



JESUS

*Worth Following*

# **7 Connect Group Studies**

***Matthew 8-11***

***October - November 2023***

# **JESUS: WORTH FOLLOWING**

## **TERM 4 MORNING TEACHING SERIES**



### **PRIMARY AIM**

The primary aim of this Teaching series is to grow in our faith in Jesus through hearing about his miracles and teaching in Matthew's Gospel.

### **SUBSIDIARY AIMS**

- To gain a deeper understanding of the person and character of Jesus;
- To examine in depth the teaching and ministry of the person of Jesus;
- To invite hearers to commit / recommit themselves to follow Jesus radically and wholeheartedly;
- To understand the mission of Jesus against the background of the great biblical themes of creation, fall, redemption, restoration.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND PASTORAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In June 2023 the Lead Minister announced the consolidation of the Sunday ministry of Kew and North Balwyn at Kew effective October 2023. This was in response to goals in the strategic plan to better steward our resources and to clearly define what it means to be a multi-campus church community. This will be the teaching series that inaugurates this new configuration of Sunday morning ministry at Kew and calls the community to a radical and whole-hearted allegiance to Jesus. For many of our long-term members, this will serve as a confirmation of a deeply held conviction, for some of our newer members it may be an opportunity to draw closer to these themes. For everyone this will be a moment to let go of our preference of site and form and recommit all of our allegiance to King Jesus and His kingdom purposes.

## ***2 Jesus: Worth Following***

## STRUCTURE AND TOPICS

We will work through Chapters 8-11 over seven weeks.

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READING
1	Oct-8	With Authority to Heal	Matthew 8:1-17
2	Oct-15	The Cost of Following	Matthew 8:18-34
3	Oct-22	An Invitation to Dinner	Matthew 9:1-13
4	Oct-29	A Faith that Heals	Matthew 9:14-34
5	Nov-5	He Who Sends	Matthew 9:35-10:16
6	Nov-12	Like Master, Like Servant	Matthew 10:16-39
7	Nov-19	What Did You Go Out To See?	Matthew 11:1-15

## RESOURCES

Bible Project: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/matthew/>

Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC (Nashville: Holman, 1992).

Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).

John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

Rodney Reeves, *Matthew*, SGBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017).

# 1

## **Matthew 8:1-17**

### ***WITH AUTHORITY TO HEAL***

1. What do you think is good criteria for having a 'great' faith?
2. Pray for God to speak through the Word of God. Read Matthew 8:1-17.

#### ***Healing of Man with Leprosy***

3. What is an Israelite instructed to do with someone who has leprosy, according to Leviticus 13:45? (cf. Lev 13-14)
4. What did the man with leprosy ask of Jesus in verse 2? And how did he ask?
5. What is the significance of verse 3?
6. In verse 4, why did Jesus give the man instructions? Look up Leviticus 14:2-7.

## ***Healing of the Centurion's Paralysed Servant***

7. What is the significance of the way the centurion addresses Jesus and requests healing (vv. 6-9)?
8. What is Jesus mean in verses 10-12? Who does Jesus refer to when he says, 'the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside'? (cf. Mt 25:30)
9. What is so great about the Centurion's faith? Is it possible for us to have the same faith in Jesus?

## ***Healing of Peter's Feverish Mother-In-Law***

10. What does the healing of Peter's mother-in-law show us about Jesus (vv. 14-15)?
11. Read Isaiah 53:1-6. How does Isaiah's prophecy, quoted in verse 17, help interpret our understanding of Jesus in these healing stories?

12. As you think about these three stories, what role does Jesus' physical presence and touch have with faith and healing?
13. Are there situations in your life where you want Jesus to bring healing? If appropriate, bring them to the group to pray for.
14. Pray for each other.

# 2

## **Matthew 8:18-34**

### ***THE COST OF FOLLOWING***

1. If you could tell your past self how much following Jesus will actually cost you, what would you say? Alternatively, what is one thing you hope following Jesus doesn't cost you?
2. Pray for the Holy Spirit to speak through the Word of God.  
Read Matthew 8:18-34

#### ***The Cost of Following Jesus***

4. What reason are we given for Jesus deciding to go across the lake (v.18)?
5. What is the teacher of the law asking Jesus for in verse 19? Isn't this a good thing? But what does Jesus reply indicate about the teacher of the law's commitment (v.20)?

6. Another disciple approached Jesus (v.21). Commentators have proposed the following suggestions for why this disciple needed to delay following Jesus.

*'... to stay behind until his aging parent (presently still in good health?) dies, ... to remain to see out the secondary mourning period (perhaps a year after the death) which was terminated by secondary burial of the bones, ... to remain long enough to bury a dead or dying father, or to see out the primary seven days of mourning.'* (Nolland, NIGTC).

What does Jesus' response indicate about the disciples' commitment in verse 22?

