

OPENING PRAYER

Proper 28¹

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written
for our learning:
Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn,
and inwardly digest them,
that we may embrace and ever hold fast
the blessed hope of everlasting life,
which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

MATTHEW 5² PART 2

Salt and Light

13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled underfoot.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. 15 No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The Law and the Prophets

17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter,[c] not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore, whoever breaks[d] one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Concerning Anger

21 “You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister,[e] you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult[f] a brother or sister,[g] you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell[h] of fire. 23 So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister[i] has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister,[j] and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court[k] with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

¹ Episcopal Book of Common Prayer pp.236

² All Bible quotations and footnotes are from the New Revised Standard Version at Biblegateway.com New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Concerning Adultery

27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.[l] 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.[m]

Concerning Divorce

31 “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Concerning Oaths

33 “Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’ 34 But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.[n]

Concerning Retaliation

38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; 40 and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; 41 and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. 42 Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers and sisters,[o] what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Footnotes

Matthew 5:1 Gk *he*

Matthew 5:11 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) lack *falsely*

Matthew 5:18 Gk *one iota*

Matthew 5:19 Or *annuls*

Matthew 5:22 Gk *a brother*; other ancient authorities (manuscripts) add *without cause*

Matthew 5:22 Gk say *Raca* to (an obscure term of abuse)

Matthew 5:22 Gk *a brother*

Matthew 5:22 Gk *Gehenna*

Matthew 5:23 Gk *your brother*

Matthew 5:24 Gk *your brother*

Matthew 5:25 Gk lacks *to court*

Matthew 5:29 Gk *Gehenna*

Matthew 5:30 Gk *Gehenna*

Matthew 5:37 Or *evil*

Matthew 5:47 Gk *your brothers*

CHAPTER 5 PART 2 OVERVIEW³

Sermon on the Mount (SM)

This is Matthew’s greatest composition. It weaves together material from Q with uniquely Matthean passages into a harmonious masterpiece of ethical⁴ and religious⁵ teaching. The Sermon on the Mount (SM) is not a summarization of religion. It presupposes the existence of Christian communities. It must be associated with the Kingdom of God and is a Christological document.

A valid interpretation of the SM must keep several things in mind:

1. The SM is not an adequate or complete summarization of religion. It was never intended to stand by itself, but rather as part of a larger whole. The SM’s demands must be seen in the context of Matthew’s concepts of grace and Christology.
2. The SM presupposes the existence of Christian communities.
3. The SM must be associated with the Kingdom of God. The SM does not speak to ordinary people in ordinary times. It instead addresses itself to those overtaken by an overwhelming reality. It does not look forward, from the present to the consummation. But rather back from the consummation to the present.
4. The SM is a Christological document. The beatitudes imply that Jesus is an eschatological herald of Isa 61 and that the qualities that they praise, meekness and mercy, are demonstrated throughout his ministry. In Matthew Jesus is as moral model and the SM proclaims his likeness to God of Israel (5:48) through the virtues of Jesus Christ.

5:13-16 Salt and Light

The Salt and the Light offer a summary description of those who live by the SM. The church has replaced the Torah and the Temple as the salt and light of the world. Not just the Jews, or Jesus followers, but the entire world of people (including gentile disciples) are the salt and the light.

5:17-48 represent the ethics of the new law giver and has shaped not only the Christian understanding of Jesus’ values, but also for its implicit Christology. The Matthean Jesus presents God’s demand by not dispensing with the Law, but by asking for a deeper observance that gets to the reason the demands were formulated. The goal is to be “perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect (4:48).

5:17-20 The Law and the Prophets

Comparison to Luke:

| Matthew 5:17-20 | Luke 16:16-17 |
|--|--|
| 17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter,[c] not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. | 16 “The Law and the Prophets were until John came; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is being proclaimed, and everyone tries to enter it by force.[f] 17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter in the law to be dropped. |
| 19 Therefore, whoever breaks[d] one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches | |

³ Sources include notes from Barton and Muddiman, Biblegateway.com, Brown, Raymond E., S.S., Davies, W.B. and Allison, Dale C., Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV Version, France, R. T., Morris, Leon.

