

Riverlife Reading Plan

The Gospel according to Matthew

Introduction

As a church, we will spend the next months until the end of April 2025 going through the Gospel according to Matthew. Although that is a lot of time, it is not nearly enough to study every passage. This simple reading plan is meant to help you dive deeper into the Gospel during the week so you can get the most out of this wonderful book of the Bible. It will give you time each Monday to reflect on the sermon from the previous Sunday. From Tuesday to Friday, it will take you in steps through the section of Matthew of which we'll hear a sermon on the coming Sunday. Saturdays and Sundays are kept free.

Background and structure of the Gospel according to Matthew

The Gospel according to Matthew is one of four gospels in the New Testament. While they all proclaim the same Jesus and the same good news, each Gospel author has a unique emphasis. It is worth studying each Gospel individually and discovering what that specific author is trying to highlight about Jesus.

The author is Matthew, one of the twelve disciples, who used to be a tax collector until Jesus calls him to follow him (Mt 9:9-13). Most likely he is writing during the 60ies of the first century, about 30 years after Christ's death and resurrection. The location could well be Antioch in Syria. These things are debated in scholarship. What is certain, is that he is writing to people with a Jewish background.

Matthew is one of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). Those three gospel accounts have a lot of common material, which points to the authors using each other's work as a basis for their own writing. Most scholars believe the Gospel according to Mark was the first, and that Matthew used Mark as the basis for his account. After a birth narrative (1:1-2:23) and the set-up to the story (3:1-4:16), the main story kicks off with Matthew 4:17 ("From that time on Jesus began to..."), which focuses on his ministry in Galilee. The story reaches a high point when the disciples confess that Jesus is the promised Messiah. Matthew repeats the statement "from that time on Jesus began to..." in 16:21, showing that from here on Jesus is orienting himself towards Jerusalem, his death, and his resurrection. The passion narrative begins in chapter 26.

Matthew also constructs his account around five main speeches of Jesus. Together with the previous narrative section these create five main parts, with a prologue and an epilogue at the end. It is possible Matthew is alluding to the five books of Moses to portray Jesus as a new Moses, based off of Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and 34:10-12. Each section of Matthew ends with the same phrase: "When Jesus had finished..." (7:28-29, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1).

For a visual representation of the structure, see the diagram at the end of this document.

How to use this reading plan:

Each week you will be lead through the section of Matthew from which the sermon will be held on the coming Sunday. This will make you well prepared for the message, and you'll have read all of Matthew by the end. In some weeks the section of scripture is quite small, in which case you'll find specific suggestions on how you can study the passage. For most weeks you will find the section split up into daily readings. In those cases, you can follow the suggested study method presented here. We recommend taking personal notes in a journal or elsewhere. This will help you to keep track of what you've discovered and what your process has been so far.

Mondays:

Reflection on the sermon from the previous Sunday.

- Take time to pray and ask the Lord to speak to you.
- Read the Bible passage that was preached on.
- Think through the points to ponder on the bulletin
 - o What was new to you?
 - o What moved you?
 - o What challenged you?
 - o What do you want to implement in your life? How are you going to put that into action?

Tuesdays to Fridays:

Reading of the scripture section for the coming Sunday.

- Take time to pray and ask the Lord to speak to you.
- Read the passage suggested for the day
- Reflect on the passage you read and take notes.

These steps can help you to study a passage:

1. Understanding the passage
 - Inform yourself about the facts and the content:
 - What people, places, things, etc. appear in the passage?
 - What is happening? Where is it happening? When is it happening?
 - How does it fit in the bigger context of Matthew?
 - What references and/or quotations are there to other Bible passages?

You find helpful information at <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
2. Reflecting on the passage
 - What does the passage teach us about the character of God?
 - Is there a command, a warning or a promise?
 - Is there a good or bad example of a person's behaviour?
 - Is there a foundational truth to be learned from it?
 - Is there something to be prayed about?
 - Is there something new, something encouraging, something challenging?
3. Applying the passage
 - How do your reflections apply to your life?
 - Where do you experience this topic or issue in your life?
 - What active response do you feel called to? How can you put that into action?

Reading Plan

02.-08. December: Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 1:1-2:21

The Nativity play won't be focused on Matthew. This is an opportunity to look at the story of Jesus birth as Luke tells it.

	Scripture	Comments
Monday	Matthew 1:1-17	Sermon reflection: Points to ponder Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Tuesday	Luke 1:1-25	
Wednesday	Luke 1:26-56	
Thursday	Luke 1:57-80	
Friday	Luke 2:1-21	

09.-15. December: Matthew 1:18-25

This is a short passage. Different scripture references are given to expand our understanding.

