



First Lutheran Church

Gospel of Matthew

Summer 2026 Reading Challenge



Introduction

Week 8: Matthew chapters 15 and 16

Matthew 15:1-28

Matthew 15:29-39

Matthew 16:1-12

Matthew 16:13-28

Chapter Outline

Addressing defilement

Healing and Feeding

Conflict with Pharisees and Sadducees

The Messiah and the Cross

What to Expect

We return to a moment of conflict with the Pharisees and Sadducees. They are bothered by the way Jesus' disciples live, and Jesus points out the Pharisees and Sadducees have interpreted the law to their own advantage, thus also negating the law.

Jesus finishes with a lesson on what true defilement is, then leaves for a coastal vacation. There he meets a woman, who has a simple request. But Jesus makes this request no so simple, pointing out she is not who he came to take care of. When the disciples fail to defend her, she steps up for herself and Jesus grants her request, citing her faith as being great. Jesus returns to Galilee where he freely heals without question, and then feeds a second large crowd.

The Pharisees and Sadducees continue their conflict, testing Jesus, which leads to Jesus testing his disciples with the question, who do you say that I am. The newly renamed Peter gets the answer right, but doesn't understand what he is saying as Jesus then teaches that their idea of Messiah isn't what Jesus is here to do, instead he will be killed. This freaks Peter and the others out, naturally. But Jesus points to the cross, the device that will kill him, as an example of self-denial, and teaches the cross is the way to understand who the Messiah will be, and also the way to understand life as a follower of the Messiah.

In some ways these chapters wrap up one section of Matthew and transition us for the next. Jesus prepares us for the cross with his message, and chapter 17 opens with the transfiguration which prepares us for the resurrection. From here on, the action will rise until the events of Good Friday and Easter.

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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