, he departed from there. ⁵⁴Coming into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom, and these mighty works? ⁵⁵Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother called Mary, and his brothers, James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? ⁵⁶Aren’t all

of his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all of these things?” ⁵⁷They were offended by him.

But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and in his own house.” ⁵⁸He didn’t do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

SESSION 5 READING

Matthew 14–18 The King and His Church · session on page 25**MATTHEW 14**

John’s Death; Feeding and Walking on Water

¹At that time, Herod the tetrarch heard the report concerning Jesus, ²and said to his servants, “This is John the Baptizer. He is risen from the dead. That is why these powers work in him.” ³For Herod had arrested John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife. ⁴For John said to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.” ⁵When he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. ⁶But when Herod’s birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced among them and pleased Herod. ⁷Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatever she should ask. ⁸She, being prompted by her mother, said, “Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptizer.”

⁹The king was grieved, but for the sake of his oaths, and of those who sat at the table with him, he commanded it to be given, ¹⁰and he sent and beheaded John in the prison. ¹¹His head was brought on a platter, and given to the young lady; and she brought it to her mother. ¹²His disciples came, and took the body, and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus. ¹³Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat, to a deserted place apart. When the multitudes heard it, they followed him on foot from the cities.

¹⁴Jesus went out, and he saw a great multitude. He had compassion on them, and healed their sick.

¹⁵When evening had come, his disciples came to him,

saying, “This place is deserted, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food.”

¹⁶But Jesus said to them, “They don’t need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

¹⁷They told him, “We only have here five loaves and two fish.”

¹⁸He said, “Bring them here to me.” ¹⁹He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, broke and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples gave to the multitudes. ²⁰They all ate, and were filled. They took up twelve baskets full of that which remained left over from the broken pieces. ²¹Those who ate were about five thousand men, in addition to women and children.

²²Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat, and to go ahead of him to the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. ²³After he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain by himself to pray. When evening had come, he was there alone. ²⁴But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, distressed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. ²⁵In the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came to them, walking on the sea.

²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It’s a ghost!” and they cried out for fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Cheer up! It is I! Don’t be afraid.”

²⁸Peter answered him and said, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the waters.”

²⁹He said, “Come!”

Peter stepped down from the boat, and walked on the waters to come to Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw that the wind was strong, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!”

³¹Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand, took hold of him, and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³²When they got up into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³Those who were in the boat came and worshiped him, saying, “You are truly the Son of God!”

³⁴When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. ³⁵When the people of that place recognized him, they sent into all that surrounding region, and brought to him all who were sick; ³⁶and they begged him that they might just touch the fringe of his garment. As many as touched it were made whole.

MATTHEW 15

Tradition, Faith, and Compassion

¹Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, ²“Why do your disciples disobey the tradition of the elders? For they don’t wash their hands when they eat bread.”

³He answered them, “Why do you also disobey the commandment of God because of your tradition?”

⁴For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.’ ⁵But you say, ‘Whoever may tell his father or his mother, “Whatever help you might otherwise have gotten from me is a gift devoted to God,” ⁶he shall not honor his father or mother.’ You have made the commandment of God void because of your tradition. ⁷You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,

⁸*“These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.*

⁹*And in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrine rules made by men.”*

¹⁰He summoned the multitude, and said to them, “Hear, and understand. ¹¹That which enters into the mouth doesn’t defile the man; but that which proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.”

¹²Then the disciples came, and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”

¹³But he answered, “Every plant which my heavenly Father didn’t plant will be uprooted. ¹⁴Leave them alone. They are blind guides of the blind. If the blind guide the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

¹⁵Peter answered him, “Explain the parable to us.”

¹⁶So Jesus said, “Do you also still not understand? ¹⁷Don’t you understand that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the belly, and then out of the body? ¹⁸But the things which proceed out of the mouth come out of the heart, and they defile the man. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual sins, thefts, false testimony, and blasphemies. ²⁰These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands doesn’t defile the man.”

²¹Jesus went out from there, and withdrew into the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²²Behold, a Canaanite woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, “Have mercy on me, Lord, you son of David! My daughter is severely possessed by a demon!”

²³But he answered her not a word.

His disciples came and begged him, saying, “Send her away; for she cries after us.”

²⁴But he answered, “I wasn’t sent to anyone but the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

²⁵But she came and worshiped him, saying, “Lord, help me.”

²⁶But he answered, “It is not appropriate to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”

²⁷But she said, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

²⁸Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Be it done to you even as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that hour.

²⁹Jesus departed from there, and came near to the sea of Galilee; and he went up into the mountain, and sat there. ³⁰Great multitudes came to him, having

with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others, and they put them down at his feet. He healed them, ³¹so that the multitude wondered when they saw the mute speaking, the injured healed, the lame walking, and the blind seeing—and they glorified the God of Israel.

³²Jesus summoned his disciples and said, “I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat. I don’t want to send them away fasting, or they might faint on the way.”

³³The disciples said to him, “Where should we get so many loaves in a deserted place as to satisfy so great a multitude?”

³⁴Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?”

They said, “Seven, and a few small fish.”

³⁵He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground; ³⁶and he took the seven loaves and the fish. He gave thanks and broke them, and gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. ³⁷They all ate, and were filled. They took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces that were left over. ³⁸Those who ate were four thousand men, in addition to women and children. ³⁹Then he sent away the multitudes, got into the boat, and came into the borders of Magdala.

MATTHEW 16

Peter’s Confession and the Cross Foretold

¹The Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing him, asked him to show them a sign from heaven. ²But he answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ ³In the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Hypocrites! You know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but you can’t discern the signs of the times! ⁴An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and there will be no sign given to it, except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”

He left them, and departed. ⁵The disciples came to the other side and had forgotten to take bread.

⁶Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

⁷They reasoned among themselves, saying, “We brought no bread.”

⁸Jesus, perceiving it, said, “Why do you reason among yourselves, you of little faith, ‘because you have brought no bread?’ ⁹Don’t you yet perceive, neither remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up? ¹⁰Nor the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up? ¹¹How is it that you don’t perceive that I didn’t speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

¹²Then they understood that he didn’t tell them to beware of the yeast of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

¹³Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”

¹⁴They said, “Some say John the Baptizer, some, Elijah, and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”

¹⁵He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

¹⁶Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸I also tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my assembly, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven; and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven.” ²⁰Then he commanded the disciples that they should tell no one that he was Jesus the Christ. ²¹From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.

²²Peter took him aside, and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This will never be done to you.”

²³But he turned, and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.” ²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ²⁵For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever will lose his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his life? ²⁷For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will render to everyone according to his deeds. ²⁸Most certainly I tell you, there are some standing here who will in no way taste of death, until they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom.”

MATTHEW 17

The Transfiguration

¹After six days, Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them up into a high mountain by themselves. ²He was changed before them. His face shone like the sun, and his garments became as white as the light. ³Behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them talking with him.

⁴Peter answered, and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you want, let’s make three tents here: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

⁵While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. Behold, a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him.”

⁶When the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were very afraid. ⁷Jesus came and touched them and said, “Get up, and don’t be afraid.” ⁸Lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, except Jesus alone.

⁹As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Don’t tell anyone what you saw, until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.”

¹⁰His disciples asked him, saying, “Then why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”

¹¹Jesus answered them, “Elijah indeed comes first, and will restore all things, ¹²but I tell you that Elijah has come already, and they didn’t recognize him, but did to him whatever they wanted to. Even so the Son of Man will also suffer by them.” ¹³Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptizer.

¹⁴When they came to the multitude, a man came to him, kneeling down to him, and saying, ¹⁵“Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is epileptic, and suffers grievously; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water. ¹⁶So I brought him to your disciples, and they could not cure him.”

¹⁷Jesus answered, “Faithless and perverse generation! How long will I be with you? How long will I bear with you? Bring him here to me.” ¹⁸Jesus rebuked him, the demon went out of him, and the boy was cured from that hour.

¹⁹Then the disciples came to Jesus privately, and said, “Why weren’t we able to cast it out?”

²⁰He said to them, “Because of your unbelief. For most certainly I tell you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. ²¹But this kind doesn’t go out except by prayer and fasting.”

²²While they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be delivered up into the hands of men, ²³and they will kill him, and the third day he will be raised up.”

