



First Lutheran Church

Gospel of Matthew

Summer 2026 Reading Challenge



Introduction

Week 9: Matthew chapters 17 and 18

Matthew 17:1-21
Matthew 17:22-27
Matthew 18:1-14
Matthew 18:15-35

Chapter Outline
Transfiguration and a healing
The Son of Man, the Temple Tax
The Greatest in the Kingdom
Forgiveness

What to Expect

Chapter 16 ended with Jesus pointing to the cross, both as his own future death and also as the symbol by which his followers will follow him. Chapter 17 begins with a story pointing toward the resurrection. The Transfiguration story serves as a transition from the early ministry and now the push to Jerusalem. But it also serves to give the disciples a foretaste of the resurrection. Jesus stands with Moses and Elijah, the Law and the Prophets, and now all three are complete with the Son.

As Jesus and his three disciples come down the mountain, they encounter a man with a child who cannot be healed by the other disciples. Part of this story is reminding us that while we may have the faith Jesus calls us to have, we may not be able to do all the things Jesus can. Some healing comes after the resurrection.

Matthew will record Jesus speaking of his upcoming betrayal three times, and this is the second here in Matthew 17. It leaves the disciples quite disturbed as they return home to Capernaum to be confronted over the temple tax. This story, which is about an ancient law, is one where Jesus does show he will meet the law, but he is also bothered by the chains the requirement places on them. What should be about freedom has become about burdening people.

Chapter 18 is Matthew moving from the resurrection into community life. People within community are going to compare their status to one another, they are going to decide who is in and who is out, and they will not want to forgive one another. Each of these stories is exactly about the ethics of the community Jesus wants us to have when he is not with us -- we are not to fight over status, we are to forgive one another, work for fair solutions, and release one another from undue harsh burdens. This is what our community should look like at all times.

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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