

## 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 25<sup>2</sup>

### The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids

25 “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten young women[a] took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.[b] 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept.

6 But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 Then all those young women[c] got up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’

10 And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. 11 Later the other young women[d] came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ 12 But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ 13 Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.[e]

### The Parable of the Talents

14 “For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; 15 to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

At once 16 the one who had received the five talents went off and traded with them and made five more talents. 17 In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. 18 But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

19 After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20 Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ 21 His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’

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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) Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

22 And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

24 Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' 26 But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest.'

28 So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. 29 For to all 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. 30 As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

### **The Judgment of the Nations**

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, 35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

37 Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? 39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'

40 And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.' 41 Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, 42 for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

44 Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?' 45 Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life."

### **Footnotes**

25.1 Gk *virgins*

25.1 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) add *and the bride*

25.7 Gk *virgins*

25.11 Gk *virgins*

25.13 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) add *in which the Son of Man is coming*

## GOSPEL COMPARISON<sup>3</sup>

Pericope	Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
The Parable of the Ten Virgins		25:1-13		
The Parable of the Talents	13:34	25:14-30	19:11-27	
The Judgment of the Nations		25:31-46		5:29

## PERSPECTIVES

### The Eschatological Sermon (Chapters 24-25)

In Chapter 25 two themes are reenforced, **watchfulness** in The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids (25:1-13); **and judgement** in The Parable of the Talents (25:14-30 ) and The Judgment of the Nations (25:31-46). The Judgement of Nations is unique to Matthew. Jesus is now the judge, and all people are separated into sheep and goats. The verdict is based in the treatment of outcasts or on treatment of Jesus' followers. Being a follower of Jesus or the church will not save you if you have not been kind to the poor.<sup>4</sup>

### 25:1-13 The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids

Jesus continues to teach his followers the necessity of continuous readiness as they await his coming again. Given the emphasis in the story and other teachings on watchfulness, Jesus clearly sees the theme as important.<sup>5</sup>

This parable is an allegory of the Parousia of Christ, the second coming. Christ is the heavenly bridegroom, the virgins represent the Christian community, the delay in the bridegrooms coming represents the delay in the second coming, and the sudden coming is the unexpected arrival of the Parousia. Lastly the spurning of the foolish, unprepared virgins, is the great judgment/reckon.<sup>6</sup>

The parable teaches three lessons: 1) the bridegroom delays and comes at an unexpected time, this means again that no one knows the date and time of the Son of Man's Parousia, second coming; 2) the wise virgins stand for the faithful and reveals that religious prudence will gain eschatological reward; and 3) the foolish virgins, who stand for unfaithful disciples, reveal that those unprepared at the end will suffer eschatological punishment.<sup>7</sup>

Theme of delay in Matthew and Luke: How should the delay be understood within the larger context of the Gentile Mission—commissioned in 28:16–18? Is it Matthew's way of "making room" for its conduct?<sup>8</sup>

Parable of Servants: Good & Wicked <sup>9</sup> Matt 24:45–51	Parable of Servants: Good & Wicked Luke 12:41–46
When he comes (46)	When he comes (43)
Master <i>delayed</i> (48) $\chi\rho\omicron\nu\acute{\iota}\zeta\epsilon\iota$	Master <i>delayed</i> (45) $\chi\rho\omicron\nu\acute{\iota}\zeta\epsilon\iota$
Parable of Ten Virgins (M) Matt 25:1–13	
Bridegroom <i>delayed</i> (5) $\chi\rho\omicron\nu\acute{\iota}\zeta\omicron\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma$	
Parable of the Talents Matt 25:14–30	Parable of the Talents Luke 19:11–27

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

<sup>4</sup> Brown, Raymond E., S.S., *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 198-199

<sup>5</sup> Morris, Leon, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, pp. 619-641

<sup>6</sup> Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., *Matthew Contributor*, Oxford Bible Commentary, pp. 878-879

<sup>7</sup> Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., *Matthew Contributor*, Oxford Bible Commentary, pp. 878-879

<sup>8</sup> Eugene E. Lemcio, *The King Who Teaches: St. Matthew's Royal Curriculum. A Pedagogical Aid* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, forthcoming 2023)

<sup>9</sup> Eugene E. Lemcio, *The King Who Teaches: St. Matthew's Royal Curriculum. A Pedagogical Aid* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, forthcoming 2023)