They were exceedingly sorry.

²⁴When they had come to Capernaum, those who collected the didrachma coins came to Peter, and said, “Doesn’t your teacher pay the didrachma?” ²⁵He said, “Yes.”

When he came into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive toll or tribute? From their children, or from strangers?”

²⁶Peter said to him, “From strangers.”

Jesus said to him, “Therefore the children are exempt. ²⁷But, lest we cause them to stumble, go to the sea, cast a hook, and take up the first fish that comes up. When you have opened its mouth, you will

find a stater coin. Take that, and give it to them for me and you.”

MATTHEW 18

Life in the Community of the King

¹In that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?”

²Jesus called a little child to himself, and set him in the middle of them, ³and said, “Most certainly I tell you, unless you turn, and become as little children, you will in no way enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

⁴Whoever therefore humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

⁵Whoever receives one such little child in my name receives me, ⁶but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him if a huge millstone were hung around his neck, and that he were sunk in the depths of the sea.

⁷“Woe to the world because of occasions of stumbling! For it must be that the occasions come, but woe to that person through whom the occasion comes! ⁸If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life maimed or crippled, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. ⁹If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire. ¹⁰See that you don’t despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

Some manuscripts add a verse 11, “For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.” The earliest manuscripts do not include it here; the same truth is stated plainly in Luke 19:10. Most modern Bibles omit it or place it in a note; the WEB keeps it, as here.

¹¹For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.

¹²“What do you think? If a man has one hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine, go to the mountains, and seek that

which has gone astray? ¹³If he finds it, most certainly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. ¹⁴Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

¹⁵“If your brother sins against you, go, show him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained back your brother. ¹⁶But if he doesn’t listen, take one or two more with you, that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the assembly. If he refuses to hear the assembly also, let him be to you as a Gentile or a tax collector. ¹⁸Most certainly I tell you, whatever things you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever things you release on earth will have been released in heaven. ¹⁹Again, assuredly I tell you, that if two of you will agree on earth concerning anything that they will ask, it will be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the middle of them.”

²¹Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times?”

²²Jesus said to him, “I don’t tell you until seven times, but, until seventy times seven. ²³Therefore the Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king, who wanted to reconcile accounts with his servants. ²⁴When he had begun to reconcile, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵But because he couldn’t pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, with his wife, his children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶The servant therefore fell down and knelt before him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will repay you all!’ ²⁷The lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

²⁸“But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, who owed him one hundred denarii, and he grabbed him, and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’

²⁹“So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I

will repay you!’ ³⁰He would not, but went and cast him into prison, until he should pay back that which was due. ³¹So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were exceedingly sorry, and came and told their lord all that was done. ³²Then his lord called him in, and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt, because you begged me.

³³Shouldn’t you also have had mercy on your fellow servant, even as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴His lord was angry, and delivered him to the tormentors, until he should pay all that was due to him. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to you, if you don’t each forgive your brother from your hearts for his misdeeds.”

SESSION 6 READING

Matthew 19–22 On the Road to Jerusalem · session on page 29**MATTHEW 19**

Marriage, Children, and Riches

¹When Jesus had finished these words, he departed from Galilee, and came into the borders of Judea beyond the Jordan. ²Great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there. ³Pharisees came to him, testing him, and saying, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?”

⁴He answered, “Haven’t you read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵and said, ‘For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh?’ ⁶So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, don’t let man tear apart.”

⁷They asked him, “Why then did Moses command us to give her a certificate of divorce, and divorce her?”

⁸He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it has not been so. ⁹I tell you that whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and he who marries her when she is divorced commits adultery.”

¹⁰His disciples said to him, “If this is the case of the man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry.”

¹¹But he said to them, “Not all men can receive this saying, but those to whom it is given. ¹²For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb, and there are eunuchs who were made

eunuchs by men; and there are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven’s sake. He who is able to receive it, let him receive it.”

¹³Then little children were brought to him, that he should lay his hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴But Jesus said, “Allow the little children, and don’t forbid them to come to me; for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to ones like these.” ¹⁵He laid his hands on them, and departed from there.

¹⁶Behold, one came to him and said, “Good teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”

¹⁷He said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but one, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

¹⁸He said to him, “Which ones?”

Jesus said, “ ‘You shall not murder.’ ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ‘You shall not steal.’ ‘You shall not offer false testimony.’ ¹⁹ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’ And, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”

²⁰The young man said to him, “All these things I have observed from my youth. What do I still lack?”

²¹Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” ²²But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sad, for he was one who had great possessions.

²³Jesus said to his disciples, “Most certainly I say to you, a rich man will enter into the Kingdom of

Heaven with difficulty. ²⁴Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into God's Kingdom."

²⁵When the disciples heard it, they were exceedingly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

²⁶Looking at them, Jesus said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

²⁷Then Peter answered, "Behold, we have left everything, and followed you. What then will we have?"

²⁸Jesus said to them, "Most certainly I tell you that you who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on the throne of his glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹Everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, will receive one hundred times, and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰But many will be last who are first; and first who are last.

MATTHEW 20

Workers, Servanthood, and Sight

¹"For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who was the master of a household, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²When he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³He went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace. ⁴He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went their way. ⁵Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. ⁶About the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle. He said to them, 'Why do you stand here all day idle?'

⁷"They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.'

"He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and you will receive whatever is right.' ⁸When evening had come, the lord of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning from the last to the first.'

⁹"When those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came, they each received a denarius.

¹⁰When the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise each received a denarius. ¹¹When they received it, they murmured against the master of the household, ¹²saying, 'These last have spent one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat!'

¹³"But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Didn't you agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴Take that which is yours, and go your way. It is my desire to give to this last just as much as to you. ¹⁵Isn't it lawful for me to do what I want to with what I own? Or is your eye evil, because I am good?' ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen."

¹⁷As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, ¹⁸"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, ¹⁹and will hand him over to the Gentiles to mock, to scourge, and to crucify; and the third day he will be raised up."

²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, kneeling and asking a certain thing of him. ²¹He said to her, "What do you want?"

She said to him, "Command that these, my two sons, may sit, one on your right hand, and one on your left hand, in your Kingdom."

²²But Jesus answered, "You don't know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

They said to him, "We are able."

²³He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with, but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it is for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

²⁴When the ten heard it, they were indignant with the two brothers.

²⁵But Jesus summoned them, and said, "You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ²⁶It

shall not be so among you, but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.

²⁷Whoever desires to be first among you shall be your bondservant, ²⁸even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

²⁹As they went out from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. ³⁰Behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, you son of David!”

³¹The multitude rebuked them, telling them that they should be quiet, but they cried out even more, “Lord, have mercy on us, you son of David!”

³²Jesus stood still, and called them, and asked, “What do you want me to do for you?”

³³They told him, “Lord, that our eyes may be opened.”

³⁴Jesus, being moved with compassion, touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received their sight, and they followed him.

MATTHEW 21

The Triumphal Entry and the Temple

¹When they came near to Jerusalem, and came to Bethsphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, “Go into the village that is opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them, and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and immediately he will send them.”

⁴All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying,

⁵“Tell the daughter of Zion,
behold, your King comes to you,
humble, and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

⁶The disciples went, and did just as Jesus commanded them, ⁷and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their clothes on them; and he sat on them. ⁸A very great multitude spread their clothes on the road. Others cut branches from the trees, and spread them on the road. ⁹The multitudes who went in front of him, and those who followed, kept

shouting, “Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

¹⁰When he had come into Jerusalem, all the city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” ¹¹The multitudes said, “This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

¹²Jesus entered into the temple of God, and drove out all of those who sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the money changers’ tables and the seats of those who sold the doves. ¹³He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers!”

¹⁴The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children who were crying in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the son of David!” they were indignant, ¹⁶and said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?”

Jesus said to them, “Yes. Did you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing babies you have perfected praise?’ ”

¹⁷He left them, and went out of the city to Bethany, and camped there. ¹⁸Now in the morning, as he returned to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹Seeing a fig tree by the road, he came to it, and found nothing on it but leaves. He said to it, “Let there be no fruit from you forever!”

Immediately the fig tree withered away. ²⁰When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree immediately wither away?”

