

## OPENING PRAYER

Proper 28<sup>1</sup>

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 13<sup>2</sup>

### The Parable of the Sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. 6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 If you have ears,[a] hear!"

### The Purpose of the Parables

10 Then the disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" 11 He answered, "To you it has been given to know the secrets[b] of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 13 The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.' 14 With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says:

'You will indeed listen but never understand,  
and you will indeed look but never perceive.  
15 For this people's heart has grown dull,  
and their ears are hard of hearing,  
and they have shut their eyes,  
so that they might not look with their eyes,  
and hear with their ears  
and understand with their heart and turn—  
and I would heal them.'

16 "But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. 17 Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

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<sup>1</sup> Episcopal Book of Common Prayer pp.236

<sup>2</sup> All Bible quotations and footnotes are from Biblegateway.com, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE)  
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### **The Parable of the Sower Explained**

18 “Hear, then, the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. 20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, 21 yet such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.[c] 22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this[d] age and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. 23 But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

### **The Parable of Weeds among the Wheat**

24 He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field, 25 but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away. 26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. 27 And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ 28 He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ 29 But he replied, ‘No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. 30 Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’ ”

### **The Parable of the Mustard Seed**

31 He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; 32 it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

### **The Parable of the Yeast**

33 He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with[e] three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

### **The Use of Parables**

34 Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. 35 This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:[f]

“I will open my mouth to speak in parables;  
I will proclaim what has been hidden since the foundation.”[g]

### **Jesus Explains the Parable of the Weeds**

36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” 37 He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; 38 the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin[h] and all evildoers, 42 and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears[i] listen!

### **Three Parables**

44 “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; 46 on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

47 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; 48 when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50 and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

### **Treasures New and Old**

51 “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” 52 And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” 53 When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place.

### **The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth**

54 He came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power? 55 Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? 56 And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?” 57 And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor except in their own hometown and in their own house.” 58 And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.

### **Footnotes**

- 13.9 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) add *to hear*
- 13.11 Or *mysteries*
- 13.21 Or *stumbles*
- 13.22 Some ancient authorities (manuscripts) read *the*
- 13.33 Gk *hid in*
- 13.35 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) read *the prophet Isaiah*
- 13.35 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) add *of the world*
- 13.41 Or *stumbling*
- 13.43 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) add *to hear*
- 13.54 Gk *them*

## OVERVIEW<sup>3</sup>

### The Sermon in Parables

One third of Jesus teaching in the Gospels is in the form of parables and the dominant theme was the kingdom of God/heaven. Originally Jesus' parables were delivered verbally and the oral tradition, what people remembered of the parables, is the source of the parables we have today in the gospels. Parable comes from Greek *parabolḗ*, is telling for both instances, to "be beside" or "alongside" where one thing is juxtaposed with another in comparison.<sup>4</sup>

The Sermon in Parables is structurally the center of the Gospel and serves as a commentary on the rejection of Jesus by the Pharisees in the two preceding chapters.<sup>5</sup>

### 13:1-9 The Parable of the Sower

Jesus' famous parable of the Sower, which should perhaps be called the "parable of the four soils", heads a chapter whose theme is the kingdom of heaven and its reception in the world. So far in the gospel of Matthew Jesus has been rejected by the Jewish authorities. The pressing question is why? Why has Israel rejected Jesus as Messiah? Why has the good news about the kingdom engendered so much resistance?<sup>6</sup>

The heart of the dilemma is the recognition that the course of salvation history is not predetermined. For while God may extend his love towards his people, he does not force them to respond. Hence if Jesus ministry has not brought about what one might have anticipated, the fault does not lie with God or Jesus but with human sin and hardened hearts. In this way the parable of the Sower comes to function as an apologetic, even as a sort of theodicy, explain the evil that has befallen Israel.<sup>7</sup>

There are many interpretations of the parable of the Sower, the most obvious is the one provided in Mark and Matthew: people should hear and do the word that Jesus speaks (Matthew 7:24-27). If the people are the soil, and the word is the seed, then the parable makes sense as a categorization of different types of soil/people, and the conditions that affect their ability to hear/act on the word/seed. It remarks on a shortage of laborers, and also promises a remarkable harvest among those who hear and act on the word.<sup>8</sup>

