



MONDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2018

SERIES: The Gospel of Matthew

Read: Matthew 16:1-4

Plug In...

In the Bible, miracles can be done by humans, even Satan. Here in Matthew the Pharisees and Sadducees are asking for a higher category. Signs are the direct visible or audible manifestation or intervention of God.

Jesus has given signs (e.g. the feeding of the 4,000 – Matthew 15:32-38). If they didn't accept that, then no wonder they're described as "an evil and adulterous generation" (v.4).

Chew It Over...

Jesus announces that to such a generation only one sign will be given. The sign of Jonah. What might that be? How do we find out?

Once we grasp the sign, we have all we need to "read" the times. If we are in search of more signs, Jesus says we're in search of something that doesn't exist. We've reached a time in history at the ministry of Jesus where there is only one sign from heaven in play, which is Jesus Himself.

Prayer Suggestion

Ask the Lord to build your faith and confidence in this sign and to live in the light of it.



TUESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2018

SERIES: The Gospel of Matthew

Read: Matthew 16:5-12

Plug In...

The disciples panic that Jesus might be highlighting their stupidity in not bringing bread. Jesus picks them up on this and says essentially, "Given all you've just seen with me, how do you not get that I'm not talking about bread, but the destructive teaching of the Pharisees".

Chew It Over...

To make the point, Jesus paces the disciples back through two staggering signs and draws attention to the maths. In pointing this out, how does that show what Jesus teaches in contrast to the Pharisees?

Prayer Suggestion

Bring whatever you lack to Jesus today in prayer. Rejoice that He sees what you need and provides. Ask that you will walk in trust that despite the conditions of this world, the conditions of our lives, we have all things in Christ and will experience them completely when He returns with His inheritance for us.



WEDNESDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2018

SERIES: The Gospel of Matthew

Read: Matthew 16:13-20

Plug In...

This is a massively significant passage. A turning point in the whole story of Matthew. Peter gets Jesus' identity right. Most are missing it, Peter says, "You are the Messiah of the Living God!".

Then, the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are given to the disciples.

Chew It Over...

Verse 18 is the most discussed passage throughout church history. Any ideas why?

The keys belonged to the end time David ([Isaiah 22:20:22](#)). What powers are given to the followers of Jesus? People's eternal destiny is decided now as people respond to the disciples' message about Jesus as the Messiah.

If you are a Christian, come to terms with the keys Jesus places in your hands. The proverb about the tongue's power for life and death takes on more meaning than just building a person's esteem up ([Proverbs 18:21](#)).

This is a heavy responsibility, oh how we must pray that we do not deprive people of the life-saving message they must hear (*cf.* [Matthew 23:13](#)).

[NB: It is worth observing Jesus' method with His friends. He spent time with them. Cared for them. Then asks them a question: Who do you think I am? Can we use this question too? *What do you think of Jesus? What do you think others think of Him? Who do you think He actually is?*]

Prayer Suggestion

May it not be so Lord that people are shut out of the Kingdom because of my shame to witness. Move me. Make me bold. May I develop relationships in order to open the Kingdom to my friends and family through presenting the Gospel. Give me opportunity to speak today. Do not allow Satan to dissuade me. Do not let my sin deflect me.



THURSDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2018

SERIES: The Gospel of Matthew

Read: Matthew 16:21-23

Plug In...

Peter understood the first half of the Gospel. That Jesus is the Messiah.

Chew It Over...

What is the other half of the Gospel that He failed to understand at this point?

Jesus just said that the first part of the Gospel understanding was *given* to Peter (v.17). Jesus keeps telling His disciples that their understanding of Him and the Kingdom comes from the Father alone ([11:27](#); [13:11](#)).

So, while we feel the weight of holding the 'keys to the Kingdom of Heaven', recognise that the heart of faith which confesses only comes from the Father.

Prayer Suggestion

Bring names to your Heavenly Father, ask that He will motivate you to share Jesus with them. Ask the Father to open their heart to confess the crucified Messiah.



The Lakes

FRIDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2018

SERIES: The Gospel of Matthew

Read: Matthew 16:24-28

Plug In...

To carry your cross was to publicly walk to your death. People looked on and saw the cross on your shoulders as you marched towards your death. Jesus says know that following Jesus– even if in shame; even if towards death – ends in gaining your whole life back.

Following Jesus publicly has to be decided on now! The Son of Man has come into His Kingdom. He's returning to remove all those against Him soon.

Chew It Over...

Will you risk it all for following Jesus? Are you risking all?

These are not diet-like questions. The ones where we challenge ourselves over food and fitness (e.g. a little bit of pain for a lot of gain). These are lordship questions. The question meets us at the level of: *What rules your life?* Our answer is made clear when seen through the lens of life and death. Do we think going in a direction away from the teaching and lifestyle of Jesus will bring us life? Or do we know that even if following leads to our death, Jesus has promised that the gates of death will not be the final word. On the other side of death is eternal resurrection. Life!

Prayer Suggestion

Help us to believe that Jesus is more alive and more real than the death we see all around. As we face our mortality, God, help us not be scared, but to follow Jesus

publicly. Be it social death. Be it physical death. We rejoice in the promise of resurrection.



WEEKEND 10-11 FEBRUARY 2018

SERIES: The Gospel of Matthew

Read: Jonah 1-4 (and Matthew 16:1-4)

Plug In...

Do you know the story of Jonah? If you only know it through the lens of a children's Bible, then today's the day to get deep with it.

Chew It Over...

Without absorbing this story, we won't grasp the key sign Jesus is directing us to.

Prayer Suggestion

How does the story of Jonah inspire you to pray to Jesus?