²¹Jesus answered them, “Most certainly I tell you, if you have faith, and don’t doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you told this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it would be done. ²²All things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

²³When he had come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority do you do these things? Who gave you this authority?”

²⁴Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, which if you tell me, I likewise will tell you

by what authority I do these things. ²⁵The baptism of John, where was it from? From heaven or from men?"

They reasoned with themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' ²⁶But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all hold John as a prophet." ²⁷They answered Jesus, and said, "We don't know."

He also said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁸But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first, and said, 'Son, go work today in my vineyard.' ²⁹He answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind, and went. ³⁰He came to the second, and said the same thing. He answered, 'I'm going, sir,' but he didn't go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?"

They said to him, "The first."

Jesus said to them, "Most certainly I tell you that the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering into God's Kingdom before you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you didn't believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. When you saw it, you didn't even repent afterward, that you might believe him.

³³"Hear another parable. There was a man who was a master of a household, who planted a vineyard, set a hedge about it, dug a wine press in it, built a tower, leased it out to farmers, and went into another country. ³⁴When the season for the fruit came near, he sent his servants to the farmers, to receive his fruit. ³⁵The farmers took his servants, beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they treated them the same way. ³⁷But afterward he sent to them his son, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸But the farmers, when they saw the son, said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and seize his inheritance.' ³⁹So they took him, and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰When therefore the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those farmers?"

⁴¹They told him, "He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will lease out the vineyard to

other farmers, who will give him the fruit in its season."

⁴²Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures,

*'The stone which the builders rejected
was made the head of the corner.*

This was from the Lord.

It is marvelous in our eyes?'

⁴³"Therefore I tell you, God's Kingdom will be taken away from you, and will be given to a nation producing its fruit. ⁴⁴He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but on whomever it will fall, it will scatter him as dust."

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spoke about them. ⁴⁶When they sought to seize him, they feared the multitudes, because they considered him to be a prophet.

MATTHEW 22 Questions and the Greatest Commandment

¹Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying, ²"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king, who made a wedding feast for his son, ³and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come.

⁴Again he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner. My cattle and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding feast!"' ⁵But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise, ⁶and the rest grabbed his servants, and treated them shamefully, and killed them. ⁷When the king heard that, he was angry, and sent his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.

⁸"Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited weren't worthy.

⁹Go therefore to the intersections of the highways, and as many as you may find, invite to the wedding feast.' ¹⁰Those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together as many as they found, both bad and good. The wedding was filled with guests.

¹¹But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw

there a man who didn't have on wedding clothing, ¹²and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here not wearing wedding clothing?' He was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and throw him into the outer darkness. That is where the weeping and grinding of teeth will be.' ¹⁴For many are called, but few chosen."

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went and took counsel how they might entrap him in his talk. ¹⁶They sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are honest, and teach the way of God in truth, no matter whom you teach, for you aren't partial to anyone. ¹⁷Tell us therefore, what do you think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

¹⁸But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test me, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show me the tax money."

They brought to him a denarius.

²⁰He asked them, "Whose is this image and inscription?"

²¹They said to him, "Caesar's."

Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

²²When they heard it, they marveled, and left him, and went away.

²³On that day Sadducees (those who say that there is no resurrection) came to him. They asked him, ²⁴saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up offspring for his brother.' ²⁵Now there were with us seven brothers. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. ²⁶In the same way, the second also, and the third, to the seventh. ²⁷After them all, the woman died. ²⁸In

the resurrection therefore, whose wife will she be of the seven? For they all had her."

²⁹But Jesus answered them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. ³⁰For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like God's angels in heaven. ³¹But concerning the resurrection of the dead, haven't you read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, ³²'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

³³When the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at his teaching. ³⁴But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, gathered themselves together. ³⁵One of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, testing him.

³⁶"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?"

³⁷Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹A second likewise is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."

⁴¹Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, ⁴²saying, "What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?"

They said to him, "Of David."

⁴³He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴*'The Lord said to my Lord,
sit on my right hand,
until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet?'*

⁴⁵"If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?"

⁴⁶No one was able to answer him a word, neither did any man dare ask him any more questions from that day forward.

SESSION 7 READING

Matthew 23–25 The King Returns · session on page 33**MATTHEW 23**

Woes to the Religious Leaders

¹Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, ²saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees sat on Moses’ seat. ³All things therefore whatever they tell you to observe, observe and do, but don’t do their works; for they say, and don’t do. ⁴For they bind heavy burdens that are grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not lift a finger to help them. ⁵But they do all their works to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad, enlarge the fringes of their garments, ⁶and love the place of honor at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, ⁷the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called ‘Rabbi, Rabbi’ by men. ⁸But don’t you be called ‘Rabbi,’ for one is your teacher, the Christ, and all of you are brothers. ⁹Call no man on the earth your father, for one is your Father, he who is in heaven. ¹⁰Neither be called masters, for one is your master, the Christ. ¹¹But he who is greatest among you will be your servant. ¹²Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

¹³“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and as a pretense you make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

¹⁴“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men; for you don’t enter in yourselves, neither do you allow those who are entering in to enter. ¹⁵Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel around by sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as yourselves.

¹⁶“Woe to you, you blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is

obligated.’ ¹⁷You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifies the gold?

¹⁸‘Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obligated?’ ¹⁹You blind fools! For which is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifies the gift? ²⁰He therefore who swears by the altar, swears by it, and by everything on it. ²¹He who swears by the temple, swears by it, and by him who has been living in it. ²²He who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God, and by him who sits on it.

²³“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith. But you ought to have done these, and not to have left the other undone. ²⁴You blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel!

²⁵“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and unrighteousness. ²⁶You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the platter, that its outside may become clean also.

²⁷“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitened tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. ²⁸Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

²⁹“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and decorate the tombs of the righteous, ³⁰and say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we wouldn’t have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’ ³¹Therefore you testify to yourselves that you are children of those who killed the prophets. ³²Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. ³³You serpents, you offspring of vipers, how will you escape the judgment of Gehenna? ³⁴Therefore behold, I

send to you prophets, wise men, and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify; and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city; ³⁵that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah, whom you killed between the sanctuary and the altar. ³⁶Most certainly I tell you, all these things will come upon this generation.

³⁷“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent to her! How often I would have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not! ³⁸Behold, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹For I tell you, you will not see me from now on, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

MATTHEW 24

The End of the Age

¹Jesus went out from the temple, and was going on his way. His disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple. ²But he answered them, “You see all of these things, don’t you? Most certainly I tell you, there will not be left here one stone on another, that will not be thrown down.”

³As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? What is the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?”

⁴Jesus answered them, “Be careful that no one leads you astray. ⁵For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will lead many astray. ⁶You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you aren’t troubled, for all this must happen, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be famines, plagues, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸But all these things are the beginning of birth pains. ⁹Then they will deliver you up to oppression, and will kill you. You will be hated by all of the nations for my name’s sake. ¹⁰Then many will stumble, and will deliver up one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹Many false prophets will arise, and will lead many

astray. ¹²Because iniquity will be multiplied, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But he who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴This Good News of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

¹⁵“When, therefore, you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take out the things that are in his house. ¹⁸Let him who is in the field not return back to get his clothes. ¹⁹But woe to those who are with child and to nursing mothers in those days! ²⁰Pray that your flight will not be in the winter, nor on a Sabbath, ²¹for then there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever will be. ²²Unless those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved. But for the sake of the chosen ones, those days will be shortened.

²³“Then if any man tells you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or, ‘There,’ don’t believe it. ²⁴For there will arise false christs, and false prophets, and they will show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the chosen ones.

²⁵“Behold, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶If therefore they tell you, ‘Behold, he is in the wilderness,’ don’t go out; or ‘Behold, he is in the inner rooms,’ don’t believe it. ²⁷For as the lightning flashes from the east, and is seen even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸For wherever the carcass is, that is where the vultures gather together. ²⁹But immediately after the suffering of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; ³⁰and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. ³¹He will send out his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together his chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

³²“Now from the fig tree learn this parable. When its branch has now become tender, and produces its leaves, you know that the summer is near. ³³Even so you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. ³⁴Most certainly I tell you, this generation will not pass away, until all these things are accomplished. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³⁶But no one knows of that day and hour, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

³⁷“As the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ship, ³⁹and they didn’t know until the flood came, and took them all away, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴²Watch therefore, for you don’t know in what hour your Lord comes. ⁴³But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore also be ready, for in an hour that you don’t expect, the Son of Man will come.

