



Meeting

The Ultimate King

Matthew 10-17

Bible Studies for Ashfield Presbyterian Church
ashfieldpresbyterian.org.au

Matthew 10: Gardening Advice

Read Matthew 9:35-10:42.

1. How and why does Jesus demonstrate compassion for the crowds (9:35-38)?
2. What is the connection between the end of chapter 9 and the start of ch 10? (Did you notice 9:36 and 10:6?)
3. Jesus sends out the Twelve (10:1-15). Describe their mission.

How is it similar to Jesus'?

How is it different?

4. Is there a principle for us to follow from v11-14 to do with finding a worthy person? How might it work for you in practice?
5. Jesus warns the disciples that their compassionate ministry will not be warmly received (10:16-25). What will they experience?

What reasons does Jesus give for such opposition?

6. What does it mean to be shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves (16)?

What does this look like in practice?

7. What attitudes does Jesus want his disciples to have? What reasons does he give?

Attitudes	Reason
v17	v17
v19	v19-20
v22	v22
v26	v28-31

8. In 10:26-33 Jesus prepares his present and future disciples for opposition. What form will this opposition take?

Why shouldn't his disciples be afraid of those who oppose them?

9. What challenging commands does Jesus give in these verses?
V32-33

V37

V38

V39

10. What does Jesus promise to those who are receptive to our message (10:40-42)?

Prayer Points:

Matthew 11: A Case of Mistaken Identity

Read Matthew 11:1-19:

1. Look back to John's proclamation of the kingdom that Jesus was coming to introduce (Mt 3:7-12). Did this expectation fit what the Old Testament prophesied about the coming kingdom (see Isa 6:8-13; Jer 15:1-7)?

Did this expectation fit with what John had heard Jesus had been doing (eg 9:18-34)?

2. How does Jesus answer John?

What is Jesus saying about the nature of his kingdom (see Isa 35:5-6; 61:1)?

3. How do the two aspects of the kingdom fit together?

4. What encouragement does Jesus add for John in v6?

How have other people fallen away on account of Jesus (understood his identity and nature incorrectly)? See 9:34; 11:19; 11:20-24

5. In what sense is John greater than those who have come before him (v11)?

In what sense are the least in the kingdom of heaven greater than John?

6. John preached one aspect of the kingdom. Jesus preached another. How did people respond to each (v18-19)?

In what way are they like children (v16-17)? What is Jesus' point?

Read Matthew 11:20-30

7. Jesus has just announced blessings on some (v6). He now announces woes. What is the sin of Korazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum?

How does this fit with the aspect of the kingdom he described in 11:4-5?

Why will the judgment be worse than for Gentile cities?

8. What things have been hidden from the wise and learned (v25)?

9. What does it mean to be little children?

Is this like the children in 11:16?

10. Lots of people have misunderstood Jesus in this chapter. What is the only way to understand who Jesus really is (v27)?

11. If it's about the Son choosing to reveal the Father to us, what is our responsibility (v28-30)?

What is Jesus' promise to us?

Prayer Points:

Matthew 12: Responding to the King

Power over people is not easily shared. Wars have been fought, people assassinated and elections rigged in order to gain or maintain power. The leaders of Israel were becoming concerned over the growing reputation and following of Jesus. Like ripples in a pool of water, the ministry of Jesus and his disciples continued to have a widening impact on the Jewish nation. If Jesus' followers became too numerous, the leaders would end up losing their positions of authority. In Matthew 12 they formulate a strategy to discredit him.

Read Matthew 12:1-21:

1. Consider the ways that religious leaders attacked Jesus in verses 1-14. What was their strategy?
2. What does Jesus mean that one greater than the temple is here (v6)? What's his point?
3. In v7 Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6. Does this mean God doesn't approve of sacrifices? In what circumstances?

Which is more important? Why?

When have you fallen into the trap of offering sacrifice, but neglecting mercy?

4. As you compare the Pharisees' second accusation against Jesus (v. 10) with their own response (v. 14), what irony do you see?
5. Why did Jesus warn the healed people not to tell others who Jesus was (v16)?

What point does the quote from Isaiah make (v17-21)?

6. Notice the startling contrast between the religious leaders' attitude toward Jesus and God's attitude (vv. 15-21). How do they differ?

Read Matthew 12:22-37:

7. The crowd's excitement over Jesus as the Son of David (see 2 Sam 7:12-16) reveals a messianic expectation for a political deliverer. Yet Jesus' kingdom is not a political one. How do the Pharisees also get the nature of Jesus' kingdom wrong (v24-28)?

What does Jesus' answer (v25-29) tell you about the true nature of the kingdom of God? About Jesus' ministry?

8. From the context, what do you think it means to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit (v31-32, notice also v28)? How have the Pharisees committed this sin?

Since forgiveness must be asked for, why is it impossible for this sin to be forgiven?

9. What meaning does Jesus give for the Pharisees' growing hostility (v34-37)?

Read Matthew 12:38-50:

10. Why do you think the Pharisees wanted to see a miracle? Why does Jesus respond to the request? Is it wrong to ask for a sign?

