

# Life Group Notes 3/9/2025: Kingdom Come: Living the Gospel of Matthew— Pastor Mark Warren

No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net). Thank you for taking the time.

– *Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.*

**Remember:** Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our heart and guide our discussions.

***Please pre-read these notes and choose the direction that is appropriate for your group.***

Be cognizant of your group's time and be sensitive. *Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.*

**Note:** I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 3/9. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. ***The purpose is to minister to one another.*** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnote speaks:

1. [On Matthew the evangelist.](#)
2. [On Matthew the gospel.](#)
3. [On Paras Patel who plays Matthew in \*The Chosen\*.](#)
4. [On when the disciples were chosen.](#)
5. [On \*The Chosen\* and the miraculous catch of fish.](#)
6. [On forgiving seventy-seven times...or seventy times seven.](#)

**Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week.

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Pastor spoke of the opportunity to pray. He prophesied over the return of our young people and the readiness to receive them, disciple them and engage with what is God is doing in them and in their lives. He says, "...the world has done an incredible thing in sucking life out of them."

1. How?

2. Do you have a testimony?
3. What have you seen?
4. Is your life group ready to receive young people? ...to become a youth group for all people?
5. What does it take to do this?
6. What young people are you in contact with? What does it take to disciple them?
7. Take a moment to pray for the return of our sons and daughters, friends and neighbors.

With this new series, Pastor is asking us to bring a physical Bible to church with us. Do you have one?

Take a moment to look at the two footnotes [on Matthew the evangelist](#) and [Matthew, the gospel](#). Pastor Mark prophesies, "If we are willing and obedient, the Holy Spirit gets behind that desire and opens new doors for us. God is going to open up those doors. Why? Because He is wanting to stretch us and grow us. How? We will all engage in this together. This means, try not to miss a week, but if you do miss a week, re-engage online with the video and these notes. Take note especially of what the Holy Spirit reveals to you that is new. He then prayed that we each become disciples.

1. What does that mean?
2. What do you know of Matthew?
3. ...of the Gospel of Matthew? What is famous in Matthew?

Pastor says today he is setting the table. He lays out the big themes:

1. Jesus is the Messiah. This really sets the stage because the Jewish people is his intended audience. Matthew was a Jewish tax collector who was called by Jesus to join the 12 apostles. (Take a minute to watch the clip of Matthew's call from *The Chosen*. The link is [in footnote three below](#).)
2. Mark highlights several important facets of Matthew's character: He is a Jewish tax collector working for the Roman occupation government. He worked in the region of Capernaum, now a mere archaeological site, but at the time a burgeoning lakeside community on the merchants' road from the Mediterranean to Damascus. Because he worked for Rome, as an IRS agent today, he was not liked, and as a Jew was considered unclean.

In sum, Jesus picked someone who was already outcast in the community. He makes this analogy, "Imagine that He picked someone whom you despise, who was of the opposite opinion from you. Imagine that you were picked before He picked Matthew..." (If you didn't watch the above mentioned clip, do it now. Watch Peter's reaction to Matthew's call. Note Jesus' response to Peter.)

1. What is your response?
2. How easy would it be to accept him?

Look up Matthew 9: **9**As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax booth. "Follow Me," He told him, and Matthew got up and followed Him. **10**Later, as Jesus was dining at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Him and His disciples. **11**When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" **12**On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. **13**But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

1. What do you see?

2. Do you notice anything new this time?
3. What was Matthew's chief qualification explaining his call?
4. Why is the gift of healing not extended to the healthy?
5. Why does our Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?
6. Where do you fit into this narrative?

Look up the context of the verse Jesus quotes in Hosea 6:[4](#)*What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For your loyalty is like a morning mist, like the early dew that vanishes. [5](#)Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth, and My judgments go forth like lightning. [6](#)**For I desire mercy, not sacrifice. and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.** [7](#)But they, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant; there they were unfaithful to Me.*

1. What do you see?
2. How does the Word of the prophets "hew" us? (How is the Word sharper than a two-edged sword, as Hebrews 4 says?)
3. Why does the Word of the prophets hew us? How is your loyalty today?
4. What are the two things God desires most?
5. What is the best way to come to know God?
6. How is knowing God better than all sacrifice?
7. What is Jesus calling you to leave behind to better follow Him?

