

THE BIBLE CHURCH, SINGAPORE

EXPERIENCING
THE **KING**
LIVING OUT
THE **KINGDOM**



THE STUDY OF MATTHEW

V2028

PRAYER | OUTREACH | **COMMUNITY** | **MAKING DISCIPLES** | LEADERSHIP REVITALISATION



Preface

In 2024, we explored the theme, “Grow: Into Our Destiny in Christ” as we studied the book of Joshua and saw how the Israelites took hold of God’s promises, entering into their inheritance with courage and faith.

In 2025, as we study the Gospel of Matthew, we encounter the ultimate fulfilment of those promises in Jesus Christ. It is He who through whom all God’s promises find their “Yes” and “Amen”. It is He who leads God’s people into the true promised land – the Kingdom of God that knows no end. It is Christ’s desire for Christians to know Him and live out His teachings as Kingdom citizens, hence the theme, "Experiencing the King, Living out the Kingdom".

Many of us are navigating seasons of tremendous difficulty due to ill health, unrelenting busyness, relationship breakdowns or other trials. These can often leave us feeling spiritually deflated or discouraged. The invitation of Jesus in Matthew is this: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (11:28)

As we rest in Him and re-discover His goodness, beauty and truth, He then invites us to participate in His mission of “making disciples of all nations” (28:19). He sends us into a dark, lost and broken

world with His presence through the Holy Spirit and calls us to be “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” (5:13, 14), demonstrating and declaring the Gospel of hope to all. God’s glorious kingdom has broken into this world and, through us, Jesus wants to invite all to be a part of it!

As we journey through Matthew as a church, our prayer is that we will:

1. Renew our vision of Jesus, the King who rules with grace and truth.
2. Be equipped to live out Kingdom values in the midst of our daily responsibilities and trials.
3. Deepen our calling to follow Jesus, even when the path of discipleship feels costly, and to call others to similarly follow Jesus in community.

May this guide help us in our CGs to experience King Jesus and live out His Kingdom together.



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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

ORIENTING DATA FOR MATTHEW

- **Content:** the story of Jesus, including large blocks of teaching, from the announcement of his birth to the commissioning of the disciples to make disciples of the Gentiles
- **Author:** anonymous; Papias (ca. A.D. 125) attributes “the first Gospel” to the apostle Matthew; scholarship is divided
- **Date:** unknown (since he used Mark, very likely written in the 70s or 80s)
- **Recipients:** unknown; but almost certainly Jewish Christians with a commitment to the Gentile mission, most commonly thought to have lived in and around Antioch of Syria
- **Emphases:** Jesus is the Son of God, the (messianic) King of the Jews; Jesus is God present with us in miraculous power; Jesus is the church’s Lord; the teaching of Jesus has continuing importance for God’s people; the gospel of the kingdom is for all peoples—Jew and Gentile alike

OVERVIEW OF MATTHEW

It is fitting that Matthew comes first in the New Testament, for two reasons: first, from the opening sentence it has deliberate and direct ties to the Old Testament; second, because of its orderly arrangement of Jesus' teaching, it was the most often used Gospel in the early church (cited by the early church fathers more than twice as often as the other Gospels).

The genius of Matthew's Gospel lies in its structure, which presents a marvelous tapestry of narrative interwoven with carefully crafted blocks of teaching. So well is this done that the most prominent feature of Matthew's story—the five blocks of teaching—is sometimes not even noticed because one is more aware of the flow of the narrative (which follows Mark very closely). The five blocks of teaching (5:1–7:29; 10:11–42; 13:1–52; 18:1–35; [23:1] 24:1–25:46) are presented on a topical basis. Each is marked off by a similar concluding formula (“When Jesus had finished [saying these things]”), which Matthew uses to transition back to the narrative.

The story itself begins with a twofold introduction about Jesus' origins (chs. 1–2) and about his preparations for public ministry (3:1–4:11). After that, each combined block of “narrative with discourse” forms a progressive aspect to the story, all having to do with Jesus, the messianic King, inaugurating the time of God's kingly rule—4:12–7:29, proclamation of and life in the kingdom; 8:1–10:42, the power and mission of the kingdom; 11:1–13:52, questioning and opposition to the kingdom and its mixed reception in the world; 13:53–18:35, growing opposition, confession by the disciples, and special instructions to the community of the King; 19:1–25:46, mixed responses to the Prophet who now presents himself as the King, and the judgment of those who reject him. The story concludes (chs. 26–28) with the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus, and the commissioning of the disciples to take the story to the nations.

SPECIFIC ADVICE FOR READING MATTHEW

You cannot easily miss Matthew's way of tying the story of Jesus to that of Israel, since it is so direct and upfront. Jesus belongs to the genealogy of Israel's royal line, and he fulfills all kinds of prophetic messianic expectations. Note how often (eleven times in all) Matthew editorializes, "This was to fulfill what was said [spoken] through the prophet(s)." Moreover, Jesus' ministry and teaching presuppose the authoritative nature of the Old Testament law (5:17–48), and during his earthly ministry, Jesus focuses on the "lost sheep of Israel" (10:6).

But at the death of Jesus, the temple curtain is torn in two (27:51), indicating that its time is over and that the time of Jesus and his followers has begun. You will see as you go along how Matthew presents Jesus as being in unrelieved opposition to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law (e.g., 5:20; 12:38; 21:15; 22:15; 23:2–36), so much so that he speaks of "their [your] synagogue(s)" as over against his disciples (e.g., 10:17; 13:54; 23:34). And an alternative story explaining away Jesus' resurrection still circulated among some Jews at the time Matthew is writing (28:11–15).

At the same time, look for the ways that Matthew also exhibits clear concern for the mission to the Gentiles. For example, four women—primarily, if not all, Gentiles—are included in the genealogy (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Uriah's wife [Bathsheba]). The story proper begins in Galilee (Matt 4:12–16), which Matthew sees as fulfilling Isaiah 9:1–2—that the people living in darkness, in Galilee of the Gentiles, have seen a great light—and it ends (Matt 28:16–20) with a commissioning of the apostles to make disciples of all the nations (= Gentiles).

This interweaving of themes suggests that the Gospel was written at a time when church and synagogue were now separated and were in conflict over who is in the true succession of the Old Testament promises. Matthew's way of answering this issue is by telling the story of Jesus, who "fulfills" every kind of Jewish messianic hope and expectation: After his birth as "king of the Jews" (2:2), he is honored (worshiped) by Eastern royal figures; at his birth, baptism, and transfiguration he is signaled as God's Son; his virgin birth fulfills

Isaiah 7:14 that “God is with us” (cf. 12:6, 41, 42; 28:20); he dies as “THE KING OF THE JEWS,” 27:37; and is acknowledged as “Son of God” by the Roman centurion (27:54). At the same time Matthew also recognizes Jesus as Isaiah’s suffering servant (20:28) and extends this recognition to include his whole ministry, including his healings (8:17) and the opposition (12:17–21).

Equally important for Matthew, Jesus is presented as the true interpreter of the law (5:17–48; 7:24–27), especially over against the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. The latter have turned the law into a heavy yoke (11:28) and bind heavy burdens on people’s backs (23:4); Jesus, who as Son knows and reveals the Father (11:25–27), offers an easy yoke and light burden (11:28–30). His “law” is mercy and grace (9:13; 12:7; 20:30, 34; 23:23). Those who experience such mercy are thus expected to be merciful in return (18:21–35; cf. 5:7). Jesus did not come to abolish the Law and Prophets but to fulfill them (5:17; 7:12), to bring the new righteousness of God’s kingdom that goes infinitely beyond the teachings of the Pharisees (5:20). At the same time, Matthew shows concern about some within the believing community who prophesy but do not live obediently (7:15–23). In his Gospel, therefore, the twelve disciples play the role of learners who are to model life in the kingdom. You will want to look for these features as you read.

Thus, for Matthew, Jesus is the center of everything, and those who follow him not only proclaim the coming of the kingdom—the coming of God’s mercy to sinners—but they are also expected to live like him (7:15–23). And when they have success in their own proclamation of the kingdom, especially among Gentiles, they are to make disciples of them by teaching them to observe the way of Jesus (28:19–20), both in their individual lives (chs. 5–7) and in their church communities (ch. 18). Matthew almost certainly intends his Gospel to serve as the manual for such instruction!

A WALK THROUGH MATTHEW

- **1:1–2:23** *Prologue: Jesus’ Divine and Human Origins*

Here you find the well-known features of Matthew’s narrative of Jesus’ origins (the annunciation to Joseph; the visit of the Magi; the slaughter of the

innocents; the flight to Egypt). As you read, note how many of Matthew's concerns and themes surface here. His genealogy explicitly places Jesus in the royal lineage (son of David) and anticipates the Gentile mission (son of Abraham). His birth from a virgin both fulfills prophecy and emphasizes his divine origins (by the Holy Spirit, as "God with us"). Note especially how the narrative of chapter 2 places worship of Jesus by Gentile royal court figures in the context of an attempted execution by Jewish royalty.

- **3:1–4:11** ***Introduction to Jesus: His Baptism and the Testing***

Jesus is introduced to Israel by way of a new prophet, John the Baptist; John consents to baptize him (how could the Messiah accept a baptism for repentance?). Jesus is immediately led by the Spirit into the desert to be tested as to who he is (Son of God) and why he is here (his royal/suffering servant mission). Note how in his baptism and forty-day testing Jesus steps into the role of Israel (= through the Red Sea followed by forty years in the desert) and foils Satan with passages from Deuteronomy 6 and 8, precisely at points where Israel failed the test; thus the (now humble) Divine Warrior wins the first round against the enemy.

- **4:12–7:29** ***The Proclamation of the Kingdom***

The *narrative* portion of part 1 is very brief: Starting in Galilee of the Gentiles, Jesus gathers disciples, proclaims the good news of the kingdom, and heals the sick (note the summary nature of 4:23–25; the first actual "miracle stories" appear in the next section).

The *discourse* in this case is by far the best known. Set in the context of a mountain (as Moses on Sinai), the new Torah (teaching from the law) is the carefully structured Sermon on the Mount, much of which you will recognize even if you have never read Matthew before. The collection emphasizes first the "gospel" setting of the discourse (5:3–16, nine beatitudes, plus affirmations of God's people being salt and light).

The rest instructs the disciples on the new righteousness (the way of living in the kingdom), setting it in the context of “fulfilling” the Law and Prophets (5:17) and going beyond that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law (traditionally “scribes”) in every way—especially ethical life over against the scribes (5:21–48) and the three religious duties of the Pharisees, namely, almsgiving, prayer, and fasting (6:1–18).

These are followed by admonitions to single-hearted trust in God, which renders life in the kingdom as without anxiety (6:19–34), to just treatment of others (7:1–12), and to obedience (7:13–27). Note the conclusion in 7:28–29, “When Jesus had finished saying these things.”

- **8:1–10:42** ***The Power and Mission of the Kingdom***

The *narrative* portion of part 2 is dominated by eight miracle stories (that contain nine actual miracles). Notice how these stories emphasize the power of the kingdom, beginning with mercy for an outcast (8:1–4) and a Gentile (8:5–13), and they include triumph over the raging sea and over demons. And so the humble Divine Warrior wins round two against Satan. Included also are three short narratives that in turn illustrate the cost of discipleship (8:18–22) and the beginning of opposition (9:9–17); note especially the citation from Hosea 6:6, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice” (Matt 9:13), in the context of opposition. A nearly identical summary (9:35–38) to what you read in 4:23–25 sets the stage for the second discourse.

The *discourse* in this section is set in the context of Jesus’ sending out of the Twelve (10:1–14)—the workers sent out “into his harvest field” (9:37–38). But as the collection of sayings proceeds (beginning with 10:17), you will see that they speak primarily to the church’s later mission in the world, especially anticipating the rough reception those who carry on the mission of Jesus are going to experience in days to come. Note how the summarizing statement begins the next section (11:1a).

- **11:1–13:52** *Questioning of and Opposition to Jesus and the Kingdom*

In the *narrative* part of this section, be looking for the rough reception that Jesus himself experienced as he is both questioned and opposed by “this generation” (11:1–19; 12:1–14). Note how these two narratives bracket Jesus’ judgment on unrepentant Israel (11:20–24) and his invitation to the humble, the “little children” who are oppressed by the burden of Pharisaism (11:25–30). And note how Matthew includes a second time the citation of Hosea 6:6, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice” (Matt 12:7), again in the context of opposition.

The opposition is seen as “fulfillment” regarding Jesus as Isaiah’s suffering servant (12:15–21; citing Isa 42:1–4, the first of the servant songs). This is followed by two more narratives of opposition (Matt 12:22–45, God’s stronger man has come and bound the strong man and is plundering his house [the Divine Warrior theme again], and one affirming the humble poor who follow Jesus and do God’s will [12:46–50]).

You will recognize the *discourse* to be made up of seven parables (13:1–52). Note their generally common thread—instructing the disciples on the mixed reception of the kingdom in the world, which will be made evident at the end, while two of them (13:44–46) emphasize the surpassing worth of the kingdom. Again, watch how the opening sentence of the next section serves to summarize this discourse.

- **13:53–18:35** *Opposition to and Confession of Jesus*

As you read the *narrative* portion of part 4 (13:53–17:27), watch for the ways it further illustrates preceding themes (varied responses to Jesus from ch. 13) while at the same time gains momentum toward the final week in Jerusalem.

It begins with the rejection of God’s prophets (Jesus in his hometown, 13:53–58; John the Baptist by Herod, 14:1–12), followed by two mighty deeds

(14:13–36). Matthew then sets controversy with the Pharisees (15:1–20) in contrast with the faith of a Gentile woman (15:21–28).

Note how a second feeding miracle (15:29–39) leads to Jesus’ being tested by the Pharisees and Sadducees (16:1–4), which in turn leads Jesus to warn his disciples against their teaching (vv. 5–12), all of which leads to the climactic moment in verses 13–20, when the disciples confess Jesus as the Messiah. This leads in turn to their being let in on what is to come—Jesus’ death in Jerusalem (vv. 21–23)—which in turn leads to special instruction on discipleship (vv. 24–28), while three of them see his resurrection glory in advance (17:1–13).

Another triumph over demons provides for teaching on faith (17:14–21), followed by a second prediction of Jesus’ death (vv. 22–23) and his announcement that his followers are exempt from temple regulations (vv. 24–27).

Note how the *discourse* in this section (ch. 18) picks up the discipleship theme from the preceding narrative, being singularly concerned with relationships within the believing community. After establishing the nature of discipleship (God’s “little ones,” the humble poor), Matthew includes instructions—not causing the little ones to stumble (vv. 6–9), seeking the wandering ones (vv. 10–14), dealing with sin against one another (vv. 15–20), and forgiveness (vv. 21–35). Again note how the first sentence in the next section concludes this discourse.

- **19:1–25:46** *Jerusalem Receives and Rejects Her King*

Be watching here as the *narrative* portion of this final section (19:1–22:46) puts Jesus first in “the region of Judea” (19:1) and then in Jerusalem itself (21:1), which Jesus enters for the events of the final week. You will observe that the narratives in the first half (chs. 19–20) continue the themes of opposition and discipleship. After opposing the Pharisees’ easy view of divorce (19:1–12), the childlike nature of discipleship is reinforced over against the rich, who find it difficult to enter the kingdom (vv. 13–15, 16–26).

This leads to further instruction on discipleship—the “last” will be “first” in the kingdom (19:27–30); they are the undeserving who receive mercy, to the consternation of those who consider themselves worthy (20:1–16). Yet the disciples are still not fully on board, as a third passion prediction (vv. 17–19) is followed by a desire for positions of authority in the kingdom (vv. 20–24). Jesus responds by assuming the role of the suffering servant (vv. 25–28), which they are to model.

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus heals two blind men (20:29–34; the eyes of the blind are opened, while those who see will be shown to be blind). Then Jesus presents himself to Israel as its long-awaited King (21:1–11, fulfilling Zech 9:9 and Ps 118:25–26) and marks off the temple as his own (Matt 21:12–17; cf. Mal 3:1–4). You will see that most of the rest of this narrative (Matt 21:23–22:46) is a series of “conflict stories” interspersed with parables, which together illustrate the clash over Jesus’ authority that will lead to his execution. Note especially the role that Psalms 118 and 110 play in these events.

The *discourse* that follows is prophetic, first announcing judgment on the teachers of the law and the Pharisees (23:1–39), after which Jesus leaves the temple (“your house is left to you desolate,” 23:38) and pronounces judgment against Jerusalem (24:1–28) in light of the end itself (vv. 29–35), calling for watchfulness and service on the part of his followers (24:36–25:46).

- **26:1–28:20** *The King Is Tried, Crucified, and Raised*

Here you come to the climax of the Gospel—the final rejection of Jesus in Jerusalem (26:1–27:66), including the trial, denial, crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus. Note Matthew’s interest in two events at Jesus’ death that mark the end of the old and the beginning of the new: (1) The temple curtain was torn in two, and (2) some holy people from the former era were raised to life (27:51–53).

But the conclusion offers hope for the future: “He is not here; he has risen, just as he said” (28:1–10). After noting an alternative report that was

circulating among the Jews who opposed Matthew's church (vv. 11–15), he concludes with the commissioning of the disciples and the affirmation that all authority belongs to the risen Lord, who is still present with us to the end of the age as we continue to carry out their commission from him (vv. 16–20).

What a wonderful way to begin the New Testament part of God's story—of his saving a people for his Name through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and sending them into the world to be the bearers of his Good News and to make disciples from all the nations, thus fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant!¹

¹ Fee, G. D., & Stuart, D. K. (2002). [*How to read the Bible book by book: a guided tour*](#) (pp. 269–276). Zondervan.

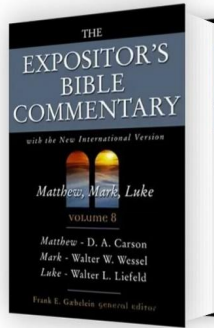
Resources



Semi-technical Evangelical

The Gospel of Matthew

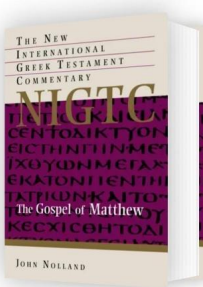
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by R. T. France



Semi-technical Evangelical

Matthew

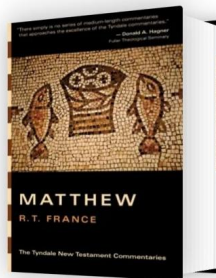
in Expositor's Bible Commentary
by D. A. Carson



Technical Evangelical

The Gospel of Matthew

in New International Greek Testament Commentary
by John Nolland



Non-technical Evangelical

Matthew

in Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
by R. T. France

CARE Group

Meeting Guide

Introduction

CARE Group meetings have four components. They are:

C = Community and Care for one another

A = Adoration in worship and prayer

R = Renewal of spiritual life through applying God's word

E = Engage to serving and outreach

Typically, the duration of CG meetings is around 90mins. Here is a general breakdown of each component. Duration may vary depending on stage of the CG.



Community

(Group Building – 10mins)

- Help newcomers feel at ease and welcome.
- Help members bond with a sense of belonging.
- Help members transit to today's CG meeting agenda.



Adoration

(Worship – 10mins)

- Glorify God.
- Encourage one another to see the greatness of God.



Renewal

(Bible Study – 45mins sharing + 20mins small group prayer)

- Encourage life change by applying God's word.
- Cultivate passion for God and passion for the lost.



Engagement

(Serve / Outreach – 5mins)

- Spur one another to serve and reach out.
- Excite members to embrace their role and calling.

The CG meeting guide provides Group Building activities (Community) and worship songs (Adoration) relevant to the respective CG meetings.

You may come up with your own activities and songs if you wish.

