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A STUDY GUIDE FOR EIGHT SUNDAYS

Five Sermons of the King

The Teaching Discourses of Matthew's Gospel

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*And when Jesus had ended these sayings,
the people were astonished at his doctrine:
for he taught them as one having authority.*

MATTHEW 7:28-29

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THE REV. CHARLIE HOLT

SEPTEMBER 27 – NOVEMBER 15

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH · JACKSONVILLE

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Five Sermons of the King

The Teaching Discourses of Matthew's Gospel

STUDY GUIDE



Eight Sessions · September 27 to November 15, 2026

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How to Use This Guide

Eight Sessions

WHAT THIS IS

Matthew gathered the teaching of Jesus into five blocks, and he marked each one with the same closing sentence: when Jesus had finished these sayings. You can find the formula at 7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, and 26:1. Over eight weeks we are going to walk through all five.

This guide holds everything you need. The reading plan comes first, then a section for each session with space to write.

READING AHEAD

The plan runs one week ahead of the class, five days at a time, with weekends free. Each week gives you three days in the passage, one day in the Old Testament ground it stands on, and one day to read the whole discourse straight through.

That last day matters more than it looks. These are sermons, and a sermon read in fragments is a different thing from a sermon heard end to end. Most other days are ten minutes or less.

IN THE SESSION

Each session opens with a prayer and a few paragraphs setting the passage in its place in the Gospel, followed by the movements of the text and questions for discussion. Ruled space is provided throughout. You will get more out of the discussion if you come having already formed an opinion about at least one of the questions.



Reading Plan

Matthew 5-7, 10, 13, 18, 24-25

HOW THIS WORKS

This plan runs one week ahead of the class, five days at a time, leaving weekends free. Each week gives you three days in the passage itself, one day in the Old Testament ground it stands on, and one day to read the whole discourse straight through. Most days are ten minutes or less. Day five is the important one: reading a discourse in one sitting is a different experience from reading it in fragments, and closer to how Matthew meant it to be heard.

READ BEFORE SESSION ONE · SEPTEMBER 27

The Character of the Kingdom · *Matthew 5:1-48*

DAY	READING	WHAT TO WATCH FOR
1	Matthew 4:12-5:12	The setting, then the Beatitudes. Read them as statements rather than commands and see what shifts.
2	Matthew 5:13-32	Salt, light, the claim to fulfill the law, and the first three antitheses.
3	Matthew 5:33-48	The last three antitheses. Note where verse 48 lands, right after enemy love.
4	Exodus 19:1-20:21	Sinai. A mountain, a mediator, a law given. Keep it in mind when Jesus climbs his.
5	Matthew 5:1-48	The whole chapter in one sitting, out loud if you can.

READ BEFORE SESSION TWO · OCTOBER 4

The Hidden Life Before the Father · *Matthew 6:1-34*

DAY	READING	WHAT TO WATCH FOR
1	Matthew 6:1-15	Almsgiving, prayer, and the Lord's Prayer. Count the uses of "in secret."
2	Matthew 6:16-24	Fasting, treasure, the eye, two masters.
3	Matthew 6:25-34	Anxiety. Note what the birds and the lilies are actually arguing.
4	Isaiah 58	Fasting that God refuses and fasting he receives.
5	Matthew 6:1-34	The whole chapter together.



FIVE SERMONS OF THE KING

READ BEFORE SESSION THREE · OCTOBER 11

Two Ways, Two Houses · *Matthew 7:1-29*

DAY	READING	WHAT TO WATCH FOR
1	Matthew 7:1-12	Judging, asking, and the golden rule as a summary of the law.
2	Matthew 7:13-20	The narrow gate and the test of fruit.
3	Matthew 7:21-29	Two builders, and the crowd's reaction to his authority.
4	Deuteronomy 30:11-20; Psalm 1	Life and death set before the people. The two ways are old.
5	Matthew 5-7	The entire Sermon in one sitting. It takes about twenty minutes.

