

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 20²

The Laborers in the Vineyard

20 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4 and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went.

5 When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. 6 And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ 7 They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’

8 When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ 9 When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received a denarius. 10 Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. 11 And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, 12 saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’

13 But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. 15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’[a] 16 So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”[b]

A Third Time Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

17 While Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves and said to them on the way, 18 “Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death; 19 then they will hand him over to the gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and on the third day he will be raised.”

¹ Episcopal Book of Common Prayer pp.236

² All Bible quotations and footnotes are from Biblegateway.com, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE) Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

The Request of the Mother of James and John

20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. 21 And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." 22 But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?"^[c] They said to him, "We are able." 23 He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

24 When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. 25 But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. 26 It will not be so among you, but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave, 28 just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many."

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

29 As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. 30 There were two blind men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, "Lord,^[d] have mercy on us, Son of David!" 31 The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet, but they shouted even more loudly, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!" 32 Jesus stood still and called them, saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" 33 They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." 34 Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

Footnotes

20.15 Gk *is your eye evil because I am good?*

20.16 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) add *for many are called, but few are chosen*

20.22 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) add *or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?*

20.30 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) lack *Lord*

GOSPEL COMPARISON³

Pericope ⁴	Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard	10:31	20:1-16	13:30	
The Third Prediction of the Passion	10:32-34	20:17-19	18:31-34	
Jesus and the Sons of Zebedee; Precedence among the Disciples	10:35-45	20:20-28	22:24-27	
The Healing of the Blind Men (Bartimaeus)	10:46-52	20:29-34 9:27-31	18:35-43	

³ Source: <http://www.gospelparallels.com/>

⁴ An extract from a text, especially a passage from the Bible, "a book of pericopes"

PERSPECTIVE

20:1-16 The Laborers in the Vineyard

This parable, recorded only in Matthew, interrupts the Markan sequence Matthew has been following since the beginning of chapter 19. It stands as a comment on the rewards of discipleship in 19:27-29 and on the first will be last and the last first in 20:16. It highlights the reversal of human expectations in the kingdom of heaven.⁵

Some possible layers of interpretations:

- The parable is on last judgement which functions as a warning against boasting or presuming oneself to be among the first. 20:1-15 are framed against 19:20 “*The young man said to him, “I have kept all these; what do I still lack?”*” and 20:16 “*So the last will be first, and the first will be last.*”, which teach eschatological reversal.⁶
- The parable teaches that God rewards human beings according to an unexpected goodness – although this teaching functions not as an encouragement but as a warning (“*But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.*”19:30). God’s kindness, in this regard analogous to Jesus moral imperatives, satisfies justice and then goes further. So the less deserving may receive as much as the more deserving. Like the Spirit, divine grace blows where it wills, which destroys all human reckoning and presumption. It is the truth that must be absorbed after, 19:28-29, that hope should never become self-satisfaction.⁷
- The parable clearly teaches that there is no necessary proportion between human work and divine reward. Many have even found evidence of the Pauline doctrine of grace here.⁸ Bonnard refers to this passage as Matthean Paulinism --- seeing Paul’s Doctrine of Grace evidenced. It shows an understanding that the future reward by what a man does to deserve it, but it is not owed or earned, but given out of the manifest mercy of God.⁹
- The parable teaches the lesson that those who convert late in life will not suffer any disadvantage. For the main teaching is how God rewards human beings according to his unexpected goodness – although that teaching functions as much as a warning as an encouragement. Hence the less deserving may receive as much as the more deserving.¹⁰

Matthean Theme of Reversal of Order

“First shall be last and the last shall be first” theme appears in the synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of Thomas.

- “But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.” (Mark 10:31)
- “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.” (Matthew 20:16)
- “Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.” (Luke 13:30)
- “For many that are first will be last, and they will become one.” (Gospel of Thomas 4)

Beginning in the Sermon on the Mount and continuing through the gospel, Matthew emphasizes Jesus’ message that the kingdom of heaven will result in a reversal of order. Leaders will be meek and humble. The poor will be exalted, and the rich will be lowered. This eschatological reversal means that how you think about the world will have to change.