For more icebreaker resources, please access here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1usMYWx1GIAWqbAwQ6ab4XkTZ_tJMeWSi/view?usp=sharing

Or scan the QR code below



Spiritual Growth Inventory and Plan (GRIP)

Preamble

As a local church, we understand our mission as “To glorify God by being disciples in a disciple-making community of Jesus Christ.” This means that as a community, we continually seek to establish and equip one another, as well as evangelise others winsomely to be followers of Jesus. But how does a disciple look like? How do we know whether we have hit the mark?

Well, there are at least four integral aspects of a disciple of Jesus:

1. Head (knowledge and wisdom);
2. Heart (conviction and character);
3. Hands (life skills); and
4. Feet (relationships).

While these are four different aspects, they are also very much integrated. In this regard, we seek to develop each aspect in a holistic manner. We encourage our believers to be taking personal ownership of their spiritual formation and growth and the church seeks to work alongside the disciple to provide the community and the resources for such nurturing.

Of course, each of us is at different stages of our spiritual formation. Some of us are new disciples, while others are maturing disciples. Although we know we will never become fully mature on this side of heaven, it is still our goal – to be fully mature disciples of Jesus.

How does a maturing disciple look like?

A *maturing* or *growing* disciple is someone who is a follower of Jesus Christ and who is keen about his spiritual well-being or spiritual formation. Spiritual formation is a lifelong process of becoming more like Christ, reflecting more and more of his image in every aspect of our lives. Jonathan Edwards, the great eighteenth-century Puritan preacher and leader of the Great Awakening, did a weekly self-check, summing up how he was doing and seeking God's help in the process of a growing number of personal resolutions. At the age of seventeen he penned twenty-one resolutions by which he would live his life. While it doesn't take twenty-one resolutions for us to live a spiritually transformed life, it certainly requires that we resolve to daily attend to the state of our souls.

How do we know that we are indeed growing as disciples? Well, growing disciples are fundamentally marked by a deep desire to: i) love God; and ii) love others (believers and pre-believers). In turn these are evidenced by the fruit one produces in one's life (such as a godly character; God-honouring lifestyles and relationships, winsome demeanour, etc).

In order to produce such fruit, one is totally dependent on the Holy Spirit. Yet at the same time, one needs to cultivate suitable spiritual disciplines and practices so as to allow the Spirit to undertake His transformative work. Some specific characteristics of a disciple include:

1. Surrenders and submits to God in worship
2. Studies and applies God's Word
3. Relies on God in prayerfulness
4. Grows interdependently in community
5. Serves joyfully within and without the church
6. Relates winsomely to pre-believers
7. Lives out life's vocation faithfully
8. Seeks to make other disciples intentionally

Incidentally, these characteristics are consistent with the **Core Values** and **Mission** of the Church, which expresses our aspirations of

commitments to worship; the Word of God; grow spiritually; prayer; build godly families; strengthen biblical community; serve; share the gospel; and make other disciples of Christ.

So am I a maturing disciple?

A Disciple's Spiritual Growth Inventory & Plan (**GRIP**)

In order to assist you take stock of your personal spiritual progress and where God wants you to work on next in your life, this self-administered inventory has been designed. Sections 1 - 5 relates to how we grow. Section 6 relates to how we serve and Sections 7 - 8 to how we reach out to pre-believers and reproduce as disciple-makers.

To make use of this **GRIP** well, please note the following:

1. We encourage a sincere honesty and 'sober judgement' before God to "know where I am as a disciple."
2. In **Part II**, we encourage you to review the questionnaire and plan simple action steps in order to help you grow.
3. We encourage you to share these action steps with other mature Christian(s), who can pray for you and keep you accountable.
4. **GRIP does not** measure how spiritual you are. It is not designed to be an exhaustive or conclusive spiritual "thermometer." It is meant to be used as a tool and guide to ascertain where we have grown or need to grow. It is also a helpful tool for monitoring your own spiritual development and growth when you look back at your previous GRIPs.

We invite you to commit this process to the Lord in prayer. Please begin when you are ready.

Part I INVENTORY EXERCISE: Taking Stock

Instruction: Go through the questions and rate yourself between the score of 1 to 5. In order to have a true assessment of yourself, try not to take more than 10 seconds to answer each question.

- 1 Never true of me
- 2 Seldom true of me (*just beginning*)
- 3 Sometimes/ occasionally true of me
- 4 Often/ usually true of me (*getting going*)
- 5 Always true of me (*well developed*)

Or you can take the test online via <https://tbcgrip.netlify.app> or scan the QR code.



1. Surrenders and submits to God in worship	Score
a. I constantly evaluate my life and submit every area to Christ as my Lord and Master.	
b. I live daily with the assurance that God the Father loves me and will provide for me.	
c. I worship God daily through personal adoration and praise of Him.	
d. I attend the weekly worship service on Saturday/ Sunday.	
e. I give a portion of my income to God cheerfully and sacrificially as part of worship.	
f. I am conscious of my brokenness and regularly examine myself to repent of my sins.	
g. I seek to obey God by doing what He wants me to do, even when it is not my wish.	
TOTAL	

2. Studies and applies God's Word**Score**

a. I read the Bible and journal what God says through the Word daily.	
b. I meditate on and memorize God's Word regularly.	
c. I systematically study and conscientiously apply the Scriptures regularly.	
d. I have a good grasp of the books of the Bible (in both Old & New Testament).	
e. I know what I believe (doctrines) about the Christian faith.	
f. I am often challenged by Scriptures to live faithfully to God in the world.	
g. I take comfort/ instructions from Scriptures when I face struggles/ concerns of life.	
TOTAL	

3. Relies on God in prayerfulness**Score**

a. I rely on God daily through time in prayer for myself, others and the church.	
b. I thank God frequently for His faithfulness and answers to prayer.	
c. I pray regularly with other Christians, including at CG or church prayer meetings.	
d. I listen to God through the practice of extended silence and solitude weekly.	
e. I understand and practise Sabbath-keeping weekly.	
f. I understand and practise the principles of spiritual warfare.	
g. I pray according to the Spirit on different occasions with different requests.	
TOTAL	

4. Grows interdependently in community**Score**

a. I feel cared for by the church community (e.g. connecting through visits and calls.)	
b. I feel comfortable to share my personal issues with someone in the church.	
c. I am regular in attendance at a CARE Group.	
d. I visit or connect with a few other believers regularly to encourage them.	
e. I am able to resolve conflicts biblically and lovingly within my CARE Group.	
f. I am prepared to or do speak truth lovingly into the lives of my spiritual friends.	
g. I welcome others to speak truth into my life or ask about my mental health.	
TOTAL	

5. Lives out life's vocation faithfully**Score**

a. I put God's calling for me as a spouse, parent and/ or child as first priority over work.	
b. I pray for and/ or with my family every week.	
c. I spend extended personal time with my spouse, kids and/or parents every week. *	
d. I spend time teaching my children about God every week. *	
e. I enjoy what I do at my workplace/ school as God's intended station for me. **	
f. I seek to contribute positively to my workplace/ school through Christian values. **	
g. I seek to reach out to my colleagues/ schoolmates through my conduct and speech.	
TOTAL	

* Those without kids/ spouse, please put '3.'

** For homemakers, your "office" would refer to your home.

6. Serves joyfully within and without the church**Score**

a. I know my spiritual gift(s) and preferred area(s) of ministry.	
b. I regularly exercise my spiritual gift(s) to serve within or without the church.	
c. I feel refreshed and connected with God through my service.	
d. I am committed to serve in 1-3 areas in the church. #	
e. I serve joyfully and humbly, as an expression of love for God.	
f. I am well equipped with needed skills to be effective in my area(s) of service.	
g. I am willing to step out of the comfort zone to serve in any area of need.	
TOTAL	

if you are not serving or serving in more than 3 areas in the church, your score should be low as you may be over-extending yourself, which may lead to burn out.

7. Relates winsomely to pre-believers**Score**

a. I am conscious about having a good testimony with pre-believers.	
b. I am praying for the salvation of a few pre-believing friends/ family members.	
c. I know how to share the Gospel and/ or my personal testimony in a simple way.	
d. I share the Gospel with non-Christians when opportunity arises.	
e. I am actively involved in our church's outreach in the Good Neighbour Initiatives.	
f. I am able to nurture a new believer to grow spiritually.	
g. I am regularly involved in praying, giving and/or going for missions work overseas.	
TOTAL	

8. Seeks to make other disciples intentionally**Score**

a. I meet with a peer or mentor regularly to be discipled and to seek spiritual guidance.	
b. I am equipped to disciple others personally.	
c. I pray for the people I am helping to grow and nurture as disciples.	
d. I spend time regularly helping one or a few disciples grow in Jesus Christ.	
e. I encourage and challenge these disciples to in turn, nurture other disciples for Christ.	
f. I help them work through questions and difficulties in their disciple-making process.	
g. I help these disciples become intentional in helping others make other disciples.	
TOTAL	

EVALUATIONKEY

The questions you have answered cover eight characteristics of a disciple's life. The score of these areas will indicate what action(s) you need to take for each area. Besides the absolute scores, you may also want to compare each category with the Scores of the **GRIP** you have done previously to see how you have grown. ***You are encouraged to share with or get assistance from any one of the church staff team members, church leaders, CARE Group leaders.***

1. Surrenders and submits to God in worship

- Score: 28-35** Thank God that you seem to have put Christ as the Lord of your life and it is expressed by constant surrender to and worship of the Lord in your daily life.
- Score: 21-27** You have committed yourself to the Lord but there is room for growth. You may want to work on one aspect of this area in the coming year.
- Score: 0-20** The worship and lordship of Christ in your life seems to be weak. Examine your life in this area and start working on one weak aspect in this area.

If you are not sure of your salvation or whether you have been saved, we encourage you to talk to an older Christian about your assurance of faith in Christ

2. Studies and applies God's Word

- Score: 28-35** Thank God that you seem to have put Christ as the Lord of your life and it is expressed by constant surrender to and worship of the Lord in your daily life.
- Score: 21-27** You have committed yourself to the Lord but there is room for growth. You may want to work on one aspect of this area in the coming year.
- Score: 0-20** The worship and lordship of Christ in your life seems to be weak. Examine your life in this area and start working on one weak aspect in this area. Be sure to keep a regular daily devotional time with God.

3. Relies on God in prayerfulness

- Score: 28-35** Be encouraged that there is a deep dependence on God. Consider encouraging others in their prayer lives by praying with them, especially new disciples, to help them grow in this area.
- Score: 21-27** There is some room for improvement in this area. You can work on one aspect of your prayer life. You can start by keeping a personal prayer journal or start attending CG or Church Prayer Meetings regularly.
- Score: 0-20** It is likely you have not been consistent in your prayer life. You may want to make plans to spend regular time each day in prayer. Look out for resources such as Prayer Cards that will be made available from time to time.

4. Grows interdependently in community

- Score: 28-35** Celebrate that God has given you a wonderful community! Do encourage others to grow with you, especially those who have yet to find deep spiritual friendships.
- Score: 21-27** You are on the way to experiencing great community! It takes risks and courage but be encouraged to explore going deeper with your CARE Group.
- Score: 0-20** To grow as a healthy disciple, you need to be in Christian community, where you are blessed by and blessing others, all at the same time. Consider some of the following suggestions in the community toolbox.

5. Lives out life's vocation faithfully

- Score: 28-35** We are so glad that you have taken God's calling for you seriously. Continue to depend on God as you seek to fulfil God's purpose for your life, especially in your family and vocation
- Score: 21-27** You are beginning to enjoy God's calling for you in your roles. Persevere in growing in your roles as spouse, parent, child and/ or employer/ employee or student.
- Score: 0-20** Perhaps you need to re-assess your commitment to your family and your work. Are there any issues in the home or the vocation that are bothering you? Please feel free to seek help from your spiritual friends or any staff or leaders.

6. Serves joyfully within and without the church

- Score: 28-35** Praise the Lord for your willingness to serve Him. Keep up the good work but be careful of burnout through over-extension! Watch your own devotional life.
- Score: 21-27** We encourage you to consider serving actively in an area of your giftedness in the church. Seek to find your area of passion. For assistance, talk to any of the church staff or CARE Group leaders.
- Score: 0-20** You may need to understand better the importance of service and to have some practical help to know where and how to serve. Consider the following suggestions in the Toolbox.

7. Relates winsomely to pre-believers

- Score: 28-35** Keep up the good work! Continue to reach out to pre-believers for Christ and watch how God is going to impact the lives of those you are reaching.
- Score: 21-27** Is there an aspect you can improve on? Do not be discouraged and keep pressing on in. Consider joining an evangelism workshop/training in church to help you improve your outreach skills.
- Score: 0-20** We are all called to reaching the lost. It can start with the people around you, including your family members, colleagues, friends. Consider the following suggestions in the Toolbox and begin the exciting journey of leading others to Christ.

8. Seeks to make other disciples intentionally

- Score: 28-35** Thank God that He has enabled you to obey the command of Christ to make disciples. Keep up the great work as a disciple maker! Encourage others who are also seeking to grow in this area. We would love to hear your story and experience in nurturing others.
- Score: 21-27** Persevere in the Great Commission of making disciples of Jesus. We encourage you to continue to seek Him in this call. Consider one or two areas in the Toolbox that will

deepen your practice of disciple-making. Feel free to connect with and seek help from other disciple makers or any pastoral staff members.

Score: 0-20

Fully developed spiritual maturity involves obeying the Great Commission to make other disciples of Jesus Christ. We encourage you to consider the following suggestions in the Toolbox.

PLANNING EXERCISE:

Goal Setting

Important note: As you consider growing in the eight areas described in this inventory, it is important to focus on 1-2 areas at a time, so as not to be overwhelmed. In these 1-2 areas, pick out 1-2 suggestions in the Toolbox that may interest and help you, and persevere in them. You are encouraged to share with or get assistance from any one of the church staff team members, church leaders, CARE Group leaders.

We have added a brand new toolbox for each of the 8 areas, with resources that will be helpful for your growth. These toolboxes can be accessed by scanning the QR code.



Look through all the above areas that need improvement and ask yourself these questions:

1. What are one or two areas in the above Inventory exercise that I am most encouraged/ affirmed by?

2. What are the one or two areas I am concerned about from this Inventory exercise?

3. What are the areas that you would like to trust God to help you grow in for the coming season? How are you going to do it?

Characteristic	Goal (Be specific and measurable)	Date to complete

4. Write a prayer to God. It could include thanksgiving to God for helping you grow, or your desire to grow in specific areas – both your faith and work goals. This is a record of your commitment to and faith in God to grow spiritually.



Study 2

Matthew 1:1-2:23

The King's Beginnings

Main Point:

Matthew's account of Jesus' birth and early years reveals Him as the long-awaited Messiah and Immanuel, "God with us," who fulfills Old Testament prophecies and brings salvation to all people.

Main Purpose:

To inspire believers to recognize Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promises and to embrace Him as the King and Savior who enters human history to be among us and redeem us.

I. Personal Study

Matthew 1:1-17

The Genealogy of Jesus

Observation:

1. What is significant about the names included in Jesus' genealogy?
2. How is Jesus connected to both Abraham and David, and why is this important?

Interpretation:

1. Why does Matthew include figures like Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba in this genealogy? How does their presence impact our understanding of Jesus' family line?
2. How does this genealogy demonstrate God's unfolding plan and faithfulness?

Application:

1. Reflect on your own family story or background. How has God worked in unexpected ways to bring about His purposes?
2. What does Jesus' genealogy teach you about God's acceptance of people from all walks of life?

Matthew 1:18-25

The Birth of Jesus

Observation:

1. How does the angel's message to Joseph reveal Jesus' identity and mission?
2. What names are given to Jesus in this passage, and what do they signify?

Interpretation:

1. How does the name “Immanuel” deepen our understanding of who Jesus is?
2. What is Joseph's role in this story and what does his response teach us about faith and obedience?

Application:

1. How does Jesus as “Immanuel” bring comfort or assurance to you in your daily life?
2. Consider a current dilemma or challenge in your life. How can you, like Joseph, respond with trust and obedience to God’s guidance?

Matthew 2:1-12

The Visit of the Magi

Observation:

1. Who are the Magi, and why are they looking for Jesus?
2. What is Herod’s response to hearing about the birth of a new “king”?

Interpretation:

1. What is the significance of the Magi in this account? How does their visit point to Jesus’ mission?

2. How are we to understand the Magi and Herod's contrasting reaction to Jesus? How might this prepare us for the way people will respond to Jesus?

Application:

1. Like the Magi, how can you intentionally seek Jesus in your life? What are the "treasures" you can give to Him?
2. Who are those who are distant from the Gospel in your life? What step can you take to share Jesus with them?

Matthew 2:13-23

The Flight to Egypt and Return to Nazareth

Observation:

1. How does God protect Jesus and His family through these events?
2. What Old Testament prophecies does Matthew cite, and why?

Interpretation:

1. How does the story of the flight to Egypt and return fulfil Old Testament prophecies?
2. What parallel do you see between Jesus and Moses, and how does this shape our understanding of Jesus' role?

Application:

1. Reflect on a time when God provided protection or guidance in your life. How did that experience shape your faith?
 2. How can remembering God’s past faithfulness help you face future challenges with trust?
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II. CG Meeting Guide

Community

(Group Building – 10 mins)

Icebreaker: Share a story of a difficult but positive journey you once took – where did you go? Why was it difficult? Why was it such a positive journey in the end?

Transition: As we begin studying the book of Matthew, let us reflect on the journey Jesus took to come into our world so that God’s promises might be fulfilled, and he might make a way for us to know God.

Adoration (Worship – 10 mins)

1. “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (Traditional)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JpvW9FU_Rg
2. “King of Kings” by Hillsong Worship (Contemporary)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Of5lcFWiEpg>

Renewal

(Bible Study + Small Group Prayer – 45 mins)

1. What does Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1:1-17 show us about His identity and purpose?

2. Consider the title “Immanuel” given to Jesus. How does knowing Jesus is “God with us” make a difference to the way you relate with Him?

3. The Magi’s journey demonstrates the lengths people will go to seek and honor Jesus. What steps can you take to pursue Jesus and honor Him in your life? In your life, who are those who are distant from Jesus but who need the Gospel?

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4. Reflect on a difficult season in which you needed God’s protection or guidance, as Mary and Joseph did in Matthew 2:13-23. How did that experience deepen your faith?

Pray in Small Groups:

1. Share a way you have experienced Jesus as Immanuel in your life recently.
2. Give thanks to God with one another and pray that each member may experience King Jesus more through the study of Matthew this year.

Participant's Notes

In Matthew 1-2, the Gospel opens with Jesus' genealogy, birth, and early years, establishing Him as the long-awaited Messiah and Immanuel, "God with us." Through each story and fulfilled prophecy, Matthew demonstrates that Jesus is the promised King who has come to redeem His people and bring God's presence into the world. These chapters reveal that Jesus' arrival was not only for the people of Israel but would extend to all nations, fulfilling God's promises to bless the whole world through His chosen people.

Matthew 1:1-17

The Genealogy of Jesus

- Jesus' Identity and Mission: The genealogy links Jesus to Abraham and David, showing that He is both a fulfillment of God's covenant with Israel and a rightful heir to the throne.
- Unexpected Figures: The inclusion of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba highlights God's grace and the way He works through unexpected and broken people. It reveals that Jesus comes from a line that includes Gentiles and those often marginalized, emphasizing that His mission is to reach all peoples.

Key Takeaway: The genealogy emphasizes God's faithfulness across generations and sets the stage for Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promises. This family line reflects a kingdom built on grace and redemption, welcoming all who come to Him in faith.

Matthew 1:18-25

The Birth of Jesus

- God's Presence with Us: The angel's message to Joseph reveals that Jesus will be called Immanuel, meaning "God with us." This title emphasizes that Jesus is not just a teacher or prophet but God incarnate, bringing divine presence and salvation.
- Jesus as Savior: The name "Jesus" means "The Lord saves," and the angel explains that He will "save His people from their sins" (1:21). His mission is clear from birth—He is sent to deliver humanity from sin and reconcile them to God.

