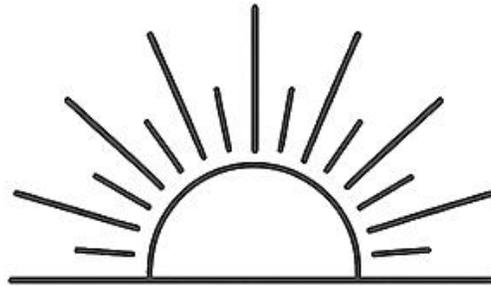


MIDSUMMER
WITH
MATTHEW



SUMMER 2025

WEEK 10

July 27 – August 2

Matthew 18:7 – Matthew 20:19

#64
Sunday, July 27, 2025
Matthew 18:7-14

Pastor Pittenger here, from Bethany Lutheran in Port Orchard, WA.

I am blessed to be the father of five children and also blessed to be the grandfather of five!

And as a parent and grandparent there is such great comfort in today's reading, Matthew 18:7-14

Jesus mentions "little ones." That word could also be translated "new ones."

So He talks about them, He knows about them. He knows them.

But then He says "who believe in Me." WOW! What comfort right there in the clear Words of Jesus.

There was a time when my kids could not have confessed the Christian faith, like saying the Apostle's Creed alongside all the other Christians in the Church. My new grandchild certainly will not be able to do that for a long-while yet. And even when they do first start joining everyone else, or singing along with a hymn they know, or joining everyone in the Lord's Prayer...

...even then I struggle thinking "Yeah, but their only repeating words they've been taught."

See, I want to hear it from their own mouths in their own words. I'm tempted to think that unless they can do it themselves, they probably don't—and can't believe.

So what comfort to hear Jesus say they can! He talks about these little ones who believe in Him. Even talks about God assigning angels to watch over them.

Faith is a gift, not a work, not an accomplishment; a gift God gives regardless of age.

I pray these words of His are a comfort to you today.

#65

Monday, July 28, 2025

Matthew 18:15-35

I love this comment: "It must be an incredibly important thing to forgive, since Jesus has taught us to say it every time we say the Lord's Prayer" (*Laache*).

Hi, I'm Pastor Jerry Gernander of Hope Lutheran Church in Leander, Texas. If someone asks me what I as a pastor do, I have a simple answer: "I forgive sins." It's not my personal forgiveness, it's God's forgiveness.

In our reading today, Jesus is talking not about delivering forgiveness from God, He's talking about forgiving someone for what they did against you. This can be hard! And we're not always good at it.

This is the devil's "back door attack" on the church. His front door attack is to attack faith. Satan's back door attack is to attack love. Isn't it ironic that in the Church, where God's forgiveness is given out unconditionally, that people who receive forgiveness have a hard time forgiving others? Instead we do experience harsh judging, complaining about others, taking offense and nursing grudges.

But when you have a hard time forgiving, realize that you're under attack from the devil. The devil doesn't want us to forgive! But Jesus does.

Notice in this parable that Jesus tells, that He says the unmerciful servant should have had compassion "just as" the master did. The master is a picture of the Lord. So He's pointing us to Jesus!

When Jesus tells Peter that He is to forgive not just seven times, but 70 times 7, and in this parable says our forgiving is to be without limitations, guess what He's also telling us? What His forgiveness is like.

When you can't forgive, that's a sin that you bring to Jesus. Guess what He'll do? Forgive you! His forgiveness is what gives you the strength to forgive. And: His blood cleanses you not only from the sins you do but from the sins done to you that are hard to forgive. He's the great Forgiver!

#66

Tuesday, July 29, 2025

Matthew 19.1-12

Good Tuesday morning! I'm Pastor Hamilton and this is a little devotional opening for July 29th for St. Matthew 19.1-12, brought to you from the Pastor's study at the Church. If someone comes to me for help to get ready for married life, and for help to get ready for a wedding, this is where we meet. I will have some practical things to say: on your wedding day, be sure to eat a little something so you won't feel faint. Also, during your ceremony, don't lock your knees, so you won't fall over! I'll also probably tell you to avoid an aisle runner if you can, so you don't have another reason to trip.

Along with those practical pieces of advice, and most importantly, I want to share with you what the Lord Jesus teaches about marriage and about married life. Now the teaching of the Lord Jesus about this is very simple, but it is difficult for us to accept, because we might like to have an out, or we might like to have more control of our own life. Yet the Lord's teaching is clear. It is very simple. It starts with this: if you are single you should live like you are single. If you are married, you should live like you are married.

So then looking at marriage and Jesus' teaching of marriage, let's ask: what is it? Three simple questions will help us here. Look at Jesus' Words, so we can ask these questions of Him. If we ask: 1) How many people make a marriage? His answer is: two. If we ask: 2) How do you characterize them? His answer is: male and female. If we ask 3) How long is their union to last? His answer is: "let man not separate what God has joined." Their union is intended *for life*.

There is a calling in married life. There is a calling in single life, too. Each is a blessing and a gift from God. In either case, the cross will meet you. In either case, God's blessings will meet you. And if we should look at our life and see that we have in some way we have sinned against our Lord and against his arrangement for marriage, then take comfort that this marriage arrangement, this relationship between one man and one woman in lifelong one-flesh union pictures something much bigger and greater: that the Lord Jesus is our Redeemer, who has come down from heaven: now bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He has bound Himself to us, taking on all our debts, and giving us His name and all of His riches. He has bound Himself to us for as long as His indestructible life will last!

God bless your reading of His Word today! God be with you and bless you, married or single, whatever your life is like, God grant you His peace.

#67

Wednesday, July 30, 2025

Matthew 19:13-15

This is Pastor Pittenger again, a father and grandfather.

