

KIAMA ANGLICAN  
CHURCHES

# Perspective

*Matthew's Gospel: Seeing Jesus, Jesus' Way*

Term 1 2022 Bible Studies



# Matthew // Perspective

## *Seeing Jesus, Jesus' Way*

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### *Study leaders:*

In this series, we are aiming towards a fairly 'open-ended' Bible study experience.

In the past I have used study schemes like **COMA** (Context, Observation, Meaning and Application), but there is a kind of 'exciting chaos' that comes from allowing a little more latitude to where the study might go.

So while I use what's called '[The Swedish Method](#)'<sup>1</sup> as a basic framework for letting the text speak, the key thing is to ask: "What is God saying to his people *today*, as we encounter him in Word and Spirit?"

I have offered some thoughts in each study, but this is only to prompt your own thinking.

The two key disciplines for leading these studies well are 1) knowing the text yourself and 2) getting a feel for how much to let people 'have their head.' It can be easy for a study to run off on a tangent when there is not a strict form to follow. However, one powerful question you can always ask is, "Where do you see that in the text?" Or, "What was it about what Jesus is saying here that brought that up?" These are helpful questions because sometimes they will bring your group back from a

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<sup>1</sup> <http://thebriefing.com.au/2009/01/the-swedish-method/>

tangent, while other times it will turn out that it is not a tangent at all - indeed, rich new horizons in your own understanding of the text may open up before you!

So please enter into this series with a sense of *adventure*, looking to where the Spirit may take you and your group in your ongoing journey of discipleship, both in mind and in deed.

*By way of users' notes:* Where you see '**Pre-read**' - these are passages which are helpful to have in mind as you come to the primary Matthew reading attached to the study.

I am keen for you to leave room for what Jesus is saying to you through the Matthew passage, so the questions in the study-proper will be more 'open'.

However, these **Pre-read** passages are attached to what you might call 'leading questions' ('leading the witness'), in order to draw out their significance as they are brought to bear upon the Matthew passages.

Additionally, each passage includes the "**Preached on...**" date. This is not to say that you have to wait for the sermon, nor fully depend upon the preacher's own work. However, reflecting on the sermon may be an aid to you in your preparation, or it may help to expand your thinking on a passage. Our preachers are men and women who have 'studied to show themselves approved workers' (2 Tim. 2:15). Yet it remains true that they, like us, are fellow disciples—learning to discern the face and voice of God in the text: at times perceiving 'in part, as in a mirror' (1 Cor. 13:12). So please use the sermons as a resource, even as you yourselves 'search the scriptures, to see if these things are so' (Acts 17:11).

# The Swedish Bible-Study Method



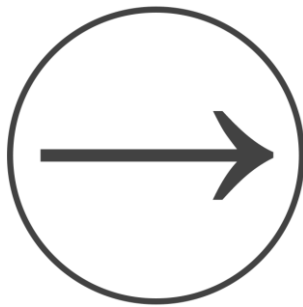
A **'light bulb'** is anything that 'shines through' in the passage. What stood out when you read it? What struck you? What grabbed your attention? It could be an idea, a literary device, a fact... Anything!



A **'question mark'** is anything that puzzles you, or raises a question for you (however basic or simple). It is extra important to ask how this might connect to the rest of the Bible. You might not have all the answers yourself, but as the group pools their resources, you may get closer to an answer together!



The **'cross'** is asking how this passage relates to Jesus. Where is Jesus in this passage? How does this passage help us understand his nature, his work, or his purpose? How does this passage help you to know Jesus more?



The **'arrow'** is asking, 'so what?' This is where we think about what preachers call 'application.' How might this change my life? One prompt is S.P.E.C.K.: is there a Sin to avoid, a Promise to know, an Example to follow, a Command to obey, or new Knowledge of God or ourself? The arrow asks, "What difference will this make to you?"

Ideally, in running the Swedish method, you will allow a time for the group to read the passage, and to reflect on it. Members might individually jot down some thoughts next to the icons in the study. When it comes time to share, you then initiate the discussion by asking, "So what were some of the things people noticed?" The study will flow on from there as you work through the categories.

Finish by praying that we will be changed by what we learn. Pray that we would not be like one who looks in a mirror and then walks away, immediately forgetting what he looks like (James 1:24). Pray that we might see the face and hear the voice of God in the text, and that we might be changed by it.

Preached on 6th Feb.

## The Problem with the World is...

Matthew 15:1-20, Isaiah 29:13-24

Jesus' identification of the human heart as the *true* origin of sin reminds us of *The Emperor's New Clothes*; that is, we tend to go with the flow, blaming others and not recognising our part in the matrix of sin. But once Jesus points out our misjudgement, well, it's almost all we can see. Recognising that sin comes from *within* almost can't help but prompt confession and repentance.

In this passage, Jesus calls us to a radical reorientation of our perspective: the problem with the world is *not* what's "out there," but what's "in here"... in our own heart. We are called to reformation of our own hearts and minds—something we will continue to explore over coming weeks.

**Read** Matthew 15:1-20



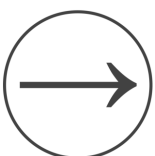
What shines  
out?



What raises  
questions?



How is  
Christ  
revealed?



What  
difference  
will it make?

Preached on 13th Feb.