Key Takeaway: Jesus' birth fulfils prophecy and confirms God's faithfulness to His people. His presence as "Immanuel" brings comfort, while His mission as Savior offers the hope of forgiveness and restored relationship with God.

Matthew 2:1-12

The Visit of the Magi

- Universal Mission: The Magi, who come from the East, are Gentiles seeking to worship the newborn King. Their journey signifies that Jesus' reign extends beyond Israel, drawing people from all nations.
- The Contrast with Herod: Herod's reaction—fear and hostility—contrasts sharply with the Magi's response of worship and reverence. Herod sees Jesus as a threat to his earthly power, while the Magi honour Him as a true King.
- Gifts for the King: The Magi's gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh symbolize Jesus' royal identity, His divine nature, and foreshadow His sacrificial death.


Key Takeaway: The visit of the Magi highlights Jesus' mission to reach all nations. Their worship underscores the significance of seeking and honouring Jesus as King, while Herod's response reminds us of the resistance His Kingdom often faces from worldly powers.

Matthew 2:13-23

The Flight to Egypt and Return to Nazareth

- God's Protection: In response to Herod's attempt to kill Jesus, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus flee to Egypt. God protects the family, guiding them back only when it is safe. This emphasizes that God's plans cannot be thwarted by earthly rulers.
- Fulfilment of Prophecies: Matthew repeatedly notes that these events fulfil Old Testament prophecies. Jesus' early years echo the journey of Israel, drawing a parallel between His life and the history of God's people. The flight to Egypt and return parallel Israel's own exodus, positioning Jesus as a new Moses who will lead His people to salvation.

Key Takeaway: God's guidance and protection are evident throughout Jesus' early years, reminding us that God is sovereign and faithful. These events affirm that Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promises, guiding and delivering His people in every season.



Study 3

Matthew 3:1-4:25

The King's Preparation

Main Point:

Jesus is prepared for His public ministry, affirmed as God's beloved Son, and begins His mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God.

Main Purpose:

To recognize Jesus' authority and purpose, and to follow Him in repentance, trust, and readiness to live out His Kingdom.

I. Personal Study

Matthew 3:1-12

John the Baptist's Call to Repentance

Observation:

1. What does John the Baptist's message emphasize about repentance and the Kingdom of Heaven?
 2. How does John describe the coming Messiah and His role (3:11-12)?
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Interpretation:

1. What does it mean to "produce fruit in keeping with repentance" (3:8)?
What does this tell us about genuine repentance?

2. What does John's description of Jesus as the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire mean? What does it suggest about Jesus' mission?

Application:

1. Reflect on your own life. What has been the fruit of your repentance? What areas continue to need realignment with God's values?
2. What steps can you take to cultivate a heart that continually allows the Holy Spirit to search you and remove that which is not of God?

Matthew 3:13-17

The Baptism of Jesus

Observation:

1. How does Jesus respond to John's reluctance to baptize Him, and what reason does He give?
2. What happens immediately after Jesus' baptism, and how does God affirm His identity?

Interpretation:

1. Why do you think Jesus chooses to be baptized, even though He is sinless? How does this act of obedience model humility?

2. How does God’s declaration (“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased”) establish Jesus’ identity and authority?

Application:

1. In what ways can you respond to God’s call with humility and obedience, even if it requires unexpected steps?
2. How does knowing that Jesus is God’s beloved Son, yet willing to fully identify with us and fulfil his mission, encourage you in your own faith journey?

Matthew 4:1-11

The Temptation of Jesus

Observation:

1. What are the three specific temptations Satan presents to Jesus?
2. How does Jesus respond to each?

Interpretation:

1. How does each temptation challenge Jesus’ identity and purpose? Why does Satan target these aspects of His mission?
2. What does Jesus’ response reveal about the power and importance of God’s Word when we too face temptations?

Application:

1. Name an area of life where you face challenges or temptations. What does Scripture say about that situation?
 2. Reflect on a specific promise or truth in Scripture that you can hold onto as you face trials or temptations.
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Matthew 4:12-25

The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry

Observation:

1. What Old Testament prophecy does Jesus' move to Capernaum fulfil (4:14-16)?
 2. What is Jesus' message in 4:17 and how does it compare to John the Baptist's message (3:8)?
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Interpretation:

1. Why does Matthew emphasize the fulfilment of prophecy in Jesus' ministry?
2. What does Jesus' call His first disciples to do (4:18-22), and what does this reveal about the mission of His followers?

Application:

1. What does it mean for you to “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” How does this message impact your life at present?
 2. “At once they left their nets and followed him” (4:20) – how does this challenge or inspire you in how you follow Jesus daily?
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II. CG Meeting Guide

Community

(Group Building – 10 mins)

Icebreaker: Share about a time when you had to prepare for something important (e.g. a conference, an exam, an overseas trip). What did that preparation involve, and how did that preparation make a difference to your experience?

Transition: Today, we explore the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, seeing how He was prepared and tested to fulfil God’s mission. As we go through the study, consider how important it is to be prepared by God to serve His purposes.

Adoration

(Worship – 10 mins)

1. “Take My Life and Let It Be” (Traditional)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3gWwGDGgVA>
2. “The Potter’s Hand” by Hillsong (Contemporary)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-cc7YDnKV0>

Renewal

(Bible Study + Small Group Prayer – 45 mins)

1. What does John the Baptist's call to “produce fruit in keeping with repentance” mean for us today? How can repentance lead to a greater sense of readiness to follow God’s purpose in your life?

2. How does Jesus' baptism confirm His identity and mission as the Son of God? How does his baptism inspire confidence in following Him and trusting in His authority?

3. How does Jesus respond to each temptation (Matthew 4:1-11)? What does this teach us about the role of God’s Word in our own lives, especially during times of temptation?

4. How does Jesus’ call to His disciples to follow Him and become “fishers of men” challenge or inspire you? What “nets” or attachments do you need to leave behind to follow Jesus more wholeheartedly?

Pray in Small Groups:

1. In groups of 3-4: Share a lesson you are prompted to apply from today’s study into your life. What is one temptation you face in which you need the community to support and be accountable for you in?
2. Pray for one another to “produce fruit in keeping with repentance” and to faithfully apply the Word into their lives, especially in times of temptation.

Participant’s Notes

In Matthew 3-4, we witness the preparation of Jesus for His public ministry. This section includes the ministry of John the Baptist, who calls people to repentance, preparing the way for Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus’ baptism affirms His identity as God’s beloved Son, and His victory over Satan’s temptations in the wilderness demonstrates His obedience and authority. This preparation culminates in the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, where He calls His first disciples and proclaims the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 3:1-12

John the Baptist’s Call to Repentance

- Repentance and the Kingdom: John the Baptist’s message of repentance marks a turning point, calling people to prepare their hearts for the Kingdom of God. This message emphasizes that true repentance involves a changed heart and life.
- The Coming Judgment and Promise: John warns of God’s coming judgment but also points to the One who will baptize with the Holy

Spirit and fire, referring to Jesus as the promised Messiah who will purify and empower His people.

Key Takeaway: John's ministry prepares the way for Jesus, highlighting the need for repentance and readiness to receive the Messiah and live under His rule.

Matthew 3:13-17

The Baptism of Jesus

- Divine Affirmation and Identity: At Jesus' baptism, the heavens open, and God's voice declares, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." This moment affirms Jesus' identity and mission.
- Solidarity and Obedience: Jesus, though sinless, is baptized to identify with humanity and to fulfil all righteousness. This act of obedience demonstrates His commitment to God's plan.

Key Takeaway: Jesus' baptism affirms His identity as God's Son and serves as a model of obedience, calling us to respond to God's purposes with humility and dedication.

Matthew 4:1-11

The Temptation of Jesus

- Victory Over Temptation: Jesus faces and resists three temptations from Satan, each designed to distract Him from His mission. One targets the prioritisation of fleshly over spiritual desires, another the desire to be spectacular and popular, yet another to give in to idolatry as a justification to achieve one's mission. Jesus responds with Scripture, demonstrating the importance of reliance on God's Word.
- Faithfulness to God's Will: The temptations reveal Jesus' steadfast commitment to God's plan, showing that true obedience prioritizes God's will over personal gain or power.

Key Takeaway: Jesus' victory over temptation shows His faithfulness to God's purposes and the power of Scripture in overcoming trials. His

example encourages us to rely on God's Word and seek His will above all else.

Matthew 4:12-25

The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry

- Proclamation of the Kingdom: Jesus begins His public ministry with a call to "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." His message continues John's call for repentance but brings the good news of the Kingdom's arrival through His presence.
- Calling of the First Disciples: Jesus calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him, inviting them to become "fishers of men." This call emphasizes the importance of discipleship and joining Jesus in His mission of making disciples.
- Healing and Teaching: Jesus' authority is demonstrated through miracles and teaching, which draw people from all regions to hear His message and experience His power.

Key Takeaway: Jesus' ministry begins with a call to repentance, the formation of a community of disciples, and demonstrations of His authority and compassion, inviting all to experience the Kingdom of God.



Study 4

Matthew 5:1-7:29

The King's Manifesto

Main Point:

Jesus teaches His followers to live as citizens of the Kingdom, reflecting God's righteousness through transformed hearts, priorities, and choices.

Main Purpose:

To actively embody Kingdom values, aligning our lives with God's righteousness, thereby living out the Kingdom in our relationships, actions, and inner attitudes.

I. Personal Study

Matthew 5

Character and Conduct of God's People

Observation:

1. Who are blessed in the Kingdom of God (5:1-12)?
2. In verses 17-20, what does Jesus emphasize about the law and righteousness?

Interpretation:

1. What surprises you about who are blessed in the Kingdom of God? Why do you think such ones are blessed in God's Kingdom?
 2. What does it mean for our righteousness to "surpass that of the Pharisees"? How does this reveal about the transformation Jesus is seeking in His followers?
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Application:

1. Which quality from the Beatitudes (5:3-12) do you most desire in this season? Why?
 2. Jesus' teachings in 5:21-48 address issues such as anger, lust, integrity, love. What is a relationship you can put one of these teachings into practice?
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Matthew 6

Commitment and Concerns

Observation:

1. What does Jesus teach about the motives behind giving, prayer, and fasting (6:1-18)?
 2. How does Jesus contrast earthly and heavenly treasures (6:19-24)?
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Interpretation:

1. Why do you think Jesus cautions against public displays of righteousness (6:1-6)? How does “the Lord’s Prayer” (6:9-13) teach us about the priorities of a kingdom citizen’s spiritual life?
2. What does it mean to “seek first the kingdom of God” (6:33)? As Christ’s followers do this, in what way will “all these things be given to you as well”?

Application:

1. Identify one area where you are seeking approval from others (e.g., work, family, church). What would it look like to seek the Heavenly Father’s approval instead?
2. List down the worries that occupy your mind. What step can you take this week to surrender these concerns to God and deepen your trust His provision?

Matthew 7

Choices of the Kingdom People

Observation:

1. What contrasting images does Jesus use in this chapter?
2. How does Jesus describe the way we should treat others in 7:12?

Interpretation:

1. What do the contrasting images in this chapter teach us about the true nature of life in the Kingdom?
 2. What does it mean to build one's house on the "rock" of Jesus' words (7:24-27)?
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Application:

1. Reflect on a decision you are currently making. How does it align with Kingdom values, and how can you ensure it is grounded on Jesus' teachings?
 2. In your relationships, how can you practice humility and extend grace to others, applying the "Golden Rule" in 7:12?
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II. CG Meeting Guide

Community

(Group Building – 10 mins)

Icebreaker: Share with one another – what is one habit you have picked up lately that has made a difference in your life? Convince the others in the group to take up this habit for themselves!

Transition: Today, we explore how Jesus calls us to adopt a set of values, priorities and choices that are countercultural yet reflect life in the Kingdom. Prayerfully consider how these Kingdom values are reflected in the way Jesus lived, and ask Him to teach you to do likewise.

Adoration

(Worship – 10 mins)

1. “Seek Ye First” by Karen Lafferty (Traditional)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3S1wfXmYPw>
2. “Build my Life” by Pat Barrett (Contemporary)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xh86R7_w1_8
3. “Build Your Kingdom” by Rend Collective (Contemporary)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-4bEbk1m_c

Renewal

(Bible Study + Small Group Prayer – 45 mins)

1. What Kingdom value or teaching from Matthew 5-7 speaks to you most, and why?

2. List the ways the kingdom of God is different from the kingdom of this world. What do these contrasts teach us about the true nature of the kingdom of God?

3. How does “the Lord’s Prayer” (6:9-13) teach us about the priorities of a kingdom citizen’s spiritual life? How does Jesus’ instruction to “seek first the kingdom of God” (6:33) challenge the priorities and mindsets you presently have?

4. Think about an area of life where Jesus’ teachings challenge you to live differently (e.g., a relationship, a personal habit, or a concern). How can you apply a specific teaching in your life this week to embody Kingdom values?

Pray in small groups:

1. Share a Kingdom value or teaching you want to live out this week.
2. Pray for one another, that God will enable you to live out the teachings of Jesus in practical ways.

Participant's Notes

In Matthew 5-7, commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus presents the values, attitudes, and actions that characterize life in God's Kingdom. Here, Jesus redefines righteousness, contrasting the inward transformation He desires with the outward religiosity practiced by many of the Pharisees. He calls His followers to a deep, genuine commitment that goes beyond legalistic adherence to rules, challenging them to live in ways that reflect God's character and bring glory to Him.

Matthew 5

Kingdom Character and Conduct

In Matthew 5, Jesus begins with the Beatitudes (5:1-12), where He blesses attitudes that the world might view as weak or undesirable, such as humility, mercy, and purity. These qualities mark true Kingdom citizens, who are called to be salt and light (5:13-16) in a world that needs God's truth and love. Jesus then emphasizes the importance of a righteousness that surpasses superficial obedience, urging His followers to look at the heart behind actions.

- Contrast to the World's Values: Jesus elevates virtues that seem countercultural to our world, such as meekness and peace making. Through this, He highlights that the Kingdom of God operates on a different standard.
- True Righteousness: Jesus reframes the Mosaic law by addressing attitudes like anger, lust, and revenge, emphasizing that true righteousness is a matter of the heart, not mere outward compliance.

Key Takeaway: True Kingdom character is marked by humility, purity, and a heart that seeks peace and mercy. Jesus calls us to a higher standard of righteousness that focuses on the internal transformation rather than external observance.

Matthew 6

Kingdom Commitment and Priorities

In Matthew 6, Jesus shifts to teaching about devotion and priorities. He warns against practicing righteousness to gain approval from others, focusing instead on the audience of One – God alone. Jesus addresses giving, prayer, and fasting, emphasizing the importance of pure motives. He then contrasts the pursuit of earthly treasures with the pursuit of heavenly treasures, encouraging His followers to trust in God rather than be consumed by worry.

- Single-minded Devotion: Jesus calls His followers to pursue God with sincerity, without seeking recognition or approval from others. The Lord's Prayer (6:9-13), in particular, teaches us about the priorities of a kingdom citizen – seeking God as Father, glorifying His Name, asking for His will to be done, looking to Him for provision, seeking forgiveness for sins and help to forgive others and to not give in to temptation.
- Kingdom Priorities: By telling His followers to “seek first the kingdom of God” (6:33), Jesus redirects attention from material concerns to a life rooted in trust and reliance on God.

Key Takeaway: True devotion to God means seeking His Kingdom above all else, whether in the carrying out of religious practices or trusting that

He will provide for our needs. This commitment requires shifting our focus from worldly concerns to eternal priorities.

Matthew 7

Kingdom Choices and Relationships

In Matthew 7, Jesus addresses choices and relationships within the Kingdom. He warns against judgmental attitudes and hypocrisy, urging His followers to look at their own hearts before correcting others. He also presents the Golden Rule (7:12) as a guiding principle for treating others with grace and respect. Jesus concludes with a call to choose the narrow path and to build one's life on the firm foundation of His teachings.

- Golden Rule: Jesus encourages us to treat others as we want to be treated, a foundational principle that summarizes much of Kingdom ethics.
- Wise Choices: Jesus contrasts the wide gate with the narrow gate, and the wise builder with the foolish builder, emphasizing the importance of choosing a path of life wisely that align with His teachings.

Key Takeaway: Living as Kingdom people involves making wise choices, rooted in Jesus' teachings, and showing grace and humility in our relationships with others.



Study 5

Matthew 8:1-9:34

The King's Power

Main Point:

Jesus demonstrates His authority over sickness, nature, demons, and sin, revealing His identity as the powerful and compassionate King.

Main Purpose:

To inspire trust in Jesus as we see his greatness and goodness – greatness in His power and authority over all things, goodness in His compassion and willingness to restore lives.

I. Personal Study

Matthew 8:1-34

Jesus' Authority Over Sickness and Nature

Observation:

1. How does Jesus respond to each person who approaches Him for healing in this chapter (e.g., the leper, the centurion, Peter's mother-in-law)?
2. What specific actions or words demonstrate Jesus' authority over sickness and nature (8:23-27)?

Interpretation:

1. What do the backgrounds of the people Jesus healed (e.g., unclean, Gentile, woman) tell us about His character and the nature of His Kingdom?
2. How does the passage on the cost of following Jesus (8:18-22) fit in with the rest of this chapter? Why is Jesus able to make such demands of His disciples?

Application:

1. Reflect on an area of your life where you feel powerless. How can Jesus' authority over sickness and nature deepen Your trust in Him in that area?
2. Who are the marginalized and needy around you? How may you follow Jesus' example to bring wholeness to their lives?

Matthew 9:1-17

Jesus' Authority to Forgive Sins and Welcome Sinners

Observation:

1. What does Jesus say to the paralytic before healing him? How do the scribes respond to Jesus' words?
2. What are the different responses to Jesus having dinner at Matthew's house?

Interpretation:

1. Why do you think Jesus forgives the paralytic’s sins before healing him physically? What does this reveal about Jesus’ mission?
 2. Why do the teachers of the law and Pharisees take such issue with Jesus’ words and actions? What does Jesus’ response in 9:15-17 reveal about His Kingdom and His ministry?
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Application:

1. How does this passage encourage you to bring areas in need of spiritual healing or forgiveness to Jesus?
 2. Are there “old wineskins” in your life—habits, attitudes, or traditions—that may need to change to embrace the new work Jesus is doing?
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Matthew 9:18-34

Jesus’ Authority Over Death, Disability and Demons

Observation:

1. How does Jesus respond to Jairus’ request and the woman with the issue of blood?
 2. What does Jesus show He has authority over in His interactions with the girl who died, the two blind men, and the demon-possessed mute man?
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Interpretation:

1. What do these miracles teach us about the extent of Jesus' authority? What is Matthew trying to impress on Jewish minds regarding Jesus' identity?
 2. What is the role of faith in these miracles? Why is faith important in appropriating Jesus' healing?
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Application:

1. In what way does Jesus' authority over death, disability and demons comfort or challenge you?
 2. Where in your life do you need Jesus' intervention to grow in wholeness? Ask him to increase your faith to believe that He can and wants to make you whole.
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II. CG Meeting Guide

Community

(Group Building – 10 mins)

Icebreaker: Share about a time when someone went above and beyond to help you in a difficult situation. How did their actions impact you?

Transition: In today's passage, we see how Jesus goes above and beyond to bring healing, restoration, and hope, especially to those on the margins. Let's consider the depth of His power and heart for humanity, and allow the Spirit to teach us to trust that Jesus can likewise bring wholeness to all of our lives.

Adoration

(Worship – 10 mins)

1. “He Touched Me” by Bill Gaither (Traditional)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kg2_WdfvrfE
2. “Day by day “ by Carolina Sandell) (Traditional)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijZo-U1Zjj0>
3. “Jesus, Strong and Kind” by CityAlight (Contemporary)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zS9w_frp674

Renewal

(Bible Study + Small Group Prayer – 45 mins)

1. What aspect of Jesus' authority stands out to you most in these chapters? Why?

2. List out the people Jesus ministers to in these two chapters. Who are these people in Jewish society? What does Jesus' ministry to them teach us about life in the Kingdom?