⁵ France, R. T., *The Gospel of Matthew* pp.746-766

⁶ Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., *Matthew Contributor*, Oxford Bible Commentary, pp. 870-871

⁷ Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., *Matthew Contributor*, Oxford Bible Commentary, pp. 870-871

⁸ Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., *Matthew Contributor*, Oxford Bible Commentary, pp. 870-871

⁹ W. Sanday, “The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard”, *Expositors* first edition, 1876, pp 81-101.

¹⁰ Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume III Chapters 19-28*, The International Critical Commentary pp. 66-110

- 5:1-11 Beatitudes
- “Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (18:4)
- “Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.” (19:23)
- “But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.” (19:30)
- “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.” (20:16)
- “Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.” (20:26-28)

The world turned upside down nature of the kingdom of heaven underscores the degree of difference between it and the current world order, and the uniqueness of Jesus and God’s view of who should be elevated.

20:17-19 A Third Time Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

The first prediction was in Gentile country to the north, the second in Galilee added betrayal, and the third and most detailed in Judea, close to Jerusalem and more threatening. The addition of the Gentiles in the third prediction adds a note of rejection and humiliation with the Jewish Messiah subjected to Gentile mockery and shame.¹¹

The third prophecy is a very close recitation of what is coming in Chapters 26, 27 and 28:¹²

Matthew 20:17-19	Matthew 26:47-28:20
18 the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes,	26:47-56
and they will condemn him to death;	26:57-68
19 then they will hand him over to the gentiles to be	27:1-14
mocked	27:29, 32, 41
and flogged	27:26
and crucified,	27:33-50
and on the third day he will be raised.”	28:1-20

This prediction propels the story forward; it is also an example of the last being first; and it prepares the way for the “cup” in the following pericope. It is also a deeply lonely and sad pericope showing Jesus is isolated already from his friends in his self-knowledge of what awaits him in Jerusalem. Jesus’ exhibited foreknowledge is becoming more specific.¹³

20:20-28 The Request of the Mother of James and John

The mother of the brothers Zebedee (James and John) will later observe the crucifixion and was apparently a follower of Jesus (Matthew 27:55-56)¹⁴. Seats on the right and left of a king were the positions of power next to the throne. The scene may have envisioned a judgement court.¹⁵

¹¹ France, R. T., The Gospel of Matthew pp.746-766

¹² Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. Matthew Volume III Chapters 19-28, The International Critical Commentary pp. 66-110

¹³ Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, Oxford Bible Commentary, pp. 870-871

¹⁴ Matthew 27:55-56 55 Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him. 56 Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph,[a] and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

¹⁵ Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV Version, pp. 1702-3

Comparing Mark and Matthew's versions of the pericope:

Mark 10:35-45	Matthew 20:20-28	Comparison Notes
35 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." 36 And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?"	20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. 21 And he said to her, "What do you want?"	Matthews shifts the request from James and John to their mother to avoid dishonoring the disciples. ¹⁶
37 And they said to him, "Appoint us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory."	She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." 22	The Twelve have guaranteed thrones of judgement when the Son of Man sits in glory ¹⁷ . Evidently that is not the same as sitting on his left and right in the kingdom ^{18, 19}
38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"	But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?"[c]	Matthew omits the baptism reference. The cup Jesus will drink is the cup of eschatological sorrow, which will be first poured out upon the people of God (Jeremiah 25:15-29). Jesus will face God's judgement. ²⁰
39 They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized you will be baptized, 40 but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to appoint, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."	They said to him, "We are able." 23 He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."	Matthew omits the baptism reference. Jesus rejects their request, assures that they will share his fate, and says it is not for himself, but the Father, to determine who is on his left and right.

The Cup

The cup Jesus will drink is the cup of eschatological sorrow, which will be first poured out upon the people of God (Jeremiah 25:15-29). Jesus will face God's judgement. Neither for Jesus or Matthew should the cup be: 1) equated with temptations; 2) given a sacramental interpretation; or 3) or connected to the drink given Jesus on the cross.²¹

15 For thus the Lord, the God of Israel, said to me: **Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath**, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. 16 They shall drink and stagger and go out of their minds because of the sword that I am sending among them.

