



ADVENT 2020
The Gospel of Matthew



CHRISTCOMMUNITY
CHURCH
Changed Hearts. Changed Lives. Changed Community.

Advent 2020:

The Gospel of Matthew

Introduction

“A thrill of hope! The weary world rejoices.”

O Holy Night

This Advent season, we are nearing the end of a strange and tumultuous year. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought disruption into seemingly every corner of our lives, not least in keeping us from being able to worship all together as a congregation. It has shifted for most of us the normal patterns of life, and it has kept the prospect of sickness and death nearer to our everyday awareness than is normally the case. Beyond this, the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis was a painful reminder that the cause of racial reconciliation in our country often feels elusive, and similar events repeated over the summer both grieved us and tempted us to despair. The ramp-up to the election and its immediate fallout aggravated deep and emotional divisions in our nation. Protests and riots became flashpoints of intense support and intense alarm. Nearer to home, in this year many of us have grieved the loss of loved ones, with all the attendant pain and heartache that such loss brings. In short, many of us enter this Advent season feeling weary.

The Gospel of Matthew was written for weary people like us. It announces the entrance into the world of the long-awaited rescuer, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. As Knox Chamblin points out, Matthew’s opening verses cause us to ask critical questions: “Who is Jesus, and why is His story being told at such length? Why is He called ‘Christ’ and ‘Son of David’ and ‘Son of Abraham?’ The genealogy readies us for the arrival of a regal figure.”¹ The more we learn of this arrival, the more the thrill of hope within us grows.

As the Advent story in Matthew progresses the clearer the significance of Jesus’ entrance into our world becomes. The very titles He is given indicate not only His mission

¹ J. Knox Chamblin, *Matthew: A Mentor Commentary*, Vol. I (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2010), 18.

to rescue His people *out of* the hurts and pains and sins of ordinary life, but His mission to rescue us *into* His eternal and everlasting Kingdom; His intention in fact, to be *Immanuel*, God with us. ‘Son of David’ and ‘Son of Abraham,’ call to mind the great covenant promises of God to His people throughout redemptive history. They call for us to recognize that Jesus is the fulfillment of these promises, and that in Him is true life in a Kingdom ruled by His wisdom, justice, equity, and righteousness. We are weary people, but Matthew fills our hearts with rejoicing because our rescuing King has come!

The purpose of this Advent series and devotional is to help us to grow in recognizing and rejoicing in this hope-filled reality. We will look together at the **first three chapters of Matthew** and the way they prepare us to see more deeply who Jesus is, the kind of savior and King He is, and the nature and character of the Kingdom He has established and drawn us into. Our calls to worship each Sunday will come from various of the **Psalms** which praise God for His covenant promises of deliverance and His righteous rule in His everlasting Kingdom. In our weekly congregational response we will confess together the staggering truth contained in **John 1:1-5, 14**, helping us remember that Jesus is the light that has shined in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Our weekly assurance of pardon will be drawn from selections in **1 John**, a book that is rich in Gospel comfort.

This devotional is designed to encourage daily meditation and prayer in personal devotions and/or family worship. You are encouraged to use it the week prior to the associated sermon so that you and your family are prepared for worship. In addition to the Scriptures and associated questions, there are opportunities to pray for the various aspects of the Church. On Wednesdays, we will pray for the various missionaries and missional ministries that we support at CCC through Faith Promise. On Saturday we have the opportunity to pray that our church family will continue to grow in our understanding and rejoicing in Jesus’ coming into our world to be our Savior and King. On Sunday, the Lord’s Day Sabbath, we will pray for the means of grace to bear specific fruit in our lives. Our desire is to continue to facilitate and grow in our dependence on the Lord through prayer.

May God bless our time in personal devotion, family worship, and corporate worship as we seek for the Church to grow in knowing God's unchanging love and eternal rule as revealed in Jesus Christ!

Soli Deo Gloria!

Sermon Schedule

DATE	CALL TO WORSHIP	ASSURANCE OF PARDON	BENEDICTION	SACRAMENT
<i>Sunday 11/22: Matthew 1:1-17</i>	Psalm 89:1-4	1 John 1:1-10	Colossians 1:11-14	
<i>Sunday 11/29: Matthew 1:18-25</i>	Psalm 89:12-29	1 John 2:1-6	Colossians 1:11-14	
<i>Sunday 12/6: Matthew 2:1-12</i>	Psalm 65	1 John 2:15-17	Colossians 1:11-14	Bread and Cup
<i>Sunday 12/13: Matthew 2:13-23</i>	Psalm 2	1 John 2:28-3:3	Colossians 1:11-14	Bread and Cup
<i>Sunday 12/20: Matthew 3:1-12</i>	Psalm 146	1 John 3:19-24	Colossians 1:11-14	
<i>Sunday 12/27: Matthew 3:13-17</i>	Psalm 116	1 John 4:1-12	Colossians 1:11-14	

Weekly Congregational Response

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:1-5, 14

*Weekly Prayer in Response to the
Assurance of Pardon*

Alba Father,

Confirm in our hearts Your word,
which assures us of your grace to us in Christ Jesus.

These things were written so that we may believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,
and that by believing
we may have life in His name.

Amen.

Adapted from John 20:30-31

Weekly Benediction

May you be strengthened with all power,
according to His glorious might,
for all endurance and patience with joy,
giving thanks to the Father,
who has qualified you to share
in the inheritance of the saints in light.