3. How does the passage on the cost of following Jesus (8:18-22) fit in with the rest of the passages on Jesus' miracles? Who is Jesus shown to be and why is He able to make such demands of His disciples?

4. What role does faith play in the appropriating of Jesus' power to heal? Where in your life do you lack faith in Jesus? How can you more fully surrender to Jesus' authority and grow in your trust in His compassionate power?

Pray in small groups:

1. Share one area of life where you desire to trust in Jesus’ authority and compassion more deeply.
2. Pray for each other, asking God to help you respond in faith as you await the experience of His compassionate power.

Participants’ Notes

In Matthew 8:1-9:34, Jesus reveals His power and authority through a series of miracles and acts of compassion. As He heals the sick, calms the storm, drives out demons, and forgives sins, Jesus establishes His identity as the Messiah who not only has authority over the physical and spiritual realms but also extends compassionate care to the marginalized, the suffering, and the faithful. His actions challenge His followers to see Him as the ultimate source of wholeness and restoration and to respond by placing their faith in Him.

Throughout these chapters, Matthew emphasizes the importance of faith, highlighting the trust that many people place in Jesus as they come to Him for help. The faith of those who approach Him often results in transformation, both physical and spiritual. However, He also has his detractors in the form of the teachers of the law and Pharisees, who question His words and actions against their understanding of the Law.

Matthew 8

Jesus' Authority Over Sickness and Nature

- Authority over Sickness: Jesus heals a variety of individuals, from a leper to a Roman centurion's servant to Peter's mother-in-law. Each healing demonstrates His compassion and power, as He reaches out to individuals regardless of their social status or background.
- Authority over Nature: When Jesus calms the storm on the Sea of Galilee, He shows His control over creation. His disciples are astonished by His power, but Jesus challenges them to have faith rather than fear.

Key Takeaway: Jesus' actions show His willingness to restore those who are broken and rescue those in peril. His authority extends beyond physical healing to nature.

Matthew 9:1-17

Jesus' Authority to Forgive Sin and Welcome Sinners

- Forgiving and Healing the Paralytic: Jesus begins by forgiving the sins of a paralyzed man, a declaration that shocks the scribes who believe only God can forgive sins. Jesus then heals the man physically, demonstrating that He alone is able to restore both body and soul.
- Fellowship with Sinners: Jesus' calling of Matthew and subsequent dining with tax collectors and sinners demonstrate His ministry to the marginalized. His parables of the unshrunk cloth and old wineskins serve to illustrate how the Kingdom Jesus came to inaugurate is incompatible with old religious traditions of His day.

Key Takeaway: This passage emphasizes Jesus' mission of spiritual restoration. Beyond physical healing, Jesus came to extend forgiveness to sinners. Humility (as seen in the tax collectors, but not the Pharisees) is required to receive such forgiveness.

Matthew 9:18-34

Jesus' Authority Over Death, Disability and Demons

- Raising the Dead and Healing the Afflicted: Jesus raises Jairus's daughter from the dead and heals a woman who has been suffering for twelve years. These miracles demonstrate not only His compassion but His power over life and death.
- Authority over Demons: Jesus drives out demons, restoring the mental and spiritual health of those who are afflicted, demonstrating His authority over spiritual forces.

Key Takeaway: Jesus' actions here reveal the boundless extent of His power and His willingness to meet people at their points of greatest need, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual.

Matthew 9:35-10:42

The King's Mission

Main Point:

Jesus commissions His disciples to continue His mission, equipping and instructing them to proclaim the Kingdom with courage and dependence on God in the face of opposition.

Main Purpose:

To embrace the mission of Jesus as His disciples by sharing the good news, trusting God's provision and protection, and embracing the cost of discipleship.

I. Personal Study

Matthew 9:35-38

The Compassionate King and the Plentiful Harvest

Observation:

1. What does Jesus see when He looks at the crowds, and how does He respond?
2. How does Jesus describe the state of the harvest and the need for workers?

Interpretation:

1. Why does Jesus describe the crowds as “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd”? What does this reveal about Jesus?
 2. What does the “harvest” symbolize in this context, and why is it significant that Jesus calls His disciples to pray for workers in the harvest field?
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Application:

1. Who comes to mind when you think of “harassed and helpless”? What opportunities can you take to share the good news of Jesus with them?
 2. Spend some time praying for workers to be sent to various harvest fields – your circles, the church’s neighbourhood, the mission field.
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Matthew 10:1-15

Sending the Twelve

Observation:

1. What instructions and authority do Jesus give to the disciples as He sends them out?
 2. How are the disciples instructed to respond to those who do not welcome them?
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Interpretation:

1. Why does Jesus instruct the twelve to go to the lost sheep of Israel instead of the Gentiles?
2. Why does Jesus instruct the disciples to rely on God's provision rather than bringing extra supplies?

Application:

1. Think of a situation where you would have to completely rely on God's help to share the good news with someone.
2. How can you stay resilient in your efforts to share the faith, even when you encounter resistance or rejection?

Matthew 10:16-42

The Cost and Reward of Discipleship

Observation:

1. What are the difficulties Jesus says the disciples will face?
2. How does Jesus encourage His disciples to remain faithful despite the cost?

Interpretation:

1. Why does Jesus emphasize that following Him may bring division, even within families? What does this reveal about the nature of discipleship?
 2. How does Jesus' promise of reward encourage His followers to persevere, even in the face of trials?
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Application:

1. How do Jesus' warnings and promises in this passage apply to you?
 2. Who is someone you know who is facing opposition in his/her faith journey? How can you encourage him/her during this time?
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II. CG Meeting Guide

Community

(Group Building – 10 mins)

Icebreaker: Share about a time when it was difficult for you to share the good news with someone. What prompted you to do it and how did you press through the difficulty of doing it?

Transition: Today, we'll explore how Jesus sends His disciples on mission with instructions to depend fully on God and boldly proclaim His Kingdom. Let's reflect on what it means to embrace this mission as His followers today.

Adoration

(Worship – 10 mins)

1. “Here I Am, Lord” by Dan Schutte (Traditional)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6To65A6lhaY>
2. “Send Me Lord” by Matt Redman (Contemporary)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3B2UEj1ja8>
3. “I will follow” by Chris Tomlin (Contemporary)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loUZDf4KjLg>

Renewal

(Bible Study + Small Group Prayer – 45 mins)

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Jesus feel for the crowds in 9:35-38? How does this inspire you to view others around you?

2. Jesus sends His disciples to proclaim the Kingdom and heal (10:1, 7-8). What might this look like in your context today?

3. What are the warnings Jesus gives to His disciples regarding opposition to the Gospel? In what way are you experiencing such opposition today?

4. How does Jesus assure His disciples to persevere despite the opposition they will face? How are you encouraged by His words to keep bearing witness to Him?

5. What does it look like for you to “take up the cross” and follow Jesus in your daily life?

Pray in small groups:

1. Share one area where you feel called to step out in faith and embrace the mission Jesus has for you.
2. Pray for one another to rely on God’s provision and courageously live as Kingdom ambassadors.

Participants’ Notes

In Matthew 9:35–10:42, Jesus reveals His compassion for the crowds and commissions His disciples to participate in His mission. This section emphasizes the urgency of the harvest, the authority of Jesus, the challenges of discipleship, and the eternal rewards for faithfulness.

Matthew 9:35–38

The Compassionate King and the Plentiful Harvest

Jesus demonstrates His compassion for the harassed and helpless crowds by teaching, proclaiming the Kingdom, and healing. He recognises the lack of workers for the harvest and calls His disciples to pray for more laborers.

- **Jesus’ Compassion:** Jesus feels very deeply for Israel as he reflects on the shepherding vacuum that has caused God’s people to remain uncared for, both physically and spiritually. The language echoes Num. 27:17 and Ezek. 34:5 and anticipates a true Messiah-shepherd whom God will send to lead his people.

- The Harvest: The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, and the harvest is plentiful but requires faithful labourers. Jesus' instruction is for Christians of all ages – they must pray, call and send faithful men and women to reach the lost of their generation.

Key Takeaway: Jesus' heart for the lost compels us to pray for and participate in His mission.

Matthew 10:1–15

The King Commissions His Disciples

Jesus empowers the Twelve with authority to heal, cast out demons, and proclaim the message of the Kingdom. He instructs them to go to the lost sheep of Israel, relying on God's provision and the hospitality of others.

- Authority and Mission: Jesus shares His miracle-working authority with His disciples, entrusting them to continue His work.
- Dependence on God: The disciples are to travel light, trusting God to provide through others. All the resources they need to serve God freely will be given to them. In this way, the simplicity, austerity and urgency of the mission can be preserved.
- Responsiveness: Wherever they go, the disciples are to look for those open to their message and ministry, evidenced by the hospitality which will be shown to them. To give or return "peace" means to bless or retract a blessing from an individual or household. The destinies of people are based on their response to Jesus and his emissaries.

Key Takeaway: As Christ's followers, we are sent on His mission, empowered to be His witnesses, and called to trust in His provision.

Matthew 10:16–42

The Cost and Reward of Discipleship

Jesus warns His disciples of persecution and opposition, even from family members, as they bear witness to Him. He calls them to rely on the Holy Spirit, endure to the end, and place loyalty to Him above all else,

even family ties. He promises eternal life to those who lose their life for His sake and rewards to those who receive His messengers.

- Expectation of Persecution: Disciples must balance prudence with purity, being both shrewd in navigating hostility and blameless in their actions. When faced with opposition, disciples are promised that the Holy Spirit will provide the words they need. Jesus warns that persecution may come even from within families, as allegiance to Him divides relationships.
- Encouragement to Persevere: Jesus contrasts the temporary harm inflicted by humans with the eternal authority of God, urging disciples to fear Him alone. The disciple can persevere in the face of opposition knowing that God cares. His intimate knowledge of the disciples—down to the number of hairs on their heads—reassures them of their worth and His provision.
- Undivided Allegiance to Jesus: Those who publicly identify with Jesus, even under persecution, will be acknowledged by Him before the Father. Such identification with Jesus means bearing personal sacrifice, including the willingness to suffer rejection or loss. Those who surrender their desires and ambitions for the sake of Christ will find true life.
- Receiving God's Messengers: Receiving Jesus' disciples is equivalent to receiving Jesus Himself and, by extension, the Father. Even small acts of kindness, like offering a cup of cold water, are seen and rewarded by God.

Key Takeaway: Following Jesus involves challenges, but His presence and promises enable us to endure with faith and courage. The disciple who is truly devoted to Christ can trust in His promise of eternal reward.



Study 7

Matthew 11:1-12:50

The King Rejected

Main Point:

Jesus reveals the nature of His mission and the Kingdom of Heaven through His response to opposition, misunderstandings, and unbelief. He invites all who are weary to find rest in Him while exposing the hearts of those who reject His authority and truth.

Main Purpose:

To challenge readers to recognize Jesus as the promised Messiah, respond to Him in faith, and align their lives with the values of His Kingdom, even in the face of misunderstanding, rejection, and spiritual opposition.

I. Personal Study

Matthew 11:1–19

John the Baptist Doubts Jesus

Observation:

1. What does John the Baptist send his disciples to ask Jesus and how does Jesus respond (11:2-6)?
2. How does Jesus describe John's role and identity (11:7-15)?

Interpretation:

1. Why does John the Baptist doubt Jesus? How does Jesus' answer clarify who Messiah is? What does Jesus mean when He describes John the Baptist as the "greatest born of women" yet less than "the least in the kingdom of heaven" (11:11)?
 2. How does the parable of the children in the marketplace (11:16-19) reflect the people's response to John and Jesus?
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Application:

1. When was a time you doubted Jesus and why? How might His words in 11:4-6 encourage you?
 2. How is the generation today like the generation Jesus speaks of in 11:16-19? What then do we need to bear in mind when trying to reach them for Christ?
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Matthew 11:20-30

Woe for the Unrepentant, Rest for the Weary

Observation:

1. What does Jesus say about the cities where most of His miracles were performed (11:20-24)?
 2. What is Jesus' invitation in 11:28-30?
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Interpretation:

1. Why does Jesus pronounce woes on unrepentant cities, and what does this teach about the importance of responding to Him?
2. What is the yoke of Christ? Why is Jesus able to provide rest for the weary?

Application:

1. What areas of life do you need to respond to Jesus' invitation for rest?
2. What is a practical step you can take to exchange your yoke for the yoke of Jesus?

Matthew 12:1–21

The Lord of the Sabbath

Observation:

1. What accusations do the Pharisees make about Jesus in this passage?
2. How does Jesus defend His disciples, and what examples does He use (12:3-8)?

Interpretation:

1. What does Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath reveal about His authority and the true purpose of the Sabbath? How does this relate to the prophecy in Isaiah? (12:17-21)
 2. Why do the Pharisees react so strongly to Jesus' actions and words? What does this teach us about the difference between religious legalism and true mercy?
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Application:

1. Are there areas where legalism may be hindering your relationship with God or others? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal these to you.
 2. How can you follow Jesus' example of mercy and compassion in your daily life?
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Matthew 12:22–45

Opposition and Signs

Observation:

1. What miracle does Jesus perform, and how do the Pharisees respond (12:22-24)? Summarise Jesus' subsequent response.
 2. What sign does Jesus say will be given to the Pharisees (12:38-42)?
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Interpretation:

1. Why do the Pharisees accuse Jesus of working by Satan's power? Why does Jesus talk about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in response to their accusation?
2. How does the sign of Jonah point to Jesus' mission and identity?

Application:

1. Where do you see similar opposition to Jesus in today's world?
2. How do the warnings here challenge your own response to spiritual matters you do not yet understand?

Matthew 12:46–50

The King's True Family

Observation:

1. Who comes to speak with Jesus, and how does He respond to the message (12:46-48)?
2. How does Jesus define His family in 12:49-50?

Interpretation:

1. What is the significance of this passage in light of Jesus' earlier teachings in 10:34-37?
2. What is Jesus trying to convey in defining His family the way He does?

Application:

1. How does this passage challenge cultural and even church views about family relationships?
2. In what ways can you strengthen your relationships within the spiritual family of God?

II. CG Meeting Guide

Community

(Group Building – 10 mins)

Icebreaker: Share about a time either you or someone you knew got rejected (from a date, a job offer or an opportunity). How did you feel?

Transition: Today, we'll explore how different people doubted or rejected Jesus, and how their choices challenge us to examine our followership of the King.

Adoration

(Worship – 10 mins)

1. “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” (Traditional)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mv8SQfJxRk>
2. O Come to the Altar by Elevation Worship (Contemporary)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VUcGrDGYr8

Renewal

(Bible Study + Small Group Prayer – 45 mins)

1. What strikes you about different people’s responses to Jesus in these two chapters? Which surprises you the most?

2. How do the rejections Jesus faces in Matthew 11–12 (from towns, Pharisees, etc.) resonate with challenges Christians face today in sharing the Gospel? How may we ready ourselves to face rejection for the sake of Christ?

3. In the midst of His response to doubt, unrepentance and rejection of Him, what does Jesus offer us (11:28-30)? Why and how is He able to provide rest for the weary?

4. How do the Pharisees respond to Jesus' work of healing and exorcism? Is there any area of your life where you may also be tempted to slip into religious legalism?

5. In Matthew 12:46–50, Jesus redefines family in terms of obedience to God. How does such a definition change the way we think about “family”? How may the CG strengthen relationships with one another as a spiritual family?

Pray in small groups:

1. Share an area of doubt, struggle, or challenge you need to release to Jesus to experience rest in Him.
2. Pray for one another, committing these areas to God. Pray that the CG may grow as a spiritual family, while also welcoming new friends into this family.

Participant's Notes

The chapters reveal a range of responses to Jesus' ministry, from belief and doubt to rejection and hostility. They show how the arrival of God's Kingdom disrupts expectations and invites individuals to recognize and submit to Jesus as Messiah.

Matthew 11:1–19

John the Baptist Doubts Jesus

This section follows Jesus sending out His disciples on mission (10:1–42). While they are ministering, John the Baptist, in prison, sends his disciples to ask Jesus if He is the expected Messiah. John's question reflects his potential doubts, likely due to his imprisonment and unmet expectations of a conquering Messiah.

- Fulfilment of Prophecy: Jesus points to His miracles as fulfilling Isaiah's prophecies (Isaiah 35:5-6; 61:1), which in turn provides evidence of His Messiahship.

- Rejection of God’s Work: Jesus highlights John’s role as the forerunner prophesied in Malachi 3:1, affirming his significance despite his doubts. Despite John’s message of repentance and Jesus’ gracious offer of the Kingdom, the generation’s rejection of both John and Jesus illustrates their resistance to God’s work regardless of its form.

Key Takeaway: Jesus invites us to trust His mission, even when it does not align with our expectations. Faith in Him grows through recognizing His works and understanding His fulfilment of Scripture.

Matthew 11:20–30

Woe for the Unrepentant, Rest for the Weary

Jesus pronounces woes on unrepentant cities where He performed many miracles, contrasting their indifference with the repentance of pagan cities like Tyre and Sidon. The invitation in 11:28–30 shifts the tone, extending hope to those wearied by the burden of religious legalism.

- **Spiritual Accountability:** The warnings against Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum emphasize accountability: greater exposure to Jesus’ works brings greater responsibility to respond. Failure to respond would result in judgment.
- **The “Yoke” of Intimacy with the Father:** Jesus reveals the intimacy of His relationship with the Father, showing that salvation comes through Him alone. Jesus then offers this “yoke” to all who would come to Him. In doing so, He redefines discipleship, contrasting the heavy yoke of the Pharisees’ legalism with the light yoke of learning from Jesus. The promise of rest is guaranteed to all who come to Jesus and discover His gentleness and humility for themselves.

Key Takeaway: Jesus offers rest for the weary, reminding us that faith requires both repentance and reliance on His grace, not on self.

Matthew 12:1–21

The Lord of The Sabbath

This passage highlights growing opposition to Jesus from the Pharisees over Sabbath practices. Their interpretation of the Sabbath law focuses on strict legalism, missing the heart of God's intention. Following the Pharisees' plot against Him, Jesus withdraws but continues His ministry of healing, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy about the Servant of the Lord.

- True Purpose of Sabbath: Jesus defends His disciples' actions by referencing David eating consecrated bread (1 Samuel 21:1-6) and the priests' work in the temple, showing that mercy supersedes ritual observance. By declaring Himself "Lord of the Sabbath", Jesus asserts His divine authority to interpret and fulfil the law. In contrast with the Pharisees, who value traditions over compassion, Jesus' healing of the man with the withered hand (12:9-14) show His prioritisation of life and restoration.
- Fulfilment of Prophecy: The prophecy quoted (Isaiah 42:1-4) describes God's chosen servant as One who brings justice with gentleness, contrasting with expectations of a conquering warrior-Messiah. Matthew highlights Jesus' refusal to draw attention to Himself and his humble focus on God's mission rather than public acclaim. In this, Jesus is identified with God's chosen servant.

Key Takeaway: Jesus' work and personhood calls us to prioritize mercy and compassion over rigid adherence to traditions, emphasizing the spirit rather than letter of the law

Matthew 12:22–45

Opposition and Signs

This section features a confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees after He casts out a demon, leading to accusations that He works by the power of Beelzebul.

- An undivided Kingdom: Jesus exposes the absurdity of the Pharisees' claim by arguing that a divided kingdom cannot stand. In saying this, Jesus highlights the reality that the forces of evil are concerted in their opposition to God. Yet, His power over demons demonstrates the arrival of a more powerful Kingdom – God's Kingdom.