## Humble Access

Matthew 15:21-28, Psalm 25:1-7

The outsider-woman described in these verses is a model of **right perspective**. Jesus points out her humble estate, and she does not argue—rather, in humility, she models dependence upon the master. And, through this modelling of dependence upon Jesus, she is blessed.

### Pre-read:

*After the offering of Isaac, the Akedah:*

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, 'I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.'

Genesis 22:15-18, NIV-UK

**Q:** How does the *Akedah* promise shape our expectation of God blessing Israel?

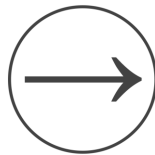
What about the Gentiles / non-Israelites?

*From the Anglican communion service: "We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold (many) and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy."*

*The Prayer of Humble Access,  
in *An Australian Prayer Book*, p. 125, §27.*

**Q:** What posture does the *Prayer of Humble Access* put us in, as we come before God?

**Read** Matthew 15:21-28





Preached on 27th Feb.

## Seagulls & the Sign of Jonah

Matthew 15:29-16:20 (the 2x readings are: 15:29-39, and 16:1-20)

Seagulls aren't particularly deep thinkers. From their **perspective**, the world is all about fish and chippies. They're interested in their next meal and not much more than that. Of course, this is a real and human concern as well. And yet, despite Jesus' miraculous feeding miracles addressing this basic concern, his followers cannot see that this is God-come-near. Therefore, they will receive one sign only - the sign of Jonah. Jonah is the Old Testament prophet who was swallowed up by the sea (in death?) and was delivered... as Christ will be.

### Pre-read:

*Jonah 2:1* says: From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. <sup>2</sup> He said: 'In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead (Hebrew = Sheol) I called for help, and you listened to my cry. <sup>3</sup> You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. <sup>4</sup> I said, "I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again towards your holy temple." <sup>5</sup> The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. <sup>6</sup> To the roots

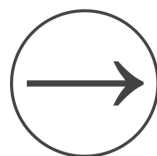
of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in for ever. But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit. <sup>7</sup> 'When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.

Jonah 2:1-7, NIV-UK

**Q:** Did Jonah *die*? He certainly uses the *language* of death.

**Q:** What similarities are there between the story of Jonah, the prophet sent to Nineveh, and Jesus?

**Read** Matthew 15:29-16:20



Preached on 13th Mar.

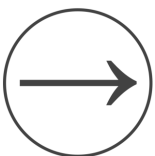
## The Things of God

Matthew 16:13-28, Isaiah 53:7-12

In this famous passage, we are called to see things God's way... to have his **perspective**. The kingdom of God does not rely on human life and victory, but on the Messiah's death and resurrection. Those who follow Jesus are called to a dying-and-rising life.

Jesus' death and resurrection are experienced, in some real way, in our own life of discipleship.

**Read** Matthew 16:13-28



Preached on 20th Mar.

## Two Witnesses

Matthew 17:1-13, Malachi 4:1-6

In this passage, our **perspective** shifts to Jesus in the context of the great prophets: He is the promised 'prophet like Moses' (Deut. 18:15-19), the one foreshadowed by Elijah's ministry (Malachi 4:5). If Jesus Christ is greater than the greatest prophets, how much more should we to 'listen to him' (Matt. 17:5)?

### Pre-read:

*God promised Moses:* <sup>18</sup> 'I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. <sup>19</sup> I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. <sup>20</sup> But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death.'

Deuteronomy 18:18-20, NIV-UK

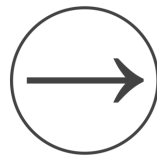
**Q:** What was special about Moses and his role in the Exodus?

*God spoke through the prophet Malachi, saying: 5 'See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.'*

Malachi 4:5-6, NIV-UK

**Q:** What do you notice about the ministry of Elijah predicted in Mal. 4:5-6?

**Read** Matthew 17:1-13





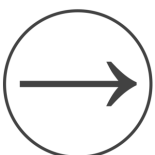
Preached on 27th Mar.

## Jesus, Exorcist

Matthew 17:14-23, Isaiah 9:1-4

In this passage, our **perspective** on Jesus shifts - we see him as the great Exorcist. He is the one who casts out Satan. He is the one who will be victorious over death itself. And in his great power we are delivered and can be confident.

**Read** Matthew 17:14-23



Preached on 3rd April.

## The Humble Kingdom

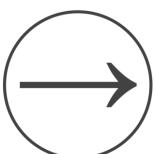
Matthew 17:24-18:4, Proverbs 3:33-35

In this passage, we see Jesus' posture of voluntary submission. Though he is the King of Kings and owes tribute to *nobody*, yet he chooses to pay the temple tax in order to "cause no offense." 18:1-5 (which follows immediately after) is Jesus' illustration of his own point - the 'greatest' in heaven will take the posture of a lowly child.

A right / heavenly **perspective** discerns 'greatness' in humility.

Compare with John Dickson's work in his book, *Humilitas*.

**Read** Matthew 17:24-18:4



Preached on 10th April (Palm Sunday)

## Little Ones, Loved Ones

Matthew 18:1-14, Isaiah 41:11-14

In this passage, we see Jesus' own **perspective** on the little ones... the lost ones. Those who lack power, who wander, and who cannot save themselves, are loved by him. He is not willing that any should perish. This so obviously and naturally leads us into the very heart of Easter.

**Read** Matthew 18:1-14

