

Study Guide



Growing as Faithful Disciples

Distribute before session 1 for use in session 1.

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Matthew 13:53–15:39

Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study and at the week’s assembly.

Hymn

Guide me ever, great Redeemer,
 Pilgrim through this barren land.
 I am weak, but You are mighty;
 Hold me with Your pow’rful hand.
 Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
 Feed me now and evermore;
 Feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain
 Where the healing waters flow;
 Let the fire and cloudy pillar
 Lead me all my journey through.
 Strong deliv’rer, strong deliv’rer,
 Shield me with Your mighty arm;
 Shield me with Your mighty arm.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
 Bid my anxious fears subside;
 Death of death and hell’s destruction,
 Land me safe on Canaan’s side.
 Songs and praises, songs and praises
 I will raise forevermore;
 I will raise forevermore.

William Williams, alt.

Prayer

*Lord Jesus,
 Look deep within my heart
 and You will see
 all I am ashamed of.
 I cannot hide
 the truth
 from You.
 Yet You love me*

*and promise to forgive,
 to purify my motives,
 to strengthen my commitment,
 and cleanse me from my sin.*

*Come, let Your Spirit
 rest within my heart
 that what comes from my mouth
 may always honor You.*

*Teach me, Jesus, to trust Your love for me,
 to see Your silence as a sign of love,
 not indifference.*

*Teach me, Jesus, to trust Your love for me
 even when I fail You,
 even when I don’t know what will happen next.
 Teach me, Jesus, to trust Your love for me.*

*Feed me with Your Word.
 Feed me with Yourself
 until I join Your family table
 in eternity.*

Digging Deep
My Personal Study for Week 1

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Day 1 • Read Matthew 13:53–58

Jesus and His disciples had made Capernaum their headquarters. In this text Jesus returns to Nazareth, His boyhood home (2:21–23), and teaches the people in their synagogue.

1. Compare the reception Jesus received in Nazareth with the reaction of the people in this village at the outset of Jesus’ ministry more than a year earlier. See Luke 4:16–30.

2. a. Why was it difficult for the people of Nazareth to accept Jesus as the Messiah?

b. Contrast their response with that of the Samaritans (John 4:39–44), who had known Jesus only two days.

courageous, afraid, manipulative, easily influenced, selfish, self-centered, jealous, used, grieved.

3. How did the attitude of the people in Nazareth affect Jesus’ ministry there? See verse 58.

4. a. What attitudes make it difficult for Jesus to have any effect on us?

b. What other descriptions would you add?

b. What destroys those barriers?

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Day 3 • Read Matthew 14:13–36

Saddened by the news of John’s death, weary from the stress of ministry and fatigued by their recent missionary journey, Jesus and His disciples withdraw privately for rest and renewal.

7. How did Jesus react to a large, demanding crowd interrupting His rest on a well-deserved holiday? See verse 14; Mark 6:30–34; and Luke 9:10–11.

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Day 2 • Read Matthew 14:1–12

Herod the tetrarch, also called Herod Antipas, was one of several sons of Herod the Great, who had ruled all Palestine for the Romans.

5. Read verses 1–2; Mark 6:14–16, 20; and Luke 9:7–9. How would you describe Herod’s state of mind reflected in these verses?

8. a. Read verses 15–21. What was the disciples’ response to the problem of the hungry crowd and the lack of food?

b. What was Jesus’ solution?

6. Read verses 3–12. Note the cast of characters in this dramatic flashback: Herod, Herodias, Salome (the daughter of Herodias), John, and John’s disciples.

a. Connect one or more of these descriptive words to each of them: conscience-stricken, faithful, seductive, unfaithful, frank, shocked, vindictive, morally weak,

9. a. What might have been the mood of the crowd as they sat down?

b. after the meal?

To Glory through the Cross

Distribute at end of session 1 for use in session 2.

Matthew 16–17

Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study and at the week's assembly.

Hymn

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
No merit of my own I claim
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In ev'ry high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, His covenant, His blood
Sustain me in the raging flood;
When all supports are washed away,
He then is all my hope and stay.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Redeemed to stand before the throne!
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

Edward Mote, alt.

Prayer

*Lord Jesus, You are God's Son, my Savior.
You have called me to faith
by Your Spirit through the Gospel.
Each day You give me just what I need*

*to grow ever closer to You.
Each day You whisper, "Trust Me today."
Lord, I do. Just help me when I don't.
You have forgiven me.
Now use me to announce Your mercy
to others too,
that we may share Your glory when You come.*

Digging Deep

My Personal Study for Week 2

Day 1 • Read Matthew 16:1–12

Ordinarily the Pharisees and Sadducees were enemies. But they joined forces in opposing Jesus. As today's text begins, they come to Jesus to argue and to test Him. Jesus warns His disciples about their teachings.

1. Read verses 1–4. Review and compare these verses with Matthew 12:38–42. Jesus said the Pharisees and Sadducees could read weather signs but not "the signs of the times." To what signs of the times might Jesus be referring?

2. a. Read verses 5–7. As Jesus and the disciples moved on across the lake what was still on Jesus' mind?

b. What was on the mind of the disciples?

3. Read verses 8–12. Jesus warns His disciples about the "yeast" of these Pharisees and Sadducees. "Leaven," or "yeast," was a Jewish metaphor for an evil influence that penetrates and corrupts.

a. What is it in the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees that could get into the hearts of the disciples and corrupt their faith (Matthew 15:7–9)?

b. How would remembering the two feeding miracles help the disciples to guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?

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Day 2 • Read Matthew 16:13–20

Jesus took the disciples to Caesarea Philippi, 25 miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee, where the population was mainly Gentile. There He withdrew to teach the disciples privately. Time was short. Soon He would turn south toward Jerusalem and the cross. Did the disciples understand Him? Did they recognize Him? Were they ready to carry on His work? To find the answers Jesus poses a question.

4. a. Read verses 13–14. How did some people identify Jesus?

b. Who do people today say Jesus is?

5. a. Read verses 15–16. Who did Peter say Jesus was?

b. Why might Jesus have pressed for a personal answer from His disciples?

c. Who do you say that Jesus is? Write your answer as if you were speaking directly to Jesus.

6. a. Read Jesus' response to Peter's answer in verses 17–20. Who revealed Jesus' true identity to Peter?

b. Jesus calls Peter "*petros*" (a little pebble), which He uses in building the foundation of His church (the fellowship of believers in Jesus). What (or who) is the *petra* (the solid rock) on which the church is built (Matthew 16:16; Ephesians 2:19–20; 1 Peter 2:4)?

c. The apostles (and prophets) are used by Jesus as the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:19–20). As the foundation, what role do the apostles play? See 1 Corinthians 3:5.

d. What part do you play? See 1 Peter 2:4–10.

e. "The gates of Hades" means gates of death, physical death. (If you are using the New International Version of the Bible, you may check Job 17:16 and Isaiah 38:10.) Compare Jesus' words in Matthew 16:18 to Paul's in Romans 8:35–39. What does Jesus mean by saying that the "gates of Hades" won't prevail against God's church?