- **Blasphemy Against the Spirit:** The warning about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (12:31-32) refers to the Pharisees' persistent rejection of God's work through Jesus and their attributing it to evil. It is their deliberate rejection of the light, even though proof of its divine source is given (not just a mistake made in ignorance), that is unforgiveable.
- **Only One Sign:** The "sign of Jonah" foreshadows Jesus' death and resurrection and calls for repentance, contrasting the Pharisees' unbelief with the repentance of the Ninevites.

Key Takeaway: Beware of hardened hearts which leads to rejection of Jesus. Instead, lean into Jesus' resurrection power which enables us to believe, repent, and align with His Kingdom.

Matthew 12:46–50

The King's True Family

As Jesus teaches, His mother and brothers arrive, seeking to speak with Him. His response redefines spiritual family in the Kingdom.

- **Family Re-defined:** Jesus emphasizes that spiritual kinship is based on obedience to God's will, prioritizing allegiance to the Kingdom over biological ties. This teaching harkens back to 10:34-37 in which Jesus describes discipleship as loving Him above all others. In this, He is not rejecting the importance of the biological family but highlighting the primacy of the family of faith among believers who follow God's purposes.

Key Takeaway: The Kingdom of Heaven unites believers as a spiritual family, emphasizing obedience to God's will above all else.

The King's Parables

Main Point:

Jesus teaches the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven through parables, illustrating the varied responses to the Gospel and God's ultimate plan for judgment and redemption.

Main Purpose:

To understand the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven and encourage readers to remain faithful to the Gospel and bear much fruit.

I. Personal Study

Matthew 13:1-23

The Parable of the Sower

Observation:

1. What are the four types of soil described in the parable? What does Jesus say each type represents in His interpretation?
2. Why does Jesus say He speaks in parables?

Interpretation:

1. Why is it that although all the people represented by the different soils hear the word, only those represented by the good soil produce a lasting harvest? What does this suggest about the role of “understanding” (13:23) in bearing fruit?
 2. Who is “them” in reference to in 13:11. How is Isa. 6:9-10 applicable to “them”?
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Application:

1. Which soil best represents your current spiritual condition? What specific distractions or challenges threaten to choke out God’s Word in your heart?
 2. How can you be someone who not only hears but understands the Word?
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Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

The Parable of the Weeds

Observation:

1. Who are the "good seed" and "weeds" in the parable, and who sows them?
 2. According to Jesus, why are the weeds not removed immediately?
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Interpretation:

1. Why does Jesus allow the weeds and wheat to grow together until the harvest?
2. How is this parable significant in light of the previous parable (about the different soils)?

Application:

1. How does the reality that “good seed” and “weeds” coexist in this world assure or challenge you?
2. What encourages you about God’s ultimate plan to separate the wheat and the weeds?

Matthew 13:31-33

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and Yeast

Observation:

1. What is the similarity between a mustard seed and yeast?
2. What happens eventually to the mustard seed and the yeast in the dough?

Interpretation:

1. What is the link between these two parables and the preceding parables?
2. What do these parables suggest about the way the Kingdom grows? How has this growth been exemplified in Jesus' own ministry thus far?

Application:

1. How do these parables challenge your expectations of how God's Kingdom advances?
2. How have you seen God use small beginnings to accomplish great things in your life or community?

Matthew 13:44-46

The Parables of the Treasure and the Pearl

Observation:

1. What is the Kingdom of Heaven compared to in these parables?
2. What actions do the individuals in these parables take when they discover the treasure or pearl?

Interpretation:

1. What do these parables reveal about the value of the Kingdom of Heaven?
 2. What does the willingness to sell everything to gain the Kingdom teach about the commitment required of true disciples?
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Application:

1. How do these parables challenge your view of the Kingdom's value?
 2. What does it look like for you to "sell everything" for the sake of the Kingdom in a practical sense?
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Matthew 13:47-50

The Parable of the Net

Observation:

1. What happens to the fish once the net is full?
 2. Who do the good and bad fish represent?
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Interpretation:

1. How does this parable add to our understanding of the Kingdom of Heaven that has been revealed in the previous parables?

2. What does the treatment of “good fish” and “bad fish” at the end of the age teach us about the reality of judgment?

Application:

1. How does the future implication of this parable make a difference to your present life?
 2. Who in your life needs to hear this difficult but needed message of future judgment?
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Matthew 13:51-58

New and Old Treasures

Observation:

1. What image does Jesus use in 13:52 to describe a teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven?
 2. What is the reaction of the people in Jesus’ hometown to His teaching and miracles? What does Jesus say is the reason for this?
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Interpretation:

1. What did Jesus mean by the Kingdom-trained teacher of the law bringing out "new treasures as well as old "?

2. What does Jesus' indictment of his hometown in 13:57 teach us about the challenges of familiarity in recognizing and following spiritual authority?
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Application:

1. As you grow in your knowledge of the Word, what would it take for you to keep drawing from the "new treasures as well as old"?
 2. Have you ever struggled to honour or trust someone's spiritual authority due to familiarity? How can you avoid this pitfall in your relationships?
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II. CG Meeting Guide

Community

(Group Building – 10 mins)

Icebreaker: What's one thing you have that doesn't cost much but means a lot to you? (if possible, show a picture of this item to your CG). Share why it's so meaningful to you.

Transition: Today, we will look at parables Jesus taught to reveal the value, growth, and challenges of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let's allow the truths concerning the Kingdom to reshape what we treasure.

Adoration

(Worship – 10 mins)

1. “[Jesus The Kingdom Has Come Into Us](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMQOoUHouhY) (Traditional)
2. “[This Kingdom](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5_NOO-NXaQ)” by Geoff Bullock (Contemporary)

Renewal

(Bible Study + Small Group Prayer – 45 mins)

1. Summarise what each parable teaches about the Kingdom of Heaven. How do these parables challenge our perceptions of the Kingdom?

2. Which soil in the Parable of the Sower best represents your current spiritual condition? What specific distractions or challenges threaten to choke out God’s Word in your heart?

3. Reflecting on the parables of the Mustard Seed and Yeast, how has God used small beginnings to accomplish great things in your life? (You may also share observations of how God has worked in the life of your CG members)

4. What do the Parables of the Hidden Treasure and Pearl teach us about the necessity of commitment and perseverance in the life of faith? What does it look like for you to “sell everything” for the sake of the Kingdom in your present context?

5. How can we encourage each other not to fall into the trap of despair (as we live out our faith in a world filled with “weeds” (13:38) and “bad fish” (13:48-49)) or over-familiarity with Jesus (13:54-57)?

(Note to Bible Study Leaders: you may supplement these questions with those from the Personal Study section. Please spend adequate time on application questions.)

Pray in Small Groups:

1. Share which parable most resonated with you and why.
2. Pray for one another to grow in understanding of the Word and to bear much fruit for the Kingdom.

Participants' Notes

In Matthew 13, Jesus presents the Kingdom of Heaven through parables—short stories using everyday situations packed with profound spiritual truths. These parables unveil the varied responses to the Gospel, the Kingdom's growth, its unparalleled value, and the reality of final judgment.

Matthew 13:1-23

The Parable of the Sower

This parable emphasizes the importance of a receptive heart in bearing fruit for the Kingdom. The seed represents the Word of God, and the different soils reflect the conditions of human hearts:

- Different Heart Conditions: The path represents hardened hearts where the Word is quickly snatched away by the evil one. The rocky ground represents superficial faith that falters under trial or

persecution. The thorny ground represents a distracted heart choked by worldly concerns and deceitful wealth. The good soil represents a receptive, obedient heart that bears abundant fruit.

- Purpose of Parables: Jesus speaks in parables for the sake of spiritually receptive disciples who are granted understanding of the "secrets of the Kingdom," and the unresponsive crowds, who remain spiritually dull. This reflects the prophetic pattern seen in Isaiah 6:9-10, where unresponsiveness to God's message was a mark of judgment.

Key Takeaway: Fruitfulness in the Kingdom begins with a heart prepared to receive and act upon God's Word. Hearing without understanding leads to unfruitfulness.

Matthew 13:24-43

The Parables of the Weeds and the Mustard Seed

- The Weeds: This parable portrays the coexistence of good and evil until the end of the age. The enemy sows weeds (representing the wicked) among the wheat (the righteous), but the final harvest will reveal God's justice.
- The Mustard Seed and Yeast: These parables highlight the Kingdom's surprising growth and influence. Though it begins small, it expands exponentially, transforming and benefitting everything it touches.

Key Takeaway: The Kingdom's growth often starts inconspicuously but has the power to impact the world profoundly.

Matthew 13:44-46

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

These parables emphasize the incomparable value of the Kingdom. In both stories, the characters joyfully give up everything to obtain their treasure.

- The Treasure in the Field: Reflects the joy of discovering the Kingdom and the wholehearted commitment it demands. The life of true

discipleship, as seen here, is not a “sacrifice” when disciples recognise the value of what they are pursuing.

- The Pearl of Great Value: Highlights the singular worth of the Kingdom, which surpasses all earthly pursuits, and captures the imagination of the disciple who sees its true worth.

Key Takeaway: The Kingdom, when seen for what it truly is, is worth any sacrifice. Disciples are called to elevate the Kingdom to be their greatest treasure.

Matthew 13:47-50

The Parable of the Net

This parable mirrors the teaching of the weeds, focusing on the final judgment. The net gathers all kinds of fish, but only the good are kept while the bad are discarded.

- Reality of Final Judgment: As with the Parable of the Weeds, this parable highlights the reality of a coming day when there will be a sorting of God’s people from the wicked. In His wisdom, God allows both groups to co-exist in history. There will be no premature separation, but in God’s good time, the wicked will be picked out and judged.

Key Takeaway: God’s Kingdom is inclusive in its invitation but exclusive in its final outcome. The righteous will be separated from the wicked at the end of the age.

Matthew 13:51-58

New and Old Treasures

Jesus concludes by highlighting the responsibility of those who understand the Kingdom’s truths. Like a homeowner bringing out both old and new treasures, disciples are called to draw from the richness of God’s Word to teach and share with others.

- Danger of Over-familiarity: Jesus faces rejection in His hometown of Nazareth, where His wisdom and miraculous works astonish the

people. However, their familiarity with His ordinary background leads them to take offense and doubt His authority. This reflects the proverb that a prophet is without honour in their hometown. The people's unbelief limits Jesus' ability to perform miracles, highlighting the necessity of faith.

Key Takeaway: A true disciple treasures the full counsel of God and uses it to impact others for His Kingdom. A true disciple also guards against over-familiarity with Jesus as it hinders faith.



Matthew 14:1-16:20 The King Revealed

Main Point:

Jesus reveals His identity as the Messiah through His miracles, teachings, and interactions, culminating in Peter's confession of Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Main Purpose:

To reflect on who Jesus is, and how His identity teaches us to release our fears and walk in faith toward Him.

I. Personal Study

Matthew 14:1-12

Herod's Fear and John's Faith

Observation:

1. What does Herod think about Jesus?
 2. What leads to the death of John the Baptist?
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Interpretation:

1. How is Herod portrayed in this passage and how is this in contrast with John and Jesus?
2. How does John's martyrdom foreshadow Jesus' suffering and the cost of discipleship?

Application:

1. What are some situations in which speaking the truth may cost you?
 2. How does this passage inspire you to remain faithful in moments of spiritual opposition?
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Matthew 14:13-21, 15:29-39

The Compassionate Provider

Observation:

1. How does Jesus respond to the crowd's needs?
 2. What role do the disciples play in the feeding of the 5000?
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Interpretation:

1. What does this miracle teach us about Jesus?
 2. Why did Jesus involve his disciples in this miracle? What might He have wanted to teach them?
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Application:

1. In what ways has Jesus provided for your needs?
2. How does the miracle challenge the way you think about scarcity and abundance in the Kingdom of God?

Matthew 14:22-33

Faith and Fear on the Water

Observation:

1. What is the disciples' initial reaction when they see Jesus walking on water?
2. What happens when Peter steps out of the boat in faith, and how does Jesus respond to him?

Interpretation:

1. What does this miracle teach us about Jesus? Why do the disciples end up worshipping him?
2. What does Peter's experience teach us about faith, fear, and doubt in following Jesus?

Application:

1. Name an area where fear holds you back from stepping out in faith.
2. How does Peter's example and Jesus' response encourage you to trust Jesus and take risks for Him?

Matthew 15:1-20

Traditions and the Heart

Observation:

1. What criticism do the Pharisees and teachers of the law bring against Jesus?
2. How does Jesus contrast outward traditions with inward purity?

Interpretation:

1. What does Jesus' response to the Pharisees reveal about His priorities? Why, for Jesus, does what comes out of the mouth matter more than what enters it?
2. Why were the Pharisees offended by Jesus and what does Jesus' response in 15:13-14 mean?

Application:

1. What do you take offence at in a church setting? Is this offence indicative of your love for tradition or the commands of God?
2. What would it take for you to have an undefiled heart?

Matthew 15:21-28

The Faith of the Canaanite Woman

Observation:

1. How does the Canaanite woman address Jesus and how is this unusual for someone like her?
2. What is Jesus' initial response to the woman's plea, and what does she do?

Interpretation:

1. Why does Jesus respond as He does in 15:24, 26 to the woman?
2. How does the woman's response in 15:27 demonstrate her faith?

Application:

1. What is a situation in your life in which you are desperate for God’s intervention?
2. How does the woman’s faith inspire your response to God when He seems silent to your requests?

Matthew 15:29-16:12

Bread and Yeast

Observation:

1. How does Jesus respond to the great crowd, and what does this reveal about His character?
2. What does Jesus warn His disciples about regarding the Pharisees and Sadducees, and how do they misunderstand Him at first?

Interpretation:

1. How does the feeding of the four thousand compare and contrast with the earlier account of the feeding of the five thousand?
2. What does Jesus mean by “the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees,” and why is this yeast to be avoided?

Application:

1. In what ways can you trust Jesus' provision in an area where you feel you are lacking?
2. Where might you be drawn to the "yeast" of non-Gospel teachings which detract or distract you from Christ's message?

Matthew 16:13-20

The King's Identity Revealed

Observation:

1. What question does Jesus ask His disciples, and how do they respond?
2. How does Jesus respond to Peter's confession and what does Jesus subsequently say about His church?

Interpretation:

1. Why is Peter's confession significant in understanding Jesus' identity and mission?
2. How are we to understand the authority conferred on Peter in 16:18-19?

Application:

1. How would you personally answer the question Jesus asks in 16:13?
 2. How does knowing the gates of Hades will not overcome the church embolden you to live life in the Kingdom?
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II. CG Meeting Guide

Community

(Group Building – 10 mins)

Icebreaker: Play a game called “guess who I am?”. Write the names of about 20 (or however many are coming for CG) Bible characters (e.g. Noah, Samson, Esther, Peter etc.) on pieces of masking tape. Stick a piece of masking tape on the back of each participant, making sure they do not know the identity of their character. For 3 minutes, participants may go around asking one another yes/no questions (e.g. Am I man? Am I found in the Old Testament?). Open ended questions (e.g. which book of the Bible am I found in?) are not allowed. At the end of 3 minutes, each participant should state who they think their assigned character is.

Transition: As we study Matthew 14:1–16:20, we’ll see how Jesus progressively reveals His identity as the Messiah through His actions and words, leading to Peter’s bold confession. Observe the contrasting responses of people to Jesus, and reflect on whether fear or faith dominate your own discipleship journey.

Adoration

(Worship – 10 mins)

1. “Crown Him with Many Crowns” (Traditional)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFEY_GrunQc
2. “Holy and Anointed One” by Vineyard Worship (Contemporary)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1ZIErq7wFg>
3. “Jesus shall take the highest honour” by Chris Bowater
(Contemporary) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MinbJJ9Oi-c>

Renewal

(Bible Study + Small Group Prayer – 45 mins)

1. What do the miracles of the feeding of the 5000 and 4000 reveal about Jesus? How do these miracles challenge the way you think about scarcity and abundance in the Kingdom of God?

2. In Matthew 14:28-31, Peter takes a step of faith but begins to sink when doubt arises. How do you relate to his experience? How does Jesus’ response encourage you to keep stepping out in faith?

3. Why does Jesus respond as He does in 15:24, 26 to the Canaanite woman? How does her persistent faith inspire your response to God when He seems silent to your requests?

4. How would you personally answer the question Jesus asks in 16:13? How does Jesus' response to Peter confession in 16:17-19 embolden you to live life in the Kingdom?

(Note to Bible Study Leaders: you may supplement these questions with those from the Personal Study section. Please spend adequate time on application questions.)

Pray in Small Groups:

1. Share one way this passage has deepened your understanding of Jesus' identity.
2. Pray for one another to grow in courageous faith, especially in areas where doubt keeps you from stepping out in faith for Jesus.

Participants' Notes

In Matthew 14:1–16:20, Jesus progressively reveals His identity as the Messiah through His miraculous works, teachings, and interactions. This section underscores His authority, compassion, and mission, culminating in Peter's declaration of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Each event offers rich insights into who Jesus is and challenges us to know and follow Him more.

Matthew 14:1-12

Herod's Fear and John's Faith

Herod Antipas hears of Jesus' miracles and assumes He is John the Baptist resurrected. This reveals Herod's guilt over John's execution, which he ordered as a result of his weak character and shameful choices during a decadent feast.

- Fear vs Faith: Herod is contrasted with John and Jesus in this episode. Herod appears indulgent and weak, fearing for his reputation and wrongly imprisoning then killing John. In contrast, John spoke the

truth in love when he confronted Herod and his faithfulness to truth cost him his life, foreshadowing the suffering Jesus would endure. The character of the two kings is also contrasted – king Herod’s feast leads to self-glory and folly, but King Jesus’ miraculous feeding demonstrates compassion and care for people.

Key Takeaway: Faithfulness to God often comes with a cost, but it is better to be on the side of compassionate truth-telling than fearful folly.

Matthew 14:13-21

The Compassionate Provider

After hearing of John’s death, Jesus seeks solitude but is moved by compassion for the crowd. In the feeding of the 5000, He miraculously multiplies five loaves and two fish to satisfy everyone present.

- Looking Back: The miracle recalls God’s provision of manna for Israel in the wilderness. As Jesus teaches His followers to pray for daily bread (6:11) and not worry about what they will eat (6:31), so this miracle affirms that Jesus is able to make good His promises to provide for His people.
- Looking Forward: The sequence of Jesus’ actions—taking, blessing, breaking, and giving—parallels the Last Supper, and points to Jesus’ own body being given to His people (Matt.26:26) as well as the future messianic banquet (Rev. 19:9).
- Abundance in God’s Economy: The 12 baskets of leftovers symbolize God’s abundant provision for His people: food for all (the tribes) of Israel.

Key Takeaway: Jesus’ compassion and power remind us that He is our ultimate provider, capable of satisfying every need.

Matthew 14:22-33

Faith and Fear on the Water

Jesus walks on water to His disciples, who are struggling against the wind and waves. Peter steps out in faith but begins to sink when fear overtakes him. Jesus saves him and calms the storm.

- **Jesus' Divine Authority:** This miracle demonstrates Jesus' authority over nature, echoing Old Testament depictions of God walking on the sea (Job 9:8; Psalm 77:19). The disciples' worship and declaration, "Truly you are the Son of God," affirm Jesus' divine identity.
- **Jesus' Humane Compassion:** Jesus, knowing his disciples' fear, tells them to take courage and not be afraid. Sensing Peter's doubt, Jesus also immediately reaches out to grab his hand before he drowns. These incidents both demonstrate the reality of discipleship – bold steps to follow Jesus will be interspersed with moments of weakness – as well as the assurance that our Master knows His disciples well – He is ready to catch us when we fall.

Key Takeaway: Faith requires fixing our eyes on Jesus, not our circumstances. Even in moments of doubt, His loving presence and divine power can sustain us.