### ***Jesus Calms the Storm***

7. After beginning to cross the Sea of Galilee, a sudden squall came upon Jesus and the disciples. Why was Jesus sleeping? Why does Jesus say to his disciples 'You of little faith, why are you so afraid?' (v.26)?
8. In verse 27, why are the disciples so amazed?
9. What do we learn about Jesus through this miracle?

## ***Jesus Restores Two Demon-Possessed Men***

10. What do the demons reveal about Jesus through their questions in verse 29 and their reaction to him? What is the assumption behind their request to Jesus in verse 30?
11. Jesus only said 'Go' and the demons came out of the two demon-possessed men. What does this say about Jesus' power?
12. How did those that tended the pigs and the town folk respond to Jesus (vv.33-34)? What do you think the town prioritised in their response to Jesus?
13. How does knowing Jesus through these stories help your commitment to following him?
14. What is one thing from this study that you will take away and apply?
15. Pray for each other.

# 3

## **Matthew 9:1-13**

### ***AN INVITATION TO DINNER***

1. Have you ever been invited to dinner and felt that you weren't worthy of being invited? What was it like and how did it feel to be invited?
2. Pray for the Holy Spirit to speak through the Word of God. Read Matthew 9:1-13

#### ***Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralysed Man***

3. 'When Jesus saw their faith', what is significant about this detail in verse 2 (see Mark 2:3-12)?
4. Why do the teachers of the law believe Jesus is blaspheming?
5. What are the answers to Jesus' two questions in verses 4-5?

6. In Jesus' day, sin was often linked to disease and physical impairment. What is the significance of Jesus forgiving the paralyzed man, before he physically heals him? Why are the crowds in awe and praise of God (v.8)?

### ***The Calling of Matthew***

7. *Jesus meets Matthew (aka Levi), a tax collector. It is likely that Matthew was at a Roman toll booth on a highway or near the lake, to collect tax on goods or customs duties. Roman tax collectors, hated by Jews, were often wealthy, with opportunity to profit unscrupulously from their position.*

What is Jesus demonstrating by inviting Matthew to be a disciple, to have dinner with him and many other 'tax collectors and sinners'? What does Matthew stand to lose and gain by following Jesus?

8. What does Jesus risk by associating himself with Matthew and other sinners (vv.10-11)? (Cf Mt 11:19)
9. What is Jesus saying about his mission in verses 12-13? And who are the 'sinners' and who are the 'righteous'?

10. Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'. If you have time, look up this quote in its context in Hosea. What is Jesus challenging the Pharisees to think or do?
11. What do we learn about Jesus through these two stories? How might this challenge the way we approach and associate with those our society and church labels as 'sinners'?
12. Pray for each other.

# 4 **Matthew 9:14-34**

## ***A FAITH THAT HEALS***

1. Share a time when God has healed you or you've witnessed someone being healed.
2. Pray for the Holy Spirit to speak through the Word of God. Read Matthew 9:14-34

### ***Jesus Questioned about Fasting***

4. In the previous story Jesus feasts with sinners and is criticised by the Pharisees. Now John's disciples question Jesus' disciples about their lack of fasting. Why did John's disciples fast?
5. Who does the bridegroom represent in Jesus' parable (v.15)? And who are his guests? What point is Jesus making?
6. Jesus provides two illustrations in verses 16-17 for why his disciples are not required to fast now. How are these illustrations similar, and how do they further deepen our understanding of Jesus' teaching?

7. How do the ways we live as Christians today (our methods) communicate the right or wrong things to our current generation about our timeless gospel message?

### ***Jesus Raises a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman***

8. Jesus responds to the synagogue leaders' request. What kind of faith does the leader (named Jairus in Mark, cf Mk 5:22-43) show? What reason might Jairus have for his faith in Jesus to heal?
9. Jesus acknowledges the bleeding woman's faith (v. 22). What barriers did the bleeding woman have to overcome to encounter Jesus?
10. That people were playing pipes further confirms that people believed Jairus' daughter had died. Why do you think Jesus says that she was asleep? Does Jesus indicate here that death is reversible or not permanent? Discuss.
11. What role did faith play in these two miraculous healings, for Jairus and the woman?

## ***Jesus Heals the Blind and the Mute***

12. What barriers did the two blind men have to overcome to find healing from Jesus (vv.27-29)? What is the significance of the blind men calling out “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”?
13. Why might Jesus have asked the blind men to not share the news of their healing? (when plainly the news of previous miracles were spreading through the region, v.26)
14. Why do the crowd and the Pharisees come to such different conclusions about Jesus’ miracles (vv.33-34)?
15. In contrast to the previous miracles, the demon possessed man does not show any faith (vv.32-33). What implications does this have for our understanding about the need or role of faith in healing from God?
16. What is one thing from thinking about these miracles of Jesus that you might take away and apply to your life?
17. Pray for each other.

# 5 **Matthew 9:35-10:16**

## **HE WHO SENDS**

1. Share a time when someone shared the gospel message with you or when you shared the gospel with another person.
2. Pray for the Holy Spirit to speak through the Word of God. Read Matthew 9:35-10:16.