27 Then you shall say to them, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink; get drunk and vomit; fall and rise no more because of the sword that I am sending among you.

¹⁶ Brown, Raymond E., S.S., *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 195

¹⁷ "Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matthew 19:28)

¹⁸ "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." (Matthew 3:12; 4:17; 10:7)

¹⁹ Brown, Raymond E., S.S., *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 195

²⁰ Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, Oxford Bible Commentary, pp. 870-871

²¹ Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, Oxford Bible Commentary, pp. 870-871

28 And if they refuse to accept the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord of hosts: You must drink! 29 See, I am beginning to bring disaster on the city that is called by my name, and how can you possibly avoid punishment? You shall not go unpunished, for I am summoning a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth, says the Lord of hosts.
 Jeremiah 25:15-16, 27, 28--29

The *cup* symbolizes one's destiny, here suffering and death. (see Psalm 11:6; 26:5)²²
 "On the wicked he will rain coals of fire and sulfur;
 a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup." Psalm 11:6

"The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;
 you hold my lot." Psalm 26:5

Ransom for Many

Vv. 20:28 "just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a *ransom* for many" probably alludes to Dan 7 and Isaiah 53 and is the climax of 20:20-28. These are the last words Jesus speaks before going up to Jerusalem. It shows him to the Son of Man in whom word and deed are one, the true king whose one aim is the benefit of his subjects. The word traditionally used for *ransom* means deliverance by payment. In the present instance the principle of "a life for a life" (Exodus 21:23) is operative. Jesus' death, like the death of martyrs in 4 Macc. 1:11, 6:28-29, and 17:20-22, has a beneficial effect on others. Jesus death has a beneficial effect upon others, and here "the many", by which is meant "all" (Romans 5:16, 5:19; 1 Timothy 2:6).²³

The pericope is really about Christology. We read that Jesus will reign in "his kingdom", that he will drink the cup of wrath, that he came not to be served but to serve, and that he will give his life as a ransom for many. The disciples are told to imitate Jesus Christ. Thus the text is entirely Christ-centric, all revolves around the Son of Man, Jesus. What matters is his life, his death, and his destiny.²⁴

For many see Isaiah 53:12²⁵

"Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,
 and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
 because he poured out himself to death
 and was numbered with the transgressors,
 yet he bore the sin of many
 and made intercession for the transgressors."

Mark 10:42-45	Matthew 20:25-28	Luke 22:24-27
42 So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them.	25 But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them.	24 A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. 25 But he said to them, "The kings of the gentiles lord it over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors.
43 But it is not so among you; instead, whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wishes to be first	26 It will not be so among you, but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be	26 But not so with you; rather, the greatest among you must become like the youngest and the leader like one who serves. 27 For who is greater, the one

²² Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV Version, pp. 1702-3

²³ Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, Oxford Bible Commentary, pp. 870-871

²⁴ Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. Matthew Volume III Chapters 19-28, The International Critical Commentary pp. 66-110

²⁵ Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV Version, pp. 1702-3

among you must be slave of all. 45 For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many."	your slave, 28 just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many."	who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.
---	---	--

Matthew hews closely to Mark in 20:25-28. He emphasizes two themes: whoever wishes to be first must be last and take the role of a servant; and that the Son of Man is to be imitated, for he came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. Luke omits the ransom language here.

The death of the Son of Man is portrayed as the supreme example of unselfish service, he will give himself for others. His role as a "ransom for many" is unique. Mark and Matthew are comparable to Paul's theology of salvation through the forgiveness of sins as a result of Jesus death (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). The ransom is paid to release someone from captivity. In Matthew, the angel tells Joseph to name the child Jesus, for "he will save his people from their sins" (1:21).²⁶

20:29-34 Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

Jericho is 10 miles east of Jerusalem in the Jordan River Valley north of the Dead Sea. The region is associated with three palaces built by Herod the Great, John the Baptist's ministry and death, and the Khirbet Qumran (the settlement nearest to the Qumran Caves where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered).²⁷