Matthew 15:1-20

Traditions and the Heart

The Pharisees criticize Jesus' disciples for not following handwashing traditions. Jesus challenges their misplaced focus on external rituals, teaching that true defilement comes from the inside, not outside.

- **Hypocrisy:** Jesus exposes the Pharisees' hypocrisy, showing how their traditions undermined God's commandments. He applies Isaiah 29:13 to them, highlighting their empty worship and misplaced priorities in which honour and responsibility toward people (in this case, parents) is given up for the show of religious duty.
- **True Purity:** Jesus' statement, "What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them" redefines purity as an inward reality rather than an external practice. For Jesus, the heart is the source of man's true character. If the heart is unclean, all kind of evil will emerge from it.

Thus, the condition of one's heart must take precedence over superficial observances.

Key Takeaway: God cares about the condition of our hearts more than outward religious practices. True purity begins within.

Matthew 15:21-28

The Faith of the Canaanite Woman

In this passage, Jesus encounters a Canaanite woman whose persistence and faith lead to her daughter's healing.

- **Humility and Persistence:** The woman's approach to Jesus demonstrates humility and boldness, as she addresses Him as "Lord" and "Son of David," recognizing His messianic role. Initially, Jesus seems to reject her plea, emphasizing His mission to Israel. He does this not to exclude her, but to draw out her persistence and trust. Her witty yet desperate response, likening herself to a dog seeking crumbs from the master's table, reveals her deep trust in Jesus' power and mercy.
- **Inclusivity:** This moment highlights the inclusiveness of Jesus' ministry and the power of faith that transcends ethnic and cultural barriers. The woman's interaction with Jesus shows that God's Kingdom blessings extend beyond Israel to all who believe.

Key Takeaway: Regardless of our background, Jesus invites us to seek Him with a faith that is humble, persevering and trusting of His divine authority.

Matthew 15:29-16:12

Bread and Yeast

Jesus performs another miraculous feeding, showing His compassion and provision for the crowds. Subsequently, He confronts the Pharisees and Sadducees, warning His disciples about their "yeast", referring to their teachings and unbelief.

- **Provision For All:** Unlike the feeding of the five thousand, this event likely occurs in Gentile territory, reflecting the expanding reach of

Jesus' mission. Occurring after the previous encounter where Jesus appeared to be reluctant to help a Gentile (the Canaanite woman), this incident clearly shows that Jesus' mission does extend beyond Israel. He is the Messiah and Provider for Gentiles as well.

- Warning Against False Teaching: In 16:1-12, Jesus confronts the Pharisees and Sadducees, who demand a sign from heaven to test Him. Jesus rebukes their lack of spiritual discernment, comparing their fixation on signs to ignoring God's evident work through Him. Jesus then warns the disciples against the spiritual danger of their faith-distorting influence.

Key Takeaway: Jesus' miracles point to His Messiahship and demonstrate His sufficiency for both physical and spiritual needs. We must be on guard against demanding for more signs that stem from a hardened heart and lack of faith.

Matthew 16:13-20

The King's Identity Revealed

In Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asks His disciples, "Who do you say I am?" Peter boldly declares, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus affirms Peter's confession, revealing His plan for the church.

- Jesus is Christ: Peter's confession marks a turning point in understanding Jesus' mission as the Messiah. Though Jesus' messianic identity has been recognised with the title 'Son of David' (9:27; 15:22), this is the first and only confession of Jesus as 'the Christ' in Matthew. It shows the disciples starting to understand the role Jesus will play in the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies and promises.
- The Authority of the Church: In response to Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus gives Simon the name "Peter," meaning "rock," signifying his foundational role in the church. The wordplay between "Peter" and "rock" underscores that Peter himself is the foundation on which Jesus will build His community, the church. This "church" (Greek ekklesia) is not a physical structure but a community of believers, representing a reconstitution of God's people centred on

Jesus. The statement that the "gates of Hades" will not overcome the church affirms that even death cannot destroy this new community, highlighting its eternal security under God's rule.

- Binding and Loosing: Jesus grants Peter the "keys of the kingdom of heaven," referencing Isaiah 22:20-22, where a steward manages the affairs of the king's household. This metaphor conveys Peter's authority and responsibility to guide the church, not to determine who enters heaven, but to steward God's rule among His people. The imagery of "binding and loosing" relates to making authoritative decisions about practices and teachings within the community, which aligns with God's will as revealed in heaven.

Key Takeaway: Recognizing Jesus as the Messiah calls us to a life of active participation in building His Church.



Study 10

Matthew 16:21-18:35

The King's Path

Main Point:

Jesus reveals that His path as the Messiah involves suffering and death, and He calls His disciples to follow Him in humility, faith, submission and forgiveness as they walk the costly path of true discipleship.

Main Purpose:

To challenge participants to embrace the sacrificial nature of following Jesus and live in humble dependence on God in the way we approach all relationships.

I. Personal Study

Matthew 16:21-28

The Cost of Following the King

Observation:

1. What does Jesus predict about His own future and how does Peter respond?
2. What does Jesus say true discipleship is about?

Interpretation:

1. Why does Peter's respond the way he does, and why is Jesus' rebuke of him so stern?
2. What does it mean for a disciple to "take up your cross and follow Me"? Why is it that "whoever wants to save their life will lose it"?

Application:

1. Presently, in which area is God prompting you to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus?
2. How would it practically mean for you to lose your life for Jesus to find it?

Matthew 17:1–13

The King's Glory Revealed

Observation:

1. What happens during the Transfiguration?
2. How do Peter, James, and John react, and what does God affirm about Jesus?

Interpretation:

1. What does the Transfiguration reveal about Jesus' identity and mission?
2. What is the significance of Moses and Elijah appearing with Jesus?

Application:

1. How does "seeing" Jesus in all His glory help you in moments of doubt or difficulty?
2. Like Jesus, how can we ensure that our identity is constantly based on what God says of us?

Matthew 17:14–27

Faith and Humility in the Kingdom

Observation:

1. What problem does the man bring to Jesus in 17:14-16, and how does Jesus respond?
2. How does Jesus respond to the question of whether He pays the temple tax?

Interpretation:

1. Why were the disciples unable to heal the boy and what is the role of faith in healing?
2. What does Jesus' response to the question of temple tax teach us about our posture toward earthly authorities?

Application:

1. How do you think more faith can be cultivated in areas where your faith feels weak?
2. What is one area you can learn humble submission to earthly authorities?

Matthew 18:1–14

The Value of “Little Ones”

Observation:

1. What does Jesus teach about greatness in the Kingdom?
2. Who does “little ones” refer to and how are they valued in the Kingdom?

Interpretation:

1. Why does Jesus use a child to illustrate greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven?
2. What does this passage teach us about how Jesus views sin and the extent to which God is willing to save his “little ones” from sin?

Application:

1. How can you cultivate “the lowly position of this child” in the way you live life?
2. Who or what in your life is causing you to stumble or sin? What decisive action do you need to take to “enter life”?

Matthew 18:15-35

Forgiveness in the Kingdom

Observation:

1. What steps does Jesus instruct us to take when we discover a brother or sister sinning?
2. Summarise the parable of the unmerciful servant in your own words. What happens to the servant who refuses to forgive?

Interpretation:

1. What do Jesus' instructions on dealing with sin in the church teach us about His attitude toward sin and sinner?
 2. What does the parable teach about the magnitude of God's forgiveness and the importance of forgiving others?
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Application:

1. What keeps you from carrying out Jesus' instruction on dealing with sin in the church? What barriers do you see in the church that prevent sin to be dealt with?
 2. Reflect on how God has forgiven you. Is there anyone you need to forgive?
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II. CG Meeting Guide

Community

(Group Building – 10 mins)

Icebreaker: Share with one another something you pursued that demanded a lot of sacrifice on your part? When you finally got what you pursued, how did you feel?

Transition: Today, we'll explore how Jesus reveals the sacrificial path of discipleship, calling us to follow Him in faith, humility, and forgiveness in our relationships.

Adoration

(Worship – 10 mins)

1. “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (Traditional)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kimLXNhzZMA>
2. “Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me” by CityAlight (Contemporary)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNXd0KQaYXg>

Renewal

(Bible Study + Small Group Prayer – 45 mins)

1. What does Jesus mean when He defines discipleship as He does in 16:24-27? What does it look like for you to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus?

2. What is the significance of the Transfiguration? How does “seeing” Jesus in all his glory help you in moments of doubt or difficulty?

3. What strikes you most about Jesus' teachings on "little ones" in 18:1-14? How does the seriousness with which Jesus takes sin challenge you to take decisive action about areas in life causing you to stumble or sin?

4. Who is someone you need to forgive? How does the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant challenge you to do so?

(Note to Bible Study Leaders: you may supplement these questions with those from the Personal Study section. Please spend adequate time on application questions.)

Pray in Small Groups

1. Share an area where this study has challenged you to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus.
 2. Pray for one another to embrace the sacrificial path of discipleship with courageous faith.
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Participants' Notes

In Matthew 16:21–18:35, Jesus reveals the path of discipleship, emphasizing the cost, glory, faith, humility, and forgiveness that mark the Kingdom of Heaven. These sections highlight how Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection shape the lives of His followers, calling them to walk the same sacrificial path with faith and dependence on God.

Matthew 16:21-28

The Cost of Following the King

Jesus' prediction of His suffering, death, and resurrection marks a pivotal turning point in His ministry. For the first time, He explicitly reveals the path of the Messiah as one of suffering, defying Jewish expectations of a political saviour.

- **Confounding Expectations:** Peter's rebuke reflects a misunderstanding of the Messiah's mission, rooted in human concerns rather than divine purposes. To Peter and most Jews, the call to "take up your cross" would have been shocking, as the cross symbolized humiliation, suffering, and death, not liberation and life.

- The Cross-Shaped Life: Jesus identifies discipleship as a life of self-denial and full allegiance to Him. “Taking up the cross” means renouncing one’s right to life and devoting all of oneself to God instead of the world. Yet, this high call is the only way that leads to great rewards when the Son of Man comes in all His glory. In this, Jesus anticipates the divine nature of His coming again in the glory of God the Father.

Key Takeaway: True discipleship requires self-denial and a willingness to prioritize Jesus’ mission over personal comfort or gain.

Matthew 17:1–13

The King’s Glory Revealed

The Transfiguration offers a glimpse of Jesus’ divine glory, confirming His identity as the Son of God. The Transfiguration occurs on a high mountain, recalling moments in the Old Testament when God revealed His glory on mountains (e.g., Mount Sinai in Exodus 19).

- Fulfilment of Old Testament: Moses and Elijah appear in the Transfiguration, symbolizing the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets in Jesus. The reference to Elijah’s return as fulfilled in John the Baptist also connects Jesus’ ministry to the prophetic promises of the Messiah.
- Divine Affirmation: The bright cloud covering Jesus and His companions [NL1] points to God’s manifested presence (e.g. Exod. 24:15–18; 40:34–38). The Father’s declaration, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him” harkens back to Jesus’ baptism (3:17) and affirms Jesus as the divine Son whose teachings must be heeded. This is true even when Jesus’ teachings are hard to accept (c.f. 16:21–23).

Key Takeaway: The Transfiguration affirms Jesus’ divine identity, authority and mission, which in turn compels disciples to listen to Him.

Matthew 17:14–27

Faith and Humility in the Kingdom

When a demon-possessed boy is brought to Jesus, the disciples are unable to heal him due to their lack of faith. Jesus teaches about the power of even small faith when fully placed in God. In the temple tax episode, Jesus models humility and submission, even when He is not obligated to pay.

- **The Power of Faith:** The disciples' inability to heal the demon-possessed boy reveals their lack of faith and dependence on God. Jesus highlights the power of even a mustard seed of faith when placed in God. Such faith is not a matter of intellectual assent, but of a practical reliance on the Living God. It must be clarified that it is not the amount of faith but the power of God available to even the tiniest faith which brings the impossible to pass.
- **Earthly Obligations:** The temple tax incident reflects Jesus' humility and His recognition of earthly obligations, even though as Son of God He could be exempt. This story illustrates Jesus' willingness to comply with the conventions of the society to which He belonged rather than cause unnecessary offence. To be sure, He is not afraid of causing offence when the issue was central to His mission. In this case, asserting independence from the temple customs would serve no useful purpose. Thus, Jesus humbly complies.

Key Takeaway: Faith, even as small as a mustard seed, connects us to God's power, while humility enables us to navigate life with grace.

Matthew 18:1-14

The Value of "Little Ones"

Jesus redefines greatness in the Kingdom as humility, using a child as an example. He shows the value of "little ones", His believers, through His hatred for anything that causes them to stumble as well as His willingness as a Shepherd to go out of the way to rescue them.

- **True Greatness:** The disciples' question about greatness reflects their worldly perspective, which Jesus counters by elevating the lowliness of childlikeness as Kingdom values. In Jesus' day, a child was of no

importance in Jewish society, subject to the authority of his elders and not taken seriously. Jesus' teaching to "become like little children" redefines greatness as humility and the willingness to accept insignificance in the eyes of others for the sake of God.

- **Guarding and Seeking:** The warning against causing others to stumble emphasizes the seriousness of sin and the responsibility of believers to guard one another's faith. Like Jesus' teachings in 5:29-30, Jesus calls believers to deal decisively with things that will trip them up. Kingdom citizens must spare no expense in pursuing holiness and avoiding sin. Jesus' protectiveness and regard for "little ones" is seen in the Parable of the Lost Sheep, which illustrates God's heart for and His pursuit of the lost. This parable points to Jesus' mission to seek and save the lost.

Key Takeaway: Childlike humility reflects true greatness in the Kingdom. Such humility is enfolded through our willingness to flee from sin and to not despise those whom Jesus is willing to go out of His way to rescue.

Matthew 18:15–35

Forgiveness in the Kingdom

Following the Parable of the Lost Sheep, Jesus offers a practical guide to how believers may follow the example of the good shepherd by lovingly confronting sin and restoring the sinner in the church. The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant illustrates the importance of extending the same forgiveness we have received from God to others.

- **Pursuing Restoration:** Jesus' process for reconciliation within the community escalates from private confrontation to the involvement of one or two others to persuade (based on the principle of multiple witnesses for credibility) to the issue brought to the congregation, with the goal of persuading the individual to repent. If all efforts fail, the sinner is to be treated as an outsider, symbolizing a break in fellowship, though not out of vindictiveness but in hope of eventual restoration. The "binding and loosing" refers to the authority of the church to discern and declare what is sin, with decisions on earth reflecting God's standards. And the promise of Jesus' presence

assures His guidance and authority when believers act in unity and prayer in His name.

- Extending Forgiveness: Jesus' response of "seventy-seven times" (or seventy times seven) rejects limits and calculations – forgiveness must be boundless. The parable illustrates the stark contrast between the vast and undeserved forgiveness God grants and the minimal forgiveness expected of His followers. The servant's enormous debt (representing sin) is freely forgiven by the king, but the servant's refusal to forgive a small debt owed to him shows an inconsistency that negates his experience of divine forgiveness, thus inviting judgment.

Key Takeaway: God's forgiveness of us requires us to confront sin lovingly and extend forgiveness to others, reflecting the grace and mercy of the Kingdom.



Study 11

Matthew 19:1-20:34

The King's Values

Main Point:

Jesus teaches that entering the Kingdom of Heaven requires humility, surrender, and reliance on God's grace rather than human effort or status. He redefines greatness as servanthood and demonstrates God's generosity and compassion toward all who follow Him.

Main Purpose:

To challenge readers to align their lives with the countercultural values of God's Kingdom and to follow Jesus' example in living for others.

I. Personal Study

Matthew 19:1-12

Marriage and Singleness

Observation:

1. What does Jesus say about God's original intention for marriage?
2. How does Jesus respond to the disciples when they claim, "it is better not to marry"?

Interpretation:

1. How does the Creation account on marriage inform the Christian view of divorce?
2. What is Jesus' main point regarding celibacy? How does His teaching elevate singleness as a Kingdom calling?

Application:

1. If you are married, how can you honour God's design for marriage? What can the church community do to help you?
2. If you are single, how can you live out their Kingdom calling in this season of life? What can the church community do to help you?

Matthew 19:13–30

Childlikeness and Riches

Observation:

1. What does Jesus say when the disciples rebuke those bring children to Jesus?
2. How does Jesus respond to the rich young man's claim that he has kept the commandments?

Interpretation:

1. Why does Jesus highlight children as models for entering the Kingdom?
2. Why does Jesus tell the rich young man to sell his possessions to give to the poor before following him? What does this story teach about riches and discipleship?

Application:

1. How can we maintain childlikeness of faith even as we age in life?
2. How does Jesus' assurance in 19:28-30 encourage you to surrender your resources and ambitions to God?

Matthew 20:1–16
Kingdom Generosity

Observation:

1. How does the landowner treat the workers who were hired at different times?
2. What is the landowner's response when those who were hired first complain about their wages?

Interpretation:

1. What does this parable teach us about grace and generosity in the Kingdom? How is this different from the way the world thinks about merit and wages?
2. What does Jesus mean when He concludes this parable with “So the last will be first, and the first will be last”?

Application:

1. How does this parable challenge the way you tend to compare yourself with others? How can you live more with a heart of gratitude for what you have been given?
2. Following God’s example, who can you extend generosity to this week?

Matthew 20:17–28

True Greatness

Observation:

1. What does Jesus say will happen to Him in Jerusalem?
2. What does Jesus teach regarding greatness in the Kingdom?

Interpretation:

1. What does the request for positions of honour reveal about James' and John's understanding about greatness? Why were the ten indignant with them?
 2. How is Jesus' teaching on greatness in the Kingdom countercultural? How does He Himself exemplify true Kingdom greatness?
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Application:

1. How does Jesus' teaching on true greatness square with your own understanding or pursuit of greatness?
 2. Who and how can you serve selflessly this week?
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Matthew 20:29–34

Compassion and Faith

Observation:

1. How do the blind men address Jesus, and what do they ask for?
 2. How does Jesus respond to their cries?
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Interpretation:

1. How do the blind men's words and actions model faith in Jesus?

2. What does Jesus' response, in contrast with the crowd's, tell us about His character and priorities?

Application:

1. In which area of your life do you need to cry out to Jesus for healing or help?
2. How does Jesus' treatment of the blind men assure you that He cares for you?

II. CG Meeting Guide

Community

(Group Building – 10 mins)

Icebreaker: Share a time when someone showed you unexpected generosity. How did it impact you?

Transition: Today's study reveals how Kingdom values—self-denial, generosity, and service—contrast sharply with the self-focused values of the world. Let's explore how Jesus calls His disciples to live counterculturally, reflecting these values in our lives.

Adoration

(Worship – 10 mins)

1. "[Make Me a Blessing](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1g9RmAljnc)" (Traditional)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1g9RmAljnc>
2. "[The Servant King](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1g9RmAljnc)" by Graham Kendrick (Contemporary)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1g9RmAljnc>

Renewal

(Bible Study + Small Group Prayer – 45 mins)

1. Which of Jesus' teaching on Kingdom values in these chapters stands out to you most, and why?

2. As a community, how can we help one another live out our calling in marriage or singleness faithfully?

3. How does Jesus' assurance in 19:28-30 encourage you to surrender your resources and ambitions to God?

4. How does the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard challenge the way you tend to compare yourself with others? How can you live constantly in gratitude for what you have been given?

5. How is Jesus' teaching on greatness in the Kingdom (20:25-28) countercultural? How would it look different for you to live as a servant to others in your family, workplace, church?

(Note to Bible Study Leaders: you may supplement these questions with those from the Personal Study section. Please spend adequate time on application questions.)

Pray in Small Groups

1. Share one Kingdom value you want to embody this week and a specific step you want to walk in faith to practice it.
 2. Pray for each other to embrace humility, live generously, and serve selflessly as Jesus modelled.
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Participants' Notes

This section of Matthew's Gospel highlights Jesus' teachings on the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven and the attitudes required to enter and live within it. It also showcases His compassion, authority, and call to discipleship, challenging prevailing societal values.