⁴ **Philosophy:** a discipline comprising as its core logic, aesthetics, ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology; pursuit of wisdom; a search for a general understanding of values and reality by chiefly speculative rather than observational means; an analysis of the grounds of and concepts expressing fundamental beliefs. **Ethics:** a set of moral principles : a theory or system of moral values. Source: Merriam-Webster

⁵ **Religion** being defined as a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices; the service and worship of God or the supernatural; or commitment or devotion to religious faith or observance. Source: Merriam-Webster

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.</p> | |
| <p>Footnotes: 5.18 Gk <i>one iota</i> 5.19 Or <i>annuls</i></p> | <p>Footnote: 16.16 Or everyone is strongly urged to enter it</p> |

Both Matthew and Luke present Jesus as being both Torah observant and a defender of the Torah.

This passage looks forward in the gospel and the post-resurrection world, to claim that Jesus does not abolish the Torah. It introduces the “antitheses”: Matthew’s Jesus does not overturn Moses or set believers free from the law.

These verses provide a clue as to how to interpret 5:21-48. In announcing that the righteousness of the disciples must exceed that of the Jewish leaders (5:20), the verse anticipates that Jesus’ words in the subsequent paragraph will require *more* than the Torah requires. The tension between Jesus’ teaching and the Mosaic Law is not that those who accept the former will transgress the latter. Rather it is that they will achieve far more than they would have if the Torah was their only guide.

5:12-16 describing the disciples as salt and light, presupposes a mission to the Gentiles. The followers of Jesus are salt and light for all Jews and Gentiles. So Matthew’s universalism is apparent. It is also apparent that the ecclesia plays an elevated role in the religious life of humanity. If the church consists of those who are the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the cosmos” then the church must be the primary location for God’s activity in and for all people.

5:17 may be a pre-Easter saying of Jesus, to defend his loyalty to the Torah against his opponents questions and attacks. It could be an early movement statement, post-Easter, to counteract the laxness of the Hellenist and Pauline followers who did not require circumcision of gentile followers.⁶

5:18 How could Matthew have felt the Torah was inviolate given that Jesus had forbidden oaths (5:33-37); dismissed the eye for an eye principle (5:38-42); defended his disciples’ picking and eating grain on the Sabbath (12:1-8); and sent his disciples out into the world without mentioning circumcision (28:16-20)? Possible considerations:

- 1) Matthew is less radical than he seems and has toned down some of Mark’s statements. He may see less tension between Jesus’ teachings and the Mosaic law than modern scholars.
- 2) The doctrine of Torah immutability may be better understood in the future than now; and that future changes by rabbis were not seen as reducing the primacy of the Torah.
- 3) Three types of attitudes existed towards the Torah in 1st Century CE Jewish-Christianity:
 - a. Judaizers expected Gentiles to become Jews first, and uphold the Torah, before they could become Jewish-Christians;
 - b. The Gentile-Christians who believed the Law had been set aside, (Stephen, John’s Gospel, Epistle of Barnabas).
 - c. Those in the middle who believed that Jewish-Christians needed to continue to uphold the Law, but Gentile-Christians did not (James, Cephas, John).
- 4) Some believers thought Jesus had brought his own Messianic law into being.

Matthew seems to view the Torah as being the living, active word of God and Jesus enables his followers to attain righteousness that exceeds what they would accomplish if they only had the Torah.

⁶ Davies, W.B., Allison, Dale C., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Volumes 1, 2, 3, 1988, Notes

5:21-48 The six antitheses (two sets of three) contrast Israelite law or interpretations of it (*You have heard...*) with Jesus' authoritative teaching, altering, or radicalizing the law (*But I say to you...*). The teachings oppose anger, adultery, divorce, swearing oaths, retaliation, and hating one's enemies.

