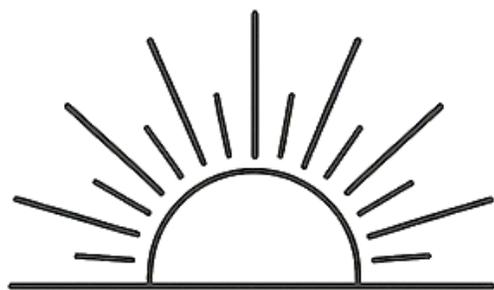


MIDSUMMER
WITH
MATTHEW



SUMMER 2025

WEEK 2

June 1 - June 7

Matthew 2:16 - Matthew 4:11

#8

Sunday, June 1, 2025

Matthew 2:16-18

Today's reading is one of those sections of the Bible that is absolutely horrible!

I don't mean to say the Bible is horrible, what is mean is that the content—today's content is.

Today's reading, Matthew 2:16-17, just three verses, show how horrible the sinful nature is, how terrible people can be! This section is formally referred to as "The Slaughter of the Innocents," and it contains the drastic measures that someone went to to try to keep God out of his life.

Because if God is in your life, in charge, then your behavior, your lifestyle, even your thoughts should be brought in line with His commands.

Does that sound at all like you? Are you fine with God but do you ever think to yourself that He'd better respect your boundaries, keep His nose out of some of your business?

Yeah...in these three verses we not only see "the sinful nature," if we look hard enough we see "our sinful nature." Yours might seem much smaller than the guy in today's reading but...

...but let these three verses be a warning about what our sinful nature is capable of.

Thank God the verses show more. They look forward to Jesus whom God the Father sent to take all our sins, even ones like the sins in today's reading, on Himself for our salvation.

Today's verses aren't pretty but they're verses God wanted preserved for us. God bless His Word that it nurture and grow your faith!

#9

Monday, June 2, 2025

Matthew 2:19-23

Hi everyone. Pastor Nate Abrahamson here and today, as I introduce you to Matthew 2:19-23, I'm in the lower level of my house, which is not just a fun place to be because there's, you know, doll houses and kid toys here and things like that.

But it's also where in our house we go, many times this time of year because here in the Midwest, sometimes those severe thunderstorms come, tornado warnings, things like that. Now, if there was a tornado warning, we would actually be probably in a more interior room down here, but we come down here because this is the lower level of our house, and it's our place to be safe during a severe storm.

Well, in the verses you're going to read, or we are reading together today, we see that Jesus was in Egypt. His family has taken him there to Egypt to keep him safe because of that tyrant, evil king who wanted him dead. But now came the time for him to come out. It's kind of like after the, the warning has passed.

Now you can come outside, take a look and see, you know, are there branches down or things like that. We're now to that kind of part of the story. But what's interesting is, when they start heading back from Egypt, we'll find that Joseph hears that there's some other people who aren't so good at ruling in the area too.

God gives him some direction to go to another place, and then he makes another choice. What's fascinating is that it's not that it was just, "Oh, the all clear", when they start heading back from Egypt, it's just sort of clear. And then God allows Joseph to make a very human decision, but then God gives him divine direction.

And that's very much how it goes in our, our lives as Christians, when we're set free from sin and death through faith in the gospel, the good news of Jesus. It's not just that now, okay, everything in life is smooth and easy. We have this interesting interplay where we look to God for wisdom.

We make human choices. He allows us to do that, but then he also gives us his direction and his word. His word always points us back to the cross, the fact that Jesus died for our sins and rose again. And then his word also gives us direction as the Spirit guides us in our lives of sanctification, as we live out what it means now to be right with God.

So we walk by faith, step by step, knowing our greatest danger, our greatest threat has been removed through the cross and the empty tomb. And we walk step by step in faith, seeing what God has in front of us.

#10

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Matthew 3:1-12

I've got a daughter graduating from high school in four days and MAN do I have a lot to do around the house! My mother, her grandma from Michigan, is coming and staying with us. Also, her oldest brother who lives in Montana. He'll be home too, which means Melissa and I have to prepare for guests.

The back bedroom needs to be dusted. Odds and ends we throw back there in an "out of sight-out of mind" style need to be put away. Long ago we packed my son's bed away, we'll have to figure out a place for him to sleep.

John the Baptist was sent to do similar prep work because soon after him Jesus was coming.

But John didn't help people straighten up their homes, he helped them straighten up their lives. "Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" Those are the first words of John the Bible records.

And, I don't know, but if my little list of things I need to do for my company got you thinking about things around your own house then let John's words in today's reading, Matthew 3:1-12, get you thinking about what needs to be straightened up in your own life.

All of us have sins we've grown so accustomed to that they live in a corner almost now unseen. Has dust built up on your Bible because you haven't touched it in a while?

John's words back then are just as pertinent now: "Repent!" So are his words of good news: "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." God keep you as a citizen of that Kingdom by grace through faith. Amen.

#11

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Matthew 3:13-17

In yesterday's reading Matthew introduced us to John, or John the Baptist. His work was to prepare people for Jesus' arrival by telling them to repent and by telling them that God's Kingdom was at hand, near, even here...

It seems sin and God's Kingdom are in conflict with one another...

In today's reading, John and Jesus finally cross paths. The Gospels of Mark and Luke tell us that John was proclaiming a baptism for the forgiveness of sins...

OK... 1) Sin and the Kingdom of Heaven are in conflict, in opposition, with each other. 2) John was baptizing for the forgiveness of sins...