Matthew 19:1–12

Marriage and Singleness

The Pharisees test Jesus with a question about divorce, and He responds by pointing to God's original design for marriage. Following His explanation, the disciples express astonishment at this high standard and question if it might be better not to marry. To this, Jesus acknowledges that some may be called to celibacy, but it is not for all.

- **God's Original Intent for Marriage:** Jesus responds to the question about divorce by pointing back to God's original design for marriage in Genesis 1:27 and 2:24. Marriage is intended to be a lifelong, sacred union, reflecting the Kingdom value of faithfulness. Divorce, Jesus explains, was permitted by Moses only due to human hard-heartedness, not because it aligns with God's ideal. As such, divorce

is only permitted in cases of sexual immorality; remarriage in other circumstances constitutes adultery.

- Singleness as a Call: Jesus also elevates singleness as a valid Kingdom calling. By comparing celibacy to being a eunuch for the sake of the Kingdom, Jesus affirms that singleness can be a purposeful and God-honouring choice. However, whether one is married or not is not a matter of 'better' and 'worse', but of God's gift, which is not the same for all disciples.

Key Takeaway: God values commitment and faithfulness in marriage while recognizing singleness as a significant calling for wholehearted Kingdom service. Both are a gift from God.

Matthew 19:13–30

Childlikeness and Riches

Jesus welcomes children brought to Him, rebuking the disciples who tried to turn them away. A rich young man then asks Jesus what he must do to gain eternal life. When challenged to sell his possessions, give to the poor, and follow Him, the man goes away sorrowful. Jesus reflects on the difficulty of wealth hindering entry into the Kingdom, teaching that salvation is possible only through God's grace. He reassures the disciples that those who sacrifice for the Kingdom will receive abundant rewards and eternal life.

- Childlike Faith: Jesus' welcome of little children demonstrates His treatment of those whom society despised. His laying off hands as an act of blessing shows His sincere love for them. He then emphasizes that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who approach God with childlike humility and dependence.
- Wealth and Discipleship: Although the rich young man claims to have carried out all the laws, Jesus senses something lacking and challenges the man to sell his possessions to which he is unwilling, revealing the true source of his security. Jesus' analogy of a camel passing through the eye of a needle (19:24) underscores the impossibility of entering the Kingdom while clinging on to their wealth-fuelled self-sufficiency. Yet, Jesus assures that what is impossible

with man is possible with God, emphasizing God's grace and power to regenerate hearts.

- A Hundred Times as Much: Jesus assures His disciples that those who sacrifice for His sake will receive great rewards in the present age and eternal life in the age to come. Jesus will handsomely reward those who sacrifice for Him, whereas those who refuse to let go of wealth will not make the grade. Thus, "many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."

Key Takeaway: True Kingdom living requires wholehearted trust in God rather than in material possessions. Jesus will not shortchange those who have left possessions or relationships for His sake.

Matthew 20:1–16

Kingdom Generosity

This parable illustrates the generosity of God's grace. Workers hired at different times receive the same wages, reflecting that God's Kingdom operates on principles of grace and generosity rather than human notions of fairness.

- Fairness vs Generosity: The landowner's equal payment to all workers highlights that God's grace is not earned but freely given. God's standard is not that of strict reward for services rendered, but grace to the undeserving. The parable challenges the human tendency toward comparison and entitlement, inviting disciples to celebrate God's generosity, first to themselves then to others.

Key Takeaway: The Kingdom operates on the principle of grace, not merit. God's generosity invites us to live with gratitude and extend grace to others.

Matthew 20:17–28

True Greatness

Jesus again predicts His impending suffering, death, and resurrection. In contrast, the mother of James and John requests positions of honour for

her sons in the Kingdom. Jesus responds by teaching that greatness in the Kingdom comes through serving others, following His own example of sacrificial service.

- **The Suffering Servant:** This is the third prediction of Jesus' passion, which He privately prepares the twelve for. Jesus provides new details about being handed over to the Gentiles who will mock, flog and crucify Him, thereby fulfilling prophecies about Him being the suffering servant (Isa. 52:13-53:12).
- **Greatness Through Service:** The disciples demonstrate their lack of understanding of the significance of Jesus' passion through their preoccupation with status and glory. In response, Jesus redefines greatness in the Kingdom as servanthood, in contrast to worldly greatness which is marked by self-importance and the desire to be noticed and respected. Jesus uses His life as the ultimate example of self-sacrificial leadership – He will lay down His life as a ransom, procuring release for captives held in the bondage of sin.

Key Takeaway: Greatness in God's Kingdom is found in humble, selfless service, following the example of Jesus, who gave His life for others.

Matthew 20:29–34

Compassion and Faith

As Jesus departs Jericho, two blind men cry out for mercy, addressing Him as the "Son of David." Despite the crowd's rebuke, Jesus stops, heals them, and restores their sight. This act of compassion and authority further reveals His identity as the Messiah.

- **Son of David:** The title "Son of David" used by the blind men affirms Jesus' messianic identity, which will soon be echoed by the crowds during His triumphal entry (21:9).
- **Compassion on the Move:** The blind men's persistent faith is met with Jesus' willingness to stop and respond, demonstrating His compassionate service and confounding societal expectations of Messianic grandeur. Jesus' mission is not political but spiritual in nature. After He heals them, they follow Jesus in an act that

symbolises discipleship. Men’s true destiny to follow Jesus is what He came to open blind eyes to see.

Key Takeaway: Jesus’ compassion and power call us to trust Him with our deepest needs and to follow Him wherever He may lead.

Engagement

(Serve/Outreach – 5 mins)

“... whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:26-28)

Identify one person or group you (individually or as a CG) could serve this week. (e.g. an elderly member, a busy parent, someone with an illness or their caregiver). Share a practical idea for service (e.g. delivering a meal, offering to babysit, writing a note of encouragement). Commit to the action and share with one another throughout the course of the week how the act of service went and how you saw God working through your service.

(Note to CGLs: you may also highlight some important church matters for the CG’s information and prayer)



Study 12

Matthew 21:1-23:39

The King's Judgments

Main Point:

Jesus asserts His authority as King and Judge, exposing the hypocrisy of Israel's leaders, and pronouncing judgment while calling for true repentance.

Main Purpose:

To lead readers to recognize Jesus' rightful authority, recognise and reject hypocrisy in our lives, and embrace a life of sincere faith in Him and His Kingdom.

I. Personal Study

Matthew 21:1-17

The Triumphal Entry and Cleansing of the Temple

Observation:

1. How does Jesus enter Jerusalem, and how do the crowds respond?
2. What does Jesus do upon entering the temple and what are the different responses to His actions?

Interpretation:

1. How does the triumphal as a fulfilment of Zechariah 9:9 confirm Jesus' identity and mission?
2. What does Jesus' cleansing of the temple reveal about His authority and the priorities of gathered worship?

Application:

1. How would it mean for you to honour Jesus as King in your daily life?
2. What is your attitude towards gathered worship? How may you rid yourself of distractions and come ready to worship God wholeheartedly during services?

Matthew 21:18–46

The Fig Tree and the Parables of Judgment

Observation:

1. What happens to the fig tree, and what lesson does Jesus draw from it?
2. What do the parables of the two sons and the tenants reveal about Israel's leaders?

Interpretation:

1. What does the cursed fig tree symbolise? What does Jesus' judgment of the tree demonstrate about His authority (see also 21:23-27)?
 2. What do the parables teach about God's response to those who reject His authority?
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Application:

1. What spiritual fruit would Jesus find in our lives today? How may we keep leaning on the Spirit to cultivate spiritual fruit that reflects genuine faith in God?
 2. How does this passage challenge and spur you to respond to Jesus' authority?
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Matthew 22:1-14

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

Observation:

1. What happens to those who refuse the king's invitation, and how does the king respond?
 2. What happens to the man without wedding clothes?
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Interpretation:

1. Who are those who refuse the king's invitation, as well as those subsequently invited and gathered, a reference to? What does the king's actions show of the king?
2. What do the wedding clothes symbolize, and what does the King expect of those invited to His banquet? What does Jesus mean by "for many are invited, but few are chosen"?

Application:

1. How does this parable challenge or affirm your view of God?
2. How can you keep saying "yes" to God's invitation to walk in the ways of the Kingdom?

Matthew 22:15–46

Questions About Authority and the Messiah

Observation:

1. What questions do the Pharisees, Sadducees, and teachers of the law ask Jesus, and how does He respond to each?
2. How does Jesus' question on Messiah challenge the Pharisees?

Interpretation:

1. How do Jesus' answers expose the hypocrisy and limited understanding of the religious leaders?
2. What point is Jesus trying to make when asking the Pharisees about David's relationship with Messiah?

Application:

1. What does it look like for you to "give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's"?
2. At present, how are you loving God and loving others? How can the Greatest Commandment be the central priority of your life?

Matthew 23:1–39

Jesus' Woes on the Pharisees

Observation:

1. What are some of the behaviours Jesus condemns in the Pharisees?
2. How will they be judged, according to Jesus?

Interpretation:

1. Why does Jesus pronounce such strong judgments against the Pharisees?
 2. What do Jesus' woes and judgments reveal about true righteousness?
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Application:

1. Where might you be tempted to hypocrisy in your spiritual life? What could help you guard against this?
 2. What are outward shows of religiosity without inward faith which our church must beware?
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II. CG Meeting Guide

Community

(Group Building – 10 mins)

Icebreaker: Share about an authority figure who made a difference in your life. What about this person made you respect his/her authority?

Transition: In today's study, we will explore how Jesus asserts His authority as King and Judge, challenging hypocrisy and calling for sincere faith and obedience. Let us be aware of our own responses to His authority in our own lives.

Adoration

(Worship – 10 mins)

1. "[You Are The King of Glory](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdDX3QLG8FY)" (Traditional)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdDX3QLG8FY>
2. "[Hosanna \(Praise is Rising\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13SSB95Non8)" by Paul Baloche (Contemporary)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13SSB95Non8>
3. "[You are my King \(Amazing love\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gt6L-6oVDjY)" by Billy James Foote (Contemporary)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gt6L-6oVDjY>

Renewal

(Bible Study + Small Group Prayer – 45 mins)

1. How does Jesus' triumphal entry challenge you to honour Him as King in your daily life?

2. The parables of judgment reveal the consequences of rejecting God's authority. How do they encourage you to reflect on your own obedience to Him?

3. How can Jesus' teaching about the greatest commandment shape your priorities this week?

4. The woes against the Pharisees highlight the dangers of hypocrisy. How can we cultivate humility and sincerity in our faith community?

(Note to Bible Study Leaders: you may supplement these questions with those from the Personal Study section. Please spend adequate time on application questions.)

Pray in Small Groups

1. Share one way you feel challenged to respond to Jesus' authority in your life.
2. Pray for one another to embrace Kingdom values of humility, obedience, and compassion.

Participants' Notes

In this section, Jesus' authority is declared, challenged, and affirmed as He confronts the religious establishment and reveals the values of the Kingdom of Heaven. His triumphal entry publicly declares His identity as the Messiah. Through parables and teaching, Jesus critiques the religious leaders for their hypocrisy, failure to bear fruit, and rejection of God's messengers. He redefines Kingdom priorities, emphasizing love for God and neighbour, and the coming judgment for those who oppose Him. This culminates in a series of woes pronounced upon the Pharisees, highlighting their hypocrisy, spiritual blindness and failure to lead God's people.

Matthew 21:1–17

The Triumphal Entry and Cleansing of the Temple

Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey, fulfilling prophecy and receiving praise as the Messiah. He then cleanses the temple, condemning its misuse as a marketplace, heals the blind and lame, and confronts the religious leaders who are indignant at the children's shouts of praise.

- Symbolism of the Donkey: Jesus riding on a donkey fulfils Zechariah 9:9, portraying Him as a humble, peaceful King, in contrast with worldly rulers who arrive on a warhorse with pomp and aggression. Through this, Jesus is shown to be Messiah, but one whose triumphal path leads to suffering, not show of force.
- The Acclamation of the Crowds: The phrase "Hosanna to the Son of David" reflects messianic hope, with the crowds viewing Jesus as the one who would deliver them (Hosanna is a Greek form of the Hebrew words translated 'Save us' in Psalm 118:25). Yet, their understanding of deliverance was likely limited to political expectations.
- Cleansing of the Temple: Jesus' act of driving out those buying and selling asserts His authority over the temple and shows his judgment over the whole system of sacrificial worship which had developed into a profit-making business. His declaration, "My house will be called a house of prayer" (Isaiah 56:7), highlights the temple's intended

purpose for communion with God, not commerce with people. The Son of David also welcomes the blind and lame into the temple and heals them, though previously, they would have been excluded (2 Samuel 5:8).

Key Takeaway: Jesus' entry and actions in the temple declare His Messianic authority and call for true worship.

Matthew 21:18–46

The Fig Tree and the Parables of Judgment

Jesus curses a fruitless fig tree, as a sign of judgment on Israel's failure to bear spiritual fruit. He tells parables condemning the religious leaders for their hypocrisy, rejection of God's messengers, and failure to honour His Son, warning of their impending judgment.

- **The Fig Tree:** The cursing of the fig tree symbolizes the fruitlessness of Israel's religious leaders (Micah 7:1, Jeremiah 8:13) and their show of religion without godliness. This "enacted parable" foreshadows the judgment on the temple and its leadership.
- **The Question of Authority:** The chief priests and elders question Jesus' authority, prompted by His actions and the crowd's reactions. Jesus' counter-question about John the Baptist's authority connects John's ministry to His own. Accepting John's mission would lead to recognizing Jesus as sent by God. The religious leaders refuse to answer, prioritising diplomacy over conviction, thus forfeiting their right to question Jesus' authority publicly.
- **Parable of the Two Sons:** This parable highlights the contrast between outward religious performance and genuine obedience. The tables are turned in God's economy – the "sinners" are included because they welcome God's saving action in the ministry of Jesus whereas the religious are excluded because they failed to do the same.
- **The Tenants:** This parable points to Israel's rejection of God's messengers, culminating in their rejection of the Son. It also looks ahead to the time the Kingdom will be open to other tenants (i.e. Gentiles), with their tenure marked by the expectation of producing fruit (v.41, 43). From the rejected Son, Jesus tells of the rejected stone

of Psalm 118:22-23 who will ultimately become the cornerstone, thus foretelling His own vindication in the resurrection.

Key Takeaway: God expects His people to bear fruit, and rejection of His Son leads to judgment.

Matthew 22:1–14

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

Jesus compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a king inviting guests to a wedding banquet. The initial invitees reject the invitation and face judgment, while others, including outsiders, are invited. However, a guest improperly dressed is cast out, emphasizing the necessity of righteousness to remain in the Kingdom.

- Rejection of the Invitation: The refusal of the original invitees symbolizes Israel's rejection of Jesus as the means of God's salvation, while the invitation extended to "anyone you find" reflects the inclusion of the Gentiles. The destroyed city points forward to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70, an act of God's judgment when His message and messengers are repeatedly rejected.
- The Wedding Garment: The man without proper attire represents those who attempt to enter the Kingdom without true righteousness. This parable stresses that though entry to God's salvation is free for all, it is not to be taken lightly. Just as the new tenants must produce fruit, so also new invitees must demonstrate a life transformed according to the values of the Kingdom. Without the "garment" of repentance or faith-inspired works, there is no guarantee of security. The offender will be treated no differently from the original invitees who rejected the king's invitation.

Key Takeaway: God graciously invites all to His Kingdom, but inclusion requires righteous living that is proof of true salvation.

Matthew 22:15–46

Questions About Authority and the Messiah

The Pharisees and Sadducees test Jesus with questions about taxes, resurrection, and the greatest commandment. Jesus answers wisely, affirming God's sovereignty, the hope of resurrection, and the priority of love for God and neighbour. He concludes by asserting His divine identity as both David's Son and Lord.

- **Questions About Authority:** Concerning taxes, Jesus, while highlighting loyalty to God, also affirms that human governments have legitimate authority and, thus, submission to imperial taxation is reasonable. At the same time, such submission only finds its proper place within the context of ultimate loyalty to God, who deserves all of who one is and what one has. Concerning resurrection, Jesus refutes the Sadducees using Exodus 3:6, where God identifies Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—long after their deaths. Because God is a living and covenant-keeping Lord, whose covenants death cannot nullify, belief in God necessarily includes hope in resurrection and triumph over death. Concerning the greatest commandment, Jesus combines Deuteronomy 6:5 (love for God) and Leviticus 19:18 (love for neighbour) as the greatest commandments, summarizing the Law's requirements and affirming the primacy of love in discipleship. These two commands serve as the foundation on which all other commandments depend. Jesus' answers reveal His wisdom and affirm His identity as the Messiah.
- **Jesus' Question:** By asking whose son the Messiah is, Jesus highlights His divine authority as coming from more than just being David's descendant. He is also David's Lord. The Pharisees are unable to respond, well aware of the implications of acknowledging Jesus as Messiah. This episode also marks the end of their public challenges to Him, leaving Jesus' authority unchallenged.

Key Takeaway: Jesus' wisdom silences His opponents and demonstrates His authority, revealing the priorities of God's Kingdom: love for the Living God and neighbour.

Matthew 23:1–39

Jesus' Woes on the Pharisees

Jesus denounces the Pharisees and scribes for their hypocrisy, legalism, and neglect of justice and mercy. He delivers seven woes condemning their focus on appearances over true righteousness and their rejection of God's messengers, concluding with a lament over Jerusalem's coming judgment and His longing for their repentance.

- Hypocrisy of the Pharisees: Jesus delivers a scathing critique of the Pharisees and scribes, exposing their hypocrisy and failures as spiritual leaders. Their hypocrisy is shown in their failure to practice what they preach (23:1–4), Pride and Desire for Recognition (23:5–7), blocking access to God (23:13), exploitation of the vulnerable (23:14), misguided evangelism (23:15), blindness to true priorities (23:16–22), external cleanliness while harbouring internal corruption (23:25–28), murderous opposition to God's messengers (23:29–36).
- Jesus' Lament: Jesus laments over Jerusalem, symbolizing the nation of Israel, for rejecting His offer of protection and salvation, likened to a hen gathering her chicks. Despite His mission to lead Israel to repentance and avert judgment, they refused, fulfilling their long history of rejecting God's messengers. He declares the temple abandoned, signifying God's departure from His house, no longer "God's house" but "your house," foreshadowing its physical destruction.

Key Takeaway: Jesus condemns hypocrisy and external religiosity, calling for repentance and genuine righteousness.



Study 13

Matthew 24:1-25:46 The King's Return

Main Point:

Jesus teaches about the events leading up to His return, and the attitudes believers are to have as we prepare for it, emphasizing the need for vigilance, faithful stewardship, and compassionate action.

Main Purpose:

To call readers to live with watchfulness, faithfulness, and compassion, as they anticipate the return of Christ.

I. Personal Study

Matthew 24:1–35

The Signs of the End Times

Observation:

1. What predictions does Jesus make about the temple? What signs will follow in the lead up to Jesus' return?
2. What will follow "the abomination that causes desolation"? What must believers be watchful of?

Interpretation:

1. Why should believers not be alarmed by wars, famines, and earthquakes?
2. How does Jesus prepare His disciples for the persecution and deception they may face?

Application:

1. In what ways can you guard against spiritual deception in your daily life?
2. How does knowing these signs make a difference to your walk with Christ?

Matthew 24:36–25:13

Watchfulness and Readiness

Observation:

1. What does Jesus say about the timing of His return? How does the parable of the faithful servants (24:45-51) contrast readiness with wickedness?
2. What was the difference between the wise and foolish virgins?