⁴⁵“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has set over his household, to give them their food in due season? ⁴⁶Blessed is that servant whom his lord finds doing so when he comes. ⁴⁷Most certainly I tell you that he will set him over all that he has. ⁴⁸But if that evil servant should say in his heart, ‘My lord is delaying his coming,’ ⁴⁹and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰the lord of that servant will come in a day when he doesn’t expect it, and in an hour when he doesn’t know it, ⁵¹and will cut him in pieces, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. That is where the weeping and grinding of teeth will be.

MATTHEW 25

Readiness and Judgment

¹“Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³Those who were foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵Now while the bridegroom delayed, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Behold! The bridegroom is coming! Come out to meet him!’ ⁷Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹But the wise answered, saying, ‘What if there isn’t enough for us and you? You go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰While they went away to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut. ¹¹Afterward the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’ ¹²But he answered, ‘Most certainly I tell you, I don’t know you.’ ¹³Watch therefore, for you don’t know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

¹⁴“For it is like a man, going into another country, who called his own servants, and entrusted his goods to them. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his own ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶Immediately he who received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. ¹⁷In the same way, he also who got the two gained another two. ¹⁸But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the earth, and hid his lord’s money.

¹⁹“Now after a long time the lord of those servants came, and reconciled accounts with them. ²⁰He who received the five talents came and brought another five talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents. Behold, I have gained another five talents in addition to them.’

²¹“His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few

things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

²²“He also who got the two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents. Behold, I have gained another two talents in addition to them.’

²³“His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

²⁴“He also who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you that you are a hard man, reaping where you didn’t sow, and gathering where you didn’t scatter. ²⁵I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the earth. Behold, you have what is yours.’

²⁶“But his lord answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant. You knew that I reap where I didn’t sow, and gather where I didn’t scatter. ²⁷You ought therefore to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back my own with interest. ²⁸Take away therefore the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹For to everyone who has will be given, and he will have abundance, but from him who doesn’t have, even that which he has will be taken away. ³⁰Throw out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

³¹“But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²Before him all the nations will be gathered, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the

goats. ³³He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴Then the King will tell those on his right hand, ‘Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry, and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in. ³⁶I was naked, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came to me.’

³⁷“Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you; or thirsty, and give you a drink? ³⁸When did we see you as a stranger, and take you in; or naked, and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?’

⁴⁰“The King will answer them, ‘Most certainly I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ ⁴¹Then he will say also to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry, and you didn’t give me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink; ⁴³I was a stranger, and you didn’t take me in; naked, and you didn’t clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.’

⁴⁴“Then they will also answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn’t help you?’

⁴⁵“Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Most certainly I tell you, because you didn’t do it to one of the least of these, you didn’t do it to me.’ ⁴⁶These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

SESSION 8 READING

Matthew 26–28

Cross, Resurrection, Commission · session on page 37

MATTHEW 26

The Last Supper and the Arrest

¹When Jesus had finished all these words, he said to his disciples, ²“You know that after two days the

Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”

³Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas. ⁴They took counsel together that they might take Jesus by

deceit, and kill him. ⁵But they said, “Not during the feast, lest a riot occur among the people.”

⁶Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, ⁷a woman came to him having an alabaster jar of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. ⁸But when his disciples saw this, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? ⁹For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.”

¹⁰However, knowing this, Jesus said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? She has done a good work for me. ¹¹For you always have the poor with you; but you don’t always have me. ¹²For in pouring this ointment on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. ¹³Most certainly I tell you, wherever this Good News is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of as a memorial of her.”

¹⁴Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, ¹⁵and said, “What are you willing to give me, that I should deliver him to you?” They weighed out for him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶From that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

¹⁷Now on the first day of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying to him, “Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?”

¹⁸He said, “Go into the city to a certain person, and tell him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.”’ ”

¹⁹The disciples did as Jesus commanded them, and they prepared the Passover. ²⁰Now when evening had come, he was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples. ²¹As they were eating, he said, “Most certainly I tell you that one of you will betray me.”

²²They were exceedingly sorrowful, and each began to ask him, “It isn’t me, is it, Lord?”

²³He answered, “He who dipped his hand with me in the dish will betray me. ²⁴The Son of Man goes, even as it is written of him, but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had not been born.”

²⁵Judas, who betrayed him, answered, “It isn’t me, is it, Rabbi?”

He said to him, “You said it.”

²⁶As they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks for it, and broke it. He gave to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” ²⁷He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, “All of you drink it, ²⁸for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins. ²⁹But I tell you that I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on, until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s Kingdom.” ³⁰When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

³¹Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of me tonight, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ ³²But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.”

³³But Peter answered him, “Even if all will be made to stumble because of you, I will never be made to stumble.”

³⁴Jesus said to him, “Most certainly I tell you that tonight, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”

³⁵Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you.” All of the disciples also said likewise.

³⁶Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go there and pray.” ³⁷He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and severely troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here, and watch with me.”

³⁹He went forward a little, fell on his face, and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not what I desire, but what you desire.”

⁴⁰He came to the disciples, and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What, couldn’t you watch with me for one hour? ⁴¹Watch and pray, that you don’t enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

⁴²Again, a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cup can’t pass away from me unless I drink it, your desire be done.” ⁴³He came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴He left them again, went away, and prayed a third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵Then he came to his disciples, and said to them, “Sleep on now, and take your rest. Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

⁴⁶Arise, let’s be going. Behold, he who betrays me is at hand.”

⁴⁷While he was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now he who betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, “Whoever I kiss, he is the one. Seize him.” ⁴⁹Immediately he came to Jesus, and said, “Hail, Rabbi!” and kissed him.

⁵⁰Jesus said to him, “Friend, why are you here?” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. ⁵¹Behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high priest, and struck off his ear. ⁵²Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place, for all those who take the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³Or do you think that I couldn’t ask my Father, and he would even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must be so?”

⁵⁵In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, “Have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to seize me? I sat daily in the temple teaching, and you didn’t arrest me. ⁵⁶But all this has happened that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.”

Then all the disciples left him and fled. ⁵⁷Those who had taken Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. ⁵⁸But Peter followed him from a distance, to the court of the high priest, and entered in and sat with the officers, to see the end.

⁵⁹Now the chief priests, the elders, and the whole council sought false testimony against Jesus, that they might put him to death; ⁶⁰and they found none.

Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward, ⁶¹and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.’”

⁶²The high priest stood up, and said to him, “Have you no answer? What is this that these testify against you?” ⁶³But Jesus held his peace. The high priest answered him, “I adjure you by the living God, that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God.”

⁶⁴Jesus said to him, “You have said it. Nevertheless, I tell you, after this you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of the sky.”

⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his clothing, saying, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Behold, now you have heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶What do you think?”

They answered, “He is worthy of death!” ⁶⁷Then they spat in his face and beat him with their fists, and some slapped him, ⁶⁸saying, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who hit you?”

⁶⁹Now Peter was sitting outside in the court, and a maid came to him, saying, “You were also with Jesus, the Galilean!”

⁷⁰But he denied it before them all, saying, “I don’t know what you are talking about.”

⁷¹When he had gone out onto the porch, someone else saw him, and said to those who were there, “This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

⁷²Again he denied it with an oath, “I don’t know the man.”

⁷³After a little while those who stood by came and said to Peter, “Surely you are also one of them, for your speech makes you known.”

⁷⁴Then he began to curse and to swear, “I don’t know the man!”

Immediately the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” Then he went out and wept bitterly.

MATTHEW 27

The Crucifixion

¹Now when morning had come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: ²and they bound him, and led him away, and delivered him up to Pontius Pilate, the governor. ³Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that Jesus was condemned, felt remorse, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, ⁴saying, “I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood.”

But they said, “What is that to us? You see to it.”