Look up the parallel passage in Luke 5:[29](#)*Then Levi hosted a great banquet for Jesus at his house. A large crowd of tax collectors was there, along with others who were eating with them. [30](#)But the Pharisees and their scribes complained to Jesus' disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" [31](#)Jesus answered, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. [32](#)I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."* (Scribe's note: Matthew is the Greek name he gives himself in his own account. Since this is clearly the parallel passage in Luke, Luke gives him his Jewish name, Levi.)

1. Do you see anything different from Matthew's account?
2. Whom does Levi invite to his banquet? Why would he do that? What kind of friends does Levi have?
3. Why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinners?
4. Does Jesus ever eat with Pharisees? Why? (See Luke 7:36 ff.) Compare the two banquets.

Pastor asks, "Who are those people whom we struggle to be around, whose lifestyle is so different; whose beliefs are so different? Would we be OK to say, 'Hey, I want to invite you to my house and introduce Jesus to you.'"

1. Who struggled at the banquet with the guests who were there?
2. Why didn't Matthew struggle? Why did he invite these guests in particular?
3. Did Jesus struggle with any who were there?
4. Do you think the other disciples struggled?
5. Why did the scribes and pharisees struggle?

Mark pointed out the order in which the disciples were picked. Peter and Andrew were first as they were fishing on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Then he picked out James and John. (See [footnote 5 below](#) to watch the depiction of Peter's, Andrew's, James' and John's call from season 1 in *The Chosen*.) (Mt 4, Mk 1) Philip and Nathanael aka Bartholomew followed. He says Matthew the tax collector followed next.

1. Look at how these disciples encountered Jesus in John 1 on the shores of the Jordan, during John the Baptist's ministry. What is the order of their first encounters, as depicted there?
2. Matthew is last mentioned by Luke in Acts 1: **12** *Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near the city, a Sabbath day's journey away. 13 When they arrived, they went to the upper room where they were staying: Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. 14 *With one accord they all continued in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.* Why is this list significant?*
3. What do we know of the future of the gospel from this meeting in the upper room with these people assembled together?
4. Explain the importance of their being in "one accord."
5. One of these is a former tax collector. The betrayer is no longer among them. Why are these significant observations?
6. What is known of Matthew from this point? (You can see the uncertainties in [footnote 1 below.](#))

Looking at the gospel of Matthew, Pastor notes these important contextual facts:

1. Matthew's audience was primarily the believing Jewish community.
2. He is therefore careful to align New Testament events with Old Testament prophecies.
3. His precision demands that he even address Jesus' genealogy in a direct line from His birth back to David and eventually to Abraham, to prove that His lineage is as it was foretold and declares Him to be Messiah.
4. The work before His ministry are found in chapters 1-3, including His birth and His temptation. The most powerful example of His teaching of the Kingdom is found in chapters 5-7, from the Sermon on the Mount. Then follow the parables of the Kingdom, where Mark says we'll be spending much time. He says this is important because Jesus is not calling us to anticipate something afar off and to come, but to live in the Kingdom here and now.
  - a. Explain.
  - b. When Jesus says, "You are the light of the world (*cosmos*)," is He saying that's what we will be? Or that's what we are here and now?
  - c. Look at Matthew 5: **14** *You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they set it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 *In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.* Does your light shine before or after you go to heaven? How are you doing?*
  - d. What light do people see when you are in the room?
5. Then he goes on to talk about where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, the sheep and the goats. Mark says we have to understand what this means and on which side we will be found.

Looking at the difficult themes of Matthew, Pastor pointed these out:

1. **Discipleship and the cost of discipleship.** He says, there is a radical way by which we follow Jesus. Look at Matthew 10: **7** *Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter*

more than Me is not worthy of Me; [38](#)and anyone who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. [39](#)Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. What do you see? Why does this seem difficult? Who loves your son or daughter more? You or Jesus? Who knows your son or daughter better? You or Jesus? Explain again why this seems difficult. Is Jesus saying we forsake family to follow Him? If He loves them more than we ever could, what is He actually suggesting?

