



First Lutheran Church

Gospel of Matthew

Summer 2026 Reading Challenge



Introduction

Week 3: Matthew chapters 5 and 6

Chapter Outline

Chapters 5 and 6 are the first two of three chapters that make up the sermon on the mount. There are multiple subheadings, depending on the editors of your Bible translation.

What to Expect

The Sermon on the Mount is the single longest sermon in the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). This sermon is not recorded in Mark's Gospel. A very similar, though altered version, of this sermon appears in Luke's Gospel where it has the heading the "sermon on the plain".

Matthew begins Jesus' sermon with the beatitudes, the twelve blessings. Matthew does not include a corresponding list of "woes" as Luke records in his version of Jesus' sermon. The sermon as found here in Matthew then begins challenging notions on what the law is, and Jesus escalates the meaning of the law, often times pointing out along the way either the challenge of the law or the inability for any one person being able to follow the law to its fullest extent.

In our modern society, we often have battles over what constitutes a correct Christian doctrine. These battles are often based on code of ethics, definitions of 'right-living', sexuality or gender identity. Matthew places this sermon at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry to help us understand what battles about correct Christian doctrine looked like in his day. If we took seriously these words by Jesus, found in the three chapters that make up the sermon on the mount, how might our battles over right doctrine be different today? Would we still fight over some one's gender identity or gender roles in society? Would we still fight over which side of the political aisle we should stand with? Would we still say to another who is included or who is excluded?

Or would we set aside worry, judge others less, learn to love more, settle our differences with dialogue and not heated debate, and strive to be the light of Christ in the world? Sit with this sermon. Let it change you.

2026 Summer Reading Challenge

Throughout this summer, First Lutheran Church will engage the Gospel of Matthew.

Each week we will read 2 chapters of Matthew.

Resources will be available along the way, including:

- An introduction to the week
- A Deep Dive into a big theme of Matthew's Gospel
- A Deep Dive into one part of this week's reading
- A Devotional based on one part of this week's reading
- A Video to read along with Pastor Jamie.

Check out our website and our Facebook page for weekly and daily postings related to this reading challenge.

Gathered by God, we live our faith with: Compassion, Grace, Gratitude, and Joy

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