⁵He threw down the pieces of silver in the sanctuary, and departed. He went away and hanged himself. ⁶The chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, “It’s not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is the price of blood.” ⁷They took counsel, and bought the potter’s field with them, to bury strangers in. ⁸Therefore that field was called “The Field of Blood” to this day. ⁹Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, saying,

*“They took the thirty pieces of silver,
the price of him upon whom a price had been set,
whom some of the children of Israel priced,
¹⁰and they gave them for the potter’s field,
as the Lord commanded me.”*

¹¹Now Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

Jesus said to him, “So you say.”

¹²When he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. ¹³Then Pilate said to him, “Don’t you hear how many things they testify against you?”

¹⁴He gave him no answer, not even one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.

¹⁵Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release to the multitude one prisoner, whom they desired. ¹⁶They had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. ¹⁷When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus, who is

called Christ?” ¹⁸For he knew that because of envy they had delivered him up.

¹⁹While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of him.”

²⁰Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes to ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. ²¹But the governor answered them, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?”

They said, “Barabbas!”

²²Pilate said to them, “What then shall I do to Jesus, who is called Christ?”

They all said to him, “Let him be crucified!”

²³But the governor said, “Why? What evil has he done?”

But they cried out exceedingly, saying, “Let him be crucified!”

²⁴So when Pilate saw that nothing was being gained, but rather that a disturbance was starting, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this righteous person. You see to it.”

²⁵All the people answered, “May his blood be on us, and on our children!”

²⁶Then he released to them Barabbas, but Jesus he flogged and delivered to be crucified. ²⁷Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium, and gathered the whole garrison together against him. ²⁸They stripped him, and put a scarlet robe on him. ²⁹They braided a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ³⁰They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹When they had mocked him, they took the robe off him, and put his clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him.

³²As they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, and they compelled him to go with them, that he might carry his cross. ³³When they came to a place called “Golgotha”, that is to say, “The place of a skull,” ³⁴they gave him sour wine to drink mixed with gall. When he had tasted it, he would not drink. ³⁵When they had crucified him, they divided

his clothing among them, casting lots, ³⁶and they sat and watched him there. ³⁷They set up over his head the accusation against him written, “THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

³⁸Then there were two robbers crucified with him, one on his right hand and one on the left. ³⁹Those who passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, ⁴⁰and saying, “You who destroy the temple, and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!”

⁴¹Likewise the chief priests also mocking, with the scribes, the Pharisees, and the elders, said, ⁴²“He saved others, but he can’t save himself. If he is the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. ⁴³He trusts in God. Let God deliver him now, if he wants him; for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” ⁴⁴The robbers also who were crucified with him cast on him the same reproach.

⁴⁵Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lima sabachthani?” That is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

⁴⁷Some of them who stood there, when they heard it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.”

⁴⁸Immediately one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him a drink. ⁴⁹The rest said, “Let him be. Let’s see whether Elijah comes to save him.”

⁵⁰Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit. ⁵¹Behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. The earth quaked and the rocks were split. ⁵²The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they entered into the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴Now the centurion, and those who were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

⁵⁵Many women were there watching from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, serving him.

⁵⁶Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the

mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. ⁵⁷When evening had come, a rich man from Arimathaea, named Joseph, who himself was also Jesus’ disciple came. ⁵⁸This man went to Pilate, and asked for Jesus’ body. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given up. ⁵⁹Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut out in the rock, and he rolled a great stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb. ⁶²Now on the next day, which was the day after the Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together to Pilate, ⁶³saying, “Sir, we remember what that deceiver said while he was still alive: ‘After three days I will rise again.’” ⁶⁴Command therefore that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest perhaps his disciples come at night and steal him away, and tell the people, ‘He is risen from the dead;’ and the last deception will be worse than the first.”

⁶⁵Pilate said to them, “You have a guard. Go, make it as secure as you can.” ⁶⁶So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone.

MATTHEW 28

The Resurrection and the Great Commission

¹Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. ²Behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from the sky, and came and rolled away the stone from the door, and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴For fear of him, the guards shook, and became like dead men. ⁵The angel answered the women, “Don’t be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus, who has been crucified. ⁶He is not here, for he has risen, just like he said. Come, see the place where the Lord was lying. ⁷Go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead, and behold, he goes before you into Galilee; there you will see him.’ Behold, I have told you.”

⁸They departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word. ⁹As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!”

They came and took hold of his feet, and worshiped him.

¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Go tell my brothers that they should go into Galilee, and there they will see me.”

¹¹Now while they were going, behold, some of the guards came into the city, and told the chief priests all the things that had happened. ¹²When they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave a large amount of silver to the soldiers, ¹³saying, “Say that his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. ¹⁴If this comes to the

governor’s ears, we will persuade him and make you free of worry.” ¹⁵So they took the money and did as they were told. This saying was spread abroad among the Jews, and continues until today.

¹⁶But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had sent them. ¹⁷When they saw him, they bowed down to him, but some doubted. ¹⁸Jesus came to them and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

AFTER THE LAST SESSION

Eight verses to carry

One verse from each session. Read them aloud once a week and they will stay with you.

1 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall give birth to a son. They shall call his name Immanuel;” which is, being interpreted, “God with us.”

MATTHEW 1:23

2 “But seek first God’s Kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well.”

MATTHEW 6:33

3 “The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest.”

MATTHEW 9:37–38

4 “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest.”

MATTHEW 11:28

5 “If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

MATTHEW 16:24

6 “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. A second likewise is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

MATTHEW 22:37–39

7 “The King will answer them, ‘Most certainly I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”

MATTHEW 25:40

8 “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:19–20

WHAT COMES NEXT

Matthew is step 1 of 6 on the **Disciple** path.

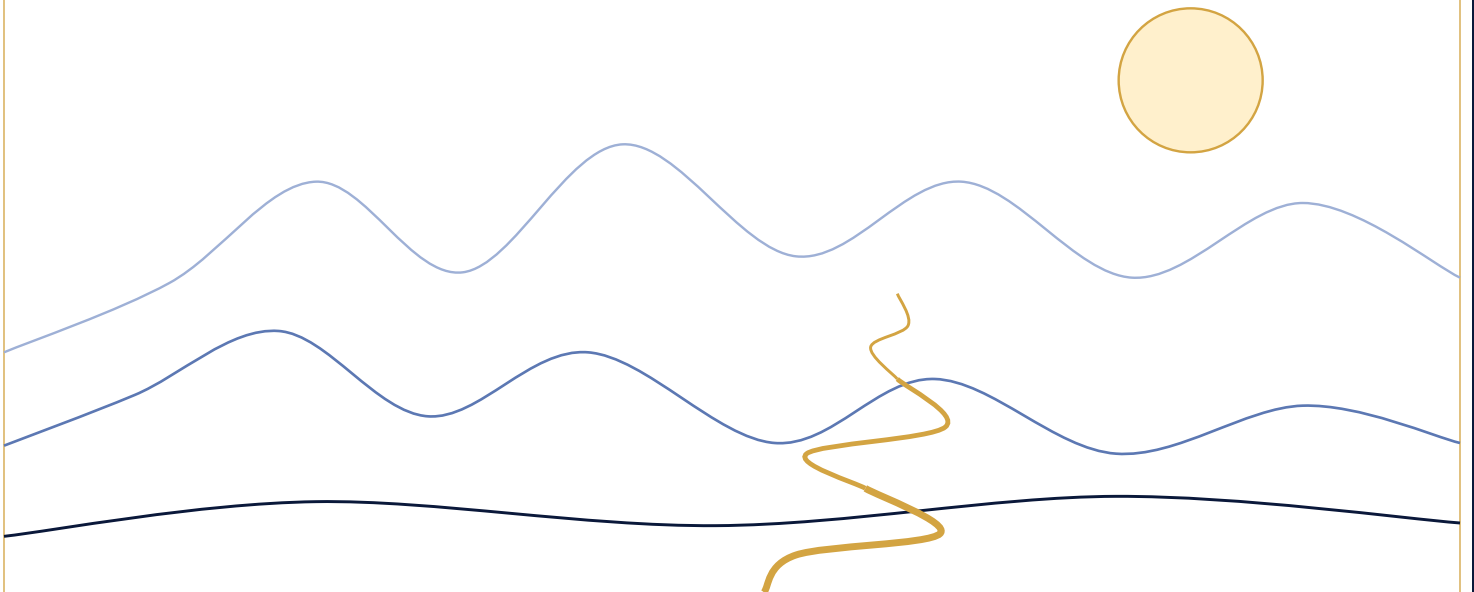


Every study is free at clearpathbiblestudies.com

PART FIVE

Take it with you

A worked example, a harder question for each session, a glossary, a Scripture index, and the pages that connect you to the people behind this study.