### ***Jesus Sends out the Twelve***

4. Matthew provides a brief summary of Jesus' ministry in verses 35. What were his key activities and why are these important?
5. What does Jesus' compassion in verse 36 lead to? How might we understand this verse and the subsequent appointment of twelve disciples in light of its echo in Ezekiel 34:23?

6. Why does Jesus use the workers in the harvest as a metaphor? Why is this a helpful metaphor (v.37)?
7. What does Jesus call for his disciples to do in verse 38? What is the significance of this call? Is this a command for his disciples today?
8. In verse 2, Matthew calls his disciples 'apostles' which means 'to send'. Why might Jesus send his twelve here only to the 'lost sheep of Israel' (vv.5-6)?
9. How is the disciples' mission to mirror Jesus' own mission in verses 7-8?
10. How does 'Freely you have received; freely give.' (v.8b) influence how we understand Jesus' instructions in verses 9-10?
11. In verses 11-15, what principles can be learnt for how the disciples were to minister in each town or village?

12. Why does Jesus believe it is important for all people to hear his message?

13. Later in Matthew 28:28, Jesus commands his disciples to 'make disciples of all nations'. In what ways can we, drawing on principles from Jesus' mission to his disciples in Matthew 10, obey Jesus and go to the spiritually lost, both locally in our neighbourhood and globally?

14. Are you open to being sent by Jesus to do gospel work elsewhere? Discuss.

15. Pray for each other.

# 6

## **Matthew 10:16-39**

### ***LIKE MASTER, LIKE SERVANT***

1. Have you ever experienced hostility for being a Christian from family or at work, or in another part of life? If so, share what happened and how you responded.
2. Pray for the Holy Spirit to speak through the Word of God. Read Matthew 10:16-39.

#### ***The Prospect of Future Hostility***

4. In verse 16, Jesus continues the metaphor of sheep and shepherd from earlier (cf. 9:36; 10:6), along with instructions to be as 'shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves'. How do these metaphors provide a guide for how Jesus' disciples are to respond to future hostility in verses 17 to 19?
5. What help will be given to Jesus' disciples (v.20)? If time, look up: Acts 4:8-10; 7:55-56; 13:9-12; 20:22-24.

6. The disciples should not be surprised to face hostility from their family too for following Jesus (vv. 21, 34-37). How might the disciples have reacted to this possibility?
7. 'The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master.' (v.24) What does Jesus mean by this in verses 24-25, in the context of this wider passage and Jesus' future?
8. What are the disciples to be afraid of and to not be afraid of (v.26-33)? In your life, which of these things do you find the hardest to not be afraid of? What assurance is given by Jesus?
9. What makes someone worthy of being Jesus' disciple (vv. 37-39)? What is the promise for those who follow Jesus (cf. Jn 12:25)?
10. In what ways do Christians face hostility in the public sphere today? How might Christians grow in being 'shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves' in these situations?

11. Try to summarise Jesus' words in our passage. What are the right and wrong responses to hostility for his disciples?

12. From this study, what is one area that you feel you need to work on this week?

13. Pray for each other.

# 7

## **Matthew 11:1-15**

# ***WHAT DID YOU GO OUT TO SEE?***

1. In Australia, what characteristics and behaviours do we commonly look for in a leader?
2. Pray for the Holy Spirit to speak through the Word of God. Read Matthew 11:1-15.
- 3.
4. John the Baptist hears about 'the deeds of the Messiah' in prison (v.2). Without consulting the Bible, try to list out from memory the different miracles and teaching of Jesus found in Matthew, chapters 8 to 10.
5. Why do you think John wants assurance whether Jesus is the Messiah (v.3)?
6. How does Jesus answer John's question in verses 3-5? (cf. Isaiah 61:2a) Is there anything that John might have been expecting, that Jesus had not done yet?

7. Jesus speaks about John. What aspects of the prophet does Jesus draw out in verses 7-9?
8. 'What did you go out to see?' What point is Jesus making by quoting Malachi 3:1 in verse 10? (cf. Mal 4:5)
9. What kind of kingdom is expected if the 'least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he' (v.11)? Who is likely to be the ruler of this kingdom?
10. Jesus says there has been an increasing hostility to the kingdom 'from the days of John the Baptist until now' (v.12). Other Messiah's had risen around this time to bring political revolution through violence, but what kind of revolution is Jesus bringing about?
11. If Jesus were to live among us today in the flesh, do you expect that people would be happy with what he would do and teach? Who would be happy and who would be angry?

12. Does Jesus meet all our expectations of what a leader should be? Why or why not?

13. As we finish this bible study series and think about our journey through Matthew's gospel, how would you complete the following statement:

*'I think Jesus is worth following because ... '*

14. Pray for each other.













*FEEDBACK?*

*To share your ideas and feedback  
on how to improve our bible study series,  
follow the link QR code:*



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