READ BEFORE SESSION FOUR · OCTOBER 18

The Cost of Being Sent · *Matthew 10:1-42*

DAY	READING	WHAT TO WATCH FOR
1	Matthew 9:35-10:15	Compassion, harvest, the naming of the Twelve, and the instructions. Note what they are forbidden to carry.
2	Matthew 10:16-25	Sheep among wolves. The promise is not safety.
3	Matthew 10:26-42	Sparrows, a sword, a cross, a cup of cold water.
4	Jeremiah 1:1-19	A prophet sent, warned, and promised opposition.
5	Matthew 10	The whole discourse together.

READ BEFORE SESSION FIVE · OCTOBER 25

Secrets of the Kingdom · *Matthew 13:1-52*

DAY	READING	WHAT TO WATCH FOR
1	Matthew 13:1-23	The sower. Read the parable through once before you read the explanation.
2	Matthew 13:24-43	Weeds, mustard seed, leaven, and the weeds explained.
3	Matthew 13:44-52	Treasure, pearl, net, and the scribe trained for the kingdom.
4	Isaiah 6:1-13	Hearing without understanding. Jesus quotes this on purpose.
5	Matthew 13:1-52	The whole discourse together.



FIVE SERMONS OF THE KING

READ BEFORE SESSION SIX · NOVEMBER 1

Life Together Under the King · *Matthew 18:1-35*

DAY	READING	WHAT TO WATCH FOR
1	Matthew 18:1-14	Greatness, children, stumbling blocks, and the lost sheep told about a church member.
2	Matthew 18:15-20	The process for confronting sin. Notice where it begins.
3	Matthew 18:21-35	Seventy times seven, and the unforgiving servant.
4	Ezekiel 34:1-16; Leviticus 19:17-18	A God who seeks the strays, and reproof as an act of love rather than its opposite.
5	Matthew 18	The whole discourse together.

READ BEFORE SESSION SEVEN · NOVEMBER 8

The End of the Age · *Matthew 24:1-51*

DAY	READING	WHAT TO WATCH FOR
1	Matthew 24:1-14	The temple, and the question the disciples actually ask.
2	Matthew 24:15-35	The desolating sacrilege, the coming of the Son of Man, the fig tree.
3	Matthew 24:36-51	No one knows the day. Watchfulness as the only posture.
4	Daniel 7:1-14	One like a son of man coming with the clouds. The source of the image.
5	Matthew 24	The whole chapter together.

READ BEFORE SESSION EIGHT · NOVEMBER 15

Ready for the King's Return · *Matthew 25:1-46*

DAY	READING	WHAT TO WATCH FOR
1	Matthew 25:1-13	Ten virgins. What exactly distinguishes the wise from the foolish.
2	Matthew 25:14-30	The talents, and the servant who plays it safe.
3	Matthew 25:31-46	Sheep and goats. Note that neither group saw what they were doing.
4	Ezekiel 34:17-31	God judging between sheep and sheep. Jesus is not inventing the image.
5	Matthew 25	The whole chapter together.

IF YOU WANT MORE

Three background passages did not fit the five-day frame but reward the time: Psalm 139 with Session Two, Zechariah 14 with Session Seven, Daniel 12 with Session Eight. Any reliable translation will serve.



The Character of the Kingdom

Matthew 5:1-48

OPENING

Almighty God, who in your Son went up the mountain and taught with the authority of the Law's own author: grant that we who hear these words may not admire them only, but be formed by them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE TEXT IN VIEW

Matthew has spent four chapters establishing who Jesus is: the son of David and son of Abraham, born of a virgin, called out of Egypt, baptized, tested in the wilderness, and gathering his first disciples. At 4:23 the Gospel gives us a summary of his ministry in three words, teaching and preaching and healing. Chapter 5 stops summarizing and lets us hear the teaching itself.