PART FIVE · BEFORE YOU BEGIN

What a good answer looks like

Most discussion questions do not have one right answer, but they do have good ones. Here is the third question of Session 2, a sample answer written the way a participant might write it, and the note a leader has beside it. Read all three once. That is what “doing the study” looks like.

3 What is the difference between hearing Jesus’ words and building on them?

A SAMPLE ANSWER · WRITTEN IN THE MARGIN

Both men hear. Jesus says the first “hears these words of mine, and does them” (7:24) and the second “hears these words of mine, and doesn’t do them” (7:26). So hearing is not the difference. The rain and floods come to both houses (7:25, 27). What gets me is that the sand house probably looked fine until the storm. I can hear a good message every Sunday and call that building. Then 7:21 says the one who enters the Kingdom of Heaven is “he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” So the question for me is what I did on Monday.

WHY IT IS A GOOD ANSWER

It stays in the passage. It quotes the words on the page (“hears these words of mine, and does them,” “doesn’t do them”) instead of general church language.

It notices what the two houses share. Both men hear and both houses get the storm (7:25, 27). Once you see what is the same, the one difference stands out.

It ends with the writer, not with a summary. “What I did on Monday” is the writer’s own question, said plainly. The answer ends on the writer’s life, not on a recap of the verses.

THE LEADER’S NOTE FOR THE SAME QUESTION · PAGE 55

The wise man and the foolish man both hear. Jesus says of the first, “Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine, and does them” (7:24), and of the second, “Everyone who hears these words of mine, and doesn’t do them” (7:26). The rain, floods and winds come to both houses (7:25, 27), and the house on the rock stands while the house on the sand falls. The difference is doing the words. In 7:21 Jesus says the one who enters the Kingdom of Heaven is “he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

Getting the most from this guide

- **Write before you talk.** In a group, two minutes of silent writing before the first question gives quieter people time to find their words.
- **Ask “Where do you see that in the passage?”** Matthew packs a lot into short scenes. Pointing to the verse keeps the group in the text and not in memory of a sermon.
- **Do the recall page from memory first.** Guessing and then checking is how the passage stays with you.
- **Keep the one thing small.** The “One thing to live out” is meant to be done, not admired.

PART FIVE · FOR GROUPS THAT WANT MORE

Go deeper

One extra question for each session, for groups that have walked with Matthew before. Each comes with a leader's note. Leaders can use one in the "Reflection and prayer" minutes if the room has the energy. This section is for leaders.

Session 1 · Matthew 1–4

- **Matthew says several times that something happened "that it might be fulfilled" (1:22; 2:15). Read 2:15 ("Out of Egypt I called my son") and then Hosea 11:1. Why might Matthew apply a line about Israel to Jesus, and how does Jesus' answer to each temptation (4:4, 7, 10) fit the same pattern?**

LEADER'S NOTE

Hosea 11:1 looks back at Israel's exodus. Matthew places Jesus inside Israel's story: He goes down to Egypt, comes up, passes through water (3:13–17), and spends time in the wilderness (4:1–2). Each of His three answers comes from Deuteronomy, the book Israel heard in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:3; Deuteronomy 6:16; Deuteronomy 6:13). Good answers notice the pattern and do not argue about how prophecy works. Christians understand "fulfilled" in more than one way, and the study does not ask the group to settle that.

Session 2 · Matthew 5–7

- **Jesus says, "Don't think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I didn't come to destroy, but to fulfill" (5:17). Then six times He sets what "was said" beside "But I tell you..." (for example 5:21–22). What does He do with the commandment each time?**

LEADER'S NOTE

In the examples the group will read, Jesus moves from the outward act to the heart: anger beside murder (5:21–22), and lust beside adultery (5:27–28). Before these, He says that unless righteousness "exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees" there is no way into the Kingdom (5:20). Christians differ on how the Law applies today, so keep the group on what Jesus says here. Be gentle with 5:27–32, since some in the room carry painful histories with marriage and divorce.

Session 3 · Matthew 8–10

- ✚ In 9:2–6 Jesus tells a paralyzed man, “Your sins are forgiven you,” and some scribes say to themselves, “This man blasphemes.” Why does Jesus then heal him? What does He say the healing is meant to show?

LEADER’S NOTE

Jesus says the healing is so “that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (9:6). The visible miracle points to the unseen one. The scribes call it blasphemy (9:3), and Matthew lets the reader see what that charge says about who Jesus is. Good answers notice that the story is about who Jesus is and not only about the man’s legs, and they notice that the crowd glorifies God for giving “such authority to men” (9:8).

Session 4 · Matthew 11–13

- ✚ Jesus tells His disciples, “To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but it is not given to them” (13:11), and later says, “blessed are your eyes, for they see” (13:16). What do the parables do for those who listen, and what do they do for those who don’t?

LEADER’S NOTE

Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9–10 (13:14–15): people who hear but do not understand. In 13:10 and 13:36 the disciples ask, and Jesus explains. Matthew also shows the hardness of heart in the crowds, which the sower’s soils picture. Christians read “it is not given” in different ways, particularly on how God’s action and human response fit together. Keep the group on the text: the invitation of 11:28 and the soils of 13:1–23 are for everyone in the room.

Session 5 · Matthew 14–18

- ✚ Jesus says to Peter, “on this rock I will build my assembly, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it” (16:18). A few chapters later He says, “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the middle of them” (18:20). What does Matthew show us about this community, and what does it do with sin and forgiveness?

LEADER’S NOTE

In the WEB “assembly” is the word for what many translations call “church,” and it appears in Matthew only in 16:18 and 18:17. Christians read “this rock” in different ways (Peter, Peter’s confession, or Christ), and the study does not ask the group to settle it. Note what chapter 18 says the community does: it goes to a brother alone first (18:15), it forgives without counting (18:21–22), and it does not hold anyone in contempt (18:10–14). Do not use 18:15–17 to pressure anyone to confront an abuser. The leader page says how to handle that.

Session 6 · Matthew 19–22

- When Jesus says it is hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom, the disciples ask, “Who then can be saved?” (19:25). What does Jesus answer, and how does the parable of the workers in 20:1–16 sit beside it?

LEADER’S NOTE

Jesus answers, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (19:26). The parable of the vineyard workers gives the same lesson from the other side: the owner pays what he chooses, and the last receive the same as the first. Good answers notice that both passages move from what people do to what God gives. Keep it from becoming a verdict on wealth or on anyone’s eternal state. The rich young man walks away “sad,” and Matthew leaves that open (19:22).

Session 7 · Matthew 23–25

- Jesus says, “no one knows of that day and hour, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (24:36). Then He tells His disciples to watch (24:42; 25:13). What does He want them doing while they wait, and what do the stories of chapter 25 show that waiting looks like?

LEADER’S NOTE

Jesus does not give a timetable. He gives a posture: watch, be ready, be faithful with what you have been given (24:45–51; 25:14–30). The sheep and goats turns on action toward “the least of these” (25:40). Christians hold different views about the timing and order of the events in chapters 24–25, and the study does not ask the group to settle them. Good answers stay with the question of what to do now. Be careful with 25:31–46 and 25:30. Do not use them to scare anyone or to name who is in or out.

Session 8 · Matthew 26–28

- At the Last Supper Jesus says, “this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins” (26:28). Earlier He said He came “to give his life as a ransom for many” (20:28). What do these two sayings say the cross is for?

LEADER’S NOTE

Both sayings use “for many,” and both say His death is something He gives. “New covenant” points back to Jeremiah 31:31–34, and “poured out” is the language of sacrifice. Christians use different words for how the cross saves (ransom, sacrifice, substitution, victory) and explain it in different ways, and they understand the Lord’s Supper differently. Keep the group on what the verses say and on what Christians across traditions affirm: Jesus gave His life for others, and the resurrection in chapter 28 shows that death did not have the last word. Handle the account of Judas and 27:25 with care, as the leader page says.

PART FIVE · FOR LEADERS

Objectives and questions, aligned

Every session names what it is for. This table shows which discussion (D) and reflection (R) questions carry each objective, so a leader who is short on time can cut a question without cutting an aim.