11. What is the sign of Jonah? How is Jesus greater than Jonah? Than Solomon? What is Jesus' point?

12. In verses 43-45 Jesus tells the Pharisees and teachers of the law a story. What does it reveal about them?

13. In light of the growing controversy, why might Jesus' mother and brothers be eager to speak to him?

Looking back over the last few weeks, would others see you as a brother or sister of Jesus, or a distant relative?

Prayer Points:

Matthew 13: Good Growth

Crowds are fickle. One moment they follow with enthusiasm, the next they turn hostile and angry. In Matthew 13 Jesus speaks to a mixed and fickle crowd. Some are hungry to hear his message. Others are suspicious and hostile. In this setting Jesus begins to speak in parables. These stories test our spiritual sight and hearing. They also expose the condition of our hearts.

Read Matthew 13

A common misunderstanding of parables is that Jesus uses them to make his teaching “interesting” or “easy to understand.” But the funny thing is, they’re actually more like frustrating riddles. Like Jesus himself, the parables are easily dismissed - and they sift out those who really want to know him.

The Parable of the Sower

1. What is the seed? How would you have known this if Jesus didn’t explain it?
2. What are the four types of soil? Could you have worked this out if Jesus didn’t explain it?
3. From verses 10 to 17, why does Jesus say he speaks in parables?
4. How does Jesus describe the people of Israel?
5. How do parables work?
6. In what way is the parable of the soils a “parable about parables”?
7. What warnings should we take from the parable of the soils?

The Parable of the Weeds

8. In the context of chapter 12, who do you think are the weeds Jesus speaks of?
9. Wheat and weeds look similar until the harvest. How does this parable explain God's delayed judgment of the wicked (vv. 24-30, 36-43)?
10. Compare Jesus' interpretation of the parable in verses 36 –43 with the final chapter of Malachi in the Old Testament.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

11. What encouragement would the few real disciples of Jesus get from this parable?
12. What warning does this parable hold for those who say the kingdom is “unimpressive”?
13. What do the parables of the mustard seed and yeast suggest about the way the kingdom grows (vv. 31-35)?

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure, the Pearl, and the Fishing Net

14. What’s the point of these parables?
15. Deciding to follow Jesus often comes at a cost. What costs has Jesus already warned his disciples of?

Jesus Mother And Brothers

16. Interestingly, the section of parables starts and ends with a comment on the mother and brothers of Jesus. Any idea what point is being made?
17. How did Jesus “home crowd” respond to him, and why? How does this confirm the truth of his parables?
18. What have YOU done with what you have heard of “the word”?

Prayer Points:

Matthew 14: Two Kings, Two Feasts

Crises are uncomfortable. They force us to make painful decisions, even when we don't want to decide. In Matthew 14 Jesus places the disciples in tough situations where they must act on what they have learned about him. The focus shifts from parables about the kingdom to the identity of the king.

Read Matthew 14:

1. Herod's murder of John happened some time before this. Any idea why Matthew chooses to include the account of John's death here?
2. What does Herod seem to fear most; the fame of Jesus? The ghost of John? The reaction of his dinner guests? His wife?
3. Why does Jesus withdraw? How does he react to the interruption?
4. How is the feeding of the five thousand (vv. 13-21) a test for the disciples?
5. Herod and Jesus, the two kings in this passage, both serve banquets. What does each king's banquet reveal about his character and authority?
6. Why does Jesus dismiss the disciples so abruptly (v22)?
7. Why do you think Jesus wanted to pray alone?
8. Imagine you are in the boat with the anxious disciples (vv. 22-26). Describe what you would see, hear and feel.
9. How is Peter's trying experience on the water a vivid picture of faith and doubt (vv. 28-31)? When are you most tempted to take your eyes off the Lord and to sink in doubt?
10. In verse 33 the disciples worship Jesus and declare, "Truly you are the Son of God." What do you see in this incident that leads you to worship Jesus?
11. Suppose you had no prior knowledge of Jesus, and that you were reading the Gospel of Matthew for the first time in order to understand who He is. Explain how Matthew 13:1-14:33 would contribute to your understanding of Jesus.

Prayer Points:

Matthew 15: Inside Out

There is relief and pleasure when something we have not quite understood becomes clear to us. In this section of Matthew the disciples come to a supernatural understanding of Jesus. What they thought they knew becomes a new and deeper knowledge. Peter, speaking for the disciples, declares who Jesus really is. Peter's words bring us to the climax of the first half of Matthew.