Three days ago, Jesus talked about little ones who believe in Him, the word could even be “new ones.”

In today’s reading, Matthew 19:13-15, Jesus specifically says that little children should be brought to Him.

Not kept from Him, not sequestered from Him and from the account of all He’s done until they are old enough to choose for themselves.

Jesus says the Kingdom of God belongs to individuals like them. They “posses” it.

How can this be?

By faith. We posses, we belong, we are a part of it and part of God’s family by faith, by believing what God says about Jesus, by believing what Jesus says about Himself and about all other things.

Like children who trust their parents, all of God’s people trust Himn over themselves.

In Acts 2:38-39 Peter tells the Pentecost crowd that the promise of forgiveness—and that Baptism—is “for you and for your children.”

What comfort there! And what comfort in today’s reading.

Faith—the Gift of the Holy Spirit—is a gift for all of God’s people, even the littlest ones among us.

#68

Thursday, July 31, 2025

Matthew 19:16-30

Hello, I'm Pastor Jerry Gernander of Hope Lutheran Church in Leander, Texas, and this is the preview of Matthew 19:16-30.

You get these wonderful moments in the Bible where someone gets right down to the heart of what God's Word is about. You know, the devil wants to make it obscure and muddled for you. I think we're susceptible to this, feeling like everything is complicated and nothing is clear.

But here in Matthew 19 we get one of these wonderful moments, when this young man comes to Jesus. He asks Jesus a question that just hits the target, when he asks what he can do in order to have eternal life.

What we'll hear in these verses is that this young man is thinking about his own doing. Jesus even repeats what God said through Moses: "If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." That's the message of the Law. But as we'll see, the chief purpose of the Law is to show us our sins. That's what Jesus does. He shows the man his sin – so that he'll repent.

Jesus makes it very clear that you cannot have eternal life by keeping the law. He says, "With men this is impossible." The way of the Law, relying on what you do, can only end in sinful pride – which the young man comes to Jesus with – or the flip side of pride, which is despair – which the young man goes away with.

Then Jesus will show us that the only way to have eternal life is from the Gospel. He says, "With God all things are possible." That's what the disciples will see before too long when Jesus goes to His Passion and death, and finally when He rises from the dead.

It's not only possible, but eternal life – your eternal life – is certain in Jesus, as He gives you faith in Him. God bless your reading of Matthew 19:16-30.

#69

Friday, August 1, 2025

Matthew 20:1-16

I want you to think today about the worst job you have ever worked. For me, it's when I was in high school. I worked on a mink farm back in Iowa, and it was dirty, it was smelly, it was hot, boooorriing. I spent so much time by myself, although God did use that time to give me the opportunity to really think about a lot of things in life and reflect it, and it's really helped me today.

But it was a hard job. If I had worked all day and someone came in and worked the last hour then we received the same payment, I would probably be frustrated. My guess is for you too, if you were working that terrible job and someone came in in the last hour and received the same, you'd be like, "What's going on?"

Having that in mind helps us understand our reading today from Matthew 20:1-16. Here we have this vineyard owner, this landowner who is paying people the same amount, even though they've worked these different hours. And it pushes us to think what's going on here.

In what Jesus says here we have this vineyard owner who is able to do what he wants with his own things. We might say, "That's not fair. That doesn't seem fair", but why doesn't it seem fair? It doesn't seem fair because when we look at this, we are basing what someone should be paid on the work they are doing.

When it comes to our God, it's never about the work we do. It's always about grace. It's about the fact that we don't deserve anything from our God, and yet he loves us anyway. We have turned away from him. We have sinned and that deserves his justice, but instead of giving us what we deserve, he has shown us mercy. Jesus came into this world to take what we deserve onto himself, to absorb it, to die for it on a cross and to rise again to set us right with God.

It's not at all about us getting what we deserve. It's about his grace. So this lesson here really pushes us to flip things on their head and ask, "What is it about?" Even if you say, "Okay, in this situation, okay, it's not about the work you do," but even so, it might still seem well then is God showing favoritism to one person over another. But again, whenever we feel this sense of like, that's not fair because well someone is showing favoritism. Favoritism is about showing preference to a person. This lesson is about showing the heart of God and that it's never about us, how good we are, how much work we do, anything like that.

When we are invited into now this relationship, we are brought into this relationship with God by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are invited now to participate in the work he's doing. None of that is meant to earn anything from God. We have been given this all by grace. The Holy Spirit is now working in us.

We get to be part of the work God's doing, but it's not anything we earn from God. It's not based on us. It's based on him and his heart, we just go and be part of what he's doing and receive his good, good gifts.

I'm Pastor Nate Abrahamson with Abiding Shepherd Lutheran Church in Cottage Grove and Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. It's been great to be here with you and we'll see you next time.

#70
Saturday, August 2, 2025
Matthew 20:17-19

I'm Pastor Pittenger, Bethany Lutheran Church in Port Orchard, WA, this is an introduction for Matthew 20:17-19, introduction number 70 out of 100, and today's verses speak of going where we've always been going.

Where we've always been going.

Way back on May 25th, Memorial Day Sunday, Matthew 1:1-6 introduced us to Jesus by telling us about His family tree. Even then, 69 days ago, Matthew had us heading in this direction.

His genealogy, the angel Gabriel's announcement to Joseph, way back in those last days of May Matthew was taking us in this direction...

Still back in the month of May, when in Matthew 2 we saw Wise Men come to Jerusalem asking for the King of the Jews, way back then Matthew was leading us in this very specific direction...

And in the three verses for today you'll see what direction that is.

A crystal clear picture of where Matthew's been going all along.

Whether you've guessed it or not, open your own Bible to Matthew 20:17, 18, & 19, and see where Jesus is going and where Matthew is taking as well.

God bless and keep you!