

A Bible Study on the Gospel of Matthew
September 1 - July 14 - August 7:00 p.m. in Room 6 and Zoom

WEEK ONE – Introduction, History, Culture and How to Study a Gospel

This is a study of the main themes of Matthew's gospel. It would take much longer than sixteen weeks to cover Matthew verse by verse. We will, however, spend a lot of time exploring Matthew's themes and what this gospel teaches us about being followers of Jesus.

Authorship – Gospels are products of faith communities in the early church. The Matthean Community was largely Jewish. The apostle Matthew is only mentioned in 9:9 and 10:3, so it seems strange that Matthew is linked with this gospel. The name Matthew was not even associated with this particular gospel until late in the 2nd century CE 100 years after it was written. It's possible that someone named Matthew played an important role in formulating the teaching of this gospel or in leading the community from which the gospel originated. Matthew also means "gift to God" which summarizes the gospel's teaching.

Date of Authorship – Matthew's gospel is difficult to date. It's clearly written after the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 CE. Scholars place the authorship between 75 – 100 CE.

Themes – Issues of identity and lifestyle were especially important to the largely Jewish audience for whom the gospel was initially written. There is hostility toward the Jewish synagogue system as well as the ruling leaders, especially the Pharisees. The community from which the gospel originates seems to be trying to find it's way in a world dominated by Roman imperial power and is quite "countercultural" in it's claims and commitments. According to Matthew's gospel it is God, not Rome who is in charge. Mercy, inclusivity, prayer, mission, and anticipating the completion of God's purpose are prominent themes.

Schedule –

September 1 – Introduction to history, culture and context of Matthew’s gospel.

September 8 – “The Family Album” Matthew 1:1-17

September 15 – “God’s Grace and Jesus’ Life’s Work” Matthew 1:18-25

September 22 – “John: Baptizing Prophet” Matthew 3:1-12

September 29 – “Jesus’ Ministry” Matthew 4:12-25

October 13 – “Life Shaped by God’s Reign” Matthew 5:3-16

October 20 – “Three Acts of Justice” Matthew 6:1-18

October 27 – “Healing and God’s Reign” Matthew 11:2-15

November 3 – “Not Enough Food, Too Much Water” Matthew 13:13-36

November 10 – “Cross Purposes” Matthew 16:13-28

November 17 – “The Community of the Cross” Matthew 18

December 1 – “It Shall Not Be So Among You” Matthew 20:17-34

December 8 – “An Anti-Triumphal Entry” Matthew 21:1-17

December 15 – “Being Ready” Matthew 24:36-44

December 22 – “Jesus’ Death: Four Perspectives” Matthew 26:1-16

December 29 – “The Risen Jesus”