Two details in the opening verses carry weight. He goes up the mountain, which for a Jewish reader recalls Sinai and a law given through a mediator. And he sits down, which was the posture of an authoritative teacher rather than a wandering preacher. The crowds are present and the disciples draw near, so the sermon is spoken to both at once. That double audience runs through the whole discourse and the text never resolves it for us.

The question the Sermon answers is set by 4:17: the kingdom of heaven has come near. If that is true, what does life under this King look like? The answer that follows is not a list of entrance requirements. It is a portrait of a people who already belong to him.

KEY MOVEMENTS

- ◆ The Beatitudes, 5:3-12. A verdict pronounced over people the world would not congratulate. Verses 3 and 10 both close with the same promise, so the eight sayings sit inside a single frame.
- ◆ Salt and light, 5:13-16. Influence that cannot be kept private, with the glory landing on the Father rather than the one doing the work.
- ◆ Fulfillment and higher righteousness, 5:17-20. Jesus denies abolishing the law and claims to bring it to completion. Verse 20 sets the bar and governs everything after it.



FIVE SERMONS OF THE KING

- ◆ The six antitheses, 5:21–48. Murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, retaliation, and enemy love. The repeated formula is the point: he cites no authority but his own.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. If the Beatitudes describe rather than prescribe, what changes about how we read them?
2. Verse 16 tells us to let our light shine before others. Where is the line between visible faithfulness and performance?
3. Jesus intensifies rather than relaxes the commands. Does that make the Christian life harder than life under the law, or is something else going on?

NOTES

THIS WEEK

Matthew 6:1–34. Carry a question with you: 5:16 tells us to let our light shine before others, and 6:1 warns us against practicing righteousness before others. Watch how often Jesus repeats the phrase about the Father who sees in secret.



The Hidden Life Before the Father

Matthew 6:1-34

OPENING

O God, from whom no secret is hidden and to whom no hidden thing is lost: free us from the need to be seen, that what we give and what we pray and what we go without may be offered to you alone; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE TEXT IN VIEW

Chapter 5 took six commands and drove each one back into the heart. Chapter 6 turns from the commandments to the practices, from what we are told to do to how we go about doing it. Verse 1 is the heading over everything that follows: beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them.

That verse answers the question we left open last week. Matthew 5:16 tells us to let our light shine before others so that they may see our good works. Matthew 6:1 warns us against practicing our righteousness before others. The works are visible in both cases, so visibility is not the problem. What differs is where the glory lands. In one, people see the work and glorify the Father. In the other, people see the work and admire the one doing it.

The chapter then asks that single question, whose applause are we listening for, across three areas of life. First the practices of religion. Then money. Then worry. By verse 33 the three have turned out to be one.

KEY MOVEMENTS

- ◆ Three acts of piety, 6:1-18. Giving, praying, and fasting, each following an identical five-part shape. The Lord's Prayer sits inside the middle one, and of its petitions Jesus doubles back to expand only forgiveness.
- ◆ Treasure, eye, and master, 6:19-24. The subject seems to change from religion to money. It has not. Verse 21 says the heart follows the treasure, and the direction of that sentence is uncomfortable.
- ◆ Anxiety, 6:25-34. Verse 25 begins with "therefore." Worry is not a new topic but what serving the wrong master feels like from the inside. Verse 33 gathers up the chapter.





FOR DISCUSSION

4. If the difference between 5:16 and 6:1 is where the glory lands rather than whether anyone sees, how would you know which one you are doing?
5. Verse 21 says the heart follows the treasure, not the other way around. What does your calendar say your heart is following?
6. Anxiety is treated here as a faith problem rather than a temperament problem. Where does that land gently, and where does it land hard?

NOTES

THIS WEEK

Matthew 7:1–29. Look at 7:12 and then turn back to 5:17. Jesus is closing a bracket he opened two chapters earlier, and everything we have read sits inside it.