D = discussion questions on the session's second page; R = reflection questions on its third page. A dash means no question asks that directly. A star means a partial fit: the question touches the objective without asking it outright. A leader who wants a dashed objective covered can raise it from the passage or the leader page. The recall practice on each fourth page serves most objectives by retrieval.

	LEARNING OBJECTIVE	DISCUSSION	REFLECTION
1	See how Matthew presents Jesus as the promised King	D1	—
	Understand "Immanuel" as the frame of the whole Gospel	D2	R1
	Recognize how Jesus answers each temptation with Scripture (4:1–11)	D3	R2*
2	Grasp the Beatitudes as the kingdom's surprising blessings	D1	—
	See how Jesus deepens the Law from action to heart	—	R1
	Understand prayer and trust in the Father	D2*	R2*
3	See the scope of Jesus' authority	D1	—
	Understand discipleship as being sent	D3	R1
	Reckon honestly with the cost of following	D3*	R2
4	Hear Jesus' invitation to the weary	—	R1
	Understand the kingdom's hidden, growing nature	D3*	—
	Examine the soils of the heart	D2	R2
5	See Peter's confession as a turning point in the Gospel	D1	—
	Hold together Jesus' glory and His cross	D1, D2	R1
	Learn the marks of His community	D3	R2*
6	Trace Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem	D2*	—
	See the kingdom's reversal of values	D1*	R1*
	Center the Law on love of God and neighbor	D3	R2
7	Hear Jesus' warning against hypocrisy	D1	R1
	Anticipate His return with watchfulness	D2	—
	Hear how the King counts mercy shown to the needy as done to Him (25:40)	D3	R2
8	Walk through the passion and resurrection in Matthew	D1	—
	See the cross and empty tomb as the Gospel's climax	D2	R1
	Hear the Great Commission as Jesus' charge to His disciples	D3	R2

PART FIVE · WORDS MATTHEW USES

Glossary

Short definitions of the words a first-time reader of Matthew is most likely to stumble on. Chapter and verse point to where Matthew uses them.

Assembly

The WEB's word where many translations say "church" (16:18; 18:17). The community Jesus builds. Traditions understand its structure in different ways.

Beatitudes

The opening blessings of the Sermon on the Mount (5:3–12), each beginning "Blessed are..."

Blessed

Favored by God, and so truly well off, whatever the circumstances look like (5:3–12).

Christ

Greek for "Messiah," the anointed King God promised. Peter confesses it in 16:16 and Matthew opens with it (1:1).

Covenant

A binding relationship God establishes with His people. At the Last Supper Jesus speaks of "my blood of the new covenant" (26:28).

Disciple

A learner and follower of Jesus. The Twelve are named in 10:2–4, and the Commission sends them to make more (28:19).

Fulfilled

Matthew's word for how Jesus' life relates to what Scripture said (1:22; 2:15; 5:17). Christians understand how in more than one way.

Gehenna

The WEB's word, from a valley outside Jerusalem, for the place of judgment (5:22; 10:28; 23:33). Christians understand what it describes in different ways.

Gentile

Anyone who is not Jewish. Gentiles appear from the genealogy (Rahab and Ruth, 1:5) to "all nations" (28:19).

Good News

The message of the Kingdom: God is acting in Jesus (4:23; 24:14).

Great Commission

Jesus' closing charge to make disciples of all nations, with the promise "I am with you always" (28:18–20).

Hypocrite

Literally an actor. Someone whose religion is a performance for others (6:2; 23:13).

Immanuel

Hebrew for "God with us" (1:23). The promise that frames the Gospel and returns in 28:20.

Kingdom of Heaven

God's rule, now arriving in Jesus (3:2; 4:17). Matthew's usual phrase, where the other Gospels often say "Kingdom of God."

Law and the Prophets

A way of saying the whole Old Testament (5:17; 7:12; 22:40).

Mercy

Compassion that acts toward people who do not deserve it. Jesus quotes "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice" twice (9:13; 12:7).

Parable

A short story from ordinary life that Jesus uses to teach about the Kingdom (13:3, 10–17).

Passover

The yearly feast remembering the exodus. Jesus' last meal and His death fall at Passover (26:2, 17–19).

Pharisees

A group devoted to strict observance of the Law and its traditions. They first appear in 3:7, and Jesus argues with them in 12:1–14 and in chapter 23.

Ransom

The price paid to free a captive. Jesus says He came “to give his life as a ransom for many” (20:28).

Repent

To turn around and change direction. The message of John and of Jesus (3:2; 4:17).

Righteousness

Living rightly before God, from the heart. Jesus says His followers’ righteousness must go beyond outward correctness (5:6, 20; 6:33).

Sabbath

The weekly day of rest. Jesus says “the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” (12:8).

Sadducees

A priestly group who denied the resurrection (3:7; 16:1; 22:23).

Scribes

Experts in copying and interpreting the Law. They teach, and some oppose Jesus (7:29; 9:3; chapter 23).

Son of David

A title for the promised king in David’s line. Used in 1:1, by those crying for mercy (9:27), and by the crowds at the entry (21:9).

Son of Man

The title Jesus most often uses for Himself. It echoes Daniel 7:13–14 and carries both humility and authority (9:6; 16:13; 26:64).

Tax collector

A Jew who collected taxes or tolls for Rome or its local rulers, and was often seen as a traitor and a cheat. Jesus calls Matthew from the tax office (9:9–11).

Temptation

The testing in the wilderness (4:1–11), where Jesus answers with Scripture.

Transfiguration

Jesus’ appearance changes on the mountain, and His face shines like the sun (17:1–8).

Twelve

The apostles Jesus chose and sent (10:1–4), a number that echoes Israel’s twelve tribes.

Woe

A cry of sorrow and warning. Jesus pronounces a series in chapter 23, beginning at 23:13.

PART FIVE • WHERE EACH PASSAGE IS USED

Scripture index

Every passage cited by chapter and verse in the sessions, the reference pages, the leader's guide, and this Part Five, with the pages where it appears. The full text of Matthew is in Part Four, pages 76–108.

MATTHEW		5:13–16	45	7:27	55, 111
1:1	43, 51, 116, 117	5:17	5, 112, 116	7:28	6
1:2	51	5:17–20	42	7:29	42, 117
1:3	51	5:20	43, 112, 117	8:3	57
1:5	51, 116	5:21–22	112	8:10	20, 46, 58
1:6	51	5:22	116	8:16	57
1:16	51	5:27–28	112	8:26	43, 57
1:18–25	46	5:27–32	54, 112, 122	8:27	57
1:20	52	5:29–30	54	9:2–6	113
1:21	52	5:32	54	9:3	113, 117
1:22	5, 43, 112, 116	5:38–42	54, 122	9:6	57, 113, 117
1:22–23	45	5:39	54	9:8	57, 113
1:23	1, 5, 7, 9, 12, 37, 43, 51, 52, 53, 72, 74, 109, 116	6:1	55	9:9	6, 58
2:1–11	12, 53	6:2	116	9:9–11	117
2:15	5, 112, 116	6:4	55	9:10	57
2:16–18	122	6:5	55	9:10–11	58
3:2	116, 117	6:6	55	9:12	58
3:7	116, 117	6:9	43	9:12–13	20, 58
3:13–17	112	6:9–13	16, 45, 56	9:13	43, 58, 116
4:1	52	6:11	55	9:22	57
4:1–11	9, 12, 53, 115, 117	6:14–15	54, 122	9:22–29	122
4:1–2	112	6:16	55	9:27	117
4:4	9, 51, 52, 53, 112	6:24	55	9:29	57
4:6	52	6:25	55	9:37–38	7, 17, 20, 57, 59, 109
4:7	9, 51, 52, 53, 112	6:25–34	56	10:1	58
4:10	9, 51, 52, 53, 112	6:26	55, 56	10:1–4	117
4:11	52	6:32	55, 56	10:2–4	116
4:17	12, 43, 45, 53, 116, 117	6:33	7, 13, 16, 45, 54, 55, 56, 109, 117	10:6	58
4:23	116	7:7–11	54	10:7	58
5:1–2	55	7:11	54	10:7–8	58
5:3–12	45, 55, 116	7:12	116	10:8	58
5:5	16, 56	7:21	55, 111	10:16	58
5:6	117	7:21–23	54, 122	10:16–22	20, 59
5:7	55	7:24	43, 55, 111	10:17–18	58
5:8	55	7:24–27	16, 45, 56	10:19–20	58
5:11	55	7:25	55, 111	10:20	58
		7:26	55, 111	10:28	116

