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FOLLOW JESUS

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STUDY NOTES ON
MATTHEW'S GOSPEL
FOR THE 10AM TALKS

READING THROUGH MATTHEW TOGETHER:

SUNDAY

10AM - FOLLOW JESUS:

4PM - LISTEN TO JESUS:

7TH JANUARY	BELOVED SON	THE LAMP
14TH JANUARY	RESISTING TEMPTATION	THE SPECK & LOG
21ST JANUARY	CALLING DISCIPLES	NEW CLOTH
28TH JANUARY	TEACHING BLESSING	THE SOWER
4TH FEBRUARY	REJECTING HYPOCRISY	SEED & LEAVEN
11TH FEBRUARY	THE NARROW GATE	TREASURE & PEARL
18TH FEBRUARY	FULFILLING LAW	<i>(HEALING SERVICE)</i>
25TH FEBRUARY	TEACHING PARABLES	THE NET
3RD MARCH	WORKING MIRACLES	UNFORGIVING SERVANT
10TH MARCH	CHOOSING THE CROSS	VINEYARD WORKERS
17TH MARCH	MODELLING FAITHFULNESS	TWO SONS
24TH MARCH	THE HUMBLE KING	MARRIAGE FEAST
31ST MARCH	HE'S ALIVE!	<i>(JOINT EASTER AT 10)</i>
7TH APRIL	SHARING THE NEWS	<i>(NO SERVICE)</i>



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STUDY IDEAS
BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION
WEEKLY STUDIES
YOUR NOTES
4PM TALKS

STUDY & GROUP IDEAS

These notes are intended to help you hear from God's Word and ask what the Lord is saying to us today. They are designed for use in small groups, and can also be used for personal Bible study and reflection. The first set of questions for each week are to understand the passage in it's original context. The second set are each designed for longer discussions on how this applies to us.

Although these notes are for prompting discussion, I think it's important to also share life together in small groups. To make time to pray, support and celebrate with one another. I would recommend finding ways to include times of quiet, worship music and socials to help deepen that fellowship. I also remember being encouraged to 'pray with Bibles open' - in other words, let the words of Scripture you've read, inform the prayers you pray as we minister God's love to one another.





BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

Matthew, who was also known as Levi, is most likely to have written his Gospel around the 60s AD. He had been a tax collector before following Jesus and becoming a disciple. Some scholars have suggested that the original group he wrote for were the early Christians in Antioch, Syria. This group of believers were a mix of Jews and Gentiles and you can hear this reflected in the way the Gospel is written.


Matthew's Gospel recounts how Jesus of Nazareth, the promised Messiah, brought God's kingdom. He died, rose again and sent his followers to tell this good news (gospel) to the ends of the earth.

Matthew wants to show his readers that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, that he is the true descendant of King David, and the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham (see Gen. 12:1–3). Matthew's account of what happened is an encouragement to Jewish and Gentile Christians to stand strong despite opposition. We can have confidence, knowing that through faith in Jesus, we have citizenship in God's kingdom. Jesus the Messiah has come to bring God's salvation, now and forever, through faith in him.

For a full introduction with timeline and maps, go to:

esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-matthew/





“ READ
MATTHEW
3:13-17 ”

I. FOLLOW JESUS: GOD’S BELOVED SON

1. What will you hope to gain from time in Matthew’s Gospel?
2. Why do you think John hesitated to baptise Jesus?
3. What does Jesus mean by his reply in v15?
4. What picture of Jesus do we already start to see here?
5. Did Jesus need to see the Spirit coming to him?
6. Did the Father need to speak this affirmation of the Son?

Applying it to us:


1. How do you feel if you imagine yourself speaking with Jesus?
2. Do we really trust that he is the beloved Son of God?
3. How does that impact the way that we follow him?

“ READ
MATTHEW
4:1-11 ”

II. FOLLOW JESUS: WHO RESISTED TEMPTATION

1. ‘I can resist everything except temptation’ - Oscar Wilde.
Do you agree?
2. Why would the Spirit lead Jesus to the wilderness?
3. Where do we see Jesus’ humanity in this passage?
4. Where do we see Jesus’ divinity in this passage?
5. What does Satan target as areas of specific temptation?
6. How does Jesus counter these temptations?