Mark 10:46-52	Matthew 20:29-34	Luke 18:35-43
46 They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"	29 As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. 30 There were two blind men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, "Lord,[a] have mercy on us, Son of David!" 31	35 As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. 36 When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. 37 They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth[a] is passing by." 38 Then he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 39
48 Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 49 Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." 50 So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.	The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet, but they shouted even more loudly, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!"	Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he shouted even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"
51 Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher,[a] let me see again."	32 Jesus stood still and called them, saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" 33 They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened."	40 Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him, and when he came near, he asked him, 41 "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me see again."
52 Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his	34 Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.	42 Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you." 43 Immediately he regained his sight and followed

²⁶ France, R. T., The Gospel of Matthew pp.746-766

²⁷ Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV Version, pp. 1702-3

sight and followed him on the way.		him, glorifying God, and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.
------------------------------------	--	---

In comparison to Mark and Luke, Matthew's version of the story is shorter, there are two beggars rather than one, Jesus is addressed as Lord rather than Jesus, and called the Son of David in all three.

In all three cases, the crowd tries to quiet the blind person(s), Jesus asks the individual or pair of men what they want, and they reply to be able to see.

Mark and Luke make Jesus response based on their faith, and Matthew bases it on Jesus' compassion. And only in Matthew does Jesus touch their eyes to heal them.

Within Matthew there is a parallel story in Chapter 9 of Jesus healing two blind men:

Matthew 9:27-30	Matthew 20:29-34
27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"	30 There were two blind men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, "Lord,[a] have mercy on us, Son of David!" 31 The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet, but they shouted even more loudly, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!"
28 When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you have faith that I can do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord."	32 Jesus stood still and called them, saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" 33 They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened."
29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith, let it be done to you." 30 And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly ordered them, "See that no one knows of this."	34 Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

The first story emphasizes the men's faith as a precondition to the miracle of healing, in the second story Jesus' acts out of compassion. Lastly, unlike in the first story, Jesus does not tell the healed men not to tell anyone. The story of the two blind men (20:29-34) is reminiscent of 9:27-30. The first occurs before Jesus has been rejected by the Jewish authorities and the second after – yet his power remains. And Jesus' difficulties do not diminish his compassion.²⁸

Traditional church teaching interprets the story as the two men representing the spiritually blind; when such hear about Jesus they cry out for salvation; obstacles arise; but to those with persistence of faith, Jesus gives sight, that is, brings salvation, after which they must follow Jesus, that is enter into discipleship. Allison does not know if that is in fact what Matthew intended from the story.²⁹

²⁸ Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume III Chapters 19-28*, The International Critical Commentary pp. 66-110

²⁹ Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. *Matthew Volume III Chapters 19-28*, The International Critical Commentary pp. 66-11

REFLECTIONS

“First shall be last and the last shall be first”

Is still a uniquely disturbing element of Christian thinking. The idea and Matthew's *Laborers in the Vineyard* parable (Matthew 20:16) teaches that there is no direct relationship between human activity and God's grace. Does this mean that God's grace is sometimes not fair?

“The Cup”

The cup Jesus will drink is the cup of eschatological sorrow. Jesus will face God's full wrath. Why do you think Jesus is facing God's wrath for our sake?

“Ransom for many”

The death of the Son of Man is portrayed as the supreme example of unselfish service. Like Paul's theology of salvation through the forgiveness of sins as a result of Jesus death (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). This was foreshadowed in Matthew, when the angel tells Joseph to name the child Jesus, for “he will save his people from their sins” (1:21).³⁰ Why do you think Matthew and Paul interpret Jesus' death in this fashion?

“Compassion”

We have become accustomed to miracles and healings being preceded by faith in Matthew. *In Jesus Heals Two Blind Men* (20:29-34) Jesus' compassion is emphasized. When you reflect on Jesus' compassion how does it affect how you interpret the chapter's stories and lessons?

³⁰ France, R. T., *The Gospel of Matthew* pp.746-766

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

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 class 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, St. Stephens Episcopal Church, Belvedere, CA; the Rev. Br. Richard Edward Helmer, Episcopal Church of our Saviour, Mill Valley, CA; 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