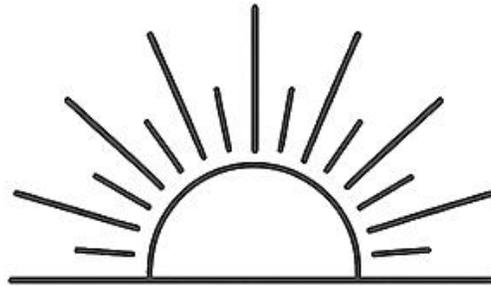


MIDSUMMER  
WITH  
MATTHEW



SUMMER 2025

**WEEK 6**

**June 29 – July 5**

***Matthew 9:18 – Matthew 11:24***

#36

Sunday, June 29, 2025

Matthew 9:18-34

Hello friends, from Pastor Aaron Hamilton, Pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scottsdale, Arizona, bringing you a little devotional opening for your reading for today, Matthew 9:18-34.

Today we take note especially that it's not just the outside of things or the appearance of things that our Lord Jesus is concerned with. You know the outside of things can be made to look pretty good—like when you go through a good neighborhood car wash. Things can look good outside, even though inside you might find old soda cans and other assorted trash—gum wrappers and banana peels and leftover fast food. That's not to mention what could be underneath the hood or in your vehicle history! Which is why we also have mechanics and things like Carfax.

But Jesus our Lord is concerned with helping us and delivering us completely! Saving us from the real uncleanness of sin and death, and the blindness that comes with it. He comes to help us by His cleansing from sin, to give us His gift of life and open our eyes through faith. His death paid the debt of our sins. His resurrection is new life for the world and for our hearts. He pledges eternal life with Him in heaven. Our eyes open by faith, and through faith we are saved and we'll see Him face-to-face in eternal life.

Nobody's ever seen anything like that before! The Pharisees have their own explanation for the things that the Lord Jesus does—but the truth is, what He does is just what was long promised in Moses and the prophets, and just what we never knew we always needed from Him.

Remember to say a prayer as you go about your Bible reading, and God bless you today as you read your Gospel lesson—Matthew 9:18-34.

#37

Monday, June 30, 2025

Matthew 9:35–38

Hi there. I'm Pastor Pittenger, from Bethany Lutheran Church in Port Orchard, WA. and I'm out at the beach again.

When I went off to college, actually at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, MN—so a shout out to them—I wanted to be a biologist.

I loved the outdoors and wanted to know more about it. About the ocean, the woods, the desert and streams, all of it. As a kid, my favorite books were those encyclopedias about animals. I'd read all about them.

My sister would have told you that I was a "Nature Nerd." She was right. I was and still am.

But the Lord had different plans for me. While I was studying Zoology and Ornithology and Mammalogy and all sorts of other "ologies" God led me toward the seminary where, after I was done with the biology degree, I went on to study theology.

Today's text, Matthew 9:35-38, might have had something to do with that change. When you read it you're going to see Jesus showing compassion to lots and lots of people.

And then He talks about needing more laborers.

More pastors and teachers and Sunday school teachers and Vacation Bible School teachers.

There's no shortage of people who need to hear God's Word—we all do—the harvest is plenteous.

If you're in school, junior high, high school, even college, I pray you give these words serious consideration. If you're out of school, out in the work-force, the military, even if you are retired, is there a way you could share Jesus love and compassion with those around you?

You can think about it and pray about it today as you read Matthew 9:35-38.

#38

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

Matthew 10:1-4

In our reading today, we hear the names of the men Jesus called to be His disciples. There are 12 of them. Not only those we know best, like Peter, John and the author of this book of the Bible, Matthew – but also those we don't know much about, such as Thaddeus.

Over the course of Matthew's Gospel, we will often see them not looking so great.

Peter sometimes speaks without thinking. James and John have a short temper. These disciples get jealous of each other, argue about who is the greatest, and don't trust Jesus to protect them in the storm. When Judas betrays Him and Jesus is being arrested, all eleven of the other disciples forsake Him and flee for their own safety.

The fact that there is such an honest, not-so-flattering portrayal of these disciples is some evidence for the truthfulness of Matthew's gospel and the other gospels. It also is a great comfort to us.

If they had these sins and faults, and yet they could still remain Jesus' disciples and then His apostles whom He sends to preach His Word, then it shows that God forgives. Then our sins and faults are things He forgives. That's how we remain His disciples.

You are His disciple, because you follow Him by hearing His Word. His Word leads you to repent and believe in Him. He also called you, when you were baptized. He calls you every day by the Gospel, to be His disciple and to keep following Him.

#39

Wednesday, July 2, 2025

Matthew 10:5-25

Today we are looking at Matthew 10:5-25 and I'm also today gearing up for Camp Rise, the one week summer camp here in Wisconsin that I'm the director of.

One of the things we play at camp is Capture the Flag. There's a lot that goes into it, you want to have some strategy as far as where you put the flag and then where you go to try to find that the other team's flag.