Applying it to us:

1. Are there particular times or places you’re most tempted?
 2. Do we need to be perfect like Christ?
 3. How can we counter Satan’s lies?
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“ READ
MATTHEW
4:12-22 ”

III. FOLLOW JESUS: WHO CALLS DISCIPLES

1. Who have been the biggest influences on your life?
2. How does Jesus' fulfilment of Isaiah link to his preaching theme?
3. What are we told about these first disciples?
4. What does Jesus mean when he says they will 'fish for people'?
5. Why do you think they were all prepared to immediately follow?
6. What would have been the risk or cost to them?

Applying it to us:

1. Does following Jesus feel like you have seen a great light?
2. Does Jesus still captivate you the way he did at first?
3. What is the risk or cost to us of being a disciple of Jesus?

IV. FOLLOW JESUS: WHO TEACHES ON BLESSING

“ READ
MATTHEW
5:1-16 ”

1. Do you remember a best or favourite teacher from school?
2. What's the significance of Jesus teaching from the mountainside?
3. How might Jesus change the way they would see blessing?
4. Can you really be blessed when people insult and persecute you?
5. Is Jesus embarrassed to say that there is a reward for following him?
6. What do you think is the meaning of being 'salt of the earth'?

Applying it to us:

1. Which of the 'Beatitudes' has stood out most to you?
2. Have you known insult for being a follower of Jesus?
3. How hard is it to let your light shine before others?
4. How do we do that in a way which brings glory to the Father?



V. FOLLOW JESUS: AND REJECT HYPOCRISY

“ READ
MATTHEW
6:1-15 ”

1. If you were asked to show off a talent, what would you do?
2. Why is it a temptation to ‘show off’ our faith sometimes?
3. When teaching on giving, is he being literal about our hands?
4. What point is Jesus making here in vv2-4?
5. What kind of prayer were the people seemingly used to?
6. How does Jesus challenge that attitude in vv 5-8?
7. How does the Lord’s Prayer help us to shape our own prayer?

Applying it to us:


1. When are you most tempted to demonstrate your faith in front of others?
2. Is there anything you need to put into place from Jesus’ teaching on prayer? Can you share suggestions for how to find time to pray?

“ READ
MATTHEW
7:1-14 ”

VI. FOLLOW JESUS: THROUGH THE NARROW GATE

1. When are the times that you feel the most harshly judged?
2. Does Jesus mean we should never point out things that are wrong?
3. How true is that we often see other’s specks before our own planks?
4. What does Jesus mean in v6?
5. Are vv7-12 about getting everything we ever want?
6. What else might Jesus be showing us here?
7. Why would Jesus use such a strong analogy in vv13-14?

Applying it to us:

1. How can we get help to identify and remove our own ‘planks?’
 2. How easy do you find it to trust God to give you good gifts?
 3. Do we feel the urgency of calling people to find the ‘narrow gate?’
- You may also like to read chapters 8-11 during the coming week*
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VII. FOLLOW JESUS: WHO FULFILS GOD'S LAW

“ READ
MATTHEW
12:1-14 ”

1. If you suddenly became Prime Minister, what would be your first new law?
2. What was the basis of the Pharisees' complaint in v2?
3. What does Jesus' reply say about him, and the purpose of the law?
4. How does Jesus' compassion in v11 overcome their trap in v10?
5. Does Jesus' teaching on the law mean that no laws apply?
6. Why would this exchange prompt such hatred from the Pharisees?

Applying it to us:


1. What does this passage teach us about the point of God's laws?
2. How can we work out whether a particular law still applies to us?
3. Do we often ask God for the same compassion that Jesus had?

“ READ
MATTHEW
13:1-23 ”

VIII. FOLLOW JESUS: WHO TEACHES IN PARABLES

1. What are your favourite kinds of stories?
2. Do you find Jesus' explanation for using parables surprising? v11
3. Is there significance in Jesus hiding some meaning in the time before his death and resurrection? Has that now changed?
4. What would you say is the main point of this parable?
5. Why is it important to keep on 'sowing the seed' of the gospel?
6. Can people who used to reject Jesus, later respond in faith?