2. **God's love for the Gentiles.** Mark says, "The Jews believed that they were God's chosen people to the exclusion of everyone else." Jesus' teaching through Matthew the Jewish tax collector will open the gospel to everybody. If we are the "light of the world/cosmos," who is excluded from our light? He continues, "God chooses and welcomes those whom our own prejudice would exclude."
3. **The hypocrisy of the religious.** He says, "After we've 'walked with Jesus for a long time, it's easy to fall into rhythms that become religious, and when we're not careful, our own religiosity can become a stronghold of judgment against the very people whom God wants us to call." He points out that we become the whitewashed tombs of which Jesus spoke. Look at Matthew 23:[27](#)*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of impurity. [28](#)In the same way, on the outside you appear to be righteous, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.* Describe the danger depicted here in your own words. Note that the Pharisees were the theologians, inventing the doctrines, and the scribes were the teachers, who transcribed and taught the Pharisaical doctrines. Why did Jesus go after them in particular?
4. **The cost of forgiveness and mercy.** When you have been wronged, how often do you have to forgive those who wronged you? Look at Matthew 18:[21](#)*Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother who sins against me? Up to seven times?" [22](#)Jesus answered, "I tell you, not just seven times, but seventy-seven times!* Why is this a difficult theme?
5. **The final judgment where people are separated into two groups—**This is the theme of the sheep and the goats. Mark claims that Jesus points out who these people are in Matthew 13:[41](#)*The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will weed out of His kingdom every cause of sin and all who practice lawlessness. [42](#)And they will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [43](#)Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.* What makes this theme difficult? Explain what lawlessness is? What matters to those without law? How does one "practice lawlessness?" Mark points out, "There are people today, people we know, who will die and go to hell? What should our response be to that?" How is this question a test of our own love?
6. **Jesus is the true King, with authority over Rome and religion.** Jesus challenges both the civil authority and the religious authority and establishes His own power over each. Look at Matthew 28:[18](#)*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. [19](#)Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20](#)and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* When Jesus says "all authority," what is included? Authority over what? Authority



over whom? What is excluded? Who is excluded? Explain the word “therefore” in this context. Under whose authority do we go?

Finally, Pastor Mark describes discipleship in the context of Matthew. He says:

1. “Discipleship begins with **hearing Jesus’ call**, as Matthew heard Jesus call him. Today, I’m encouraging us to recognize that Jesus is calling each one of us to hear His voice and to respond to His call.”
2. “Then **stepping into a life of learning**. Jesus never suggested that when we were called we were instantly made perfect. Peter messed up a lot of times, and Jesus changed his name to ‘Rock.’ He’s calling us likewise to learn and submit to what we hear.
3. “And then **growing in unwavering obedience** to His Words and ways.” We decide to follow what we know we have been told. Mark observes, “We are in a spiritual conflict. Do we nourish our spirit, or do we nourish our flesh...and the battleground is our soul that is being saved, which sits at the center of our very will and our emotions, our innermost being. So I am aiming to build up the spirit so that we can combat the flesh that desires to take our life from us. If we feed the flesh, our flesh will lead us to places that are sinful. Our fleshly desires will give way to the lust of our eyes and our own greed, whereas the things of the Spirit will lead us to Jesus, to life and hope. Look at Galatians 6:8 *The one who sows to please his flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; but the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.* Do you have a testimony? Do you have questions?”

Mark says, “The Spirit is challenging me to challenge you, not to chastise you, but to prepare you for some difficult decisions that you are going to be facing shortly. He’s asking me to challenge your thinking, asking yourself, ‘Where am I in this narrative? Am I sheep or am I goat? ...a true follower or lukewarm? ...light or darkness? ...truly called or just someone who showed up accidentally? What does it mean to be called of the Lord?’”

1. What do you look forward to in this series?
2. What questions are you wrestling with?
3. Do you have insights to share?

He concludes, “I’m not preaching to you. I’m preaching to us, myself included. I feel like God is saying, ‘Would you make His bride, the church, ready...more radiant. Would you help Her clothe Herself in my radiance, in My image?’ Then he prophesied again, “It is not a time for us go into autopilot, but to go into high gear. It will require us to walk in great humility, to be open, to have the courage to walk in obedience.”

