

A study in
MATTHEW
Chapters 8-13



HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This 12-week study in Matthew 8-13 is designed to be used by groups of any size, in any setting - anything from two friends reading the Bible together in their lunch break, to an entire Connect group meeting after dinner on a weeknight. All you need is a Bible and this booklet.

Before you begin, it might also be helpful to watch through the Bible Project's introductory video on Matthew 1-13 (only 8 mins long), available on their website:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/matthew-1-13/>

Each study in this booklet has **three** components:

- 1) looking at the passage using the questions provided,
- 2) discussing the application questions that go with it, and
- 3) finishing with personal reflections.

For a 60-minute bible study we recommend you structure your time in the following way:

1. Reading the passage (5 mins)
2. Explaining what the passage is about (10 mins)
3. Discussing what the passage means (10 mins)
4. Discussing the application questions (25 mins)
5. Sharing your response to the passage (10 mins)

Week ONE

Matthew 8:1-17

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

*What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?
What things are unclear or confusing?
What do you think the main point of this passage is?*

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Consider Jesus' compassion and care. He touches the leper, even though he doesn't need to (notice he heals with just a word and from a distance in verse 13). Have you ever experienced Jesus' compassion or care? Has he ever inspired you to show compassion or care to others?

The Centurion has confidence in Jesus' absolute authority (verse 8-9). What do you think it means to come under the authority of Jesus?

In verse 10-12 Jesus teaches that his kingdom is open to people from every tribe, tongue and nation, but it is only open for those who put their faith in Jesus. Are you tempted to either narrow or broaden the kingdom beyond what Jesus says?

Are there people in your group who need prayer for healing? Are there people you know who need prayer for healing? Spend some time praying that Jesus would bring healing.

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

*What is God saying to me?
What does this mean for how I live?
Does this change what I think or believe?
Is there anything I should do or stop doing?
Is there something I want to be held accountable for?*

Week TWO

Matthew 8:18-34

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

In verses 23-34 we see the power and authority of Jesus over both the natural world and the spiritual world. Have you ever forgotten about, or underestimated the power and authority of Jesus? What might have caused this?

Have you experienced Jesus' power at work in your life? When and how did you see it?

In verses 18-22 Jesus outlines the reality of what it means to follow him. These are difficult words! How do you feel about the reality that following Jesus might lead to instability and discomfort (verse 20)? What could be some examples of this for a Christian today?

How do you react to Jesus' call to place the Kingdom as a higher priority than even your own family responsibilities (verse 22)? How might Jesus call us to do this today?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

What is God saying to me?

What does this mean for how I live?

Does this change what I think or believe?

Is there anything I should do or stop doing?

Is there something I want to be held accountable for?

Week THREE

Matthew 9:1-17

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

*What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?
What things are unclear or confusing?
What do you think the main point of this passage is?*

4 Discuss the following application questions:

By healing the paralysed man, Jesus revealed his authority to forgive sin (verses 4-7). This is the very reason He came! What might it look like for you to rely on Jesus' forgiveness in your life, day to day? Can you share about any times where you have in the past?

Jesus wasn't afraid of associating with sinful people, but made them his friends (verse 10). What fears or worries stop you from spending time with 'sinners'? What do we need to be mindful of when it comes to taking the gospel to people living far from God?

As sinners who have experienced God's mercy, our true worship is to show this same mercy to others (verse 13). What do you struggle with more: accepting God's mercy and forgiveness? Or showing mercy towards the sins of others? Why might this be?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Is there something I want to be held accountable for?*

Week FOUR

Matthew 9:18-34

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

This passage is full of people who receive miraculous help from Jesus. Which of the four miracles do you find the most astounding? Which do you find the most moving?

We see both Jesus' power and his compassion in this passage. In what ways do you see his power? In what ways do you see his compassion?

In this passage, some people reach out to Jesus (v18, v20-21, v27), while others are incapable of reaching out and need Jesus to be brought to them (v25, v 32). What does that teach you about Jesus' power? What does it teach you about faith?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Week FIVE

Matthew 9:35-10:42

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

In this passage, Jesus ties discipleship and mission together. Do you feel like you have a part to play in Jesus' mission?

What stands out to you about how we are to engage in Jesus' mission? How do we respond to any opposition?

Jesus' call to us is absolute (verses 37-39). What sacrifices have you had to make for Jesus' sake? What is the hardest part of following Jesus for you?

Before moving on, spend some time praying that God will raise up workers for his harvest field.

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Week SIX

Matthew 11

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

What are the expectations that you have of Jesus? It might be helpful to think how you would answer: I will follow Jesus if....

Repentance is a heart level response of recognising our sinful nature, turning away from it, and asking for God's mercy.

When is the last time you spent time in repentant prayer?

Jesus tells us that we need to learn from him because he is gentle and humble in heart (verse 29). Would people in your life describe you as gentle? Humble?

Jesus offers us two things: rest for our souls... and a yoke...

Have you accepted his yoke? Do you come to him for rest?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Week SEVEN

Matthew 12:1-37

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

*What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?
What things are unclear or confusing?
What do you think the main point of this passage is?*

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Jesus says (quoting Hosea), 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'. What might this look like in practical terms?

Have you ever found that you have been so devoted to religious ritual or rules that you have become condemning of others who aren't living up to your standards?

Can you think of ways that your faith demonstrates the compassion and the character of Jesus? Are there ways that it doesn't?

Jesus says that, 'the mouth speaks what the heart is full of'. What does your speech reveal about what is going on in your heart? Is there anything you particularly need to ask Jesus for transformation?

NOTE: Verses 31-32 are challenging verses, and have led to pastoral distress for some people. If anyone in the group needs to think through these verses further, we recommend listening to this week's sermon on the DBC website.

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Week EIGHT

Matthew 12:38-50

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

*What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?
What things are unclear or confusing?
What do you think the main point of this passage is?*

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Like the Pharisees, have you ever asked Jesus for a sign of his power or presence in your life (verse 38)? What was it that led you to ask for a sign? (e.g. fear, doubt, worry, uncertainty?)

Jesus makes the shocking claim that his disciples are also his family - not a biological family, but a family of faith (verse 50). Do you feel like you are part of God's family? Why, or why not?

As a family united by faith in Jesus, how can the church help each other remain strong in our faith? What would this look like week-to-week?

Can you share any examples of when your 'faith family' has encouraged you in your walk with Jesus? How might you be able to do the same for someone else?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Week NINE

Matthew 13:1-23

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Which of the first three soils most describes you? What do you need to confess and repent of?

We know that God needs to be at work in the hearts of people that we want to reach to with the gospel. Think about the particular non-Christian friends you are praying for. Does the parable help you be more specific in how you pray for them?

As a group, brainstorm different ways that you could 'sow the seeds' of the gospel, either together or individually.

Can you share any stories of where you have seen people come to faith?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Week TEN

Matthew 13:24-43

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Which of the three pictures that Jesus uses to describe the kingdom (weeds and wheat, mustard seed, yeast) do you most relate to? Which is hardest to relate to?

The mustard seed and the yeast are both parables about the effect of the Kingdom. What are some of the ways that the Kingdom of God has influenced the world?

How do you respond to Jesus' warning of judgement in verses 40-43? Would you want to live in a world where there wasn't the hope of full and final justice?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Is there something I want to be held accountable for?

Week ELEVEN

Matthew 13:44-52

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Jesus claims that the kingdom of heaven is so precious it is worth losing everything else for. Is there anything more precious to you than Jesus? Is there anything you could not give up for his sake?

Jesus gives a stark warning for those who don't receive the kingdom of heaven (verses 49-50). Is there anything in your life you need to re-evaluate in light of this warning?

What is it about the kingdom of heaven that fills you most with joy? Share this with the group.

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Week TWELVE

Matthew 13:53-14:12

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Jesus was a stumbling block to the people in this passage. The truth is that tragically, even today, people will reject him. If the people around you reject Jesus, how do you cope?

We can't control how people respond to Jesus, but we do need to examine ourselves so that our life or faith isn't a stumbling block to others. Is there any part of your life that someone could 'trip over' before they get to Jesus?

'It's easy to identify with John the Baptist in this story... Maybe we should identify with Herod!' Does the gospel challenge any specific part of your life you would rather not change? Are there any things in the gospel that you don't want to hear?

It takes humility to listen and respond to Jesus, especially when it requires us to repent and change. Do you need to repent of pride and ask for humility? Pray for this together.

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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What does this mean for how I live?

Does this change what I think or believe?

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Is there something I want to be held accountable for?