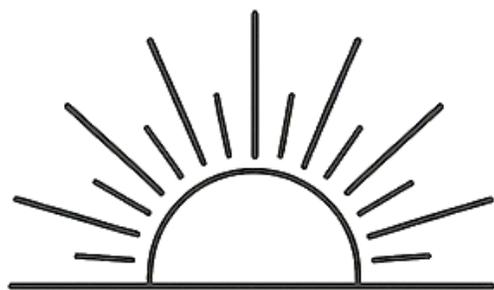


MIDSUMMER
WITH
MATTHEW



SUMMER 2025

WEEK 4

June 15 - June 21

Matthew 6:1 - Matthew 7:20

#22
Sunday, June 15, 2025
Matthew 6:1-4

Pastor Ulrich here and the other day I met with a student at Mount Olive Lutheran School. His name is Kai and he had just finished band practice.

I asked him if, in band practice, he's supposed to go off and his own and play the notes he wants to play, showing off for the audience, leaving everyone else in the dust?

He answered, "No, I do at home but in band I'm supposed to play the same music everyone else is.

When you're in the band, you're to be part of a team, trying to work together to make a beautiful piece of music. That's how it works.

What does that have to do with our text for today? With Matthew 6:1-4 Jesus continues the sermon on the mountain and He encourages people not to do things are doing things for your own self-glorification, trying to show people your own greatness.

My friend Kai pointed out that even though in a school band, you might be tempted to do that, it doesn't usually end well. You need to work together with others and you do it not for your own glory, but, for the sake of about other people and for your team.

Same thing goes for us. As Christians, Jesus tells us that when you are generous, when you're helping other people, don't do it for your own glory. Give lovingly without taking credit for anything.

And Jesus can preach that to us because that's how He was. He practiced what He preached. Jesus achieved true glory, but He shares that glory with us and we get the credit for what He has done.

That's how it works before God. And so even though He deserves all credit, all glory, honor, and praise, He shares it with us. He's not hoarding it for Himself so He encourages us today in our Christian lives to do likewise. To not be seeking after our own greatness, but to be willing to sacrifice for the sake of others, to not worry about getting credit, but know that that God sees what we do and He is glorified by our actions.

So again, my name is Luke Ulrich, Pastor at Mount Olive. Thank you for going through the book of Matthew with us this summer. I hope this reading from the beginning of Matthew chapter 6 is a blessing to you.

#23

Monday, June 16, 2025

Matthew 6:5-15

Hey everyone, Pastor Nate Abrahamson here with Abiding Shepherd Lutheran Church in Cottage Grove in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. Here for our reading for June 16th. And we're looking at Matthew 6: 5-15.

Now, I'm at the same cliffs where I was last time that I got to share the devotion with you and I noticed something that made me right away think of our next set of verses.

Over in a tree, across a wide space was a Turkey Vulture. Usually when I see a Turkey Vulture, I at first am like, "Oh, is it a bald eagle?" And then I'm like, "Ah, it's just a Turkey Vulture." But here's the thing, I've never been higher than where a Turkey Vulture sits, and it was really a cool experience. I heard a noise, I look over and to see it actually resting on the branch, like it gave me a different view and a different appreciation for that.

That bird, because normally you just see so many of them, it's like, "Ah, whatever." They're not the one that we are necessarily looking for. It's not a glamorous bird, but it was a bit different to actually be this high up and to see it from that perspective.

Now I wanted to share that because today we're going to see the verses where we have the Lord's Prayer. And let's be honest, the Lord's Prayer is spoken so often that it's, it kind of loses its excitement for us. It's like, "Okay, this just the Lord's Prayer." We can kind of just get into cruise control. Even for me as a pastor, when I'm up in front of church saying the Lord's Prayer. It's hard for me to stay focused the whole way through. I often start thinking about the next thing I need to do in the service.

But today also, as I was reading these verses, I gained a bit of a different perspective. You know, as we think about the Lord's Prayer, remember right before that Jesus says that you don't have to pray like those other religious leaders who want to impress people. Prayer is not about being impressive. It's not about impressing God. It's not about saying all kinds of special words or some fancy formula. The Lord's Prayer... it's not for us to be like, "Okay, now you got to get all the words right for God to hear you." The Lord's Prayer is an example of a simple prayer that you speak to a God who already knows what you need, who cares about you and your life even more than you do.

God, who sees your sin, but then sent a Savior to pay for your sin. Who loves you and wants to answer your prayer and guide all things according to His plan and His purpose for your good. Look at this prayer as an example of that simple prayer that you pray to a God who knows you and loves you, and it might give you a whole new perspective.

#24

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

Matthew 6:16-24

Showing off is natural. Humans seek the approval of others and when we compare ourselves to others we want to come out on top.

Showing off is as natural as being greedy, being selfish. It might be having money to feel comfortable and secure or it might be having things to feel comfortable and secure.

BUT...in today's reading you will see Jesus point out that you can't serve these things and God. Each of them and all of them are in opposition to Him and to a life with Him; showing off how religious we are, accumulating money or things for the sake of just having more money or things...

Serving God, being faithful and loyal to Him first means all other things; things and money and status have to be in the background. They should serve His will not our natural, self-centered will...

You don't need to do certain things—even religious things—to try to improve your status before God. Remember the beginning of this sermon of Jesus': You are the blessed ones. You are blessed. His Father in Heaven is your Father in Heaven.

So read today's section, Matthew 6:16-24, confident that you are God's own child.

