



First Lutheran Church

Gospel of Matthew

Summer 2026 Reading Challenge



Introduction

Week 13: Matthew chapters 27 and 28

Chapter Outline		
Matthew 27:1-10	Suicide of Judas	Matthew 28:1-10 Resurrection
Matthew 27:11-26	Trial before Pilate	Matthew 28:11-15 Report of the Guard
Matthew 27:27-56	Crucifixion of Jesus	Matthew 28:16-20 the Great Commission
Matthew 27:57-66	Burial of Jesus	

What to Expect

We reach the climax of the story with these final two chapters of Matthew's Gospel. Matthew is the only Gospel to tell us the fate of Judas. Judas' death is also told in Acts, but that author records a different death scene for Judas. Matthew tells us that Judas hangs himself. Judas is so overcome with grief that he cannot see through the end. But it is important to also see there is no judgment offered by the author about Judas' death. No other character in the story even comments on it. No other author in all the New Testament ever comments on his death. The idea that suicide is an unforgivable sin developed long after the Bible was written. There is no sin associated with taking one's life, and we need to stop spreading that stigma and start recognizing mental health as a real disease that people struggle with and provide better ways to help them.

The story doesn't linger, obviously, as the main point is Jesus. The trial before Pilate is quite simple. Herod is not found here. Pilate also washes his hands of Jesus' sentence in Matthew. Only Matthew tells us this, yet we probably cannot think of this scene without Pilate doing this.

The trial is short. The sentence is given. Then Jesus is taken for crucifixion after a brief moment of being mocked. Matthew is showing us the clash of the two kingdoms - God's Kingdom and the earthly kingdoms. And Matthew is really driving home the point of how much the earthly kingdoms stand in opposition to God's Kingdom. The death of Jesus is described succinctly, and then Jesus is buried. Matthew describes a guard placed at the tomb, and introduces the plausible deniability clause for the Romans and Jews who do not want to believe.

On the day of resurrection, the tomb is open, the guard is asleep, two Marys encounter an Angel and then Jesus. The disciples gather in Galilee and receive their commissioning to go forth. And that is it. The Gospel comes to a close, with a promise that Jesus will be with us and the command to teach others to follow what Jesus has said. And to know what it looks like for Jesus to be with us and for us to do what he taught, we go back to the beginning and read the Gospel again.

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

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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.