



First Lutheran Church

Gospel of Matthew

Summer 2026 Reading Challenge



Introduction

Week 12: Matthew chapters 23 and 24

	Chapter Outline
Matthew 23:1-12	Warnings
Matthew 23: 13-36	Woes
Matthew 24:1-31	Little Apocalypse
Matthew 24:32-51	Parables

What to Expect

We are in the heart of what we call holy week. There is no dating associated with Jesus on these days. We just know this happens after his entry and before his final meal and arrest. These stories may even be things Jesus said before being in Jerusalem, but Matthew arranges all these stories in this space for a purpose. And that purpose is we are approaching Jesus' death and resurrection.

So we get a list of warnings, a list of woes, a brief description of what the end times may be like, and some parables to ponder. Jesus is not holding back in these teachings. This is some of the toughest material we have had to work through in the whole Gospel.

Here we wrestle with discipleship, the Law, grace, prophecy - some of which came true (the destruction of the temple), some of which have not come true (the predictions of how and when Jesus would return).

The list of woes, which has some correlation to Luke's Beatitude/Woe list, is here as part of the warnings. Matthew is preparing his readers for the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. But to understand how that moment is ushering in a new era, these warnings, and woes, and parables are focusing us on what is ultimately important. And for Matthew, that is living in the Kingdom of God, standing opposed to the Kingdoms of this world. Rejecting easy power and turning toward the path of discipleship. Learning grace, but abiding the spirit of the law. Freeing those who need to be freed, correcting those who need to be corrected. And it is not an easy balance. Which is why we tend to skip these kinds of passages and rush right to the "Everything is gonna be alright" passages. But we need these warnings and woes. They are just as important as the easy stuff.

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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