1. Your thoughts, in conclusion?
2. Who needs this message? Why?

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### ***The follow up application:***

1. Use the [soap study below](#) throughout the week and note the understanding you receive.
2. Read the gospel of Matthew this week. Jot down questions and thoughts that come to you. Note the themes and the context.
3. Invite friends whom God puts on your path to partake in this series...and in the discussions in life groups that will come up.

***Take the time to pray.***

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### Scribe's Footnotes:

1. **On Matthew, the evangelist**—If you're interested in finding more about Matthew, you'll do well to do your own research with the usual caution. What we know on the basis of fact can be found in the scripture, where seven verses of the New Testament speak of him. What we know on the basis of legend is legion. Here is an excellent website to begin your own study: <https://overviewbible.com/matthew-the-apostle/>.
2. **On Matthew the gospel**—If this is your first foray into what “scholars” call textual criticism, the study of the authenticity of various texts, Wikipedia is as good a place to begin as any. It covers the claims and controversies as well as any work, and remains somewhat neutral in its analysis. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_Matthew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Matthew).
3. **On Paras Patel, who plays Matthew in *The Chosen***—Despite some of the disturbing controversies concerning the depiction of the gospel in the new series, *The Chosen*, one of the strengths of the series lies in its casting of each of the disciples and their relationships with one another. Paras Patel plays a Matthew who is so punctilious critics claim he has Asperger's disease, a form of autism. What is clear is that he notices details like no one else, making his own eventual writing of the gospel plausible and almost predictable. It is this very human portrayal of Matthew in the first season, and his interactions with the rest of the cast, that makes some of the glaring errors in the screenplay that develop over the seasons, almost forgivable, but easier to overlook. Here is the scene where Jesus calls Matthew in season one episode 7: [https://youtu.be/Bk6cd12kZdM?si=0QR3fEXFyNcVZ\\_Sk](https://youtu.be/Bk6cd12kZdM?si=0QR3fEXFyNcVZ_Sk). Enjoy.
4. **On when the disciples were first called**—The disciples were first called to be disciples in their hometowns, Bethsaida and Capernaum, on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, while they were cleaning their nets. However, for some of them, this is not the first time they were called. When you read of their first encounter in John 1, many encountered Jesus with John the Baptist at Jesus' own baptism and began to follow him there because of John's testimony. Look at John 1:**43***The next day Jesus decided to set out for Galilee. Finding Philip, He told him, “Follow Me.”* **44***Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the same town as Andrew and Peter.* The disciples had been disciples of John, and had already spent much time south in Judea on the banks of the Jordan river. Their call on the banks of the Sea of Galilee was a confirmation of their own hearts' desire at their first meeting on the banks of the Jordan.
5. **On *The Chosen* and the miraculous catch of fish**—Another extraordinary scene from *The Chosen*, also from the first season, is when Jesus calls Peter after the miraculous catch of fish. Watch it here: [https://youtu.be/hWGCkovAUWM?si=M6Hxt\\_TfW7NuD4KZ](https://youtu.be/hWGCkovAUWM?si=M6Hxt_TfW7NuD4KZ).
6. **On forgiving seventy-seven times...or seventy times seven**—In Matthew 18:22, we are either to forgive our brother seventy-seven times or seventy times seven times depending on the translation, and the translator's choice. This discrepancy began with the translation of Genesis 4, where Lamech declares he will be avenged of any wrong done to him, just as Cain, in these terms: **24***If Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.* The Greek translation of this in the LXX (aka the Septuagint), the first and authoritative translation of the Old Testament into Koine Greek, allows either seventy-seven fold or seventy times seven fold. Whatever translation you are reading

from, the translator decided how many times it is appropriate to forgive, without breaking the rules of accuracy.

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**For further study:**

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP method** (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Matthew 9:9-13

Tuesday: Hosea 6:4-7

Wednesday: Acts 1:12-14

Thursday: Matthew 5:14-16

Friday: Matthew 10:37-39

Saturday: Matthew 23:23-24

Sunday: Matthew 23:27-28

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.