

Matthew

The Introduction of the King Chapters 1 & 2



University of
Michigan

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

Hints and Highlights

1. Matthew begins with a genealogy (1:1-17) that starts with Abraham and focuses on King David. Its purpose is to show that Jesus has the birthright to be a King.
2. Activity: One great way to get to know each other is to have each person describe the 3 most influential people in their lives and why they are the most influential.
3. Matthew has a lot of quotes and paraphrases from the Old Testament. He is trying to show how Jesus fulfills many prophecies.

Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

Option 1:

Ask each person in your group, "What is your favorite movie or song?" You could even write a list and have them guess who belongs to what title. Ask them how the movie begins. You could ask them to act out the beginning or sing the beginning.

Option 2:

You could do Christmas in September. Bring candy canes for everyone and have them describe what Christmas is like in their family.

Option 3:

Ask them to describe meeting someone for the first time. What do you like/dislike about it? What do you want to know when you meet someone for the first time? Have them each share one or two things they would like the rest of the group to know about them.

- ? Why are introductions so important? What do they tell us about the person or theme (i.e. in music or film) that is being introduced?

Tonight we will look at how Matthew, one of the four gospels, introduces Jesus and together find out what we can learn about Him from this introduction .

Diving In

Read 1:18-25.

1. How would sum up what happens in this story? What are some things that strike you as unusual about this story?
2. How would you describe Joseph as a person? How would you describe Mary? (for further details see Luke 1:26-38)
3. How would you feel if you were Mary and this were happening to you? How would you feel if you were Joseph? What do you think others would think about you? What impact could this have on your reputation?
4. Why do you think the angel needed to appear to both of them?
5. What are some insights you gain about Jesus from this passage? How would you describe the circumstances surrounding his birth? What might people have said about him? (illegitimate, shotgun wedding, etc.)

Read 2:1-6

1. How would you describe the next scene of the story?
2. How would you describe the Magi? (astrologers—men who were wise in

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Hints and Highlights

1. Herod asks about the Messiah, or Christ. This is the Anointed One who will rescue Israel as prophesied.
2. Bethlehem is not just the birthplace of Jesus, it was also the birthplace of King David.
3. More details about the actual birth of Christ can be found in Luke 2.
4. Gold is the metal of kings. Frankincense is used by priests in worship. Myrrh is for embalming the dead. These gifts could be foreshadowing Jesus as King, Priest and Savior.
5. There is an interesting parallel between Jesus going into and out of Egypt and the sons of Jacob who were delivered through Moses.
6. Nazareth is a town in Galilee in northern Israel.

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studying the stars) Why do you think they came to Jerusalem? Why did they go to Herod the king? (it would make sense that if a King were born it would be in the palace in the capital)

3. What is Herod's response to this? What does he do about it? Why?
4. What does Herod learn? What do you think is the significance of the prophecy? Why do you think Matthew quotes so many prophecies?

Read 2:7-15

1. How would you describe what happens next?
2. How would you describe King Herod's response to the child?
3. How would you contrast that with the response of the Magi to the child? What do you think it means to worship Him? Why do you think they worshipped a baby? What does that show about the Magi?
4. Why do you think they gave Jesus those particular gifts?
5. How would you describe the two dreams? Why do you think God sent these dreams? Why do you think Herod wanted to kill the baby Jesus?
6. How would you describe the first period of Jesus' life?

Read 2:16-23

1. How would you describe the end of the story?
2. Why do you think Herod was so upset? How does he respond? Why do you think Matthew chooses to include this part of the story?
3. Why does Jesus end up growing up in Nazareth? Why is this significant?
4. How would you describe the early years of Jesus' life?

In Summary

1. How would you sum up this story?
2. Why do you think that Matthew introduces Jesus to us in this way?
3. How would you describe Jesus' early years?
4. What are some insights we gain about Jesus here?
5. How would you summarize the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled?

Making Application

Jesus is the King, but makes a hectic and unusual introduction on earth. This gives us insights as to who He is.

1. From conception Jesus had a difficult life. He was not born in the palace. How does that help you as you think about your own difficulties?
2. Think about the response to Jesus by Mary and Joseph, Herod and the Magi. What are some ways you identify with the response of each? What are some ways you can worship Jesus? Have you ever placed your faith in Jesus before?
3. How is my trust in God reinforced by Him fulfilling His words of prophecy made hundreds of years before?

Let's thank Jesus that He came to earth in such a humble way.

Matthew

The Preparation of the King Chapters 3 & 4



University of
Michigan

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

Hints and Highlights

1. Always remember the context. Mathew is telling the story of Jesus' life but he is including details in an intentional order. Having just focused on Jesus' early days, Matthew now shows his preparation for His ministry.
2. The prophecy in v. 3 is from Isaiah 40:3. John's role is to prepare the way for Jesus.
3. The Pharisees and Sadducees were different sects of Jewish religious leaders.
4. John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins (see Luke 1:36-45)

Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

Option 1:

Ask everyone why they came to UM. What motivated them? What excited them about UM? What scared them? Then ask how they prepared for coming here.

Option 2:

You could bake cookies or make a meal together. Then talk about what they had to do to prepare. What would happen if someone did not do these things?

Option 3:

Talk about presidents. Play a game guessing what they did before they became president. For example, Carter was a peanut farmer & governor of Georgia, Reagan was an actor & governor of California, George W. Bush was an oilman & governor of Texas, Bill Clinton was governor of Arkansas, Washington was a farmer and a general, etc. How do you think these experiences prepared these men to be president?

- ? What do you think is the best kind of preparation for a mission? Why do you think preparation is so important? What do you think would happen if you did not adequately prepare for something?

Tonight we will look at how Jesus prepared for his difficult and important mission.

Diving In

Read 3:1-12 (optional—this creates a feel for who John the Baptist was)

1. How would you describe John the Baptist? What do you think his role in God's plan was?
2. Why do you think that John responded so harshly to the religious leaders of the day? What did they do wrong? Why do you think hypocrisy is so harmful? Why do you think repentance is so important? How would you describe true repentance?

Read 3:13-17 (Preparation #1: Baptism)

1. How would you describe what takes place here?
2. Why do you think John tried to deter Jesus from being baptized? What was the purpose of John's baptism? (do not get into a discussion on infant baptism vs. believers' baptism—it is way off the topic!)
3. If baptism involves repentance from sin and Jesus was sinless, why do you think He chose to be baptized? How do you think that God feels about Jesus' baptism?

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Hints and Highlights

1. Satan came to tempt Jesus when He was most vulnerable. What was at the heart of the temptation was a shortcut, rushing to claim that which Jesus would eventually gain. Jesus lived entirely as a human and never do we see Him using His power to help Himself. Jesus would shortly eat and so did not need to show Satan His power. Jesus did not need to follow a dare to prove He was the Son of God because Satan already knew that. Satan also knew that Jesus would eventually rule over all the earth. Interesting that Satan offers at the beginning of Jesus' ministry that which Jesus would not get until the end.