Read Matthew 15

1. Top religious leaders from Jerusalem oppose Jesus by attacking the disciples (15:1-2). What is their complaint, and what does it suggest about Jesus?
2. Compare the way Jesus addresses each group here (identified in vv 1, 10, 12). Who is Jesus harshest with? Why?
3. In Jesus' address to the multitude (verses 10-11), he identifies two very different views of the sinfulness of man. Identify and contrast these two views. (See also vv 17-20.)
4. How do you reconcile His teaching here with all the Old Testament teaching on uncleanness (e.g., Leviticus Chapter 15)?
5. How does Jesus respond to their accusation (15:3-20)?
6. How would you account for the unusual interaction between Jesus, the woman and the disciples (15:21-28)? Does Jesus' response to the Canaanite woman seem overly harsh to you? Explain.
7. Describe the Canaanite woman's response to Jesus in verse 27. In particular, what did she not dispute in Jesus' reply to her, and what was the basis for her plea for help?

Why did Jesus commend the Canaanite woman for her "great faith?" How did she exercise faith in this situation?

8. Can you see a connection between Jesus' teaching on the real source of what defiles a man (verses 11f.) and the faith of the Canaanite woman?
9. Jesus' statement in v32 is a test. Do the disciples pass? How do you account for their lack of insight and faith?
10. What is Jesus' reason for healing and feeding the crowds?
11. What do you think Jesus was teaching His disciples through this incident? Why do you think this was a difficult lesson (apparently) for them to learn?

Prayer Points:

Matthew 16: Undercover Boss

1. If you were to ask your non-Christian friends “Who is Jesus Christ?” what would they say? What would a good answer for you to give to their response?

Read Matthew 16

2. How do people understand Jesus incorrectly in this chapter?

How do they get him right?

3. After Jesus heals the sick and feeds the four thousand, the religious leaders ask him for a sign from heaven (16:1). What is wrong with their request?

Why do you think Jesus resists them (16:2-4)?

What sign would Jesus give them (16:4)?

4. In 16:5-12 the disciples misunderstand Jesus' allusion to yeast. How is their misunderstanding related to a lack of faith?
5. Any thoughts on what is so bad about the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (16:11-12)? (Does 15:1-20 help?)
6. Why do you think Jesus asks His disciples in verse 13, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” In other words, why is Jesus forcing the issue of His identity now? (HINT: See verse 21).
7. In 16:5-12 the disciples couldn't even grasp a simple figure of speech. How then does Peter have enough insight to confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (16:13-17)?

If he gets it right here, how does he get it so wrong in v22-23?

Why do you think Jesus addresses Peter as Satan?

8. Even though Peter doesn't see clearly, Jesus calls Peter blessed (v17), and promises that on "this rock" he (Jesus) will build his church (v18). The rock on which he will build his church could be 1. Christ 2. Peter's confession of faith in Jesus as Messiah. 3. Christ's teaching. 4. Peter himself. Which do you think Jesus is referring to?

How does this promise make you feel as you serve his church?

9. Any thoughts on what Jesus means by "whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (v19)? Does the context of a similar saying in 18:18 help?

10. What is Jesus saying in v24-25 about what discipleship looks like?

How have you found v25 to be true?

11. How is the call given in verses 24-27 related to the identity of Jesus (v16)?

How is it connected to his mission (v21)?

12. Put v26 in your own words.

13. In v27-28, Jesus is referencing **Daniel 7:9-14**. Read these verses and list the sequence of events described

14. What event is Jesus referring to in v27-28 when he mentions the Son of Man coming in his kingdom?

How does v27 encourage you to obey the command of v24-25?

Prayer Points:

Matthew 17: Undercover Boss

Read Matthew 17:1-13

1. How might the transfiguration (v1-8) help resolve the disciples' confusion about Jesus' impending death?
2. Any thoughts on why Moses and Elijah appeared with the transfigured Jesus? (Hint: Exodus 19:20-23 and 1 Kings 19:7-18)
3. What does God say about Jesus? What is his purpose for these words?

What does it mean for us to obey this command?

4. Tell the group how you came to see that Jesus was God's Son, and that you should listen to him.
5. Why does Jesus command secrecy (v9)?
6. Why do the disciples ask about the coming of Elijah (see Malachi 4:5-6)

Read Matthew 17:14-27

7. God commands the disciples to listen to Jesus. Who listens to him in v14-23?
8. Check back on how the disciples have responded to Jesus so far (8:26; 14:31; 16:8). How would you characterize Jesus' response in verse 17? Irritated? Frustrated? Why was he feeling that way?
9. Jesus once again tells His disciples in verses 22-23 that He will be killed and then rise again. This is the third time in Chapters 16 and 17 that Jesus tells His disciples this. Why do you think He had to say the same thing over and over again to His disciples? What do we learn about Jesus' personality from this?
10. What is the point Jesus is making about Himself and Peter when He says in verse 26, "...the sons are exempt"? (HINT: The implication in verse 27 is that they should be exempt from paying the tax.)

11. Jesus goes to extraordinary lengths to make a point in verse 27. What do you think the point is?

12. Despite clearly demonstrating that He had the supernatural resources that would have enabled Him to avoid paying the tax, Jesus advocates submission to this earthly authority. How does this relate to Jesus' coming submission by death on the cross?

What benefits do we enjoy as God's sons and daughters?

Prayer Points: