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CONFRONTING
JESUS

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STUDIES IN
MATTHEW 8-13

CONFRONTING JESUS

Jesus has just stepped down from the mountain (where he gave the sermon on the mount), and he shows us what he's just been teaching about for three chapters: That he has the authority of God himself, over creation, and in his understanding of the Old Testament law. So in story after story, told in quick succession, we will see Jesus reversing people's expectations of who God seeks out, reversing the curse of sin, and even reversing everyone's understanding of God's own laws in the Old Testament, to show the new way that he was bringing in through his kingdom.

Because Jesus is reversing so many expectations of God and of his Messiah, many will confront Jesus with their doubts and accusations. But at the same time, some will marvel, and call upon Jesus in faith—almost always the least expected people (which in itself can be confronting). But in this section of Matthew, Jesus slowly reveals himself to the world, as the authoritative Son of God, but also the compassionate Servant of God.

“You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to infants.”

Matthew 11:25

This term, no matter whether you're pretty new to the Christian faith, or you've been a Christian all of your life, we hope that you will be confronted anew with the unexpected people who Jesus loves to seek out, the unexpected ways that Jesus loves to work in their lives, and the confronting glory of our all-powerful and all-merciful Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

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In this series, we want you all to feel like your groups are freed up to read these passages afresh, and bring your own questions to these stories, as you meet Jesus each week. These four simple questions will be repeated in every study, to try to help that to happen:



What do you like about this passage?



What don't you understand about this passage?



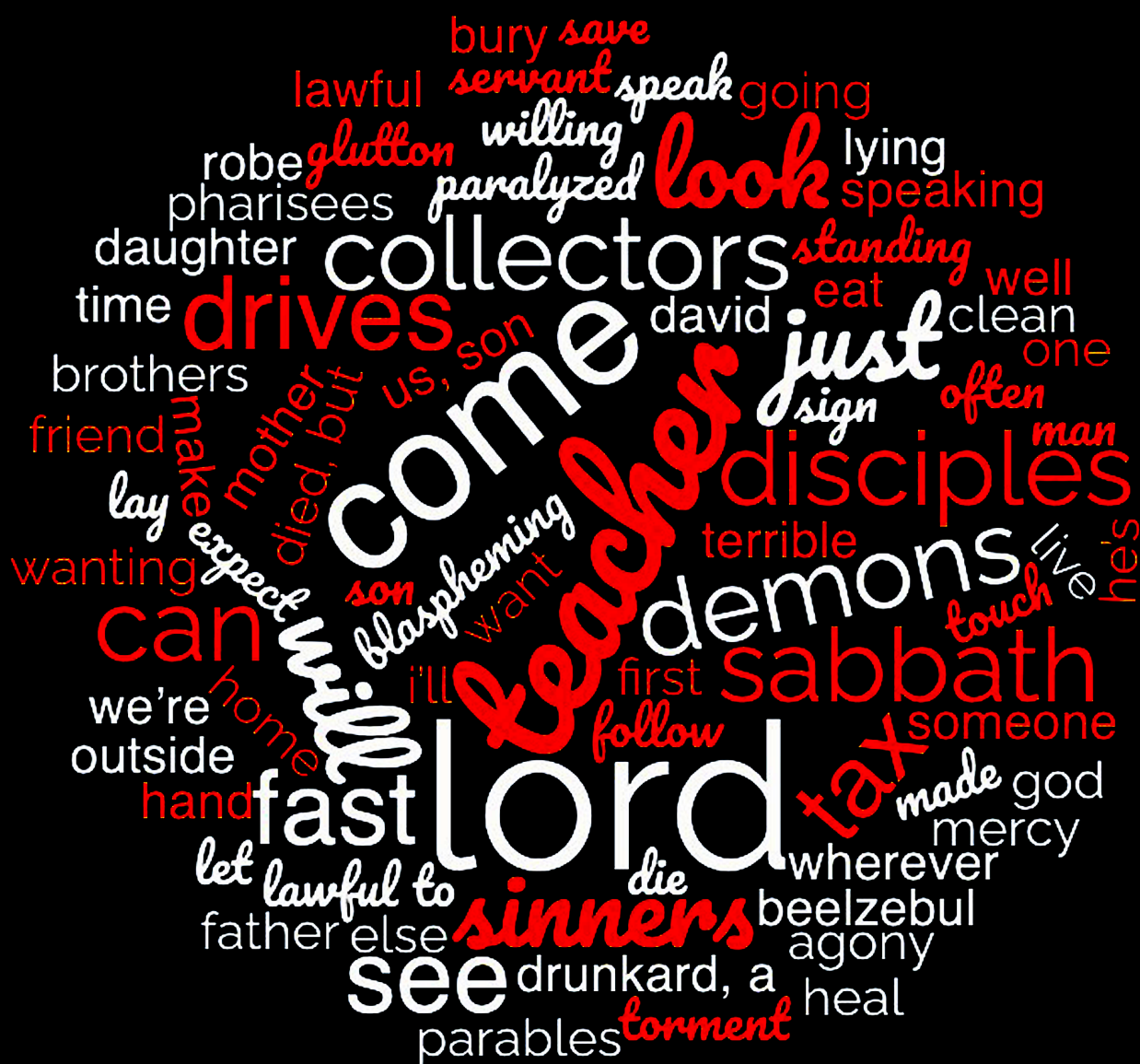
What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?



How does Jesus want to shape the way you live in this story?

If you feel like you need a little bit more guidance in working through the passages, there will also be more specific questions in each study, as well. But feel free to work through the stories in whatever way is most helpful for your group.

This is a word cloud of every word that people confront Jesus with in Matthew 8-13:



MATTHEW 1-7 RECAP

Jesus' birth fulfills thousands of years of God's promises.



Chapter one

Jesus is born in Bethlehem, and his family moves to Nazareth.



Chapter two

John the Baptist prepares the way for Jesus, and baptises him.



Chapter three

Jesus is tempted in the wilderness, but stands strong, and starts his ministry.



Chapter four

Jesus teaches that those who know their need for God are blessed.



Chapter five

Jesus teaches that you don't need to impress others, because God will look after you.



Chapter six

Jesus teaches his followers to seek his kingdom, and build their lives on it.



Chapter seven

PRAYER POINTS



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J E S U S
E X P E C T S
T O O M U C H
O F U S

ooo

MATTHEW
8:1-22

READ MATTHEW 8:1-22



What do you like about this passage?



What don't you understand about this passage?



How do people confront Jesus in this passage? How does Jesus respond?



What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

In verse 2, why do you think that Jesus focused on this one man, out of the “large crowd”?

In the Old Testament law, when you touched a leper, you became unclean (Leviticus 13). But what happens when Jesus touches the leper? What is this meant to tell us about Jesus’ power?

Jesus then tells the man to show himself to the priest, which was a step toward being restored to society. What is this meant to show us about Jesus’ mission?

How is Jesus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah in verses 14-17?

Read Isaiah 53:3-6. How does the rest of this prophecy help us to understand Jesus’ mission on earth?

Read 1 Peter 2:21-25.

How does this help us to see how Jesus would ultimately fulfill this prophecy?



How does Jesus want to shape the way you live in this story?

When we are seeking to love like Jesus, how can we be seeking to not just meet people's immediate, physical needs, but their social needs, as well?

Like the centurion, do you trust in both the ability and the willingness of Jesus to work powerfully in your life? Is it more difficult for you to trust his ability (his power) or his willingness (his compassion)? Why?

The Centurion trusts that Jesus' words have the power to restore people's lives. When is it hardest for you to trust that Jesus' words have the power to bring change?

"I will follow you wherever you go" (Matt. 8:19) are the words of a whole-hearted disciple of Jesus. Are there any difficult places or situations where Jesus is calling you to go at the moment?



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J E S U S
T H I N K S T O O
M U C H O F
H I M S E L F

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MATTHEW
8:23-9:13

READ MATTHEW 8:23-9:13



What do you like about this passage?



What don't you understand about this passage?







How do people confront Jesus in this passage? How does Jesus respond?



What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

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In each of these stories, Jesus shows his authority as the Christ. How does he show his authority in each?

 Matthew 8:26	 Matthew 8:29-32
 Matthew 9:2-7 	 Matthew 9:12-13 

In all of the four stories, there are very different reactions to Jesus. How do the people react to Jesus in the each of the stories?

 Matthew 8:27	 Matthew 8:34
 Matthew 9:8 	 Matthew 9:11 



How does Jesus want to shape the way you live in this story?

Even in the face of violent storms, demonic pigs, and debilitating illness, by the end of each of these stories, people seem to be the most afraid of Jesus and his power. Do you think that we should be afraid of Jesus' power? Why / why not?

The irony is, in each of these stories, Jesus was showing his power to save people. Jesus can only save us if he is the Son of God, with all authority on heaven and earth. How do 9:12-13 show us how Jesus uses his authority?

What are you afraid of at the moment? How do these stories speak into that fear?

Read 1 John 4:10-18. What's the ultimate answer that this passage gives to us in the face of fears?



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J E S U S
I S N ' T G O O D
E N O U G H

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MATTHEW
9:14-34

READ MATTHEW 9:14-34



What do you like about this passage?