2. Capernaum is a prominent town on the Sea of Galilee.

3. "From that time on" denotes a major turning point (see 16:21, 26:16).

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Read 4:1-11 (Preparation #2: Temptation)

1. How would you describe what happens next? How do you think Jesus felt after 40 days of fasting? Why do you think that the devil chose to tempt Jesus then? Why do you think the Spirit led Jesus there?
2. How would you describe each of the three temptations? What would you say is at the heart of each? (see sidebar)
3. How did Jesus respond to each temptation? (Make sure to notice He uses Scripture. You could ask "Why do you think He used God's Word to respond to temptation?") What are some things that we can learn about temptation from Jesus' experience?
4. Why do you think Jesus needed to be tempted by Satan before He began His ministry? How does this make you feel about Jesus, knowing that He went through even harder temptations than what we face? (You could also read Hebrews 4:15 here for more insight about Jesus' temptation)

Read 4:12-17 (Optional—Preparation #3: Moving to Capernaum)

Why do you think Jesus moved? What did Jesus begin? Why then?

Read 4:18-22 (Preparation #4: Calling First Disciples)

1. How would you describe what happens here? What did Jesus ask them to do? What do you think it means to be a "fisher of men"?
2. How quickly did they follow Jesus? Why? What did they leave behind? What do those things represent?

Read 4:23-35 (Preparation #5: Actual Ministry)

1. How would you describe Jesus' early ministry? What do you think His teaching, preaching and healing demonstrated about God?
2. How would you describe the response of the people?

In Summary

1. How would you sum up this story?
2. Why do you think each preparation was necessary for Jesus to have an effective ministry?

What are some of the principles we learn about pleasing God, temptation, following Jesus?

Making Application

Jesus is the King, but He does not just burst onto the scene. He goes through the proper steps patiently following God's time.

1. What are some ways that we can please God?
2. What are some of the ways I am tempted to shortcut God's plan?
3. What are some ways I can better handle temptation? (You could even give them a minute to meditate on where they are being tempted and what they could do about it.)
4. What are my nets? What are the things I need to leave behind to follow Jesus, no matter how scary it may be to leave them behind?

Let's thank Jesus that He did not take any shortcuts, but fully followed God's plan.

Matthew

Ethics of the King - Chapter 5



University of
Michigan

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

Hints and Highlights

1. After Jesus begins His ministry He begins to teach the multitudes. This section is known as the "Sermon on the Mount", the first of 5 major sections of teaching in the book of Matthew.
2. These first ten verses are often called the "Beatitudes", which means blessedness.
3. Remember, the goal of a Bible study is that the students learn. Therefore, it is very important to have a discussion, not have you lecture. Please give them time to answer the questions you ask.

Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

Option 1:

Play Two Truths and a Lie. Then talk about whose lie was the most believable. What makes a lie believable? Is it ever right to lie?

Option 2:

Play a basketball game like HORSE (or other game). Ask someone ahead of time to cheat (bump people as they shoot, etc.). Then talk about what happened. How did it make you feel when they cheated?

Option 3:

Create several scenarios where it might be possible for an ethical shortcut. Maybe make an anonymous survey of certain things. Then talk about that. The survey could include things like: 1. McDonald's gives you \$10 extra in change. Do you give it back?

2. Your TA accidentally gives you the answers to the homework set due tomorrow. Would you look at it? 3. Would you say bad things about your roommate when he is not there? 4. Would you look at internet pornography?

- ? What do you think makes something right or wrong? Are our attitudes as important as our actions? What about our thoughts?
- ? Let's look at the standards set by Jesus in His teaching.

Diving In

Read 5:1-10 (the Beatitudes)

1. Who is listening to this message? (It appears that both His disciples and the multitudes were present.) Where are they?
2. How would you describe the general theme of this first part? What do you think it means to be "Blessed"? How would you describe those who are "blessed"? (You could have them write down or make a chart of each blessed person and what will happen to them.)
3. What are your conceptions of someone who is meek? Merciful? Why do you think these people are blessed?
4. Which one of these blessings strikes you as most surprising? Least? Why?

Read 5:11-16 (Persecution)

1. What are some things that you notice that are different here (v. 11) than in the first 10 verses? (for sure there is a transition to "Blessed are You") Why do you think He chose to expand on this particular group?
2. How would you define persecution? Why are these "blessed" people being

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Hints and Highlights

1. Jesus chooses to use 2 common examples: salt and light. Salt in ancient days was used for preservation as well as flavor. In pre-electricity days a city on the hill would glow with its lamps.
2. Jesus is making it clear that He does not intend to lower standards of the Law. Jesus did not come to give a license to sin. He fulfilled all of the Law, i.e. lived it all, even to the degrees He sets out in the last half of the chapter.
3. What Jesus does in the last half of the chapter is take a common aspect of the OT Law that most thought they were doing well in keeping (I didn't kill anyone or sleep with someone), then shows how they sin in their hearts.
4. The word "raca" in v. 22 is an Aramaic (common local language) term of contempt (like "fool" or "idiot").

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persecuted? (key point—v. 11 “because of Me”)

3. How are those who are persecuted to respond? What are the examples He uses? How does each illustration help us to know what to do?
4. What are some ways that we can live as “salt” and “light”?

Read 5:17-20 (Jesus & the Law)

1. How would you describe what Jesus is saying here (especially v. 17)? How would you say Jesus defines righteousness?
2. Jesus then gives six examples of how He defines righteousness: 1. Murder 2. Adultery 3. Divorce 4. Oaths 5. Revenge 6. Love for Enemies. We'll look at a couple of them. You can add more or just use the ones most appropriate.

Read 5:21-26 (Redefining Murder as Hate)

1. How would you say that Jesus redefines murder?
2. How do you think Jesus would respond to the person who would say “I'm a good person, after all I haven't murdered anyone”?
3. How do you think people responded to His message here?
4. What are some of the principles that Jesus gives us to apply to daily relationships with our roommates, family, etc.?

Read 5:27-30 (Redefining Adultery as Lust)

1. How would you describe Jesus' view of adultery? How does this view make you feel?
2. What are some insights Jesus gives us about our hearts? How does this make you feel about your own thought life?

Read 5:38-47 (Revenge & Love for Enemies Redefined)

How would you describe Jesus' perspective on each one? How is this different than our normal ways of dealing with those who wrong us?

In Summary

1. How would you sum up the main points of Jesus' teaching so far?

What are some of the principles we learn about our lives? About how Jesus lived His life?

Making Application

In a day of questionable ethics, Jesus presents a unique perspective on life and very high standards.

1. Which of the beatitudes do you most identify with? Why?
2. What are some ways we can live our lives as salt and light? What are some ways you are tempted to compromise God's standards?
3. Give them a minute to possibly reflect on this silently. What are some ways that my thoughts and attitudes, if not my actions, do not meet God's standards? (perhaps in how I relate to others, thoughts of lust, or an attitude of pride) Encourage them to take a moment to confess these things before God, and experience His forgiveness.

Let's thank Jesus that He did not compromise on anything in life or death.

Matthew

The Genuineness of the King Chapter 6



University of
Michigan

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

Hints and Highlights

1. Jesus continues His Sermon on the Mount by dealing with two issues of the heart: hypocrisy and anxiety. The first half of the chapter Jesus uses three Jewish religious observances: alms, prayer and fasting to illustrate what a hypocrite looks like. For each He gives a wrong ("do not") and a right way to observe the practice.
2. Activity: One great way to help people be more genuine and show care for each other is to exchange prayer requests. Then spend a little time praying for each other.

Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

Option 1:

Have them act out 2 scenes, one where a student is helping someone to be nice and the other where he is helping someone so that others notice (like med school admission board, friends, parents, etc.).

Option 2:

Have everyone share their scariest experience. Then ask what makes something fearful. Why are we sometimes afraid? Or you could ask them what causes the greatest stress in their lives.

Option 3:

Ask them to draw a picture of a hypocrite. Have them show everyone the picture and explain why they drew it the way they did. Then ask how do you feel about hypocrites. Why do you think you feel that way?

Why do you think hypocrisy and anxiety are so important as a Christian? What are some ways UM students struggle with each?

Tonight we will look at how Jesus feels about religious hypocrisy and what advice He gives to deal with stress and anxiety.

Diving In

Read 6:1-18

Overview

1. Have them take a minute and read these verses. How would you sum up Jesus' statements? What are your first impressions?
2. What do you think He means by practicing righteousness before others (v. 1)? What are some ways that we do that?
3. How would you describe the right and the wrong ways to give alms to the poor? To pray? To fast? What do you think He is trying to emphasize?
4. How would you describe a hypocrite? Why do you think people dislike hypocrites so much? (see sidebar on page 2) What are some ways UM students perceive hypocrites?

Deeper look at Prayer (v. 5-15)

1. Have them take a minute and reread these verses. What are some principles that you notice about prayer? According to these verses why do you think we should pray? Why shouldn't we pray? Why do you think Jesus discourages

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Hints and Highlights

1. The word “hypocrite” originally was used to describe actors who played a part, spoke words for effect but did not convey the truth.
2. Verses 9-13 are commonly called “the Lord’s prayer” and are repeated in a lot of church services.
3. If you choose to spend some time emphasizing prayer in this study you could teach them the acrostic ACTS as a summary of prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanks, Supplication)
4. The words “like this” imply that the Lord’s prayer is a good model for praying.
5. The focus of the analogy with the birds and lilies does not imply doing nothing and then relying on God. Rather it implies an attitude of complete trust in God in every-thing you do.

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meaningless repetition?

2. How would you summarize Jesus’ model prayer? What are some of the elements He gives that we can model in prayer?
3. Why do you think He begins by praising God for who He is? What do you think He means by “daily bread”? Why do you think it is important to confess our sin and ask for God’s forgiveness?
4. Why do you think it is important for us to forgive others? Why do you think He includes forgiving others in this prayer? (remember He is addressing religious hypocrisy)

Read 6:19-34

1. How would you describe what Jesus is talking about here? Why do you think He places this after discussing religious hypocrisy?
2. What are some of the things Jesus asks us to do and not to do here?
3. Why do you think Jesus warns us against laying up treasures on earth? (make sure they see that anxiety and stress largely come from worrying about earthly things) What are some examples of treasures on earth we try to store up?
4. Why do you think you cannot serve God and money? What does that struggle look like in the lives of UM students?
5. What are some of the examples Jesus uses in this story? What do you think His reason might be for using them? How does it make you feel to know that your Heavenly Father knows what you need? How would you tie these thoughts in with the prayer that Jesus modeled earlier?
6. What do you think it means to “seek first God’s Kingdom”? What are some ways we can practically do that at UM?

In Summary

1. How would you sum up Jesus’ teaching here?
2. What insights do you gain about prayer from these verses? Hypocrisy? Anxiety and stress?

How would you say these topics are related to each other?

Making Application

Jesus is the King, and cares deeply about the sincerity of your heart.

1. What are some ways that we live as hypocrites? What are some changes we need to make to not live that way?
2. Why do you think so many students at UM struggle with anxiety and stress? What are some things that you tend to worry about? What principle from tonight can help you deal with these concerns?
3. What are some ways that we can improve our prayers? How can we pray for each other? What are some things we can thank God for?
4. What are some ways we can seek God’s Kingdom first?

Let’s thank Jesus that He has a genuine heart and that we can talk with Him always.

Matthew

The Challenge from the King - Chapter 7



University of
Michigan

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

Hints and Highlights

1. This is the last section of the Sermon on the Mount. After discussing ethics and issues of the heart like hypocrisy and anxiety, Jesus then takes on judging others, prayer, and the Golden Rule (v. 12). The last half of the chapter deals with the contrast between the two ways of living.
2. Remember to ask open-ended questions that stimulate discussion. These are questions that begin with: Why...? What are some...? How do you feel about...?

Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

Option 1:

Make an obstacle course and have them attempt it. Then ask them about what made it challenging. You could even blindfold them if you want. What makes something challenging?

Option 2:

Give them a puzzle to do. Talk about the right and wrong way to do a puzzle. Or create something else that is difficult for them to do.

Option 3:

Split them up into teams, give them toothpicks and marshmallows and have them build the tallest structure they can in three minutes. The structure must hold the weight of a small book. What makes some buildings strong and others fall?

- ? What are some of the challenges we face as students at UM? How do you feel about a challenge?
- ? What are some ways that some people wrongly respond to a challenge?
- ? Jesus lays down a challenge to Christian growth. Will you take it up? Let's take a closer look and see.

Diving In

Read 7:1-5

1. How would you describe Jesus' point? What do you think He means by judging? (You could have them draw a picture of the analogy). What happens to those who judge? What do you think this means?
2. How would you describe the analogy? Why do you think we are so tempted to look at the specks in others' eyes and ignore our own planks? What are some ways that we can do that?
3. What are some principles that we can apply to our relationships?

Read 7:7-12

1. How would you summarize what Jesus is saying here? What are some principles that we can draw out about prayer? Why do you think He uses the three words ask, seek, and knock to describe His point?
2. How would you describe and explain the real life examples Jesus uses? What do you think His point is?
3. What do you think it looks like to pray persistently? What would you do if

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Hints and Highlights

1. The word “judge” means to criticizing in a harsh spirit.
2. We skipped v. 6 to save time. Dogs and pigs are derogatory terms for Gentiles. But this is not a command against evangelizing Gentiles or any unbeliever. Rather it seems to be a reminder that not all of God’s wisdom will be appreciated by some who rebel against God.
3. Verse 12 is often called the “Golden Rule”. Treating others as you want to be treated sums up the whole Old Testament.
4. Jesus sets a clear contrast in the last half of the chapter. He talks about 2 gates (v. 13-14), 2 trees (v. 15-20), 2 claims (v. 21-23) and 2 builders (v. 24-27). There are those who follow Christ and those who take the “easy road” in not following Christ.