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Reflect on the Nativity Play: What stuck out to you? What moved you?
Tuesday	Matthew 1:18-25	
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 22:13-21, 24:1-4	Background to Joseph's actions when he hears Mary is pregnant.
Thursday	Numbers 5:11-31	What does this show us about Joseph's character and challenges?
Friday	Isaiah 7:1-25	Scripture referenced by Matthew

16.-22. December: Matthew 2:1-23

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Tuesday	Mt 2:1-12	
Wednesday	Mt 2:13-15	
Thursday	Mt 2:16-18	
Friday	Mt 2:19-23	

23.-29. December: Matthew 3:1-4:16

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Tuesday	Mt 3:1-12	
Wednesday	Mt 3:13-17	
Thursday	Mt 4:1-11	
Friday	Mt 4:12-16	

30. December – 05. January: Matthew 4:17-5:48

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 4:17-25	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 5:1-16	
Thursday	Mt 5:17-32	
Friday	Mt 5:33-48	

06.-12. January: Matthew 6:1-34

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 6:1-4	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 6:5-15	
Thursday	Mt 6:16-24	
Friday	Mt 6:25-34	

13.-19. January: Matthew 7:1-29

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 7:1-6	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 7:7-14	
Thursday	Mt 7:15-23	
Friday	Mt 7:24-29	

20.-26. January: Matthew 8:1-9:38

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 8:1-22	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 8:23-34	
Thursday	Mt 9:1-17	
Friday	Mt 9:18-38	

27. January – 02. February: Matthew 10:1-42

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 10:1-15	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 10:16-25	
Thursday	Mt 10:26-33	
Friday	Mt 10:34-42	

03.-09. February: Matthew 11:1-12:50

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 11:1-19	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 11:20-29	
Thursday	Mt 12:1-21	
Friday	Mt 12:22-50	

10.-16. February: Matthew 13:1-58

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 13:1-23	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 13:24-35	
Thursday	Mt 13:36-46	
Friday	Mt 13:47-58	

17.-23. February: Matthew 14:1-15:20

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 14:1-12	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 14:13-21	
Thursday	Mt 14:22-36	
Friday	Mt 15:1-20	

24. February – 02. March: Matthew 15:21-16:20

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 15:21-28	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 15:29-39	
Thursday	Mt 16:1-12	
Friday	Mt 16:13-20	

03.-09. March: Matthew 16:21-18:35

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 16:21-28	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 17:1-13	
Thursday	Mt 17:14-27	
Friday	Mt 18:1-35	

10.-16. March: Matthew 19:1-20:34

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 19:1-15	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 19:16-30	
Thursday	Mt 20:1-16	
Friday	Mt 20:17-34	

17.-23. March: Matthew 21:1-23:39

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 21:1-22	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 21:23-22:14	
Thursday	Mt 22:15-46	
Friday	Mt 23:1-39	

24.-30. March: Matthew 24:1-25:46

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 24:1-28	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 24:29-51	
Thursday	Mt 25:1-30	
Friday	Mt 25:31-46	

31. March – 06. April: Matthew 26:1-75

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 26:1-13	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 26:14-35	
Thursday	Mt 26:36-56	
Friday	Mt 26:57-75	

07.-13. April: Matthew 27:1-66

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Mt 27:1-10	Bible study in your own style or as suggested above.
Wednesday	Mt 27:11-31	
Thursday	Mt 27:32-56	
Friday	Mt 27:57-66	

14.-20. April: Matthew 28:1-15

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Matthew 28:1-15	Compare each resurrection account.
Wednesday	Mark 16:1-8	
Thursday	Luke 24:1-12	
Friday	John 20:1-18	

21.-27. April: Matthew 28:16-20

This is the concluding week of this series in Matthew. Take some time to review what you have learned and what God has been doing in your life during this time.

- Consider what the Gospel according to Matthew tells us about Jesus.
- What does Matthew's message mean to you? What response does it call for?
- What impact has it had on your life?

	Scripture	Comments
Monday		Sermon reflection: Points to ponder
Tuesday	Matthew 28:16-20	
Wednesday	Daniel 7:9-14	Reference to the Son of Man
Thursday	Ephesians 1:3-15	Blessings in Christ
Friday	Philippians 2:1-11	Follow Christ's example

Book: Matthew

Birth and Preparation	Prologue	7:1	Preamble	23	20	Death and Resurrection
		3:1	Narrative	7		
Ministry around Galilee	Book 1	4:7	Narrative	7	46	Jesus facing Jerusalem
		5:1	Discourse	25		
		8:1	Narrative	29		
		10:1	Discourse	38		
	Book 2	10:1	Discourse	42	39	Book 4
		8:1	Narrative	38		
		7:1	Narrative	42		
		13:1	Discourse	50		
	Book 3	13:1	Discourse	58	35	Book 5
		7:1	Narrative	50		
		14:1	Narrative	39		
		16:21	Discourse	27		
Book 4	16:21	Discourse	27	19:1	Book 5	
	18:1	Discourse	35			
	19:1	Narrative	39			
	24:1	Discourse	46			
Death and Resurrection	Epilogue	26:1	Passion narrative	26:1	20	Death and Resurrection
		26:1	Passion narrative	26:1		

Main structural sentences: 4:7, 16:21 – „From that time Jesus began...”

Transitional sentences: 7:28-29, 7:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1 – „When Jesus had finished...”