Two Ways, Two Houses

Matthew 7:1-29

OPENING

Lord Christ, whose word is a foundation for all who build upon it: give us grace not only to hear you but to do what you say, that when the rain falls and the floods come and the winds beat upon the house, it may stand; who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE TEXT IN VIEW

At 5:17 Jesus said he had not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets. At 7:12 he says that the golden rule is the Law and the Prophets. Everything we have read across three weeks sits inside that bracket, and with verse 12 it closes.

What follows is a conclusion, and it changes register entirely. The Sermon does not end by adding more content. It ends by asking which side of a line we are standing on, and it does this four times in fifteen verses: two gates, two trees, two confessions, two builders. No middle category is offered with any of them.

The final test turns out to be neither hearing nor religious achievement. The people dismissed in verses 21 to 23 prophesied and cast out demons and did mighty works in his name. The two builders both heard the same words and faced the same storm. What separates them is doing.

KEY MOVEMENTS

- ◆ Judging and asking, 7:1-12. Verse 1 is the most quoted line in the Sermon and the most often misread. Verse 5 settles it: the speck still comes out, after the log.
- ◆ Four choices, 7:13-27. Two gates and roads, two trees and fruits, two confessions both saying Lord, two builders and two houses.
- ◆ The hardest lines, 7:21-23. An impressive résumé of works done in his name, and the answer is not “you fell short” but “I never knew you.”
- ◆ The crowd’s reaction, 7:28-29. Matthew’s formula appears for the first time, and the crowds are astonished at an authority unlike that of their scribes.



FOR DISCUSSION

7. Verse 5 says the speck still comes out, after the log. What does non-judgmental correction actually look like in practice?
8. Four contrasts and no middle category. Why do we reach for one anyway?
9. Both builders heard the same words and the same storm came. If hearing is not the difference, what is doing?

NOTES

THIS WEEK

Matthew 10. The first discourse is finished and the King has described his kingdom. Now he sends people out into it, and the tone changes sharply.



The Cost of Being Sent

Matthew 10:1-42

OPENING

Lord Jesus Christ, who looked on the crowds with compassion and sent your disciples out with nothing but your own authority: give us the courage of those you send, and grant that we who fear many things may fear only the loss of you; who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE TEXT IN VIEW

The first discourse described the kingdom. The second sends people into it. Between them Matthew has given us nine miracles in two chapters, and the discourse begins not with a strategy but with a feeling. At 9:36 Jesus sees the crowds and is moved in the gut, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Mission in Matthew starts there.

He then tells the disciples to pray for laborers for the harvest, and in the very next verse they become the answer to their own prayer. He gives them authority, and the works he lists are precisely the works he has been doing himself. The mission is not an errand they run for him. It is an extension of him.

What follows is short on method and long on cost. Roughly ten verses of instruction, and thirty on opposition, fear, division, and loss. The horizon also widens as the chapter goes: governors and kings and Gentiles appear, and hatred from all nations, which is more than a preaching tour through Galilee will produce. Matthew is letting the church read its own future in the charge given to the Twelve.

KEY MOVEMENTS

- ◆ Compassion and commission, 9:35-10:4. The harvest is plentiful, the laborers few, and the ones told to pray are the ones sent. Judas is named in the list from the very beginning.
- ◆ The charge, 10:5-15. Take no gold, no bag, no second tunic. Dependence is the method rather than a hardship to be endured. Shaking the dust was a sign act normally reserved for leaving pagan territory.



FIVE SERMONS OF THE KING

- ◆ Sheep among wolves, 10:16–25. The shepherd sends sheep into the wolves rather than away from them. A disciple is not above his teacher, so expect what the teacher received.
- ◆ Three times, do not fear, 10:26–33. Verses 26, 28, and 31. The one fear that displaces every other sits two verses away from the God who counts sparrows and numbers hairs.
- ◆ A sword, not peace, 10:34–42. Division reaching into households, the first mention of a cross in this Gospel, and then, at the end, a cup of cold water.

FOR DISCUSSION

10. The disciples are told to pray for laborers and are immediately sent as the answer. Has that happened to you?
11. Jesus sends sheep into wolves rather than promising protection. What does that do to how we think about safety in Christian work?
12. The chapter moves from taking up a cross to giving a cup of cold water in six verses. Why put those two so close together?