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God did not answer a specific prayer you made?

4. How would you describe v. 12? What are some ways we can live this out? How does this summarize the Old Testament?

Read 7:13-27.

1. How would you describe Jesus’ teaching in these verses? What are some of the contrasts He makes?
2. How would you describe His example of the gates? What do you think He means in His description of each gate? How does that look in life?
3. What do you think the trees refer to? What would you say is Jesus’ concern? Why do you think the fruit is significant? What are examples of good fruit?
4. How would you describe the claims of those who cry “Lord, Lord”? Why do you think many did not enter the Kingdom? What do you think He means by “doing the will of My Father in Heaven”? What do you think it means to “know” Jesus? How does one know Jesus?
5. How would you describe the two builders? What are some things they did differently? What do you think Jesus is trying to communicate? What are some ways we can build our houses on rock? What are some ways we can build them on sand?

Read 7:28-29

How would say the crowd responded to Jesus? Why? What do you think it looks like to teach with authority? Why do you think the other Jewish teachers did not appear the same way?

In Summary

1. How would you sum up Jesus’ teaching in this chapter?
2. What are some principles we can learn about relationships? Prayer? Challenging choices?
3. How would you describe the person and character of Jesus based on this message that He gave?

Which gate, road, tree, etc. do you think most UM students live? Why do you think they do? How does this make you feel about them?

Making Application

Jesus lays out a huge challenge on how to treat others, how to pray, and to choose the narrow path of fruitful obedience.

1. When do you tend to be critical of someone else? Is there someone whose speck you are focusing on? Take a moment and reflect on the planks in our own life. Is there any area where you think that you look good at on the outside, but are not right in on the inside...in the heart?
2. How persistent are you in praying for something? Is there something you need to take a minute to ask God for? What are some ways you are treating someone that you would not wish to be treated?
3. Jesus puts people in two categories, those who know Him and those who do not. Who are some friends I can bring here next week?

Let’s thank Jesus that He did not compromise on anything in life or death.

Matthew

The Authority of the King - Chapters 8 & 9



University of
Michigan

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

Hints and Highlights

1. When Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount at the end of ch. 7 the crowds were amazed because He taught as one who had authority (not like their own religious leaders). In this chapter Matthew emphasizes this authority, showing His power over sickness, the weather, and even demons.
2. Leprosy is a contagious skin disease. Lepers were required to live apart from the rest of society. And no one was allowed to even touch them (look at what Jesus did!)

Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

Option 1:

Think back to the teacher or coach you respected the most. Have each person share who that was and why they respected him or her so much.

Option 2:

Take them outside and have them talk about the weather. Then ask them to change the weather. Obviously they cannot. Ask what are some things that we can control and can not control. What makes the difference?

Option 3:

Give them a project to do like make a tower out of newspaper or an egg drop carton. Give each one a different role (leader, follower, etc.) Maybe even rotate the leaders or try having no leader or all leaders. Then talk about what happens.

- ? How do we respond to authority? What gives a leader authority?
- ? Jesus shows Himself to be a leader with authority. Let's look at how He lives out this authority.

Diving In

Read 8:1-4

How would you describe what Jesus did here? How would you define leprosy? What strikes you as unusual about this story?

Read 8:5-10, 13

1. How would you summarize what takes place here? What strikes you as unique about this story?
2. How would you describe a centurion? (Roman army officer). What did the centurion understand about Jesus? How would you say that the centurion demonstrated faith? Why do you think that his faith was so surprising?
3. Jesus healed many people. Why do you think Matthew chose to include these two stories? (These were both surprising healings of people with whom good religious Jews would have no contact.)
4. What do you learn about Jesus' authority? (it extends beyond the normal realm of religious experience—it is over all!)

Read 8:18-22.

1. How would explain this part of the story? What do you think He is saying

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Hints and Highlights

1. A centurion is a Roman officer commanding 100 soldiers.
2. It is interesting that Jesus touched a leper, took pity on a Gentile leader of a despised occupying army, and touched a woman with a fever (we skipped over v. 14-15). These are things the Jewish Law and customs prohibited but Jesus came to fulfill the Law as God intended it to be understood.
3. Jesus' responses to the question of how to follow Him show that following Jesus can make you feel alone and even leave you without a home (v. 20) It is not always stable and secure. Burying your father was an important family obligation but it pales compared to following Jesus.
4. The title "Son of Man" (v. 20) is a humble term tying Him to His creation but referring back to Daniel 7:13-14. The demons know Jesus, calling Him Son of God (v.29).
5. Blasphemy is identifying yourself as God.

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about "following Me"?

2. What do you think the hesitation is for the teacher of the Law? The other disciple? What are some of your hesitations in following Jesus?
3. Why do you think Matthew included this story in between all of the healings and other demonstrations of authority?

Read 8:23-27

1. How would describe what happens in this part of the story?
2. How would you contrast Jesus and the disciples in the storm? How does Jesus describe the disciples? Why do you think they lacked faith? How would you contrast them to Jesus' description of the centurion?
3. Why do you think Jesus calmed the storm? (make sure they see the idea of authority) How would you explain the response of the disciples to this miracle? How do you think you would have responded?

Read 8:28-34

1. How would you summarize what happens in the last part of the chapter?
2. Why do you think the demons responded in the way that they did? What does that tell you about Jesus? (make sure they get the idea of authority) Why do you think the townspeople asked Him to leave? How do you think you would have responded if you saw this scene?

Read 9:1-8

How would you describe this scene? Why is it such a big deal to forgive sin? What does this show about Jesus? Why do you think the religious leaders were so upset? Why did they think Jesus blasphemed? (only God can forgive)

In Summary

1. How would you sum up what happens in this chapter?
2. What are some principles we can learn about the authority of Jesus?
3. What do you think the various miracles demonstrate about Jesus?

What do you think it means to "follow Jesus"? What does it look like? What do you think this passage teaches about faith?

Making Application

Jesus is a leader not only by way of great teaching, but also by great authority.

1. How do you feel about the authority that Jesus possesses? How willing are you to give Him control of your life? What are some things that keep you from fully following Him?
2. How would you describe your faith in what Jesus can do? How well do you identify with the disciples in the boat? How well do you identify with the centurion? What kinds of situations cause you to have faith like the centurion or unbelief like the disciples? Where do I need Jesus' forgiveness?
3. What are some things in my life that I need to give Jesus the authority over? Take a moment and write some of them down.

Let's thank Jesus that He possesses all authority over creation and over my life.

Matthew

Mysteries of the Kingdom - Chapter 13



University of
Michigan

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

Hints and Highlights

1. We are fast forwarding from the Sermon on the Mount and the miracles of authority to the parables. In ch. 10 is the call and a specific mission of the 12 disciples. Ch. 11 focuses on the reaction of John the Baptist to Jesus' ministry and ch. 12 shows Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus' family calls for Him, yet He says whoever does the will of God is His family.
2. A parable is a simple story from daily life designed to illustrate a biblical truth.

Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

Option 1:

Give them a puzzle to put together as a group. Time them, then give them the picture for a guide and time them again. Ask why the picture helps so much.

Option 2:

You could play a game of Clue or find some other mystery to solve. Ask what makes a mystery hard to solve.

Option 3:

You could have them as a group write their own fairy tale, complete with a moral. You may want to first have them come up with the moral, then write the story.

- ? What do you think makes a puzzle difficult to solve?
- ? What are some ways we can make life insights memorable?
- ? What is your favorite story from when you are a child? Why?
- ? Jesus faced the difficult of task of trying to explain the kingdom of God in ways people could remember, but would not always fully understand. To do so Jesus used stories called parables. Let's look at some of them and see what we can learn about the mysteries of the Kingdom.

Diving In

Read 13:1-9

1. How would you describe the setting of the chapter? What kind of people are present? How would you define a parable? (see sidebar #2)
2. How would you describe the first parable Jesus tells? What strikes you about the parable? Why do you think He chose to use this illustration? (Note: at this point resist the temptation to interpret the parable. Wait until the text does.)

Read 13:10-11, 18-23

1. What are your impressions about why Jesus used parables as you hear His answer? What do you think He means by secrets? Why do you think only some understand? (Do not use this as a chance to debate predestination.)
2. For the sake of time we skip vv. 12-17. How does Jesus explain the parable? What are the seeds? (the word). How would you describe each different type of soil? (the path, the rocky soil, the thorny soil, the good soil)
3. What are ways we can live as different soils at UM? What are some examples of the birds snatching the word away? The rocks allowing only shallow

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Hints and Highlights

1. For sake of time we skip the parables of the mustard seed and the yeast (v. 31-35). The mustard seed shows the explosive growth of the kingdom as it spreads from person to person. A small amount of yeast transforms a lot of dough. In the Kingdom great results stem from small beginnings.
2. One of the things these parables make clear is that there is a final judgment. Those who do not place their faith in Christ will be like the weeds burned in the fire (v. 40) and thrown into the fiery furnace (v. 50). This might be a good time to go back and meet individually with any nonbelievers in your group.
3. When Jesus returns to Nazareth He is treated with contempt. "Isn't this the carpenter's son?" They rejected Him because they were too familiar with Him.

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growth? Thorns which choke out the good fruit? What are some ways we can be fruitful in our lives?

Read 13:24-30, 36-43

1. How would you describe the parable of the weeds? (first get the details of the parable before you get into what it means).
2. What do you think the parable of the weeds means? What are some insights we gain about the Kingdom? (battle between God and Satan for souls, judgment at the end of time, etc.)
3. How would you describe the righteous based on this story? How would you describe their fate?

Read 13:44-50

1. How would you describe the next three parables? How are they similar to the previous ones? How are they different?
2. What insight about the Kingdom do we gain from the parable of the hidden treasure? What about the pearl? (The Kingdom is worth everything you have). What are some things that we can be tempted to think are worth more than the Kingdom?
3. What insights about the Kingdom do we gain from the parable of the net? What are some things this tells us about each person on earth? What do you think is the difference between the wicked and the righteous? (from what we have looked at before, it is their faith in Jesus for salvation) How does this make you view your friends, neighbors and roommates?

Read 13:53-59

1. How would you summarize Jesus' visit to His hometown? Why do you think they mentioned His family? (they were too familiar with Him and wondered how He could have such power)
2. Why do we think they were so upset with Him? How did their faith impact Jesus' ministry? Why?

In Summary

1. How would you sum up Jesus' insights about the Kingdom?

Why do you think Jesus taught in parables?

Making Application

Through these parables Jesus gives us great insight into the mysteries of the Kingdom. Despite His power, His own town rejects His ministry with contempt.

1. Which of the parables grabs you the most? Why?
2. Which of the soils do you feel describes you? What keeps you from being the good soil? What are some of the thorns that can choke out your desire to grow in your faith?
3. What do you need to give up to buy the field/pearl and wholeheartedly pursue the Kingdom?
4. Who might be some people you can bring next week to Bible study?

Let's thank Jesus that He provides the way into the mysterious Kingdom of God.

Matthew

Who really is the King? - Chapters 16 & 17



University of
Michigan

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

Hints and Highlights

We are moving from the parables to a section on who Jesus is. We are skipping over ch. 14 which covers the death of John the Baptist, and two miracles: the feeding of 5000 and walking on the water. Ch. 15 talks about defiling the heart and several miracles of compassion. In the beginning of ch. 16 the religious leaders ask Jesus for a sign as to who He really is. In this context we enter our passage which starts with Jesus asking the disciples who they think He really is.

Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

Option 1:

Have each person share one of their nicknames from high school. Have them explain how they got it and what it tells about them.

Option 2:

You could have each person write on a 3 by 5 card a couple of things that people may not know about them. Then have everyone guess which person matches each card. You could give a prize to the one who gets the most correct.

Option 3:

Have each person draw the person to their left. Then collect all of the pictures, mix them up and have each person guess who each picture portrays. Again you could give a prize to the person who matches the most.

- ? How do you know who a person really is? What are some things that you need to know to tell what a person is really like?
- ? Many people have different thoughts as to who Jesus is. Some think He is a good teacher, others a founder of a new religion, others call Him Savior. Let's see what insights Jesus gives as to who He really is.

Diving In

Read 16:13-20

1. How would you describe what happens here? Why do you think Jesus asks the disciples who people say He is? What do you think about the responses?
2. Why do you think He asks who they (the disciples) say He is? Why is this such an important question? (remember they had been with Jesus for several years) How would you describe Peter's response? What do you think He means by the "Christ"? Why do you think Jesus was so excited about Peter's response? (Peter recognized that Jesus was the Messiah, the promised one who would save Israel—Jesus was thrilled that He got it!)
3. What are some things Jesus promises to Peter? (He will build the church, keys to the kingdom, binding and loosing—note: this seems to refer to the fact that the church has great power over darkness through Jesus)
4. What do you think these promises mean? (note: this is not the place to get into an argument about Catholicism. There are several interpretations as to what the rock means—see the sidebar on the reverse page for more information).

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Hints and Highlights

- Verse 18 is a word play. Jesus says that you are Peter (Greek *petra* - a little stone) and upon this rock (*petra*—large rock) He will build the church. There are three possible interpretations for what this means. The rock could be Jesus Himself, the rock could be the confession of who Jesus is, or the rock could be Peter. If it is Peter, note that Jesus builds the church through normal people like Peter. That is the place to go, not to argue about Peter's successors or the pope.
- Verse 24 means to figuratively accept the sentence of death to all personal ambitions.
- Some may wonder what v. 28 means. The disciples experienced God's kingdom coming in a variety of ways, including the transfiguration, and later, the resurrection, Pentecost, and the rapid spread of the church.

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- Why do you think the church is so powerful? Why do you think we don't often see that kind of power? (overcoming even the gates of Hell—we are passive and do not believe God for victory)

Read 16:21-28

- How would you summarize what happens here? Why do you think Jesus told them all what would happen? How would you describe Peter's response?
- Why do you think Jesus responded the way He did? How do you think Peter could have had such great insight earlier about Jesus' identity and such bad insight here about Jesus' future?
- How would you describe what Jesus said about following Him? What do you think it looks like to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus?
- What do you think He means by saving and losing your life? What do you think Jesus is trying to say?
- What ultimately will Jesus do? Why do you think He brings this up here? (remember He just rebuked Peter for rejecting His upcoming suffering)

Read 17:1-8

- How would you describe what happens here? Why do you think Jesus only brought the three? (Peter, James and John—note they were His 3 closest disciples)
- How would you describe what they saw? How would you respond if you saw this? Why do you think Peter responded the way He did? What do you think Peter's intent was?
- What are some things you know about Moses and Elijah? (Moses led Israel out of Egypt and was the Lawgiver; Elijah was the first of the great prophets). Why do you think they were there? (key figures of the Old Testament)
- How would you describe what the Father says? How is this similar to the baptism in 3:17? How did Jesus respond to their fear? Why?

In Summary

- How would you sum up the events that we looked at?

What do we learn about who Jesus really is? What do we learn about the Kingdom?

Making Application

Even in Jesus' day there was much debate as to who He really was.

- In your heart of hearts who do you say Jesus is? Is He the Promised One who can change your life for you?
- How much of Jesus' power do you see in your own life? Among the Christians in your dorm?
- What are some ambitions, goals, relationships for which I need to give control over to God and deny myself? How can I do that best?
- How do you respond to the glory and majesty of Jesus? How can I worship Him? What makes me afraid of Him? How can I experience His touch?

Let's thank Jesus that He provides the way into the mysterious Kingdom of God.

Matthew

Relating in the Kingdom - Chapter 18



University of
Michigan

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

Hints and Highlights

1. After the transfiguration Jesus casts out a demon the disciples were unable to cast out, then miraculously provides for their temple tax. Then in ch. 18 Jesus talks about relationships.
2. This is a Bible study about relationships. It might be a good idea to plan something together to deepen the relationships in your group. Maybe plan a party for the group, or a separate prayer night together. Bible studies really grow when people are together more than just an hour a week.

Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

Option 1:

Have each person share the thing that bothers them the most. Do not allow them to criticize a person, just the behavior or thing in life that annoys them. Have them share why it bothers them.

Option 2:

Have each person draw a picture of their family dinner table. Have each one explain who sat where and why. What kind of atmosphere and communication took place each night over dinner?

Option 3:

Have a few people describe their first date. Ask them how they felt. Was it a comfortable time or awkward? Be careful if you use this to not make anyone feel bad. The point is to introduce the idea of relationships.

- ? Why do you think relationships (with anyone, not just with the opposite gender) can be so difficult?
- ? How do you feel about someone close to you who sins? How do you feel about yourself when you sin?
- ? Let's look at how Jesus addresses some principles about relationships.

Diving In

Read 18:1-4 (Humility):

1. How would you describe what happens here? How would you describe the heart behind the disciples' question?
2. How would you describe the heart behind Jesus' reply? Why do you think He used the analogy of a child? How would you describe the underlying attitude that Jesus thinks is so important? (humility) Why do you think humility can be so difficult for us?

Read 18:5-9 (Don't cause believers to sin)

1. How would you summarize Jesus' teaching here? What would you say is the root issue He is concerned about? Why do you think He is so harsh on those who cause others to sin?
2. How would you say He applies this principle to our own lives? What would it look like to "cut off your foot" or "gouge out your eyes" to keep you from sinning? What might be real life examples?

Read 18:10-14 (People matter)

1. How would you summarize the story? What do you think Jesus' point is?

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Hints and Highlights

1. Note the process that a believer must go through to resolve an offense. First go to the person privately. Then you bring a few others with you. Then you let the authority of the whole church confront him. If he still does not repent only then treat him as a tax gatherer or a pagan (Gentile). These were people that their society shunned.
2. Verses 19-20 are not simply promises that whatever two believers agree on in prayer God will do. The context points more to the importance of the power of believers resolving conflict and asking together (of which prayer may be a part).
3. 10,000 talents was an amount so high that in today's dollars would be worth well over a \$1 billion. The 100 denari was not insignificant (100 days wages for a common laborer) but still would only be worth a few dollars today. The debt pales in light of what was forgiven him.

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2. What do you think the point of this story tells us about the heart of God? How does God's heart for people compare to our own hearts for others?

Read 18:15-20 (Proper confrontation)

1. How would you describe Jesus' teaching here? What would you say is the issue He is concerned about?
2. How is the believer supposed to respond to one who sins against him or her? Why do you think it is a multi-step process of confrontation?
3. How does this differ from the way most people you know resolve conflict? Why do you think Jesus instructs us not to ignore or just forgive someone without talking with them?
4. What do verses 19-20 tell us about the power of resolving conflict and achieving unity among believers?

Read 18:21-35 (Forgiveness)

1. How would you paraphrase Peter's question? Why do you think he asked it? What do you see as the principle behind Jesus' answer?
2. How would define forgiveness? Why do you think it is so important in relating to others? (notice Jesus mentions both confrontation and forgiveness)
3. What are some insights you gain from Jesus' story about forgiveness? How do you think the man felt when the king forgave him that huge debt? How did that man respond to the man who owed him a little? Why do you think he responded that way?
4. Why do you think the king responded that way? What would you say Jesus' point is? Why do you think God values forgiveness so much? How does this affect our relationships with others?

In Summary

1. How would you sum up the principles Jesus makes about relationships? What does that tell us about the heart of God?

What are some ways these principles differ from the way most people relate on campus?

Making Application

Dealing with sin and relating to others is an important part of God's Kingdom.

1. As you review the principles of relationships (humility, not encouraging sin, people matter, confrontation and forgiveness), which do you find the easiest right now? Which is the most difficult for you? Why do you think that is so?
2. Take a moment and silently before God confess any sin that He brings to mind. How would you describe your humility? How preoccupied are you with having others notice your achievements? What might be some changes you need to make to "cut off your hand" that causes you to sin?
3. Take a moment and reflect. Is there someone you need to confront privately? Is there someone you need to forgive (as you were forgiven)?

Let's thank Jesus that His forgiveness provides the foundation for our relationships..

