**The Gospel of Matthew**

**“The gospel was a message before it became a book.”**

**Matthew 8-13**

Texts in this section are used on the following Sundays in Pentecost:

**The Message:**

Matthew has chosen stories of Jesus’ “works” that picture God’s saving power present in Jesus to deliver people victimized by circumstances and powers from which they cannot save themselves: leprosy, paralysis, sickness, earthquake and storm, demon possession, sin, speech and hearing disability, blindness and death. Each story is a gospel in miniature that points to the meaning of the Christ event as a whole. *(New Interpreters Bible Commentary, 233)*

**Structure of 8:1-9:34**

1. **Christ Acts in Power for the Marginalized and Excluded – 8:1-17**
   1. For a Leprous Person
   2. For a Roman officer’s servant
   3. For a sick woman and many others
2. **Christ’s Might Acts Generate a Community of Discipleship – 8:18-9:17**
   1. Christ calls into the storm, of which he is master
   2. Christ calls into new horizons, where he is master
   3. Christ’s call generates opposition, of which he is master
3. **Christ’s Power Evokes Faith and Unbelief – 9:18-34**
   1. Faith in Jesus, who overcomes sickness, isolation, and death
   2. Sight to the blind and the question of faith
   3. Faith and unbelief: healing a speechless, demonized man

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| 18-Jun | Matthew 9:35-10:8, (9-23) |
| 25-Jun | Matthew 10:24-39 |
| 2-Jul | Matthew 10:40-42 |
| 9-Jul | Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30 |
| 16-Jul | Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 |
| 23-Jul | Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 |
| 30-Jul | Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 |

**Read 9:35-10:42 – In this section the disciples are named, authorized and sent.**

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus in this section? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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What elements of this section are most challenging to you?

“To many modern Christians, this speech seems strange, even fanatical… To the extent that it seems alien, it is a call to reexamine our own version of Christianity and ask whether we have remade the Christian faith to our own tastes, and whether it is possible to so change faith and have it remain Christian faith.” *(New Interpreters Bible Commentary, 263)*

Note: Matthew 11: 2-11 (John the Baptist) is used in the 3rd Sunday of Advent – Here Jesus explicitly names John as Elijah

* John has doubts about Jesus in this section: “Are you the one or should we wait for another?”
* What message might this story convey to later disciples?

**Read Matthew 11: 16-30 –** Who is Jesus talking to? Who is he talking about?

* To whom have “things” been revealed and to whom have they been hidden?

Outline of Chapter 12

This section highlights a conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees.

This section also lifts up Jesus as a “Son of David” – how might he be similar to David? How is he different?

What Questions do you have?

What is the sign of Jonah?

Matthew 12:1 Plucking Grain on the SabbathMatthew 12:9 The Man with a Withered HandMatthew 12:15 God's Chosen ServantMatthew 12:22 Jesus and BeelzebulMatthew 12:33 A Tree and Its FruitMatthew 12:38 The Sign of JonahMatthew 12:43 The Return of the Unclean SpiritMatthew 12:46 The True Kindred of Jesus

Chapter 13 begins a new section of teaching in Parables: Read each of the parables in chapter 13 and discuss.

**Notes from EntertheBible.org**

**SUMMARY Matthew 13:1-58 – The Parables of the Kingdom and the Rejection at Nazareth**

Jesus the Messiah has announced the kingdom of God in word and deed. But response to this message is mixed. In his teaching in parables Jesus describes the righteous as those who are blessed in their hearing and who thus receive the surprising treasure of the kingdom with understanding. Those who reject it are the weeds that live in the meantime among the wheat but will be separated out at the end of the age.

**ANALYSIS** The third major discourse of Jesus in Matthew collects a series of parables of Jesus on the kingdom of God, in which Matthew expands on Mark's original. As opposition to Jesus' ministry and message grows (see especially chapters 11 and 12), Jesus now turns more directly to teaching on discipleship and the kingdom in this collection of Jesus' teaching in parables, which also thus reflects the understanding of that message for Matthew's own community. Two themes especially characterize Matthew's collection-the understanding and the blessing of the disciples-both of them grounded in scriptural prophecy (13:14-17). Once again the discourse proper ends with Matthew's typical formula conclusion (13:53) and then is followed by the account of Jesus' rejection even in his own home town of Nazareth (13:54-58). The people take offense at Jesus and the impact of their unbelief is confirmed in his inability any longer to do deeds of power in that place.

**SUMMARY Matthew 13:1-23 – The Parable of the Sower and Its Interpretation and the Purpose of the Parables**

The parable of the sower, like the other parables, represents secrets of the kingdom given to those whose eyes are blessed to see. The kingdom of heaven is like a sower who sows seed on various kinds of soil. That which falls on good soil represents those who hear the word of the kingdom, understand it, and produce fruit for the harvest.

**ANALYSIS** Though Jesus' teaching in parables is addressed to the crowds, it is clearly meant especially for those righteous members of the community who respond to Jesus' teaching in faithful obedience. Jesus' parable of the sower and its interpretation are clearly joined together and centered around Jesus' teaching to the disciples about the reason for the parable teaching in general. The parables comprise "secrets" about the kingdom of God, the understanding of which is a sign of blessing for those that have ears to hear. That Jesus' teaching further marks a division between those who take offense and the disciples who hear and understand is carefully and explicitly described as the fulfillment of prophecy in themes typical of Matthew's narrative (13:14-17)

**SUMMARY Matthew 13:24-43 – The Parable of the Weeds among the Wheat and Its Interpretation; the Mustard Seed, the Yeast, and Jesus’ Teaching in Parables**

Jesus' teaching in parables is in fulfillment of scriptural prophecy. The parable of the weeds among the wheat sees the kingdom of heaven to be like a farmer who sows good seed and then is surprised to find it also contains weeds. The weeds and the wheat must be allowed to grow together until the time of harvest, because, like a mustard seed or like yeast, the kingdom will grow and expand.

**ANALYSIS** Like the parable of the sower with its interpretation, the next section presents a parable and its explanation to the disciples by Jesus that frame two other brief parables and a second statement about the reason for Jesus' parable teaching. Matthew's reworking of Mark and his preference for structure are both to be seen here in support of his key themes. He has removed Mark's parable about the seed growing secretly and replaced it with his unique one about the weeds growing among the wheat. As such he has shifted the question from how the seed grows to why there are so many weeds among the wheat and what to do about it. The interpretation provides transparent instruction to Matthew's own disciple community about life in the meantime of kingdom waiting. The sower is the Son of Man who at the end of time will come to gather his good seed, the righteous children of the kingdom, and separate out the weeds, the children of the evil one, and burn them in fire. The parables of the mustard seed and the yeast are framed by this teaching and so underscore the confidence in the growth of the kingdom in spite of the signs to the contrary.