NOTES

THIS WEEK

Matthew 13:1–52. Notice where Jesus is standing. He begins outside by the sea speaking to crowds, and halfway through he goes into the house and speaks only to the disciples. The physical move is part of the meaning.



Secrets of the Kingdom

Matthew 13:1-52

OPENING

O God, who hides your kingdom in small and ordinary things, a seed, a measure of flour, a field with treasure buried in it: open our ears to hear what we have heard many times before, and give us the understanding you give to those who ask; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE TEXT IN VIEW

Chapters 11 and 12 are a catalogue of rejection. John the Baptist sends from prison to ask whether Jesus is the one after all. Whole towns are denounced for refusing to repent. The Pharisees take counsel to destroy him, accuse him of casting out demons by Beelzebul, and demand a sign. By the end of chapter 12 a question is pressing hard: if this man is the King, why does the kingdom look like this?

Chapter 13 is the answer. Seven parables, all of them about a kingdom that arrives hidden, mixed, and small. A sower who loses most of his seed and still gets a harvest. Weeds growing among wheat until the end. A seed the size of a grain of mustard. Yeast worked invisibly into a great mass of flour. The kingdom is not failing. It is coming the way he always said it would come.

Watch where he is standing. He begins outside, by the sea, in a boat, speaking to crowds. At verse 36 he leaves the crowds and goes into the house, and from there he speaks only to the disciples. The discourse is physically divided between those two places, and that division is part of what it means.

KEY MOVEMENTS

- ◆ The sower, 13:1-9 and 18-23. Told outside to the crowds, explained inside to the disciples. The soils differ, but so does the sower's extravagance, and the harvest of thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold is enormous.
- ◆ Why parables, 13:10-17. The disciples are given the secrets of the kingdom. Jesus quotes Isaiah 6 at length. Parables both reveal and conceal, and which one they do depends on the hearer.
- ◆ Weeds, mustard seed, and leaven, 13:24-35. Darnel looks like wheat until the head forms, so you cannot tell early. The mustard seed and the leaven are a matched pair about small beginnings.



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- ◆ Treasure, pearl, and net, 13:44-50. One man finds by accident and one by searching; both sell everything, and verse 44 names joy as the reason. The net ends where the weeds ended, with a separation that is certain and deferred.
- ◆ The scribe trained for the kingdom, 13:51-52. A householder bringing out of his treasure what is new and what is old.

FOR DISCUSSION

- 13.** The parables are told to explain why the kingdom is meeting resistance. Does that change how you hear the parable of the sower?
- 14.** The weeds are left in the field until the harvest. What is the difference between that patience and mere tolerance of evil?
- 15.** In verse 44 the man sells everything with joy. Is joy the usual motive we give for costly obedience?

NOTES

THIS WEEK

Matthew 18:1-35. The disciples ask who is the greatest immediately after Jesus tells them he is going to be killed. Read 17:22-23 first so you feel the collision.



Life Together Under the King

Matthew 18:1-35

OPENING

Merciful Father, who forgave a debt we could never carry: make us quick to go after the one who wanders and slow to hold what you have released, that the mercy we have received may be the mercy we show; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE TEXT IN VIEW

Read 17:22-23 before chapter 18 and the discourse changes shape. Jesus has just told the disciples for the second time that he is going to be delivered over and killed, and they were greatly distressed. The next thing that happens is that they come to him and ask which of them is the greatest. The question is not a neutral inquiry. It arrives at the worst possible moment.

His answer is a child. Not because children are innocent, which is not a claim the ancient world made about them, but because a child had no standing, no power, and no claim on anyone. The disciples want to know where they rank. He tells them to turn around and become like someone who does not appear on the list at all.

From there the discourse works outward. If greatness is gone, what holds a community together? Matthew's answer is two things. You go after the one who wanders, at whatever cost to your own convenience, and you forgive the one who wrongs you without keeping count. The chapter ends with the parable that makes good on a promise left hanging back in Matthew 6.