Matthew

Make life count for the Kingdom - Chapter 25



University of
Michigan

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

Hints and Highlights

This passage takes place during Jesus' last week of life. After the information on relationships (ch. 17) Jesus talked about divorce in ch. 19 and humility in ch. 20. Ch. 21 describes Palm Sunday, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. In ch. 22 Jesus sums up the Law as loving God and loving others and in ch. 23 Jesus attacks the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Ch. 24 focuses on Jesus' coming back to earth after His death and the last days. This sets up ch. 25, which urges living life in light of Christ's imminent return.

Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

Option 1:

Ask them to discuss what they would do if they only had one week to live. Why would they do those things and not some others?

Option 2:

Play a game of touch football, but play as if it were a 2 minute drill at the end of the game. Why do you think so many times teams score in the 2 minute drill?

Option 3:

Play a game that involves speed, like speed euchre or speed chess. How do you win games that you know have a quick ending?

- ? How does having a sense of urgency and limited time affect how you live or play?
- ? Why do you think we so often live without a sense of purpose or urgency?
- ? Let's look at what Jesus has to say about how we should live our lives and what things about the end times we need to keep in mind.

Diving In

Read 25:1-13 (Parable of the 10 Virgins)

1. How would you summarize the story Jesus tells? What happens here? How would you describe the setting of the story? Who are the key players?
2. Why do you think they needed the lamps? (it was part of the wedding procession) What does the five women's lack of oil show about them? When they finally arrive why do you think they are not let in?
3. How would you describe the wise women? The foolish women? What do you think the difference was between them? (note- the women were not going to be married, they were in the wedding party and the 5 missed the whole event because they were not prepared)
4. What do you think Jesus' point is here? What do you learn about the Kingdom of Heaven through this story? (it could come at any time)

Read 25:14-30 (Parable of the Talents)

1. How would you paraphrase this story? How would you describe the setting? Who are the key players? What do you think the master entrusted to them?

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Hints and Highlights

1. The fact that Jesus will return again to earth to judge and rule is the context for all 3 stories.
2. The first parable uses the occasion of a wedding celebration. These were lengthy occasions that seem to have involved a processional of the bridal party in the middle of the night. Five of the women were not ready. They did not have extra oil so their lamps ran out and they were excluded. The point is that we do not know when Jesus will return so we need to be ready.
3. The talent was a sizable sum of money that the master entrusted to his servants to invest. The main point is making the most of the time and the things entrusted to us before Christ returns.
4. The setting of the third story is the judgment at Christ's return. The righteous sheep who have a relationship with Christ gain eternal life and the goats are punished.

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2. What do you think they were supposed to do? How would you describe what each of them did with what they were entrusted? Why do you think he gave different amounts of money to each servant?
3. How would you describe the response of the master to each servant's stewardship? What do you think Jesus is trying to illustrate?
4. What do you think this has to do with the fact that Christ will return anytime? How does that change how you live your life?

Read 25:31-46 (Parable of the Sheep and the Goats)

1. How would you describe the story that Jesus tells? What is the setting of this story? (he makes it really clear that it is His return to earth to judge)
2. How would you describe the sheep? How does Jesus call them? (look at v. 37—the righteous) What kinds of things did the righteous do? What point does Jesus make about this? (it is as if you did it for Me).
3. Note: It is the righteous who did these good deeds because they were righteous, not the good deeds which made the doer righteous.
4. How would you describe the goats? What kinds of things did the goats do? How would you describe the ultimate fate of the goats?
5. What kind of relationship do you think the sheep had with the goats? (have them look at v. 32—they needed to be separated, so obviously they were together at one point)
6. What do you think Jesus' point is here?

In Summary

1. How would you sum up Jesus' teaching about His return? What kind of difference does this make on how we should live our lives?
2. How would you summarize each of the three stories? What would you say is the main point of each? Why do you think Jesus used these stories right before His death?

What are some insights you gain about Jesus through these stories? Which parable grabs your attention the most? Why? What are some insights you gain about the Kingdom of heaven?

Making Application

Life is short. We do not know when our lives may be over or when Christ will return in judgment.

1. What are some things you need to do differently in your life so that you are focusing on the most important things in God's eyes? What do you think are the most important things in God's eyes? (His Word, God Himself, people)
2. Since Christ could come back at any moment for judgment what are some things we need to do to help those who do not know Christ?
3. Make a list of 5-10 people you will pray for each day to know Christ. Then look for chances to talk with them about Christ this week. Maybe you could even bring them to Bible study or Cru next week.

Let's thank Jesus that He is coming back and it makes a difference in how we live.

Matthew

The Death of the King - Chapters 26 & 27



University of
Michigan

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

Hints and Highlights

1. After Jesus finishes His teaching on His return, Matthew begins the description of the last few days before His death. There are a lot of verses here so we will merely highlight some things. Try to capture the emotion Jesus must have felt while going through this time of great distress.
2. Summary of what we are skipping in chapter 26: 26:1-5 Chief Priests plot to kill Jesus. 26:17-30 The Last Supper. 26:57-68 Trial before the High Priests.

Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

Option 1:

Discuss these questions. What do you think are the greatest struggles that college students have? Have them generate a list, or make one of your own and have them rank it. Make sure to include loneliness.

Option 2:

Discuss these questions. What is the nicest thing someone has ever done for you? What about this made you feel it was so nice? How did it make you feel when they did it for you? What did it cost them to do this for you?

Option 3:

How would you say the following people view the cross? Brittney Spears, Osama bin Laden, Martha Stewart, Billy Graham. Why do you think people have such a widely varying view of the cross?

- ? What comes to mind when you think of the death of Jesus? How do you think He must have felt going through this lonely, horrifying experience?
- ? Let's fill in the gap and look at the details of what happened in the last few days of Jesus' life and His death on the cross.

Diving In

Read 26:6-13 (An expensive gift)

How would you describe what takes place here? Why do you think the woman did this? What does this show about the woman? Why do you think this upset the disciples so much?

Read 26:14-16 (A cheap betrayal)

1. How would you summarize what happens here? Why do you think one of Jesus' closest friends chose to betray Him?
2. The amount of money Judas received is far less than the value of the perfume. Why do you think Matthew put these two stories next to each other? What does this tell you about Judas? About the woman?

Read 26:36-46 (Friends sleep while Jesus agonizes)

1. How would you describe what is happening here? Why do you think Jesus asked Peter, James and John to go with him? What do you think Jesus was feeling knowing what He was about to go through?
2. What do you notice about Jesus' prayer? How must Jesus have felt to find His friends sleeping while He prayed?