After a long time (19) πολὺν χρόνον	When he returned (15)
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v.1 “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this.” Matthew mentions the kingdom of heaven for the last time in this gospel. The ten girls are part of the bride’s party, and they are going out to meet the bridegroom and bride as they return to the village. They will take their place in the procession to come into the village for the wedding feast.<sup>10</sup>

v.2 The girls fall in to two groups: the wise/sensible/prepared and the foolish/unprepared. They all have torches, but some have brought extra oil in case the wedding party is delayed, and others have not. The latter group is guilty of a lack of foresight and not being prepared.<sup>11</sup>

vv. 5-7 The bridegroom is late – no excuse is given or expected. The girls sleep while waiting in the darkness. In the middle of the night the bridegroom is sighted, and a cry went up. Up until this point there was no difference in the ten girls. They all get up and attend to their torches.<sup>12</sup>

v. 8-9 The foolish girls found that their torches were going out and they had no additional oil. So they ask the wise girls to share their oil and they are refused. Jesus is teaching that being prepared for the Parousia, and being watchful, is not something that can be shared. It is an individual responsibility.<sup>13</sup>

V. 10 Jesus moves the action swiftly to the bridegroom meeting the wise girls with their lit torches and continuing into the wedding banquet. Then *the door was shut*. This indicates that there was a time to join the wedding banquet and those who were not there when the time expired were totally excluded.<sup>14</sup>

vv. 11-12 The foolish girls arrive late and ask to be allowed in and they are rejected. “I do not know you.”  
v. 13 Jesus hammers the message home: “*Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.*” It is a condition of life on earth that we do not know when Jesus will return, and we need to be ever vigilant.<sup>15</sup>

### 25:14-30 The Parable of the Talents

The master stands for Jesus, the slaves for the church, whose members receive various responsibilities. The master’s departure represents the earthly departure of Jesus, and his long absence is the age of the church.<sup>16</sup>

Jesus’ return is the return of the Son of Man. The good slaves receive heavenly rewards, and their joy is that of the messianic banquet. The fearful slave’s punishment represents those within the church whom through the sins of omission, condemn themselves to eschatological darkness. This passage introduces the concepts that Christian’s receive gifts according to their ability (v. 15) and it is what they make of those gifts which counts in the end.<sup>17</sup>

Matthew and Luke share this parable and draw very different conclusions from it:

- Matthew’s slaves are given huge sums to manage, Luke’s small;
- Matthew’s amounts differ from slave to slave, in Luke’s they are the same;
- Matthew concentrates on trading and while Luke brings in a reference to a man receiving the kingdom and the attitude of his subjects; and

<sup>10</sup> Morris, Leon, The Gospel according to Matthew, pp. 619-641

<sup>11</sup> Morris, Leon, The Gospel according to Matthew, pp. 619-641

<sup>12</sup> Morris, Leon, The Gospel according to Matthew, pp. 619-641

<sup>13</sup> Morris, Leon, The Gospel according to Matthew, pp. 619-641

<sup>14</sup> Morris, Leon, The Gospel according to Matthew, pp. 619-641

<sup>15</sup> Morris, Leon, The Gospel according to Matthew, pp. 619-641

<sup>16</sup> Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, Oxford Bible Commentary, pp. 878-879

<sup>17</sup> Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, Oxford Bible Commentary, pp. 878-879

- Matthew’s story starts with the fact of the different gifts to be found in God’s servants and brings out the way we use or don’t use, those gifts; whereas Luke teaches that all of God’s servants have one basic task, living out our faith.<sup>18</sup>

The previous parable in Matthew taught the importance of being ready, this one teaches by showing what readiness means. The parable starts with a man preparing to go abroad, he gives wealth to his slaves to manage while he is gone, and to use their own initiative. He did not give them instructions. He trusted them<sup>19</sup>

Albert Sweitzer wrote “Jesus is saying that a religion concerned only with not doing anything wrong in order that its practioner may one day stand vindicated ignores the will of God.”<sup>20</sup>

Jesus’ spiritual principle is that anyone who receives a talent (in the modern sense of the word) of any kind and fails to use it, by that very fact forfeits it. By contrast anyone who receives a talent and uses it to the fullest, finds that the talent develops and grows.<sup>21</sup>

### 25:31-46 The Judgment of the Nations

To evaluate contested claims about the identities of those being judged and sentenced by the Son of Man, especially since many “progressives” (both Christians and non-) cite the passage as a basis for promoting “social justice.”<sup>22</sup>

Nowhere else in the entire Bible (including Revelation) is there a lengthier or fuller account of final judgment than here. This makes interpreting the text accurately even more important. However, the matter is not as straightforward as it seems, as the most comprehensive account of the passage’s history of interpretation shows. Within the range of options, two stand out. The chart below displays the most glaring differences at the greatest points of contention.<sup>23</sup>

Matthew 25	Current Majority View	Former Majority View <sup>2425</sup>
	Universal	Particular
“All the nations of the world” (v32)	Nations / individuals within the nations, including Christians	(Individuals within) nations
“My brothers” (v.40)	All are Jesus’ siblings	Those doing the Father’s will
“The least of these” (v/45)	People anywhere in need “embody” Jesus	Only Jesus’ followers / emissaries in need “embody” him.