10:28–31	42	13:53	6	19:26	67, 114
10:29	58	16:1	117	20:1–16	114
10:29–31	58	16:13	117	20:26–28	32, 68
10:31	58	16:15–16	45	20:28	68, 72, 74, 114, 117
10:34–39	57, 122	16:16	28, 64, 65, 116	20:32–34	68
10:38–39	58	16:17	64	21:4	67
11:1	6	16:18	43, 113, 116	21:5	67, 68
11:2–6	24, 62	16:20	64	21:6–9	32, 68
11:3	61	16:21	63, 64, 65	21:9	67, 117
11:4–6	61	16:23	64	21:13	67
11:7–11	61	16:24	7, 25, 28, 43, 63, 64, 65, 109, 122	21:14	67
11:9	61	16:24–25	65	22:23	117
11:11	61	17:1	64	22:35–36	67
11:28	7, 21, 24, 60, 62, 109, 113	17:1–5	28, 65	22:37	67
11:28–29	24, 62	17:1–8	117	22:37–39	7, 29, 32, 45, 66, 68, 109
11:28–30	45, 62	17:2	64	22:38	67
12:1–14	116	17:3	64	22:39	67, 68
12:7	116	17:5	64	22:40	67, 116
12:8	117	17:8	64	23:1–3	69
12:22–24	60	17:9	64	23:3	70
12:28	43	17:14–20	122	23:5	70
12:31–32	60, 122	18:10–14	113	23:5–7	70
13:1–23	113	18:15	64, 113	23:13	44, 116, 117
13:3	116	18:15–17	63, 64, 113, 122	23:23	70
13:3–8	61	18:15–20	45	23:25–26	70
13:9	61	18:16	64	23:25–28	70
13:10	113	18:17	43, 64, 113, 116	23:33	116
13:10–17	116	18:18	64	24:14	116
13:11	113	18:20	45, 113	24:35	36, 71
13:14–15	113	18:21	43	24:36	69, 70, 114
13:16	113	18:21–22	28, 43, 65, 113	24:42	69, 114
13:18–23	24, 62	18:21–35	63, 122	24:45–51	114
13:19	61	18:22	64	25:1–12	70
13:19–22	61	18:27	65	25:1–13	36, 71
13:19–23	62	18:33	64	25:4	70
13:21	61	18:35	65	25:5	70
13:22	61	19:1	6	25:13	43, 69, 70, 71, 114
13:23	61	19:3–12	66, 122	25:14–30	114
13:24–30	60	19:16	67	25:15	70
13:31–32	61	19:19	67	25:21	70
13:33	61	19:20	67	25:24–30	36, 71
13:36	113	19:21	67	25:26	71
13:44	61, 62	19:21–22	32, 67, 68	25:30	114
13:44–46	24, 42, 62	19:22	67, 114	25:31–34	43
13:46	61, 62	19:23	67	25:31–46	69, 114, 122
13:47–50	60	19:25	114	25:35–36	35, 69, 70, 71

25:37	70	27:12–14	73	28:19	73, 116
25:37–39	70, 71	27:24	46	28:19–20	7, 37, 40, 72, 74, 109
25:40	7, 33, 35, 36, 42, 45, 69, 70, 71, 109, 114, 115	27:25	72, 114, 122	28:20	10, 40, 42, 51, 52, 73, 74, 116
25:45	70	27:26	46, 72	DANIEL	
25:46	69	27:27–54	73	7:13–14	117
26:1	6	27:37	73	DEUTERONOMY	
26:2	116	27:50–51	45	6:13	112
26:17–19	116	27:51	45	6:16	112
26:26–28	40, 74	27:54	73, 74	8:3	112
26:28	72, 74, 114, 116	28:1	73	HOSEA	
26:36–46	73	28:6	73, 74	11:1	112
26:39	73	28:8	73	ISAIAH	
26:56	73	28:9	73	6:9–10	113
26:64	117	28:17	73, 74	JEREMIAH	
27:3–5	72	28:18	40, 44, 73, 74	31:31–34	114
		28:18–20	45, 73, 116		

PART FIVE · YOUR TURN

Tell me what helped.

You've just spent some hours in this study. Before you put it on the shelf, I'd like to know how it went: the part that landed, the part that lost you, and the part you'd fix if it were yours.

Three questions. No account needed. Name and email only if you want me to write back.

1 What helped? A session, a question, a line you underlined.

2 What confused you, or slowed you down? Be blunt. If a question didn't make sense, that's my writing, not your reading.

3 What would you add, cut, or change?

What you write helps shape the next edition of this study.

— Ron Givens

Founder — Executive Director, Clear Path Bible Studies



SCAN TO ANSWER

clearpathbiblestudies.com/s/matthew/feedback

Opens the three questions with this study already selected.

Jotted your answers above? Type them into the form when you're ready. Nothing on this page is sent anywhere until you do. Hand it to your group leader, too, if you'd rather say it out loud.

PART FIVE · FOR EVERYONE WHO LEADS, AND EVERYONE WHO SHARES

Care in the room

People say real things in a Bible study, and that's the point. These four agreements keep the room safe. The lines at the bottom are for the moments that are bigger than a study.

Four agreements

What's said here stays here. Names, stories, and struggles don't leave the room, not even as prayer requests somewhere else. The one exception is safety: if someone is in danger, or a child is being hurt, you get help.

No one has to speak. Silence is fine. A person who listens for eight sessions has still done the study.

The text comes first. The leader isn't the last word. When we disagree, we go back to the page together.

Disagree, but don't scorn. A question is never a threat. No mocking, no interrupting, no fixing people.

Matthew has passages that land hard on real people in the room: 2:16–18, 5:27–32 and 19:3–12 (marriage and divorce), 5:38–42, 6:14–15, 7:21–23, 9:22–29 and 17:14–20 (faith and healing), 10:34–39, 12:31–32, 16:24, 18:15–17, 18:21–35, chapter 23 (the woes), 25:31–46, the account of Judas in chapter 27, and 27:25. The leader pages say how to handle them. Read those notes before you gather.

If someone shares something heavy

Thank them. Don't rush to a verse. Say, "That took courage. Can we talk after?" and then do. If what they shared involves danger to them or to someone else, now or at home, the help lines below come first, and, if they want it and it is safe, you stay with them while they call.

If a child is being hurt, call Childhelp, below, any hour, and report to child protective services or the police as your state requires. Reporting laws vary by state, and in some states every adult is required to report. If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

A study isn't counseling. Before you ever need it, know the name of one counselor, one pastor, and one help line, so you can hand them over without scrambling.

Help lines · United States

Emergency — call 911.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call or text 988, any hour. For anyone thinking about ending their life, in a mental-health crisis, or worried about someone who is. Veterans and service members: call 988 and press 1, or text 838255.

National Domestic Violence Hotline — 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788. Danger or fear at home.

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline — 1-800-422-4453. A child who is being hurt, or an adult who suspects it.

SAMHSA National Helpline — 1-800-662-4357. A treatment referral and information line for substance use and mental health; it is not a crisis line.

National Human Trafficking Hotline — 1-888-373-7888, or text 233733. Forced labor or forced sex.

RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline — 1-800-656-4673. Free and confidential.

Verified October 2026. The current list, with lines for other situations, is kept at clearpathbiblestudies.com/help. These pages are not a substitute for a doctor, a counselor, or a pastor who knows you.



SIMPLE · ACCESSIBLE · TRANSFORMATIONAL

Every study is free. So is the next one.

Free Bible studies, online and in print, written so that someone new to the Bible and someone who has read it for years can sit at the same table.

clearpathbiblestudies.com

© 2026 Clear Path Bible Studies. This guide is a free resource. You may print and copy it for personal and group study. It may not be sold. Scripture quotations are from the World English Bible (WEB), which is in the public domain.



SCAN TO OPEN THIS
STUDY ONLINE