5:21-26 Concerning Anger

The hyperbolic equation of murder with anger (also found in Jewish tradition) shifts attention from the outward act to the inward state. It makes anger and harsh words grievous sins to be exorcized at all costs. In contrast to later Christian tradition, Jesus makes no allowance for justified anger (such as toward the devil). This takes us beyond wisdom teaching, which permits, even encourages, appropriate anger and hatred (Sir 1:22; Eph 4:26).

5:27-30 Concerning Adultery

Jesus' prohibition of lust and its equation with adultery do not contradict the traditional biblical injunction against adultery (Ex 20:14; Deut 5:18). And Jesus himself speaks against this sin (5:32; 15:19; 19:9). Jesus goes beyond the Law to require more, at once upholding and supplementing the Law. The verses assume that the act is evil, and the thought is evil as well. The vivid demands for personal sacrifice (5:29-30) are hyperbolic, yet they underscore the seriousness of the sin.

5:31-32 Concerning Divorce

If lust is like adultery, so too is divorce. Jesus summarizes Deut 24:1-4, where allowance is made for remarriage, and then goes on to say that for a man to divorce a woman except for *porneia*⁷ causes her, because she will remarry, to commit adultery. The definition of *porneia* is disputed, but most conclude it means sexual unfaithfulness within marriage or incest.

5:33-37 Concerning Oaths

The OT permits oaths in everyday speech provided they are not false nor irreverent. But for Jesus oaths are not needed, for the presupposition behind the oath is that there are two types of statements: one which demands commitment (the oath), and one which does not (the statement without an oath). Jesus enjoins invariable commitment to every statement so that the oath becomes superfluous.

5:38-42 Concerning Retaliation

Following the citation of the law of reciprocity in 5:38 (Ex 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21), Jesus goes on to offer a general principle in 5:39 with four illustrations. The disciple is insulted, then taken to court, then impressed to do a soldier's bidding, and then asked to help one in need of funds. The brief vivid scenes represent the demand for an unselfish temperament, for naked humility and a willingness to suffer the loss of one's personal rights. And concludes that evil should be requited with good. There is no room for vengeance on a personal level (Rom 12:19).

Jesus does not overturn Moses' Law principle of equivalent compensation on an institutional level, that question is not addressed, but Jesus does declare it illegitimate for his followers to apply it to their private disputes.

We meet two of Matthew's themes: the congruence between word and deed, speech and action, and the idea that is so important for Hellenistic philosophy, and Jesus' status as moral exemplar, which requires an imitation of Christ.

⁷Porneia: illicit sexual intercourse, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals etc. sexual intercourse with close relatives; Lev. 18; sexual intercourse with a divorced man or woman; Mk. 10:11, metaph. the worship of idols; of the defilement of idolatry, as incurred by eating the sacrifices offered to idols. Source: <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/kjv/porneia.html>

5:43-48 Love for Enemies

Love in the OT, Paul, John and Synoptics⁸

Love is the most important of the abiding Christian virtues (1 Cor. 13). Both the language of love, and the concept of love are central to all parts of the NT.

OT Tradition on Love and Israel

The covenant between God and the people of Israel is articulated in the Torah, but the Law is not the foundation of the covenant. The OT covenant is founded upon the steadfast love (HB: *hesed*) of God for the people of Israel. God's steadfast love demands from Israel a response of obedience and unwavering loyalty.

"4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.[a] 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." (Deut 6:4-5)

And in response to God's love Israel is to treat other human beings with compassion and justice:

"18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord." (Lev 19:18)

Thus the life and identity of Israel is rooted in the steadfast love of YWHW, and from this steadfast love grow the covenant, the commandments, and the faith in the OT.

Pauline Tradition on Love

In Pauline thought, the central concept of love is interpreted and applied to various aspects of the human condition. Paul has 7 primary categories of love: the extension of the covenant love in the OT; the love of God, Christ, the Spirit for us; our love of God, Christ, the Spirit for us; love between Christians; "Beloved" as a title for Christians; love between wife and husband; and love as the preeminent Christian virtue.⁹

Love is the greatest of the three enduring Christian virtues (1 Cor 13:13¹⁰) and is more than a passive emotion. Love is closely linked to faith and is one of the active fruits of the Spirit. Paul gathers the whole Christian faith around the presence and practice of love in the life of the believer. Love is the aim of the Christian life.