<sup>18</sup> Morris, Leon, The Gospel according to Matthew, pp. 619-641

<sup>19</sup> Morris, Leon, The Gospel according to Matthew, pp. 619-641

<sup>20</sup> Morris, Leon, The Gospel according to Matthew, pp. 619-641

<sup>21</sup> Morris, Leon, The Gospel according to Matthew, pp. 619-641

<sup>22</sup> Eugene E. Lemcio, The King Who Teaches: St. Matthew’s Royal Curriculum. A Pedagogical Aid (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, forthcoming 2023)

<sup>23</sup> Eugene E. Lemcio, The King Who Teaches: St. Matthew’s Royal Curriculum. A Pedagogical Aid (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, forthcoming 2023)

<sup>24</sup> Eugene E. Lemcio, The King Who Teaches: St. Matthew’s Royal Curriculum. A Pedagogical Aid (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, forthcoming 2023)

<sup>25</sup> Sherman W. Gray, in “The Least of These My Brothers,” argues that the goal of interpreting this passage needs to take place within the context of the First Gospel in its entirety (351). He contends that attempts to determine what a pre-Matthean source (whether oral or written) might have conveyed regarding identities (and other aspects of the passage) are beyond methodological control and so should be avoided. It is also important, according to Gray, that the passage be regarded mainly as a parable rather than a largely literalistic portrait, where too fine a point is made of pressing each feature for significance—e. g., what is it about the nature of sheep and goats that causes these animals to represent the two classes of defendants? Gray also provides comprehensive statistics about the number and kind of interpreters who have taken one or the other of the two positions from the beginning through the end of the twentieth century. Generally speaking, the Current Majority View has prevailed only since the late 1800s, paralleling the rise of the so-called “Social Gospel.” (Eugene E. Lemcio, The King Who Teaches: St. Matthew’s Royal Curriculum. A Pedagogical Aid (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, forthcoming 2023))

Sheep (v.32) / righteous (v.37) / blessed (v.34)	Nations / individuals who attended Jesus via needy people	Nations / individuals who attended Jesus via needy followers / emissaries
Goats (v.32)	Nations / individuals who did not do so	Nations / individuals who did not do so

The final discourse is not a parable but a “word picture of the Last Judgement” (Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, 1949; pp 249). The final story tells us how to eschatologically prepare for the Parousia, the second coming and judgement by Jesus, by living the imperative to love one’s neighbors, especially the marginalized. By this we will be judged on the far side of history.<sup>26</sup>

The identity of who is gathered is disputed, but they are probably all of humanity. The concept of service to Jesus through service to others goes back to Proverbs 19:17 “Whoever is kind to the poor, lends to the Lord, and will be repaid in full.” What is new in Matthew is the Son of Man’s identification with the needy. The Son of Man does not require super human actions from his followers. What he asks for is simple, unobtrusive charity. The superhuman can be faked, simple charity cannot. (“For false messiahs[f] and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” 24:24) Charity is accorded the true test of faith.<sup>27</sup>

The final judgement is Matthew’s most powerful and dramatic ethical statement: “When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory” (v/31). The context of the final judgement is the Son of Man coming in glory, seated on a throne of power and judgement.<sup>28</sup>

The Book of Daniel, especially chapter 7, has profoundly shaped the gospel tradition in its emphasis on the Kingdom of God and the Son of Man. Perhaps nowhere else in this Gospel are allusions to or echoes of Daniel 7 clearer than here. However, appreciating this connection requires familiarity with the LXX of the passage. The “original” Aramaic and English translations based on it do not contain the full range of common terms.<sup>29</sup>

LXX <sup>30</sup> Daniel 7:9, 13–14	Matthew 25:31–34 <sup>31</sup>
as a son of man	the son of man
glory	glory (2x)
throne	throne
all the nations	all the nations
kingdom	the King, kingdom
given eternal authority	given all authority in heaven & on earth (28:18)

Whatever the human-like figure’s identity in Daniel—an individual human (the messiah?) or heavenly persona (an angel? Michael?) or a collective symbol for God’s loyalist people on earth —this much can be said with certainty if one attends to the mini-drama of the vision rather than focusing exclusively on its final moment. He begins as a subordinate figure—a person of lower status. Before the Ancient of Days

<sup>26</sup> Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, Oxford Bible Commentary, pp. 878-879

<sup>27</sup> Barton and Muddiman Editors, Dale C. Allison Jr., Matthew Contributor, Oxford Bible Commentary, pp. 878-879

<sup>28</sup> Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV Version, pp. 1712-1713

<sup>29</sup> Eugene E. Lemcio, The King Who Teaches: St. Matthew’s Royal Curriculum. A Pedagogical Aid (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, forthcoming 2023)

