



# Devotional

June 28 - Oct. 3

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The evidence before you, in Chapter 5 (the Beatitudes) confirms that Jesus' grace extended to all – especially those in need by telling us that Blessed are the Poor in Spirit (5:3), Blessed are those who mourn (5:4), Blessed are the meek (5:5), and Blessed are the merciful (5:7). Now I ask you, has there ever been a better message in your lifetime?

Furthermore, ladies and gentlemen, the evidence before you, following the Beatitudes and continuing through chapter 12, Jesus raises the bar for us by teaching us that not only shall we not commit adultery but shall not look lustfully at a woman (5:27-28), that an eye for an eye is insufficient and that we are to turn the other cheek (5:39), that we are to give to the needy (6:1-4), that we cannot serve God and money (6:24), and that we are not to judge others (7:1).

Prayer: Gracious Father in Heaven, thank you for loving the world so much that you gave us your only Son such that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Questions:

1. Are my actions consistent with the teachings of Jesus?
2. When I fall short, can I humble myself and admit my failings?
3. How can I select my favorite teaching of Jesus and apply it in my life?

## WEEK ELEVEN (SEPTEMBER 6–12)

**Day 250: September 6, 2020**

**Full Plan: Matthew 13:1–58**

**Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 13:3–43**

There are seven parables in Matthew 13, with this common idea: God is at work in your life; it may seem small, but it's real. So you have a choice: let that work grow, or choke and hide it. Don't be like those who live their entire life and miss out (v 17).

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 251: September 7, 2020**

**Full Plan: Matthew 14:1–15:39**

**Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 14:1–36**

Matthew 14 describes what may have been the longest 2 days of his ministry: grief over John's death, feeding the 5,000, walking on water, and arguing with the Pharisees, all in 48 hrs. But here's the model for us: twice in that period, he withdrew to pray.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 252: September 8, 2020**

**Full Plan: Matthew 16:1–18:35**

**Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 17:1–27**

Matthew 16-18 is the gospel's pivot. Peter confesses Jesus to be the messiah (16), then the Transfiguration (17), then Jesus teaches reconciliation. (18) It's a reminder that calling Jesus Lord means full surrender to God, and full restoration with others.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 253: September 9, 2020**

**Full Plan: Matthew 19:1–20:34**

**Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 18:1–35**

Matthew 19-20 is full of reversals. Children are blessed, the last are first, the materialistic are burdened, early and late laborers are treated the same, and the served become the servant. God's grace contradicts the world's ways. That's good news for us. How might you live more "counter-culturally"?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 254: September 10, 2020**

**Full Plan: Matthew 21:1–46**

**Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 26:1–35**

In Matthew 21, Jesus overturned the tables because the temple wasn't being used for its holy purpose. Same for our lives. If we compromise the work that God wants to do in us, we are like a fruitless fig tree, a disobedient child, or a rebellious worker.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 255: September 11, 2020**

**Full Plan: Matthew 22:1–23:39**

**Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 26:36–75**

Matthew 22-23 is the last verbal showdown between Jesus and the Pharisees. They test him with four questions about his authority, then he pronounces six woes against them for their hypocrisy. Struggles with doubt are understandable. But hypocrisy is inexcusable.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 256: September 12, 2020**

**Full Plan: Matthew 24:1–25:46**

**Abbreviated Plan: Matthew 27:1–31**

The parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31-46 is a reminder that if you're waiting for Jesus to come back, stop waiting. Jesus is already here. You can see him in the faces of the hungry, thirsty, the immigrant, the poor, and the prisoner.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**September 6–12, 2020: Weekly Devotion by Glenn Simpson**

This week, as we read the second half of Matthew, we are graced with a series of glorious life lessons from Jesus – lessons that are the heart of God's plan for us through the life of His son, Jesus. Beginning in Chapter 13, Jesus' parables and miracles tell us that obeying God should be foremost in our lives.

If scripture says to obey God, why don't I listen to God's voice rather than focusing on my own instead?

A little more than a decade ago, my wife and I took our first mission trip to Nicaragua. I wasn't sure why we decided to go to a third world country not long after their civil war. In retrospect, we acted upon the recommendation of the previous year's group that had survived the mission. My experience floored me. I found

happiness among the destitute; I witnessed the grace of God; I experienced true joy from serving God.

Better yet, I gained a new perspective of scripture. It was on that trip that Matthew 25 came alive for me and I for the first time saw scripture more than intellectually. We felt the presence of Jesus within the community we served - Leon, Nicaragua. In fact, each evening the group would share where we had seen Jesus during the day.

Scripture says 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ... The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Through my real-world experience, I've heard Jesus' words speak to me today as if He were in my presence. I've experienced the real joy that comes from obeying God – living out Matthew 25 as obedience to God rather than thinking of myself.

Prayer: Gracious God, as we pause from our hectic lives this Labor Day, may we focus more clearly on our relationship with You and seek to make Your love real to others to the best of my ability.

Questions:

1. How does my understanding scripture change throughout my life?
2. How has the Bible Project 2020 affected my obedience to God?
3. How can I more fully live out the lesson of Matthew 25?