Johannine Tradition on Love

Love is the central concept in Johannine thought. "God is love." (1 John 4:8, 16) Love is the key to the relationship between Father and Son (John 3:35). Love is key to Jesus' ministry (John 15:39). Love is the key to the believers relationship with Jesus (John 14:21). Love is the key to relations between Christians (John 15:12). Love is the operative power behind Christianity. The gift of God's love carries and ethical command (John 15:12), and one's love for God is evidenced in one's love for others (John 13:34, 35). Absence of love points to an absence of God (1 John 4:8, 20). Thus God's love is the center of Johannine world. Johannine thought which encompasses theology, Christology, anthropology – God, Christ, humanity – is an exposition of love.

Synoptic Tradition on Love

The concept of love in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) draws primarily on the demands of the OT and the Shema (Lev 19:18). When asked which commandment is the greatest, Jesus quotes Deut 6:4-5, and then adds Lev 19:18. Love God and love your neighbor (Mark 12:29-31; Matthew 22:37-39; and Luke 10:27). But Jesus' interpretation is more radical than the traditional interpretation of the OT. Jesus extends the understanding of neighbor beyond the borders of Israel, beyond the bounds of kinship, to demand love of enemy. (Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-36).

⁸ Mills, Watson E., Mercer Dictionary of the Bible.

⁹ Mills, Watson E., Mercer Dictionary of the Bible. Pp 526 for citations

¹⁰ 1 Cor 13:13 "13 And now faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love."

From within the Christological perspective, the Synoptics provide a radical interpretation and application of the OT concept of love, both its gifts and demands. To practice this type of love for neighbor and enemy bears evidence of one's love for Jesus and for God (Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 7:47).

In addition, the Synoptics refer to the "Beloved" as a title for Jesus. "Beloved" comes from Isaiah 42:1 and this reference links Jesus uniquely to God's work as the Beloved Son of God. The phrase is a revelation which bears witness to the unique identity of Jesus. The title is used at the baptism and Transfiguration of Jesus and in the parable of the vineyard.

Comparing Leviticus, Matthew, and Luke:

| Leviticus 19:18 | Matthew 5:43-48 | Luke 6:27-36 |
|---|--|--|
| 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself : I am the Lord. | 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you , 45 so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. | 27 "But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; 28 bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you. |
| | | 29 If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. 30 Give to everyone who asks of you, and if anyone takes away what is yours, do not ask for it back again. |
| | | 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you. |
| | 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the gentiles do the same? | 32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 If you <i>do good</i> to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive payment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 Instead, love your enemies, <i>do good</i> , and lend, expecting nothing in return.[e] Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. |
| | 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. | 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. |

The material on love of one's enemies as the last of the six paragraphs introduced by 5:17-20, is climatic, and it contains the most important and difficult commands.

Jesus begins by quoting Lev 19:18, "Love your neighbors", which he will again quote and uphold (19:19, 22:39). Jesus does not contradict Lev 19:18, but he goes beyond it. For the Lev passage understands neighbor as a fellow Israelite. This allows one to confine love of others to those of one's own kind. Leviticus then expands on itself in Leviticus 19:34 "you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."

Jesus gives neighbor the broadest definition. If you are to love even your enemies, then who will not be loved as neighbors?

The context equates enemies with those who persecute the faithful. This means they are not just personal enemies, but God's opponents as well. Further love is qualified by what follows. One must pray for one's enemies, do good to them, and greet them. Jesus is speaking of actions which benefit others. In this the disciple is imitating God as Father who causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall on the faithful and the unfaithful.

5:43-44 The succinct and arresting parable¹¹, "*Love your enemies*" is undoubtedly the invention of Jesus' own mind. Jesus does not promise that such love will turn enemies into friends. He is calling for love that does not rely on something in response. He is asking for you to love your enemy despite the circumstances or the results.

Matthew views Jesus' speeches as new and revelatory. He is not just reminding people what is in the OT. He is adding new insights and instructions to elevate life. At the same time Matthew seems equally committed to the old and the new, the Torah and Jesus.