### 13:10-17 The Purpose of the Parables

Matthew adds two elements to Mark: a formula citation (13:14-15 of Isaiah 6:9-10) that was implicitly quoted in Mark, and a Q blessing enlarging the good fortune of those who have been favored with knowing the secrets of the kingdom (13:16-17).<sup>9</sup> Based on Mark 4:10-12, his reply includes a saying from Q and Mark 4:25. In Matthew the question to Jesus is much clearer than in Mark. Mark 4:10 "the twelve asked him about the parables" has been clarified in Matthew 13:10 "Why do you speak to them in parables?"

The parable is built on the concept of a closed group in Matthew's thinking (7:6). Things that should not be revealed to unbelief are not. Only those who do the Father's will in heaven, and so belong to Jesus' family, will understand Jesus' parables (11:25-30; 12:46-50). Those who do not do the will of the Father will not understand. Knowledge thus has a moral dimension. While the mysteries of the presence of the eschatological kingdom are given by God's initiative through his parables, such teaching falls upon closed as well as open ears.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This chapter's overview is primarily from notes from W.D. Davies, Dale C. Allison Jr. and supplemented by Muddiman, Biblegateway.com, Raymond E. Brown, S.S.

<sup>4</sup> Mills, Watson E., Mercer Dictionary of the Bible, Mercer University Press, 1990, Pp643

<sup>5</sup> Brown, Raymond E., S.S., *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 1997

<sup>6</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>7</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>8</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>9</sup> Brown, Raymond E., S.S., *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 1997

<sup>10</sup> Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, *Oxford Bible Commentary*, 2001

Matthew makes it clear that spiritual blindness is the effect of wickedness. Not the result of some arbitrary, prior action of God or Jesus. Unbelief is rooted not in Jesus words but in hardened hearts. If few are chosen, it is because many have not been called. In contrast the disciples truly see and hear Jesus. Accurately perceiving, Jesus boldly proclaims, is beholding that which the prophets and the righteous of old longed to see, namely, the eschatological revelation of God – which for Matthew includes Jesus' parables.<sup>11</sup>

### 13:18-23 The Parable of the Sower Explained

Matthew 13:18-23 and Luke 8:11-15's allegorical interpretation of the parable of the four soils all agree with Mark 4:13-20 from which they were taken.

- The seed that was thrown beside or upon the path and which was eaten by the birds stands for those who do not understand the words about the kingdom. The evil one comes and snatches the word out of their hearts.
- The seed sown on rocky ground represents those who receive the word with joy but soon fall away when hard times come.
- The seed sown among the thorns stands for those who receive the word but prove unfruitful because they give themselves over to the cares of the world and its riches.
- The seed sown on good soil are those who understand the word. They will produce abundant fruit.<sup>12</sup>

Matthew's version of the parable of the Sower is not aimed at exhortation. Its purpose is to offer an explanation within the wider context of Chapters 11-12, that detail the failure of Jesus ministry to effect repentance in corporate Israel. A difficult question is engendered, similar to Romans 9-11: how does one explain the failure of the Jews as a body to come to faith in Jesus? Matthew to be sure knew Jews that believed in Jesus (for he himself may have been one). Yet their numbers are comparatively small in late 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Israel and the Jewish diaspora. So Matthew, like Paul before him, faced the dilemma of a Messiah rejected by his people -- in opposition to all Jewish eschatological expectations.<sup>13</sup>

Matthew, like Paul believed that in the end God would redeem his people. Both probably kept hope for Israel's eschatological redemption. But this conviction by itself hardly explained the unexpected response to Jesus himself or the unbelief of so many Jews in Matthews day. It is precisely this failure to come to faith that Matthew 11-2 is intended to speak of, and Matthew 13 is expected to explain.<sup>14</sup>

Although the word of the kingdom is preached to all, all do not respond in the same manner. Some believe, some do not. The reason? Opportunity does not guarantee response, proclamation does not abolish sin. This is the main message of 13:1-23, which offers in effect something similar to the free will defense for the problem of evil. For Matthew, Israel's failure, the root of her trouble, does not lie with God. It lies with the people who have hardened their hearts. Therefore until or unless God overrides wills, the gospel will meet with mixed response.<sup>15</sup>

### 13:24-30 The Parable of Weeds among the Wheat

The Sower and the Weeds parables both address the problem of why does the Word fail in the world? Why don't people listen and change? The major difference between the parables of the Sower and the Weeds is that the Sower focuses on human responsibility, and the Weeds focuses on the role evil plays; that the evil one must share responsibility for the failure of God's work in the world.<sup>16</sup>

The common message with the Sower parable is that the victory of the kingdom is assured, the progress of the gospel is hampered by unbelief and its effects. The Tares focusses on the role of the devil, who imitates Jesus in the Sower, by sowing his own seed. Satan shares responsibility for human sin: those without faith are sons of the evil one. Some commentators view this as commentary on the early church.

<sup>11</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>12</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>13</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>14</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>15</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>16</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

The author would disagree that this is focused on the world at large and how evil pushes back against the gospel.<sup>17</sup>

### **13:31-32 The Parable of the Mustard Seed**

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven parables are a pair. They illustrate the present small beginnings of the kingdom and its great future.

The parable of the mustard seeds illustrates by reference to the growth of the mustard seed a vital truth about God's kingdom. A humble beginning and secret presence are not inconsistent with a great and glorious destiny. It is important to note that the emphasis is not on either the smallness of the seed, nor the insignificance of the present, nor the greatness of God's future. The Matthean emphasis falls on the juxtaposition of the two seemingly incongruent facts: the one being the experience of Jesus and his followers in the present (the mustard seed), and their expectation of the future (the tree in which the birds of heaven nest).<sup>18</sup>

The parable is an invitation to ponder these two things: the present and the unexpected future, reality, and hope, in light of the mustard seeds story. The point is that despite all appearances, between the minute beginning and the grand culmination there is an organic unity. Indeed, the tree/the eschatological climax is an effect of the seed/God's activity in Jesus and his disciples. The end is in the beginning.<sup>19</sup>

### **13:33 The Parable of the Yeast**

13:33 has no Markan parallel passage. It is from Q and is shared in Luke. What was Jesus' point of comparing the kingdom to leaven? It could be the contrast between a small beginning and a magnificent end as in the parable of the mustard seed. But the parable can also be understood as teaching the inevitability of certain eschatological ends.<sup>20</sup>

Like the mustard seed, the parable of the leaven tells of a small, hidden thing that becomes large through an organic process. Both parables introduce the theme that the coming of the kingdom begins not with a great spectacle, but with a hidden presence. In this manner, the character and nature of Jesus ministry, and its failure in Israel, can be better understood.<sup>21</sup>

### **13:34-35 The Use of Parables**

Matthew draws on Mark 4:33-34 and Psalm 78:2 ("I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old"), to compose a formula quotation which makes a general statement about Jesus' use of parables. Two ends are served: 1) Jesus' parabolic manner of speaking is grounded in OT prophecy; and, 2) 13:34-5 serves as a transition that notifies the reader of a change in audience. Jesus is now speaking to the disciples alone, not including the crowds. He is turning away from those who do not understand and towards those who do.<sup>22</sup>

### **13:36-43 Jesus Explains the Parable of the Weeds**

Jesus is again alone with his disciples who request and explanation of the parable of the weeds. He complies by giving them a list of allegorical equations (13:37-39); reciting a short account of the last judgement (13:40-43); and uttering a general admonition (13:43).<sup>23</sup>

Chapter 13's discourse arises out of the opposition to Jesus in Chapter 11-12. The problem is how to explain the unbelief. The Weeds Parable explains the unbelief as being in part due to the cosmic struggle between God and Satan. Those who oppose the Messiah are "sons of the devil". Their irrational lack of faith is part of an even greater mystery that of transcendent or non-human evil.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, Oxford Bible Commentary, 2001

<sup>18</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>19</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>20</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>21</sup> Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, Oxford Bible Commentary, 2001

<sup>22</sup> Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, Oxford Bible Commentary, 2001

<sup>23</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>24</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

The parable also addresses the theodicy, the defense of God's goodness and omnipotence in view of the existence of evil<sup>25</sup>, by putting evil in eschatological perspective and reminding the reader that bad only endures for a season. Eventually the weeds will be picked out when the wheat is gathered. It is at history's end which will give the answers to the difficult theological questions that history and Jesus raise.

### **13:44-50 Three Parables**

In the three parables the focus is on the present, not the future, and on the actions of believers, not unbelievers. The point is that the kingdom is hidden, and it can be found, and when it is found, one should make whatever sacrifice is necessary to obtain it.<sup>26</sup>

Finding the treasure hidden in a field (13:44) sets the value of the kingdom above that of social property rights and may have been shocking to Jewish audiences. The pearl of great value (13:45-46) argues that when truth is encountered a choice has to be made and it must be acted on immediately. The dragnet (13:45-50) recalls the parable of the weeds and returns the reader to thoughts of the last judgement. The main point is simple: the wicked will suffer due punishment. Interestingly it does not say what happens to the righteous.<sup>27</sup>

### **13:51-53 Treasures New and Old**

Three major points: the disciples have understood Jesus' parables, they are now scribes in the kingdom, and they will bring out teachings from the old and the new. This last point is a key to understanding Matthew. It is not just the new teachings of Jesus, but how they enfold and include the OT teachings, that the disciples have now shown they understand.<sup>28</sup>

### **13:54-58 The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth**

The story of Jesus' rejection in Nazareth helps to explain why Jesus must concentrate on his disciples since even his own townspeople do not accept him. Matthew makes three small changes to the story from Mark 6:1-6: He does not report that Jesus was a carpenter, or that he was a prophet without honor "among his own relatives", or "could do no miracle there". (Matthew's substitution of "son of a carpenter" for Mark's "carpenter" gave rise to the custom of depicting Joseph as a carpenter.)<sup>29</sup>

This story provides a concrete example of people hearing but not hearing and seeing but not seeing. It illustrates the failure to understand leads not to indifference, but to hostility, and further unbelief does not correspond to any geographical pattern. Wherever Jesus goes, even to his home town, there is always some negative response to his presence and teachings.<sup>30</sup>

In 13:57 Jesus implicitly proclaims himself a prophet and in 14:5 the people correctly uphold JohnBap as a prophet. The upshot will become clear: JohnBap and Jesus will share the same fate, the fate of prophets who are rejected and suffer death for their prophetic roles.<sup>31</sup>

## **REFLECTION**

1. In Matthew Chapter 13 who controls whether a person accepts Jesus? God or the individual?
2. How do you struggle personally with "new teachings" integrating with "old teachings"?
3. Does Chapter 13 give us permission to turn away from people who do not understand or accept the gospel?

<sup>25</sup> Merriam-Webster

<sup>26</sup> Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, Oxford Bible Commentary, 2001

<sup>27</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>28</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

<sup>29</sup> Brown, Raymond E., S.S., *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 1997

<sup>30</sup> Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, Oxford Bible Commentary, 2001

<sup>31</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary, 1991

## 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 COMPARISON<sup>32</sup>

Pericope <sup>33</sup>	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The Parable of the Sower	13:1-9	4:1-9	8:4-8	
The Reason for Speaking in Parables	13:10-17	4:10-12 4:25	8:9-10 8:18b 10:23-24	
Interpretation of the Parable of the Sower	13:18-23	4:13-20	8:11-15	
"He who has Ears to Hear, Let him Hear"	13:12	4:21-25	8:16-18	
The Parable of the Tares (Weeds)	13:24-30			
The Parable of the Mustard Seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	13:18-19	
The Parable of the Leaven (Yeast)	13:33		13:20-21	
Jesus' Use of Parables	13:34-35	4:33-34		
Interpretation of the Parable of the Tares	13:36-43			
The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and of the Pearl	13:44-46			
The Parable of the Net	13:47-50			
Treasures New and Old	13:51-52			
Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth	13:53-58	6:1-6a	4:16-30	

<sup>32</sup> Source: <http://www.gospelparallels.com/>

<sup>33</sup> An extract from a text, especially a passage from the Bible, "a book of pericopes"

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## 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.

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