Interpretation:

1. Why does Jesus liken the days of Noah to His return (24:37-39)?
 2. What does the shut door represent? What is the main point of the parable of the ten virgins?
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Application:

1. How do these parables challenge complacency and highlight the urgency of preparation?
 2. What would it look like to be like the faithful servant or wise virgins in your daily life in terms of being ready for Christ's return?
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Matthew 25:14–30
Faithful Stewardship

Observation:

1. How does the master allocate resources to his servants, and what do each of the servants do with them?
 2. How does the master respond to the actions of each servant?
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Interpretation:

1. What does the parable of the talents reveal about God's expectations for His people?
2. Why does the third servant do nothing about his assigned resources? What does the Master's response to this servant reveal about His character?

Application:

1. List down the "talents" God has entrusted to you. How can you use each of them faithfully for His glory?
2. What fears do you have in your service to God? How can you keep from being like the third servant?

Matthew 25:31–46
The Final Judgment

Observation:

1. How is Jesus described in this passage? What does He do?
2. What criteria does He use to distinguish between the sheep and goats?

Interpretation:

1. Why does Jesus identify Himself with “the least of these”?
 2. How does this passage square with our understanding of “salvation by grace through faith” alone?
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Application:

1. Who are “the least of these” whom God has placed around you? How do you treat these people at present?
 2. What might exercising compassionate love for “the least of these” look like tangibly for you?
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II. CG Meeting Guide

Community

(Group Building – 10 mins)

Icebreaker: Share one thing you eagerly anticipate (e.g., a holiday, reunion with a friend, work event). How does the anticipation make a difference to your actions or priorities?

Transition: Today, we’ll explore how Jesus calls us to live as we anticipate His return and the fulfilment of His Kingdom.

Adoration

(Worship – 10 mins)

1. “[Come Thou Long Expected Jesus](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFloWX1yuyQ)” (Traditional)
2. “[Soon](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JE2LAzn0j3c)” by Brooke Ligertwood (Contemporary)

Renewal

(Bible Study + Small Group Prayer – 45 mins)

1. How do you feel as you read through the passages in this study? What comforts and challenges you?

2. What are Jesus’ warnings as He looks ahead to the end times in Matt. 24? How can we remain vigilant against false messiahs and false teachings?

3. What does the parable of the talents teach about stewardship? How may you not be paralysed by fear as you serve God with what He's given you?

4. How does Jesus' identification with "the least of these", and His judgment based on how we treat them make a difference to the way we treat others?

5. What does readiness for Christ's return look like in practical terms for you?

(Note to Bible Study Leaders: you may supplement these questions with those from the Personal Study section. Please spend adequate time on application questions.)

Pray in Small Groups

1. Share one specific way this study has challenged your priorities as you look forward to Christ’s return?
2. Pray for one another to “keep watch” and be ready for the Master’s impending return.

Participants’ Notes

In this section, Jesus prepares His disciples for His return by teaching about the signs of the end times, the importance of readiness, faithful stewardship, and the final judgment. This section provides a theological framework for living in anticipation of the King’s return, with practical implications for discipleship and Kingdom living

Matthew 24:1–35

The Signs of the End Times

Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple and outlines the signs that will precede the end of the age. These include false messiahs, wars, natural disasters, persecution, and the proclamation of the Gospel to all nations.

- The Temple's Destruction: Jesus' declaration about the temple's destruction is a turning point, signalling the end of the old covenant and the temple as the centre of God's presence. His departure from the temple parallels God's glory leaving the temple in Ezekiel 10–11. This prophecy is fulfilled in AD 70 with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, emphasizing God's judgment on unfaithful Israel. The temple's destruction (fulfilled in AD 70) serves as a foreshadowing of the broader eschatological events leading to Christ's return.
- Faithfulness Amidst Deception and Disaster: Jesus warns His disciples about false messiahs, wars, and natural disasters, which are the "birth pains" of the end but not the end itself. After which, persecution against Christians will come, which will cause the love of most Christians to grow cold. Enduring faithfulness is thus needed on part of true disciples.
- The Abomination of Desolation: The "abomination that causes desolation" refers to a desecration of what is holy, echoing Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:27; 11:31) and symbolizing ultimate rebellion against God. God's people must discern the times and be forewarned of severe trials which will open the door for messianic pretenders to lead the elect astray.
- Cosmic Imagery and the Son of Man: The apocalyptic language of 24:29–31 describes political and cosmic upheaval, representing the vindication and enthronement of Jesus as the Son of Man (Daniel 7:13–14). Amidst end time struggles, Jesus emphasizes that His words are enduring (24:35), underscoring the trustworthiness of His promises amidst the chaos.

Key Takeaway: Jesus' warnings call us to vigilance and perseverance in faith, reminding us that God's purposes will prevail.

Matthew 24:36–25:13

Watchfulness and Readiness

Jesus shifts focus to the necessity of being prepared for His unexpected return. Using the imagery of Noah's time, the parable of the faithful servant, and the ten virgins, He emphasizes the urgency of readiness.

- **Unexpected Timing:** This passage emphasizes the unknown timing of Jesus' return, likening it to the days of Noah, where people were caught unprepared despite warnings. Jesus calls for constant vigilance and faithfulness, particularly for those within the church, warning against complacency. The faithful servant models readiness and trust in the master's return, while the unfaithful servant, who exploits others during the master's delay, faces judgment. The passage stresses that delay is no excuse for neglecting faithful discipleship.
- **The Parable of the Ten Virgins:** The parable illustrates the critical importance of being spiritually prepared for Christ's return. All ten virgins represent members of the professing church, equally expectant of the wedding feast, but the wise virgins prepared beforehand, while the foolish ones delayed and were shut out. The bridegroom's delayed arrival echoes the recurring theme of waiting in Matthew 24. The shutting of the door signifies the finality of judgment, emphasizing that readiness cannot be borrowed or transferred—it requires individual preparation. The parable concludes with the warning to "stay awake," underscoring vigilance and spiritual preparedness for the unpredictable timing of Christ's return.

Key Takeaway: Readiness for Christ's return requires vigilance, active faith, and consistent preparation.

Matthew 25:14–30

Faithful Stewardship

In the parable of the talents, Jesus teaches about the responsibility to use what God has entrusted to us for His Kingdom.

- **Responsibility with God's Gifts:** A "talent" was a significant monetary unit, and in our case, symbolises the resources, opportunities, and gifts God gives to each believer. The varying amounts of talents given to the servants highlight God's individualised calling and expectations based on capacity.
- **Faith in Action:** Faithfulness is expressed in action, not passivity. The faithful servants demonstrate trust in their master by investing what

they are given, while the third servant's fear reflects a misunderstanding of the master's character. The master's response reveals that stewardship is both a privilege and a responsibility, with eternal consequences.

Key Takeaway: Believers are called to use their God-given gifts for His Kingdom, boldly and without fear, in order to please the Master.

Matthew 25:31–46

The Final Judgment

Jesus concludes this section with a vivid depiction of the final judgment, where humanity is separated into “sheep” and “goats” based on their response to “the least of these.”

- **The Son of Man as Judge:** Jesus describes His return in glory, when He will separate the sheep from the goats (following shepherding practices), with sheep symbolising submission and trust, and goats representing stubbornness. The sheep and separated from the goats based on their treatment of "the least of these", a reference to those in need, on the margins, possibly fellowship believers enduring hardship. The King's identification with the “least of these” emphasises that services to them is service to the King. Jesus' judgment is based not on merit but on evidence of a transformed life that reflects the values of the Kingdom.
- **Faith and Works:** This passage challenges a purely intellectual or passive faith, highlighting the inseparability of faith and works. Acts of mercy and compassion toward the needy reflect genuine discipleship and determine eternal reward or punishment.

Key Takeaway: True faith manifests in compassion and service to others, reflecting the values of the Kingdom, on which basis we will be judged.



Study 14

Matthew 26:1-28:20

The King's Triumph

Main Point:

Jesus fulfills His mission of inaugurating God's Kingdom on earth through His sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection. He commissions His disciples to make other disciples of His from all nations.

Main Purpose:

To invite readers to appreciate Christ's passion and resurrection, and embrace the Great Commission.

I. Personal Study

Matthew 26:1-46

The Passion Begins

Observation:

1. What does Jesus predict in 26:1-2 about His death, and how does this shape the events that follow?
2. What does the woman at Bethany do for Jesus? How do the disciples respond?
3. What does Jesus ask of His disciples at Gethsemane, and how do they respond? What does Jesus pray for?

Interpretation:

1. What is the significance of the Passover for Jesus' death? (And, similarly, how is the Passover meal a significant setting for Jesus to institute the Lord's Supper?)
 2. How and why does Jesus honour the woman at Bethany?
 3. How does Gethsemane demonstrate both Jesus' humanity and His obedience to God's will?
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Application:

1. How does Jesus' resoluteness to go to the Cross inspire your own cross-bearing discipleship (c.f. 16:24)?
 2. Like the woman at Bethany, how may your devotion to Jesus be expressed?
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Matthew 26:47–27:56

The Trials and Crucifixion

Observation:

1. How does Judas' betrayal unfold, and what role do the religious leaders play?
2. What takes place during the two trials Jesus endures? How does Jesus respond in each of these trials?
3. How is Jesus treated by the Roman soldiers? What supernatural events occur at Jesus' death?

Interpretation:

1. Why does Jesus remain silent during His trials, and what does this teach us about Him? Why are His words, when He does speak, significant?
 2. What do the different ways people treat Jesus, and His response, tell us about worldly power and true Kingly authority?
 3. What is the significance of the supernatural events at Jesus' death? What does the torn curtain signify?
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Application:

1. What new insights have you personally gained from the accounts of Jesus' betrayal, trial and crucifixion? How do these deepen your gratitude for His sacrifice?
 2. How does the Passion of Christ make a difference to your discipleship and evangelism efforts?
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Matthew 27:57-28:15

The Burial and Resurrection

Observation:

1. What took place immediately after Jesus' crucifixion?

2. Who do the women encounter at the tomb? What does Jesus say to them?

Interpretation:

1. How does Jesus' burial and the guard at the tomb prove that Jesus was dead?
2. What is significant about the fact that women are the first witnesses to Jesus' resurrection?

Application:

1. What practical difference does the resurrection make to your daily life?
2. What risks are you willing to take for God, knowing that Jesus has defeated sin and death for you?

Matthew 28:16–20

The Great Commission

Observation:

1. Where do the disciples meet Jesus, and how do they respond to His appearance?

2. What mission does He give His disciples, and how does He assure them that they can do it?

Interpretation:

1. On what basis can Jesus say, “all authority on heaven and on earth has been given to me”? Why is Jesus’ universal authority foundational to the Great Commission?
2. What is the significance of baptism and teaching in the task of discipleship?

Application:

1. How does knowing that you are sent to make disciples with the authority and presence of Jesus strengthen your conviction regarding the Great Commission?
 2. What steps can you take to strengthen your own discipleship and discipling?
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II. CG Meeting Guide

Community

(Group Building – 10 mins)

Icebreaker: Share about the greatest scene of triumph or victory in a movie you have ever seen. (If there is time, search for it online and show it to the CG). What was this scene so powerful for you?

Transition: Today, we'll explore the ultimate victory of Jesus through His death and resurrection. Even if you may have read this account many times, allow the Holy Spirit to bring new insights to you, and hear His Great Commission anew in light of His triumph.

Adoration

(Worship – 10 mins)

1. [Jesus Paid It All](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dj5qmooaPwE)” (Traditional)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dj5qmooaPwE>
2. “[Living Hope](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f2FXxDVO6w)” by Phil Wickham (Contemporary)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f2FXxDVO6w>
3. “[Oh to see the dawn](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wcULqyoINg)” by Keith & Kristyn Getty (Contemporary)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wcULqyoINg>

Renewal

(Bible Study + Small Group Prayer – 45 mins)

1. Why is the Passover context significant in understanding of Jesus' sacrificial death?

2. How does Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane contrast with His disciples' actions? Which area of life is God inviting you to say to Him, "not as I will, but as you will"?

3. What new insights have you personally gained from the accounts of Jesus' betrayal, trial and crucifixion? How do these deepen your gratitude for His sacrifice?

4. What practical difference does the resurrection make to your daily life? What risks are you willing to take for God, knowing that Jesus has defeated sin and death for you?

5. Knowing that Jesus' authority and presence are always with you, what steps can you take to strengthen your own discipleship and discipling?

(Note to Bible Study Leaders: you may supplement these questions with those from the Personal Study section. Please spend adequate time on application questions.)

Pray in Small Groups

1. Share one way you feel called to live in light of Jesus' triumph over sin and death.
2. Pray for boldness and faithfulness to live out the Great Commission.

Participants' Notes

Matthew 26–28 presents the culmination of Jesus' earthly ministry, from His preparation for crucifixion to His passion, resurrection and, finally, commissioning of His disciples. By this, He fulfils His mission to glorify God by establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.

Matthew 26:1–46

The Passion Begins

This section sets the stage for Jesus' crucifixion, beginning with His prediction of His death at the Passover. Judas agrees to betray Jesus, and the Last Supper is held, where Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper. In Gethsemane, Jesus wrestles in prayer, submitting Himself to the Father's will.

- Passover: Jesus connects the Passover with His crucifixion, demonstrating the fulfilment of God's redemptive plan. The timing of the Passion during the Passover emphasizes the ultimate act of deliverance—freedom from sin through Jesus' sacrifice as the ultimate Passover Lamb. The leaders' scheming in secret to kill Jesus

juxtaposed with Jesus' willingness to suffer underscores divine providence working through human schemes to achieve salvation.

- Anointing: A woman anoints Jesus with expensive perfume, an act He interprets as preparation for His burial. In contrast with the disciples who see her act as wasteful, Jesus highlights her extravagant devotion to Him, reflecting the high cost of discipleship.
- Betrayal: Judas agrees to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, echoing Zechariah 11:12, which points to a rejection of the Messiah. The betrayal illustrates the sovereignty of God, showing how even evil serves the purposes of redemption.
- Remembrance: Jesus reinterprets the Passover meal, instituting the Lord's Supper as a new covenant, in which He is the mediator. Through the sacrifice of His body and blood, signified by the bread and cup, He fulfills the law's demands and procures redemption for mankind.
- Denial: Jesus warns that His disciples will desert Him, specifically predicting Peter's denial. Peter's bold declaration of loyalty only serves to demonstrate the emptiness of man's boasting in the face of testing. Jesus' foreknowledge of Peter's denial shows His compassion and understanding of human weakness. It underscores the need for grace in discipleship.
- Submission: At Gethsemane, Jesus models perfect submission to God's will, despite overwhelming personal anguish. Gethsemane reveals the cost of obedience, as Jesus accepts the "cup" of suffering on behalf of humanity. His remarkable perseverance is in stark contrast with the weakness of His disciples, who fail to stay awake to keep company with their Lord, highlighting human weakness in the face of spiritual trials.

Key Takeaway: Jesus' willingness to face betrayal, suffering and death demonstrates His love for humanity and obedience to God, encouraging us to prayerfully persevere amid challenges.

Matthew 26:47–27:56

The Trials and Crucifixion

Judas leads the authorities to arrest Jesus, who is tried by the Sanhedrin and condemned for blasphemy. Peter denies Jesus, fulfilling Jesus' prediction. Pilate yields to the crowd's demands and sentences Jesus to death. Jesus is subsequently mocked, beaten, and crucified. His death is accompanied by cosmic signs, demonstrating His divine nature.

- Arrest: Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss, fulfilling the role of "the one who hands Him over." Jesus' rebuke of the disciple who strikes the servant of the high priest emphasises nonviolence and His willingness to obey what is written in the Scriptures and His submission to the Father's will. His reference to twelve legions of angels highlights His divine authority, which He willingly sets aside to accomplish the redemptive plan.
- "Trial": The trial before Caiaphas is a sham, with false witnesses accusing him. Jesus' silence fulfils Isaiah 53:7, portraying Him as the Suffering Servant. His declaration of Him being the Son of Man (Daniel 7:13-14) seated at God's right hand is a declaration of his Messianic mission before the authorities of Israel, and His pointing to His future vindication and divine authority. His being accused of blasphemy and subsequent abuse at the hands of the leaders only serves to deepen the irony of the scene, as readers will see that it is 'judges' who are being judged.
- Remorse: Peter's denial of Jesus three times as predicted is contrasted with Jesus' steadfastness. His weeping bitterly in remorse reflects repentance and points to a future time when he will be restored. In contrast, Judas' remorse does not result in restoration – he hangs himself, a final act demonstrating the tragic consequences of rejecting God's grace.
- Trial: The silence of Jesus before Pilate again fulfils Isaiah 53:7, a depiction of the Suffering Servant who does not protest His unjust treatment. The release of Barabbas, a guilty man, in place of Jesus, the innocent one, reflects the substitutionary nature of Jesus' sacrifice for humanity. Despite Pilate's symbolic washing of hands, he is not absolved of his responsibility in sentencing an innocent man to death. Together with the religious leaders and crowd, their actions in rejecting Messiah play out God's redemptive purposes for humanity.

- Crucifixion: The mocking and crucifixion by the Roman soldiers emphasise the contrast between Jesus' true kingship and the world's misuse of power and authority. The events surrounding the crucifixion fulfil numerous Old Testament prophecies (e.g., Psalm 22, Isaiah 53), affirming God's sovereign plan. The tearing of the temple curtain signifies the end of the old covenant and the establishment of a new covenant through Jesus' death, granting believers direct access to God. Jesus' cry of abandonment reflects the depth of His suffering as He bears humanity's sin – it is the only time in the synoptic gospels He does not address God as "Father", and yet, that He can still appeal to God as "my God" shows His total willingness to drink the cup of suffering for the sake of the world.

Key Takeaway: Jesus' painful, sacrificial and obedient death on the Cross reconciles humanity to God, offering redemption and new life.

Matthew 27:57-28:15

The Burial and Resurrection

On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and another Mary discover the empty tomb and encounter an angel who announces Jesus' resurrection. Jesus appears to the women, affirming His victory over death. Meanwhile, the guards report the events to the authorities, who bribe them to spread a false story that the disciples stole Jesus' body.

- Burial: Jesus' burial by Joseph of Arimathea fulfils Isaiah 53:9, which speaks of the Messiah being buried with the rich. The large stone over the tomb symbolises the finality of Jesus' death. The extra effort taken to station guards at the tomb only serve to set up the miracle of the resurrection and enhance the credibility of the story of the empty tomb.
- Resurrection: The women at the tomb exemplify faithful discipleship as well God's inclusion of the marginalised in His Kingdom work. The resurrection confirms Jesus' identity as the Son of God and confirms Jesus' divinity and decisive triumph over sin and death. As the cornerstone of the Christian faith, it guarantees believers hope in

eternal life. However, not all are willing to accept this truth, as seen in the chief priests' cover-up of the resurrection.

Key Takeaway: The resurrection, which follows the burial, affirms Jesus' victory over sin and death, providing hope and confidence for believers to live boldly for Him.

Matthew 28:16–20

The Great Commission

The risen Jesus meets His disciples on a mountain in Galilee, where He commissions them to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey His commands. To this end, He assures them of His authority over heaven and earth and His enduring presence with them until the end of the age.

Commission: Jesus' declaration that absolute authority over heaven and earth has been given Him points to the vindication and victory of the resurrection – the prophecy of the Son of Man being enthroned as ruler (26:64) has been fulfilled. As the Risen King, He now commands His disciples to make disciples of all nations, reflecting the global scope of God's Kingdom, breaking down barriers of ethnicity and culture. The acts of baptism and teaching symbolise inclusion in God's covenant and a lifelong process of living and learning under Jesus' lordship. The promise of His ever-abiding presence assures all disciples that they carry out their mission with divine empowerment, not on their own.

Key Takeaway: The Great Commission sends us out into the nations to make disciples, assured by Jesus' authority and presence.



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For more information, please write to:

The Bible Church, Singapore

152 West Coast Road Singapore 127370

t: 67793255 e: office@biblechurch.sg

w: www.biblechurch.sg