KEY MOVEMENTS

- ◆ The child, 18:1-5. Greatness is not a lower rung on the same ladder. It is leaving the ladder. Receiving such a child in his name is receiving him.
- ◆ Stumbling blocks, 18:6-9. The little ones are now believers rather than literal children. The amputation language from 5:29-30 returns, aimed this time at harm done to others rather than to oneself.
- ◆ The lost sheep, 18:10-14. Luke tells this parable to Pharisees about sinners. Matthew tells it to disciples about a church member who has wandered off. The shepherd who goes looking is the model for what comes next.



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- ◆ Going to your brother, 18:15–20. Privately first. The stated goal in verse 15 is that you have gained your brother, so this is restoration rather than adjudication. Verse 20, about two or three gathered, sits in this context and not in a prayer meeting.
- ◆ Seventy-seven times, 18:21–35. Peter's seven is already generous. The debt in the parable is unpayable on purpose, and verse 35 is where Matthew 6:14–15 finally lands.

FOR DISCUSSION

- 16.** The disciples ask about greatness immediately after hearing that Jesus will be killed. What does that juxtaposition expose?
- 17.** Verse 15 says to go alone first, and names the goal as gaining your brother. How often does that first step actually happen?
- 18.** The servant asks for patience and is given forgiveness, which is more than he requested. Why does he then fail to pass it on?

NOTES

THIS WEEK

Matthew 24:1–51. The last discourse begins with the disciples admiring the temple buildings. Notice the question they ask in verse 3, and notice that it is really more than one question.



The End of the Age

Matthew 24:1-51

OPENING

God of all times and seasons, who has not told us the day or the hour: keep us from the fear that reads every rumor as a sign, and from the sleep that forgets you are coming at all, that we may be found awake and at our work; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE TEXT IN VIEW

The last discourse begins with architecture. Jesus has just finished the confrontation in the temple courts and left the building, and the disciples point out how magnificent it is. He tells them that not one stone will be left on another. Later, on the Mount of Olives, they come to him privately and ask what looks like one question.

It is not one question. Matthew records it as three clauses: when will these things be, what will be the sign of your coming, and what will be the sign of the end of the age. Mark records the question much more briefly. Matthew has deliberately made the doubleness visible, and nearly every disagreement about this chapter traces back to it. The disciples assume the destruction of the temple and the end of the world are the same event. Jesus does not correct the assumption directly, and he answers at length.

What surprises most readers is how much of the chapter is negative. Wars, famines, earthquakes, false messiahs, rumors, people announcing that he is here or there: almost all of it is a list of things that are not the sign. Verse 36 turns the corner and says plainly that nobody knows the day or the hour. What follows is not a timetable but a command to stay awake.

KEY MOVEMENTS

- ◆ The question, 24:1-3. Not one stone upon another, and then a private question on the Mount of Olives with at least two horizons folded into it.
- ◆ Birth pangs, 24:4-14. Wars and famines and earthquakes are explicitly called the beginning, not the end. The repeated instruction is not to be alarmed and not to be led astray.



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- ◆ Tribulation, 24:15–28. The desolating sacrilege from Daniel, a flight from Judea so urgent there is no time to fetch a coat, and a warning not to chase anyone who claims to have located him.
- ◆ The coming of the Son of Man, 24:29–35. Cosmic signs from Isaiah and the figure from Daniel 7 coming with the clouds. Then the fig tree, and the difficult saying about this generation.
- ◆ No one knows, 24:36–51. Not the angels, not the Son. The days of Noah, where the problem was not wickedness but obliviousness. A thief at night, and a servant who assumes his master is delayed.

FOR DISCUSSION

- 19.** Most of the chapter lists things that are not the sign. Why do we keep reading it as a timetable anyway?
- 20.** In the days of Noah people were eating and drinking and knew nothing until the flood came. What is the modern version of that?
- 21.** The wicked servant's error is the thought that his master is delayed. How does a long delay change behavior?

