



First Lutheran Church

Gospel of Matthew

Summer 2026 Reading Challenge



Introduction

Week 4: Matthew chapters 7 and 8

Chapter Outline

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| Matthew 7 | The remainder of the Sermon on the Mount |
| Matthew 8:1-17 | Jesus heals many |
| Matthew 8:18-22 | Jesus responds to those who want to follow him |
| Matthew 8:23-27 | Jesus calms the storm |
| Matthew 8:28-9:1 | Jesus heals in the region of the Gadarenes |

What to Expect

As we read the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, we may be confused because this really doesn't feel like a sermon. It feels much more like a collection of sayings. And certainly, there is a lot spoken in these lines. Now, it is unlikely that if Jesus ever gave a sermon on a mount, that it would have followed this exact format, these teaching nuggets are more than just parables or proverbs or wise sayings brought together for the sake of creating one large narrative speech. The Gospel writer uses this sermon to help us see themes that will be coming up throughout the rest of the Gospel. So, pay attention across the rest of the Gospel for these themes.

When the Sermon ends, the crowds are amazed by Jesus' wisdom. But Jesus doesn't stay on the Mount, he begins journeying. First to Capernaum, healing along the way, a man with a skin disease, then a centurion's servant. Arriving in Capernaum, Jesus keeps healing, first Peter's mother-in-law, then many others. When they leave town, we see Jesus also has power over nature, calming the storm. The final healing in this story scares the community, and Jesus is forced to move on again.

Reading through these two chapters, we come across a lot of nuggets we are used to reading in isolation -- on Sunday mornings, out of the context of what came before it or after it. How do these healings relate to one another? How does Jesus moving from preaching to interacting with people reflect our weekly pattern of worship, with a sermon, and being sent out into the world to encounter people who are hurting in many ways? Pay attention to what brings up questions as you read these chapters this week.

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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