#25

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

Matthew 6:25-34

My mom is a birdwatcher and when I was a kid I kinda rolled my eyes about it. But now I've become one like her. We talk about what we've seen, she actually volunteers for helping save and restore Piping Plovers along the shores of Lake Huron in Michigan. If you go out to Tawas Point in the late spring you might see her protecting a nesting pair or two.

Today, in Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus says "consider," or "look at," the birds...

At Bethany Lutheran Church in Port Orchard, WA, where I serve, I've been feeding a couple of crows. A couple of days each week we cross paths, sometimes in the morning and sometimes in the evening, they see me and recognize me and they will wait...

They know I've got a bag of peanuts in my office and that soon I'll come out with a handful for them. Crows love peanuts.

But they don't seem to worry about whether I'm here or not. If I am, and we cross paths, they know I'll feed them. But if I'm not here, they move on somewhere else. Maybe they'll join the seagulls down on the waterfront digging up clams with their beaks, flying them high into the air, and dropping them onto the pavement to crack them open. Or maybe they'll find a nice green lawn and walk through it looking for insects.

According to Jesus, who created them, they don't worry.

So that's the thing for today's reading, Matthew 6:25-34. Read it yourself thinking about the birds and flowers and trust those words of Jesus: After all, Jesus is God's proof that you are of far, far more value than birds and flowers are. Your Father in Heaven knows what you need. He will provide in His perfectly good time.

#26
Thursday, June 19
Matthe 7:1-6

Hello friends, from Pastor Aaron Hamilton, Pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scottsdale, Arizona.

What might happen to you if you have an accident where something gets in your eye, or if you should cross paths with a mean neighborhood dog or feral pig? You might need to pay a visit to a hospital Emergency Room or an Urgent Care facility.

In our gospel devotional for today though, Matthew 7.1-6, when our Lord Jesus mentions our eyes and the needs of our hearts, He has more in mind than a physical malady or a bodily injury. He wants to deal with the eye and heart problems that we have on account of sin. He intends to do that with His holy Word: for us to see better, to believe His Law and His Gospel, and for us to take to heart their proper use.

You see, the Law can be used as a magnifying glass to look at and examine and expose the sins of our neighbor. A quite different use of the Law is for us to see in the Law our *own* problem of sin—the problem that we all share; that we all have in common. That use, the mirror use, is a better one.

Likewise, the Gospel could be used to whitewash sins! But more in keeping with our Lord's intention for it, the Gospel is there to comfort us and reassure us and when our conscience is troubled and we feel the burden of our sin and guilt.

So, in your reading for today when you hear the Lord Jesus say: "Judge not," think, "Magnifying glass." And when you hear the Lord Jesus saying, "Do not give what is holy..." think, "whitewash." He's teaching us not to fall all over ourselves to give the words and gifts of grace to folks who aren't longing for forgiveness, but are looking for permission and affirmation instead. In that way, we are learning to handle God's Word the way He wants it to be handled!

But finally, if you're anything like me, someone with a problem in the eyes, and something of the nature of a dog or a pig in your heart, then you need these words of the Lord Jesus to teach you, to reassure you, redirect your mind and heart to give you the full comfort of the Gospel, since our Lord Jesus came from heaven to take all our sins away.

Remember to pray! And God bless your reading of His Word today, St. Matthew 7:1-6.

#27

Friday, June 20, 2025

Matthew 7:7-14

When my brother-in-law was as young as three years old, he used to ask his parents for a motorcycle...

Not a toy, not a bicycle, not something electric, or even those small gasoline powered dirt bikes...

He wanted something like a Harley. The average Harley Davidson weighs over 700 pounds!

Now, in love, how do you think his parents answered him? They answered him with a soft, but very firm, "No." They answered him in love.

As you read from Matthew today, Matthew 7:7-14, you'll probably notice that this is not the first time Jesus has talked about prayer, about God hearing and answering us and about us trusting Him.

The next time your prayers aren't answered exactly as you want, exactly when you want, remember my brother-in-law; that three-year-old who wanted a Harley Davidson.

His human parents answered him in love. Our Father in Heaven is perfectly wise and perfectly loving. He's not going to give you something He knows is harmful for you and He is going to give you exactly what you need.

And that opens a door to ask. Don't be afraid to bring your needs to Him.

This trust is hard, it's like a narrow way or gate, it's hard to keep on the straight and narrow. Thank God He hears us, loves us, and cares for us!

#28

Saturday, June 21, 2025

Matthew 7:15-20

We're getting close to the end of the Sermon on the Mount now, and it's getting more serious! The previous reading showed a contrast: the broad easy road that leads to eternal destruction, and the narrow path that leads into eternal life.

In today's reading, Jesus begins with the word "Beware," which shows that He definitely doesn't want anyone to be left out of eternal life. Jesus uses two pictures to show the ways we recognize that we are on the wrong path.

Both of these pictures are showing how we can recognize false teachers – those pastors or churches that use God's Word to lie and deceive. Choosing a church to attend is not something we should take lightly.

It's not about taste or style. Jesus shows the end result of the false teachers, and those who are in false-teaching churches where they don't hear God's truth. He pictures it like a tree that will be "cut down and thrown into the fire" on the Last Day. So for the sake of our souls, we evaluate the teaching in a church by whether it teaches what God's Word says.

Jesus speaks so seriously about this because He loves you and He wants you! He wants you to be with Him forever.

He is the true Shepherd and we are His sheep by hearing His voice, going to church where His Word is taught in its truth and purity. Then, by His grace, we will believe it and be saved! When you're in church tomorrow, rejoice to hear the voice of Jesus, your Good Shepherd!