What don't you understand about this passage?



How do people confront Jesus in this passage? How does Jesus respond?



What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

A ruler recently suffered the death of his daughter (9:18), a woman suffered for 12 years of social marginalization due to her condition (9:20), and two men suffer from blindness (9:27). How does Matthew present the faith of each of these people?

How does Jesus respond to each one?

How do we see the faith of each person in these stories?



Matthew 9:18

Matthew 9:21



Matthew 9:28





How does Jesus want to shape the way you live in this story?

How is your faith going at the moment? How quick are you to trust Jesus with your needs?

In these stories, we really do see that Jesus went out to reach and restore all kinds of people—both people at the top of the social order, and those marginalised from society. How can we be seeking to see people with the same indiscriminate compassion that Jesus shows here?

In each of these stories, the people trust Jesus to help them in ways that would ordinarily seem impossible. Is there a situation in your life where you were once prayerful, but have started to give up hope of any change?



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J E S U S
G E T S Y O U
A R R E S T E D

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MATTHEW
9:35-10:20



What do you like about this passage?



What don't you understand about this passage?



How do people confront Jesus in this passage? How does Jesus respond?



What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

How is 10:1-4 an answer to 9:37-38?

Jesus chose his disciples from very diverse backgrounds—a fisherman, a tax collector, and a zealous revolutionary. What does this say to us about Jesus' kingdom?

What reasons does Jesus give for bringing the good news to the Jewish people first?

Read Acts 1:8 and Romans 1:16. How do these passages help us to understand the priority of the Jewish people for the Gospel message?

What kind of authority does Jesus give to his disciples?

What kinds of words will the Spirit give Jesus' disciples to speak (verses 19-20)?

How do verses 37-38 speak to us today?



How does Jesus want to shape the way you live in this story?

"Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest." Here are Village Church's Gospel Partners.



The Djamaludins
Interserve Thailand



The Birchleys
CMS PNG



Pria
Mark Drama QLD



Nick
QUT Christians



The Woolletts
Power to Change,
Sydney



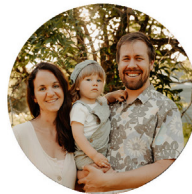
The Iedemas
FOCUS QUT



John Board
City Bible Forum
Brisbane



L&C
South-East Asia



Jared & Verena
Germany



Marcus & Anna
Central Asia

Spend some time praying for each of our Gospel Partners, that God would give them strength and encouragement for their work (if you want more specific and correct prayer points, you can find them in the Village Church prayer points list. If you don't know where to find it, please contact philip@vc.org.au).

Reach out to one of our Gospel partners to encourage them, to let them know that you've been praying for them this week.



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J E S U S
B R I N G S
H A T R E D

ooo

MATTHEW
10:16-42

READ MATTHEW 10:16-42



What do you like about this passage?



What don't you understand about this passage?



How do people confront Jesus in this passage? How does Jesus respond?



What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

From 10:21-31, what reasons do the disciples have for being fearful?

What does 10:28 teach us about fear? What does it look like to follow Jesus' words here?

Read Deuteronomy 10:12-13, Proverbs 1:7; 9:10, Ecclesiastes 12:13. How do these verses help us to understand the fear of God?

What better reasons does Jesus give his disciples to trust him?

What kinds of persecution may come with Jesus' mission. How do you see these in the world today?

Read James 2:1-7. How does it help us to understand what Jesus may have meant by 10:42?



How does Jesus want to shape the way you live in this story?

Jesus' most common command in the Bible is: "Don't be afraid." Read Luke 12:32, 2 Timothy 1:7, 1 John 4:18, Hebrews 13:6, Romans 8:15, 1 Peter 5:7. Revelation 1:17. What reasons do these passages give us not to be afraid?

Verses 32-33 are a pretty confronting challenge to those who identify as Christians. How are these verses a challenge to you right now?

What does it look like for you to be open about your Christian faith with your neighbours, workmates and friends?

Verses 34-39 are a pretty confronting challenge to Christians to prioritise Jesus and his kingdom above everything else in their lives. How are these verses a challenge to you right now?



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J E S U S
I S F O R
L O S E R S

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MATTHEW
11:1-30

READ MATTHEW 11:1-30



What do you like about this passage?



What don't you understand about this passage?



How do people confront Jesus in this passage? How does Jesus respond?



What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

Why might John have doubted whether Jesus was really the Christ? (verses 2-3)

How was Jesus' response answering John's question? (verses 4-6)

In verse 11, Jesus gives John the Baptist some pretty high praise. What do you think it means that "the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he"?

