



First Lutheran Church

Gospel of Matthew

Summer 2026 Reading Challenge



Introduction

Week 7: Matthew chapters 13 and 14

Matthew 13:1-23
Matthew 13:24-53
Matthew 13:54-58

Chapter Outline
The parable of the sower
More parables
The rejection at Nazareth

Matthew 14:1-12
Matthew 14:13-33
Matthew 14:34-36

Chapter Outline
Death of John the Baptist
Feeding of 5000/walking on water
Jesus at Gennesaret

What to Expect

After earlier recording a series of Jesus' statements in a sermon format, here Matthew offers us a series of Jesus' parables. These short stories often seem like riddles. Some have easier meanings to discern than others. The parable of the sower even comes with an explanation. But others are baffling. And sure, we have lost some of the sense of idiom that Matthew's audience may have been familiar with, but other parables just don't seem to make any sense, even after sitting with them and parsing out all the cultural references. Using a handy reference guide like a Bible with study notes or a commentary is one way to get a better grasp of these parables. Other times being in a group Bible study is helpful, because we will each hear the parables through our own experiences and someone else may more quickly understand a certain parable than we do because of their life experiences.

John the Baptist's death is recalled here, Matthew drops this flashback story in after Jesus is rejected at Nazareth. John and Jesus are both representing the incoming Kingdom of God, and both are rejected. But while John's death is final, Matthew will go on to demonstrate Jesus overcoming his death, proving that only Jesus, not John, is the Messiah.

Jesus grieves the death of his fellow prophet by wanting to retreat, but despite being rejected by Nazareth, thousands still descend upon him, and Jesus' compassion leads to their being healed and fed. Matthew has a doublet story of Jesus calming the waves, this time with the added story of Peter walking on the water towards Jesus, until he is too frightened and falls in.

We end in Gennesaret, a place which once rejected Jesus after he healed two demoniacs. But now, the people recognize Jesus and once again, they come all hoping to be touched and healed.

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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