



# First Lutheran Church

## Gospel of Matthew

### Summer 2026 Reading Challenge



## Deep Dive: Miracle Stories

### Talking to the Kids

When we pray for others, we have a list of people who are sick or dealing with long term health concerns.

Take a moment to show your kids that list. Do you know any of these people on the list? Do you know why we are praying for them?

We don't often talk about why we are praying for others, just that we are. Sometimes a person wants their concern to be private. Other times, we all know what is happening.

When we pray for others, we are asking for God to bring healing and help. But God answers our prayers by saying to us, "Now, how will you help this one you are praying for?"

We can visit. We can send greeting cards. We can ask if there is any kind of help they need. Praying doesn't end with talking to God. It only begins there.

### Week 4: Matthew chapters 7 and 8

- Matthew summarizes Jesus' miracle ministry earlier in chapter 4, but here in chapter 8, we read the first full miracle stories. These are healing stories. And there are some interesting things to note. In chapters 8 and 9, there is a sequence of 10 miracles. And this is not random. Matthew is using the Moses story as a structure for Jesus. And these 10 miracles become the Jesus version of Moses' 10 plagues. Only instead of plagues that hurt and force an enemy to capitulate, these 10 miracles are healing and bringing those who are excluded into God's Kingdom.
- These miracles are performed in a way to deliver those who cannot deliver themselves: they suffer from leprosy, paralysis, sickness, earthquake and storm, demon possession, sin, speech and hearing disability, blindness, and even death. At no point in Matthew's Gospel or the others for that matter, does Jesus heal a Pharisee, a scribe, or a priest.
- And this is part of the message. In today's context, we tend to read these stories in isolation, we hear Jesus perform a miracle, we expect Jesus to perform a matching miracle in our own time. We think our faith is not good enough when we do not get healed from an illness or a death of a loved one is not prevented. We blame God for these inactions, because if Jesus really is Lord, and really can heal if he wants to, then why didn't Jesus perform the miracle for me?
- But Matthew isn't writing this to demonstrate Jesus as a vending machine of miracles. The miracles are theological treatises on who Jesus is. Jesus is the new Moses, the new David. Only Jesus' deeds demonstrate acts of mercy and deliverance, even for the enemy like the Roman. These are invitations for us to not expect a modern equivalent of the same miracle, but instead to be the miracle to bring mercy and deliverance to those around us who are excluded from God's kingdom solely based on religious or dogmatic lines.
- In Jesus' day and age, having a skin disease meant you were unclean. Bleeding, as in having your monthly menstrual cycle, meant you were unclean. Bleeding for 12 years, meant she was excluded from community for 12 years. Any sort of ailment, deafness or muteness, or paralysis, it all meant you could not be touched. Jesus flips the script and welcomes these.
- Who in our modern day is excluded because of religious or dogmatic lines? Who needs mercy and deliverance? Who needs to hear Good News and be welcomed into the family of God?
- How do we extend mercy without expecting paralysis to end or ears to open or mouths to shout praises? How do we provide acceptance to those who wear a mark of uncleanness? This is what these miracle stories are all about. Not will Jesus heal our cough, our cancer, our broken bones -- but how do we live mercy and welcome for those with the illnesses, the sicknesses, the disabilities, etc.

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

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