How does Romans 3:23-24 help us see how this applies to all of us?

What is "hidden" in verse 25?

How are verses 28-30 connected to verses 25-27?



How does Jesus want to shape the way you live in this story?

How might verse 6 be speaking to us today?

Are you more prone to feel like you're not good enough for God, or that God's okay with you no matter what you do (or both)? How does Romans 3:23-24 speak to that struggle?

How do you need to remember the hidden things of God's kingdom at the moment?

How do you need to come to Jesus to find rest right now?

What keeps you from bringing your burdens to the One who promises you rest?



J E S U S B R E A K S
H I S O W N
R U L E S



MATTHEW
12:1-21

READ MATTHEW 12:1-21



What do you like about this passage?



What don't you understand about this passage?



How do people confront Jesus in this passage? How does Jesus respond?



What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

In verses 1-2, how do the Pharisees confront Jesus about the Sabbath?

How does his reply flip the script on their issue?

In verses 9-10, how do the Pharisees confront Jesus about the Sabbath?

How does his reply flip the script on their issue?

Read Hebrews 4:4-16. How does this passage help us to understand how Christians should think about the Sabbath?

How does Jesus fulfil this prophecy from Isaiah?



How does Jesus want to shape the way you live in this story?

"The whole law is fulfilled in one statement: Love your neighbor as yourself" (Galatians 5:14). In both of these stories, Jesus showed that the Sabbath wasn't meant to keep hungry people from eating, or sick people from finding healing, but was intended as a day of rest, out of God's love for his people. Are you ever tempted to understand God's commands as cruel, rather than loving?

Jesus makes it clear to the Pharisees that people are more valuable than rules. In what area of your life are you tempted to value rules over relationships? What people or circumstances do you most want to control?

It's a human tendency to want to create rules, to try to appear good to God, to others, or to yourself. How can you see that tendency in yourself?

There are two very different responses to Jesus in this passage: "The Pharisees plotted against him, how they might kill him," and "the nations will put their hope in his name." Ironically, it was in Jesus' death that the nations will find their hope. Read 1 Peter 1:3-6. How does it give you hope?



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J E S U S
L A C K S
C R E D I B I L I T Y

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MATTHEW
12:22-50



What do you like about this passage?



What don't you understand about this passage?



How do people confront Jesus in this passage? How does Jesus respond?



What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

List all the ways that we see Jesus' authority in verses 22-32.

How is the healing in verse 22 showing that Jesus fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah in verses 18-21?

How do the Pharisees confront Jesus in verse 24?

How does Jesus confront them back?

Verse 31 has caused a lot of anxiety for a lot of Christians.

How does Isaiah's prophecy in verses 18-21 (and the context of the Pharisees' accusation in verse 24) help us to understand what "blasphemy against the Spirit" might mean?

As Matthew's gospel goes on, Jesus' words seem to become more and more polarising. How do Jesus' words confront his listeners, in verses 33-50?



How does Jesus want to shape the way you live in this story?

This passage is an extreme example, but if we're honest, we can all doubt whether God's work in our lives is truly good. Are you struggling to see the goodness in God's work in your life at the moment?

Have you ever worried that you may have committed the "unforgivable sin" against the Holy Spirit? From this passage, how would you help those who are worried that they may have done so?

From this week's passage, fill in the following sentence:

Knowing that God is _____ shows me
that I am _____.

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?



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J E S U S
M A K E S
N O S E N S E

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MATTHEW
13:1-23

READ MATTHEW 13:1-23



What do you like about this passage?



What don't you understand about this passage?



How do people confront Jesus in this passage? How does Jesus respond?



What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

How many times does "the kingdom of heaven" appear in this passage? Why do you think that it's emphasised so much?

What are the four types of soil? What are the four different outcomes from each of the soil?

What keeps the seed sown on the path, the rocky ground and the thorns from thriving?

What does the seed that falls on the good soil do that none of the other seed does (13:8)?

What question do the disciples have for Jesus in 13:10? What does their question imply about how Jesus' story landed on the ears of the crowds?

In one sentence, summarize Jesus' response to their question (13:11-17).



How does Jesus want to shape the way you live in this story?

How is the amazing fruitfulness of the seed that falls on the good soil an encouragement to all who have heard and believed the gospel?

How have you seen this fruitfulness in your own life? If you can, give a specific example to encourage the group.

Jesus tells the disciples that the crowd is deaf and blind to the secrets of the Kingdom. Yet the disciples themselves need help interpreting His parables. What could be making you spiritually blind or deaf to what God is saying to you in His Word?

Take a minute to pray that God would give you ears to hear and eyes to see; pray that like the disciples you would be blessed with understanding.



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