5:48 Perfect vs. Merciful

Jesus asks for "perfection", for something that cannot be surpassed. Be perfect is not a call to sinlessness, nor does the imperative posit two sorts of believers, the merely good on the one hand and the perfect on the other.

God is perfect because of God's mercy, compassion, forgiveness, and love. We are created in God's image, and created in love, God's love for us. Jesus' call for perfection is a call for completeness through imitating God as Father.

¹¹ Davies, W.B., Allison, Dale C., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Volumes 1, 2, 3, 1988 Notes

REFLECTION

Are Jesus' teachings relevant to us today?
 Are any of Jesus' teachings practical?

CLOSING PRAYER

We thank you, heavenly Father,
 for the witness of your apostle and evangelist,
 Matthew, to the Gospel of Beatitude and Grace
 which you have given us in your Son, our Savior;
 and we pray that, after his example,
 we may with ready wills and hearts obey
 the calling of our Lord to follow him;
 through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you
 and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

The Rev. Zoila Schoenbrun

GOSPEL COMPARISON¹²

| Pericope ¹³ | Matthew | Mark | Luke | John |
|-----------------------------|----------|---------|--------------------|------|
| Occasion of the Sermon | 4:24-5:2 | 3:7-13a | 6:17-20a | |
| The Beatitudes | 5:3-12 | | 6:20b-23 | |
| The Salt of the Earth | 5:13 | 9:49-50 | 14:34-35 | |
| The Light of the World | 5:14-16 | 4:21 | 8:16 | |
| On the Law and the Prophets | 5:17-20 | | 16:16-17 | |
| On Murder and Anger | 5:21-26 | | 12:57-59 | |
| On Adultery and Divorce | 5:27-32 | 9:43-48 | 16:18 | |
| On Swearing and Oaths | 5:33-37 | | | |
| On Retaliation | 5:38-42 | | 6:29-30 | |
| On Love of One's Enemies | 5:43-48 | | 6:27-28 6:32-36 | |

¹² Source: <http://www.gospelparallels.com/>

¹³ an extract from a text, especially a passage from the Bible, "a book of pericopes"

SLOW RELIGION: GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW



*The Inspiration of St. Matthew,
Caravaggio, 1602*

Slow Religion, The Gospel According to Matthew is a lay person-led adult education weekly series for Christians and seekers. Slow Religion uses a literary and historical approach to the ancient texts to identify and apply insights from the Gospel to today's world.

Matthew's gospel is worth studying because the author attempts to uphold Jesus' Jewish past, with Jesus ministry, death, and resurrection, in the context of the 1st Century CE Jesus movement and early church, and in a hostile Hellenistic and Jewish world.

21st Century readers recognize Matthew as the source of many of the best-known stories and sayings of Jesus as well as a social philosophy that many non-Christians believe in. Famous for its Sermon on the Mount, The Beatitudes, and other teachings, Matthew is often called the most Jewish of the Gospels, while also contributing with the Gospel of John to antisemitism.

The class is created and led by Joe Jennings and advisors include: the Rev. Zoila Schoenbrun and the Rev. Robert Gieselmann, St. Stephens Episcopal Church, Belvedere, CA; the Rev. Br. Richard Edward Helmer, Episcopal Church of our Saviour, Mill Valley, CA; Eugene E. Lemcio,

PhD, Emeritus Professor of New Testament, Seattle Pacific University; the Rev. Heather Wenrick, the Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Seattle; and the Father Vincent Pizzuto, PhD., vicar at St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Inverness CA and Full Professor at the (Jesuit) University of San Francisco, New Testament and Christian Mysticism, in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies.

Prior Slow Religion Classes include the Gospel of According to Mark (2021-22), the Foundations of Christian Faith (2020-21), the Holy Spirit (2020), the Gospel According to John (2019-20), and Paul's Letter to the Romans (2017-8).

For more information, to see class videos, our bibliography or to join the Slow Religion mailing list go to: www.slowreligion.com