<sup>30</sup> One cannot be reminded too often that the Bible of those who wrote the NT and that of their successors for the next several centuries were the Hebrew Scriptures in Greek translation. Exclusive dependence on the Hebrew and Aramaic text for translation is an innovation, begun in earnest during the Protestant Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Orthodox Churches also regard the LXX as inspired Scripture. Eugene E. Lemcio, The King Who Teaches: St. Matthew’s Royal Curriculum. A Pedagogical Aid (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, forthcoming 2023)

<sup>31</sup> Eugene E. Lemcio, The King Who Teaches: St. Matthew’s Royal Curriculum. A Pedagogical Aid (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, forthcoming 2023)

endowed him, he had been without glory. Earlier, he had not possessed authority. Nor had he ruled the kingdom bequeathed to him. And all the nations had not served him.<sup>32</sup>

v. 32 “*Nations*” (*ethne* Gk) can mean groups of almost any kind of people. It most likely implies groups of people beyond your own group. Thus it implies Jews and Gentiles.<sup>33</sup> v. 34 In Jesus parables King usually refers to God. Here it refers to the Son of Man. vv. 35-36 The criteria of judgement is whether a person has performed works of mercy to those in great need in the present world.<sup>34</sup>

This last passage reads like a description of what will happen on judgement day versus a parable. It puts strong emphasis on the truth that ultimately every person on earth will be called upon to account for his or her use of the opportunities of service experienced through life. Jesus shifts the narrative from behavior to outcomes because of behavior. The passage deals only with works. Nothing is said about grace or Jesus’ atoning work. This passage deals with the evidence on which people will be judged. The works we do are evidence of the grace of God at work in us, or of our rejection of that grace.<sup>35</sup>

vv. 32-33 That “*all the nations*” will come before him makes it clear that Jesus is speaking about final judgement for all peoples, not just Jews. He uses the analogy of separating sheep and goats in a herd. The sheep were more prized and placed at the shepherds right hand.<sup>36</sup>

v. 34 What is unique to Matthew is it is not God judging all of the people, it is Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of Man. This passage is the only one in which Jesus refers to himself as King. “Inherit the kingdom” means something has come as a gift from God, not as a result of one’s own activities or efforts. What is inherited is the kingdom, which means a sure and accepted place in the kingdom of God rather than they themselves will become kings. This kingdom is not an afterthought, it is one God has planned for creation from the beginning. It implies and elect.<sup>37</sup>

Vv. 35-36 Jesus cites actions people have taken which is evidence that God has been at work in the world through them – not that this is why they earned the kingdom.<sup>38</sup>

vv. 37-39 The sheep are now called the righteous. What God has done through them has transformed them into people who are acceptable in God’s sight. Their kindness to the needy was not in order to gain reward and salvation, but part of the way they lived their lives in response to what Christ has done for them.<sup>39</sup>

“*Truly I tell you*” sets out an important and serious statement to come. How you treat the least of the people is how you have treated Jesus. Two ways to understand “the least of these my brothers”: brothers means Jesus disciples; and/or “brothers and sisters” implies any one in need, lowly people in general. How you treat lowly, needy people who you think are of no importance is vitally important to Jesus.<sup>40</sup>

vv. 41-46 sets out the negative for those who did not treat the poor with benevolence. Their punishment is v. 41 “You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels”. Their mistake is not in terms of some awful crime, but in terms of their failure to do what is right – theirs is a sin of omission. Jesus promises a place in the kingdom for the sheep, and eternal punishment for the goats. “Eternal” reward and punishment is thus a central principle in Christian orthodoxy.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Eugene E. Lemcio, *The King Who Teaches: St. Matthew’s Royal Curriculum. A Pedagogical Aid* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, forthcoming 2023)

<sup>33</sup> Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV Version, pp. 1712-1713

<sup>34</sup> Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV Version, pp. 1712-1713

<sup>35</sup> Morris, Leon, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, pp. 619-641

<sup>36</sup> Morris, Leon, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, pp. 619-641

<sup>37</sup> Morris, Leon, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, pp. 619-641

<sup>38</sup> Morris, Leon, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, pp. 619-641

<sup>39</sup> Morris, Leon, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, pp. 619-641

<sup>40</sup> Morris, Leon, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, pp. 619-641

<sup>41</sup> Morris, Leon, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, pp. 619-641

## REFLECTION

Jewish Eschatological preaching is supposed to give people comfort. It promises an eventual end to troubles and judgement for the righteous and the sinners. In Chapter 25 the themes of delay and judgement dominate. Does Matthew 25 give a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience comfort? How do you respond to Chapter 25's themes?

### Delay

"As the bridegroom was delayed" (v.5)

"But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (24:36)

### Judgement

"And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (v.30)

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." (vv.31-32)

### How to behave while waiting:

#### Watchfulness

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour." (v.15)

#### Service/Love your neighbors as yourself

44 Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?' 45 Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'

## 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).

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