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Hints and Highlights

1. What we are skipping in chapter 27: 27:1-2 Jesus sent to Pilate. 27:3-10 Judas' remorse. 27:11-26 Pilate releases the rebel Barabbas instead of Jesus while washing his hands of Jesus' blood. 27:51-66 Impact of Jesus' death.
2. When Jesus was on the cross He took upon Himself the sins of the world. As a result Jesus for the first time was separated from fellowship and communion with God the Father. The cry in Aramaic is from Psalm 22:1.
3. Elijah, according to 2 Kings 2:1-12, was taken up to Heaven alive. They evidently mistook "Eloi" (word for God) with the name Elijah.
4. Notice what Matthew is emphasizing in this account. Jesus was abandoned by Judas, then His disciples and even Peter, then the soldiers, passers-by, priests, those killed with Him, then finally by God Himself.

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Read 26:47-56 (Betrayal with a kiss and the disciples flee)

1. How would you summarize what happens here? How must Jesus have felt when Judas kissed Him? How would you describe Jesus' attitude?
2. Why do you think Jesus stopped the disciples from fighting? How do you think Jesus felt that His enemies came with swords? How do you think He felt when He saw that His disciples fled?

Read 26:69-75 (Peter's denial)

1. How would you describe what happens here? With what kind of people was Peter talking? Why do you think He denied knowing Jesus?
2. Look back at 26:31-35. How would you describe Peter's boast? What do you notice about Jesus' prediction? How must Peter have felt after the cock crowed? How do you think Jesus felt knowing His closest friend would deny even knowing Him in His time of crisis?

Read 27:27-44 (Extreme Mockery and Humiliation)

1. How would you summarize what happens here? How would you describe the attitudes of the soldiers? How would you describe the attitudes of those who passed by? How would you describe the attitudes of the chief priests? How would you describe the attitudes of the robbers?
2. Why do you think these people responded in this way? How do you think Jesus felt during this time?

Read 26:45-50 (Feeling Abandoned by God and Death)

How would you describe what happens here? Why do you think Jesus cried out "My God why have you forsaken Me?" (see sidebar). How must Jesus have felt? Why do you think Jesus yielded up His life?

In Summary

1. How would you summarize Jesus' last days? How would you contrast the woman with the perfume and Judas?

How would you describe the response of Jesus' friends? His enemies? Strangers? How must Jesus have felt? How did Jesus respond to this?

Making Application

Jesus went through utter agony, loneliness, complete abandonment and finally death.

1. Why do you think Jesus went through all of this? If He did this for you what does that tell you about how Jesus feels about you? Have you ever accepted Jesus' gift of life through His death?
2. Often we think that God does not understand our problems. How does this change your view of what you can share in your life with God?
3. How do you value Jesus? Will you give Him your most priceless things like the woman? What are they? Will you be bought out cheaply like Judas? What things do you place a higher value on than following Jesus?

Let's thank Jesus that He endured such shame and death for us.

Matthew

The Resurrection of the King - Chapter 28



University of
Michigan

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

Hints and Highlights

1. Jesus was dead and His friends laid Him in a tomb. Matthew chooses to tell the story of the resurrection focusing on the response of the guards, the women, the chief priests and the disciples. The only appearance Matthew records is where Jesus gives the "Great Commission".
2. You may have some students in your group that need a challenge. A great thing to do is to take them with you and go and share your faith. You could do a survey or just talk with a friend about what God has done for you.

Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

Option 1:

Have everyone share what Easter was like for them growing up. What kinds of things did your family do on Easter?

Option 2:

Brainstorm a list of movies about the supernatural (like the Exorcist, the Sixth Sense, the Blair Witch Project, or even the show Crossing Over) What do these movies tell us about the supernatural? Why do you think our society is so intrigued by the supernatural?

Option 3:

How would you describe a funeral? What kinds of traditions do we have at funerals? How would you describe the emotions at a funeral? What do you think would happen if the dead guy or gal in the tomb stood up and walked?

- ? What would it feel like if someone you loved who had died came back to life? How would you respond to spending time with them, listening to what they have to say?
- ? Jesus was well loved by His friends. Let's look at what they experienced when Jesus rose again. Let's look at His commission to them as well.

Diving In

Read 27:62-66

How would you describe what takes place here? Why do you think the chief priests were so concerned about security? How would you describe the security? (note: a wax seal was placed over things the Roman Empire needed to make secure. Those who broke the seal would be punished.)

Read 28:1-7

1. How would you summarize what happens here? Why do you think the women were visiting the tomb? How do you think they were feeling before they went to the tomb? What must they have felt when they saw the angel and the tomb?
2. How would you describe the response of the guards? Think about how experienced and powerful the Roman army was. Why do you think they were so frightened?
3. What do you think the women were feeling while the angel talked with them?

Read 28:8-10

1. How would you describe what happens here? What kinds of emotions do you

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Hints and Highlights

1. It is rather remarkable that Jesus chose to appear first to women, in a culture and time where women were not as highly esteemed.
2. Even today some may say the disciples stole the body. The quick answer is that 10 out of 11 died for saying Jesus rose from the dead. Would 10 people all die for a lie and never tell? Of course not!
3. A disciple is both a learner and a follower with a high level of commitment. He or she is whole-hearted in commitment to the Master.
4. Baptism is mentioned here, not because it saves you but because it is an important way of identifying yourself as a follower of Christ. Notice the trinity is present in this as well.
5. Matthew closes in the same way He opens His book. In 1:23 Jesus was called Immanuel, "God with us" and in 28:20 He is with us always.

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think they were experiencing before they saw Jesus?

2. How would you describe their response to Jesus? What must it have felt like to actually see someone you love rise from the dead? What do you think it means to worship Him?

Read 28:11-15

1. How would you summarize what happens here? How would you describe the response of the guards to Jesus' resurrection? The chief priests?
2. Why do you think the religious leaders would go to such extreme measures? What does this tell you about these leaders? How did they feel about Jesus?

Read 28:16-17

How would you describe what happens here? How would you describe the response of the disciples? Why do you think the response was varied?

Read 28:18-20 (The Great Commission)

1. How would you summarize what Jesus is saying? What insights do you gain about Jesus from these verses?
2. What do you think it means that He has "all authority"? Why do you think He begins this message with this phrase? What gives Jesus this much authority?
3. What are the things He asks them to do? What do you think it means to make disciples? Why "of all nations"?
4. How would you describe the difference between a disciple and just a follower? What things might you do to help make disciples of Jesus?
5. Why do you think He closes by saying that He is always with you? How does that make you feel?

In Summary

1. How would you describe the responses to Jesus' resurrection? Why do you think each person responded the way he or she did?

How would you sum up the commission Jesus gives? Why do you think He closes with this command?

Making Application

Jesus rose from the dead. That gives Him the right and authority to place a commission on our lives.

1. Think for a moment on what it must have felt like for Jesus' friends to see Him again. How can you build a better appreciation and amazement at the power of God?
2. What are some examples in your life where you live as if Jesus does not have all authority and He is not with you always? How can you change this?
3. What are some things that you can do to help make disciples of all nations? What are some things you can do here at UM? How can you yourself be a better disciple and not just a follower of Jesus?

Let's thank Jesus that He rose from the dead and wants us to make disciples.