Applying it to us:

1. Have you known a time when you were more like 'rocky' ground?
 2. How does this parable prepare us for the range of responses we might receive when sharing our faith?
 3. Do you find that encouraging, or not?
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IX. FOLLOW JESUS: THE MIRACLE WORKER

“ READ
MATTHEW
14:13-21 ”

1. Have you ever seen a miracle?
2. Do you think the Disciples suggestion in v15 is reasonable?
3. What is Jesus demonstrating in not sending the crowd away?
4. How is Jesus able to feed so many from such little food?
5. Why do you think Jesus involves the Disciples in distribution?
6. What is this event showing them, and now us, about Jesus?

Applying it to us:

1. Is this story here to teach us how to feed the crowds?
2. If not, what is the purpose for us, how does it strengthen our faith?
3. How does Jesus provision here point to his provision of the bread of life to us?

“ READ
MATTHEW
16:13-28 ”

X. FOLLOW JESUS: WHO CHOSE THE CROSS

1. Who is the most famous person you've met?
2. Are the answers in v14 way off the mark or not bad guesses?
3. Why do you think Jesus wants to hear what the Disciples think?
4. What is the significance of Jesus' words to Peter in vv17-20
5. Why does Jesus say he 'must' go, suffer, and die?
6. Do you understand Peter's response?
7. How do Jesus strong words emphasise the importance of him not being tempted away from his mission?

Applying it to us:

1. How would you answer the question 'who do you say he is?'
2. Is it a question you could ask others?
3. Are you ready to ask God for the faith that Jesus describes in vv24-27?



“ READ
MATTHEW
19:1-12 ”

XI. FOLLOW JESUS: WHO MODELS FAITHFULNESS

1. This teaching is important but not always easy, perhaps start this week with prayer for wisdom, grace and understanding
2. How are the Pharisees trying to trap Jesus with their question?
3. How high a view does Jesus have of creation, men and women, and marriage?
4. Why does this run so counter to so much of how our culture sees these things?
5. How were some people abusing the divorce law at the time?
6. Does Jesus understand that teaching in this area isn't always easy for us?
7. How important is it to put this alongside what else we know about his forgiveness and grace?

Applying it to us:

1. In all of our situations, are we able to live for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven and trust that Jesus knows and wants our best?

XII. FOLLOW JESUS: THE HUMBLE KING

“ READ
MATTHEW
21:1-11 ”

1. Did you watch the coronation of King Charles? What stood out?
2. Could Jesus have arranged the colt in advance, and secretly?
3. What do we see fulfilled in Jesus from Zechariah's prophecy?
4. What indicators are there of this crowd's honouring of Jesus?
5. If 'Hosanna' was regularly sung, was anything different that year?
6. Do we see a difference between the city folk and the crowds from outside (who already knew of Jesus)?

Applying it to us:

1. Does Jesus still prompt a response like: 'Who is this?'
2. How might we answer that in just a few minutes?
3. Does it strengthen your faith to see Jesus fulfil so much prophecy?
4. How does it help us trust what the Bible says is still to come?

(We will cover much of chapters 22-27 during Holy Week)

XIII. FOLLOW JESUS: WHO IS ALIVE!

“ READ
MATTHEW
28:1-10 ”

1. Have you recently received any really good news?
2. Why do you think the Marys were the first to visit Jesus' tomb?
3. What evidence do we have of the miraculous power of God that day?
4. How would you sum up the angels' message to them? (vv5-7)
5. Is it understandable they experienced a mix of fear and joy?
6. How must they have felt as they realised Jesus was alive?

Applying it to us:

1. Is there any greater news than that Jesus is alive?
2. How much of life and everything does his resurrection impact?
3. Do we know and trust he's with us, do we share the joy that he's alive?

“ READ
MATTHEW
28:16-20 ”

XIV. FOLLOW JESUS: TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS


1. Have you ever been sent on any kind of mission?
2. Is it interesting that even then, some doubted?
3. What gives them confidence to go out with the good news?
4. What are the main things that Jesus calls his followers to go and do?
5. What does Jesus mean that he's with his people always?
6. How do you think the Disciples might have felt at this exact moment?

Applying it to us:


1. When have you felt the most encouraged to share your faith?
2. Does it help to be reminded that Jesus is always with you?
3. Are there particular people or places you might have been called by God to prayerfully aim to share in this mission?



YOUR NOTES



“AND SURELY I AM
WITH YOU ALWAYS,
TO THE VERY END
OF THE AGE.
MATTHEW 28:20”



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stjohnssouthbourne.com/study