When I play this game with the kids, I am not as fast as many of the kids, so I have to strategize; it is key.

As Jesus is sending out His disciples, He's full of strategy as to where they are to go and how they approach things and how long they're to stay places. As He does this He says that the kingdom of heaven is near. This is something that we can sometimes forget that as Christians, God is working in us to actually advance his kingdom in us, into the world around us.

We are advancing on enemy territory as we bring the Gospel and live out our lives of faith. So that means we should be strategic too, because there's an enemy around us. There's hostility around us. So we should be smart too as we share the Gospel of Jesus.

Jesus, the night He when He was standing on trial, says that from now on you're going to see the Son of Man coming. So, this is something that we see. We see Jesus being revealed as a Son of God, kind of in various ways. Even when He conquers death on the cross, when He conquers sin there, we see Him in that way. When He rises again, we see Him as the Son of Man. When He ascends to the right hand of the father, we see Him as a Son of Man coming there. In that way, even in the ways that it becomes clear that the old view of a renewed earthly kingdom isn't happening, like when the temple is destroyed there too, we see Him. When we see the Gospel spreading throughout the world, and then of course, ultimately when He returns again, then we'll see Him.

So there's kind of steps to that. In a way, the Son of Man hasn't come and yet He already has started to come. So that's where Jesus can say, okay, you're not going to reach all these cities before the Son of Man comes. Okay. Alright, so read today and think about their strategy as we think about our strategy here in this world.

#40

Thursday, July 3, 2025

Matthew 10:26-42

Two weeks ago tomorrow, a dear friend of mine went home to Heaven. His name is Chad and I'm looking forward to seeing him again.

Chad was in the Army and did a lot of really brave things during his service. One of those things was jumping out of airplanes.

Which is really funny because Chad was—I doubt that he is anymore—but he was afraid of heights.

He and I were on a roof hanging Christmas lights and he wouldn't even go near the edge. That Airborne Green Beret was afraid of heights.

Fears! Today's reading, Matthew 10:26-42, talks about things we tend to be afraid of but Jesus does it in the context of His Father—our Father—in Heaven.

We tend to be afraid of those stronger than us—and so in fear we comply and compromise with them. We tend to be afraid of losing relationships. How often don't we—in fear of losing them—compromise our faith and our confession of our faith (the way we live and behave)?

“Have no fear of them,” says Jesus.

Read today's verses, Matthew 10:26-42, confident that Your Father in Heaven knows where you are, even knows how many hairs are left on your head, and that Jesus Himself is the Father's proof of love for you!

#41  
Friday, July 4, 2025  
Matthew 11:1-19

Today, with sparklers, firecrackers, and gigantic fireworks shows, our country remembers our war for independence.

We remember it. We are not fighting the British every year. They are our friends, one of our closest allies.

The sparklers, even the gigantic city-wide displays, point back to the 1770s when that battle took place and when “the rockets’ red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof through the night, that our flag was still there.”

The Revolutionary War was the real thing. Today’s fireworks are supposed to point toward it.

Like those fireworks, today’s reading from Matthew has consider a real thing, and someone who points to the real thing.

The person who points is John the Baptizer. John was a pretty unique character, unique diet, clothes, style, etc. John could have been someone people thought was the promised Savior.

But like modern fireworks, John’s purpose was to point toward Someone else, to point toward Christ.

Remember: If you light the fuse to something today or tonight, you’re not doing it to become independent from Great Britain, as if our freedom has to be purchased every single year.

No! You celebrate with fireworks and picnics because you are independent.

Keep that difference in mind as you read Jesus asking “Why’d y’all go to see John? Did you go so that he could open heaven for you or did you go because he talked about Someone who would open heaven?”

God bless your reading of Matthew 11:1-19 today and God bless your 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

#42

Saturday, July 5, 2025

Matthew 11:20-24

Growing up with two sister, one older and one younger, I was obsessed with things being equal.

Well, to be fair, I was obsessed with things either being equal or with things coming out in my favor.

From the last cookies Mom baked to who had to sit in the middle seat of the station wagon, looking back I realize I spent an inordinate amount of time obsessing about whether or not things were equal.

Maybe you did too. Thankfully my Mom didn't always treat us equally! If she had, she would have either put me in glasses when I didn't need them or she would have withheld glasses from my little sister who did need them!

My older sister had to receive allergy shots. Thankfully my mom didn't make me get shots because I "wanted everything to be equal."

Jesus has some hard words in today's reading, in Matthew 11:20-24. He talks about some special things some of the villages and towns got to see back then which towns like Sodom and Gomorrah didn't get to see.

Keep that bratty kid in mind as you read today's section, remembering how blessed we are among so many people! We have more than just the promise of a Savior. We have the historical coming, His death, and His resurrection to lean upon.

Read today's section thanking God that He has given us exactly what we need!