NOTES

THIS WEEK

Matthew 25:1–46. The chapter division is ours, not Matthew's: chapters 24 and 25 are one discourse. All three parables next week turn on the same problem, that the master is away and has not come back yet.



Ready for the King's Return

Matthew 25:1-46

OPENING

Lord Jesus Christ, who will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead: give us oil for our lamps and courage for our work, and open our eyes to see you in the least of these, that we may not be strangers to you on that day; who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE TEXT IN VIEW

Chapter 24 ended by refusing to give a date and commanding watchfulness instead. Chapter 25 shows what watching looks like, in three scenes that all assume the same situation: someone is away, the return takes longer than expected, and people have to decide how to spend the interval.

The three are not interchangeable. The ten virgins are about a readiness that cannot be borrowed at the last minute. The talents are about what we do with what we were given, and about a servant whose picture of his master made him afraid to do anything at all. The sheep and the goats are about the criterion by which it all gets weighed, and the striking thing there is that neither group saw what they were doing at the time.

Watch for a bracket closing. The first discourse ended with a wise and a foolish builder. The last one opens with wise and foolish virgins, and in both cases the difference is not what they heard or believed but what they did while there was time. At 26:1 Matthew writes his formula for the fifth and final time, and the next sentence is about the Passover and the cross.

KEY MOVEMENTS

- ◆ Ten virgins, 25:1-13. All ten sleep, so sleeping is not the failure. The bridegroom is delayed, and oil turns out to be the one thing nobody can lend you in the last five minutes. The closing words echo 7:23.
- ◆ The talents, 25:14-30. Sums are handed out according to ability, and the two who traded receive identical commendation word for word. The third servant is not a thief. He is afraid, and his fear comes from what he believed about his master.



FIVE SERMONS OF THE KING

- ◆ Sheep and goats, 25:31–46. All the nations gathered before a throne, and a separation made on a single criterion. Both groups ask the same astonished question, when did we see you.
- ◆ The fifth formula, 26:1. The discourses end and the passion begins in the same breath.

FOR DISCUSSION

22. All ten virgins fall asleep, and only five are unprepared. What is the oil that cannot be borrowed?
23. The third servant acts out of what he believes about his master. How does our picture of God shape what we risk?
24. Neither the sheep nor the goats knew what they had done. What does that say about the kind of life Jesus is describing?

NOTES

THIS WEEK

The series ends here, but Matthew does not. Read 28:16–20, where the risen King tells the eleven to teach the nations to observe everything he commanded. What he commanded is the five discourses we have just walked through.







FIVE SERMONS OF THE KING

Matthew gathers the teaching of Jesus into five great sermons, and each one shows us what it looks like to live under King Jesus. Over eight Sundays we will walk through all five discourses, from the Sermon on the Mount to the Parables of the Kingdom to the Sermon of the Last Judgment, asking what Jesus actually asks of those who take up his cross and follow him. Join the Rev. Charlie Holt at 9:00 a.m. in Leatherbury Hall beginning September 27. Breakfast and childcare are provided.

The Eight Sessions

SEPTEMBER 27 · MATTHEW 5:1-48

The Character of the Kingdom

OCTOBER 4 · MATTHEW 6:1-34

The Hidden Life Before the Father

OCTOBER 11 · MATTHEW 7:1-29

Two Ways, Two Houses

OCTOBER 18 · MATTHEW 10:1-42

The Cost of Being Sent

OCTOBER 25 · MATTHEW 13:1-52

Secrets of the Kingdom

NOVEMBER 1 · MATTHEW 18:1-35

Life Together Under the King

NOVEMBER 8 · MATTHEW 24:1-51

The End of the Age

NOVEMBER 15 · MATTHEW 25:1-46

Ready for the King's Return

SUNDAYS AT 9:00 AM · LEATHERBURY HALL



ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH · JACKSONVILLE