SO... when Jesus comes to be baptized, John is understandably confused.

Jesus is holy, pure, the Eternal Son of the Father, John would call Him the Lamb of God—that spotless sacrificial lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

Jesus has no need for forgiveness because Jesus has no sin.

EXACTLY!

So many great things in these four verses! Read Matthew 3:13-17 for yourself and see John say "I need to be baptized by You!" Yes he does. So do we.

As you read today remember that your Baptism is not just some quaint ceremony. If sin and Heaven are in conflict with each other, if Baptism is—as the Bible says—for the forgiveness of sins. And if that perfect Lamb of God placed Himself into Baptism to fulfill and perfect all righteousness, then cling to what God has promised in your Baptism. Instead of saying "I was baptized." Christians can say "I am baptized. I am God's own child."

#12
Thursday, June 5
Matthew 4:1-4

Hi Luke on the Pastor at Mount Olive Lutheran church and today we begin Matthew chapter 4.

This is the temptation of Jesus, the temptation that He faced in the wilderness as He faced off against the devil. We read yesterday about Jesus' baptism, remember when He was baptized God the Father proclaimed "This is My beloved, Son with whom I am well pleased."

Now Jesus goes out into the wilderness and faces off against the devil and the devil attacks. "Are you really the Son of God well if so, then why are You hungry? Why is God seemingly keeping things from You?"

The devil continues to pinch the same temptations before you and me. If you really are a son or daughter, a child of God, why are there things that you want but don't have? Why are you facing difficult difficulties and challenges in your life? Maybe God isn't actually for you."

Those are temptations that you and I face.

As you read today, see Jesus respond responds because the same thing goes for you and me. We might look around, we might feel as if we're lacking things, but we are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us.

We have everything we could possibly need in the glories of Heaven! And we rejoice in knowing that God has promised to provide daily bread for His people. We are not lacking.

True the devil has gotten the best of us and we have fallen into temptation, but another beautiful thing about this little section is seeing our Lord Jesus, who is willing to go and face the devil for every temptation that we have fallen into. He has kept God's law perfectly. We call that Jesus' "active obedience," when He followed God's law perfectly, earning a righteousness which He shares it with all who believe in Him. Even though you and I fall into these temptations, the righteousness of Jesus is shared with us, covering us.

What a joyful thing as we read and see that Jesus has defeated the devil!

Trust in what God has written in His Word!

#13

Friday, June 6

Matthew 4:5-7

Hey everyone, Pastor Nate Abrahamson here with Abiding Shepherd in Cottage Grove in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. I have here in my hand the answer key for the test that I gave to my confirmation students at the end of the year that they had to pass in order to be confirmed. Now, by the time you watch this video here in June, I'm sure this will be in my recycling, but I wanted to share that I had this answer key here with you to think about tests and how you feel about them.

The tests in God's word are interesting because whether a test is good or bad is all about the motivation of the one giving the test. You can actually really see this in that the word "test" and "temptation", it's actually the same word. It's all about the context. Well, in the verses that we have today from Matthew, we're looking at Matthew chapter four, verses five to seven.

It's interesting here, the Satan actually comes before Jesus and uses a Bible verse and tries to turn it against Jesus. It's a Bible verse that's similar to how a test can be good or bad, depending on the motivation, it's a Bible verse that that Satan here is trying to get Jesus to use the wrong way.

He's trying to get Jesus to here test and see if your father will actually come through. And that's not the way God would have us take hold of tests. The opposite, though he would have us do. There are times in Scripture where he says, "Test me in this. See what, see what I will do if you trust me."

There's this little difference, a test where you test from doubt... "Let's see if God actually comes through". As opposed to if you test from faith, "Hmm. I wonder what God's going to do with this." Now. Unfortunately, often we have tested out of doubt, which is why it's such a blessing that Jesus here went through this test and passed it.

He always trusted his father. He didn't fall for the lies of the enemy. Here He actually went back and quoted from Deuteronomy from when his people, when God's people failed their test, to show just how much he has entered into our story. He came to live the life we were meant to live, but don't. He came so could lay His life down and die on the cross and then rise again to set us right with God.

So take hold of God's Word and even take hold of the test in a good way, trusting him to see what God will do, to see just how much we can believe and trust in Him and in Jesus.

#14
Saturday, June 7, 2025
Matthew 4:8-11

Today we'll read about the last of the three temptations our Lord faced.

The reading is from Matthew 4:8-11.

To this point Jesus has been tempted to doubt. At His baptism God the Father said "This is My beloved Son," but after going 40 days without food...well...who treats their son like that?

Doubt about whether or not Jesus really is the Son of God. Doubt about whether or not God's Son, or any of His children, should suffer. Turn these stones into bread!

Then He was tempted to tempt God, to back the Father into such a tight corner that the Father had no choice but to do whatever the Son wanted. Jump off this tall tower!

Today's temptation centers around pleasure, especially forbidden pleasure, and that's a temptation we're all familiar with.

God doesn't give us everything our sinful heart desires. Satan says he will. He says he cares about you by offering you pleasures that only end in pain, if not the pain of false friendships, illicit relationships, addictions, and other such things, in the end it is the pain of separation from God.

Instead God's greatest gift is the one right here in today's reading who stands firm in temptation for all of us. We are weak—He was strong. We are faithless—He is faithful.

God bless your reading of Matthew 4:8-11 as you see Christ here on your behalf!