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness
and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,
in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:11-14

The Week of November 22nd

Matthew 1:1-17

Monday 11/16 **Psalm 89:1-4:** How have you seen the steadfast love of the Lord in the generations of your family?

Tuesday 11/17 **I John 1:1-10:** Take time to thank God that he brought his plan since the beginning of time to completion in the redemption we have in Christ Jesus.

Wednesday 11/18 Pray for the Mills who are serving with MTW in Thailand, that the Lord would add new names to the list of generations that Jesus called his own in that country.

Thursday 11/19 **Matthew 1:1-18:** Spend some time meditating on how God brought the Messiah out of such a messy family. How can God bring redemption out of your family's messiness through Christ?

Friday 11/20 **Colossians 1:11-14:** How are we *qualified* to share in the inheritance of God through Jesus Christ?

Saturday 11/21 Pray that the Lord would prepare our hearts for worship and that we find renewed hope in the redemptive plan of God began before the foundation of the world.

Sunday 11/22 **The Lord's Day Sabbath:** Pray for the means of grace to see Jesus at work in our families to bring about redemption and to proclaim the steadfast love of the Lord.

The Week of November 29th

Matthew 1:18-25

Monday 11/23 **Psalm 89:15-29:** Meditate on how the promised Messiah brings hope to the people of God who live in a world hostile to His kingdom.

Tuesday 11/24 **I John 2:1-6:** How does Jesus work of propitiation cover our sins and call us to new obedience?

Wednesday 11/25 Pray for Mwamba Johnson and Vision Collegiate Ministries as they proclaim to college and university students around the Atlanta area that the Messiah has come and his name is Jesus!

Thursday 11/26 **Matthew 1:18-25:** How does the name *Immanuel* (God with us) give you hope about your current circumstances?

Friday 11/27 **Colossians 1:11-14:** How can you patiently endure with joy while waiting for Jesus to return and make all things new?

Saturday 11/28 Take time to pray for the worship service tomorrow. Pray that the Lord would renew our hope in Jesus, the one who takes away our sins.

Sunday 11/29 **The Lord's Day Sabbath:** Pray for the means of grace to remind us that God is present with us in all circumstances.

The Week of December 6th

Matthew 2:1-12

Monday 11/30 **Psalm 65:** How does God's loving call to people from many cultures over many centuries to come and worship the Messiah both humble and encourage you?

Tuesday 12/1 **I John 2:15-17:** What are some things you desire and love that are ultimately passing away? Meditate on the specific things of this world that clamour for our affections and draw us away from doing God's will.

Wednesday 12/2 Pray for First Care Women's Clinic to serve the women who come through their doors with wisdom and joy.

Thursday 12/3 **Matthew 2:1-12:** Pray for the nations to hear the gospel and like the wise men of the east come and bow down to worship king Jesus.

Friday 12/4 **Colossians 1:11-14:** How has God delivered you from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son? Meditate on the ways God's deliverance has shaken up the domain of darkness around you.

Saturday 12/5 Pray that God would prepare our hearts for worship and that we would be diligent, like the wise men, to seek out king Jesus and bow down before Him.

Sunday 12/6 **The Lord's Day Sabbath:** Pray for the means of grace to call us to greater worship of king Jesus as the hope of the world.

The Week of December 13th

Matthew 2:13-23

Monday 12/7 **Psalm 2:** Meditate over God's promised victory through Christ over the rebellious nations.

Tuesday 12/8 **1 John 2:28-3:3:** Take time to give thanks that you have been made a child of God. Pray for continued faith and hope in the return of Jesus.

Wednesday 12/9 Pray for the Sawyers serving in Kenya that they would continue to see many people in Maasai Mara become children of God.

Thursday 12/10 **Mathew 2:13-23:** Reflect upon Jesus' fulfillment of the three Old Testament prophecies mentioned in this passage. Why are these details important?

Friday 12/11 **Colossians 1:11-14:** What are some aspects of our future inheritance of the saints with Christ? Which are you most looking forward to?

Saturday 12/12 Take time to pray for the worship service tomorrow. Pray that the Lord would open our eyes to the ways in which Jesus has perfectly fulfilled all that was prophesied about the Messiah.

Sunday 12/13 **The Lord's Day Sabbath:** Pray for the means of grace to grow our understanding of who Jesus is and strengthen our resolve to love and follow Him in every aspect of our lives.

The Week of December 20th

Matthew 3:1-12

Monday 12/14 **Psalm 146:** Meditate over being set free by God from the reign of sin and death. How does this reality shape the way you think and talk about current events?

Tuesday 12/15 **1 John 3:19-24:** What are the commandments of God mentioned in this passage? In what ways has your confidence in God and your salvation grown as you have sought to cultivate these things?

Wednesday 12/16 Pray for Eric and Rebecca Larsen serving with NEXT Ministries. Pray for an abundance of next-generation leaders for the global church to be raised up through their work.

Thursday 12/17 **Mathew 3:1-12:** Reflect upon the ministry of John the Baptist. In what ways did he prepare the way of the Lord?

Friday 12/18 **Colossians 1:11-14:** In what ways has God strengthened you with His power this week?

Saturday 12/19 Take time to pray for the worship service tomorrow. Pray that the Lord would reveal to us the ways in which we may be allowing the concerns of life to obscure Jesus from our view.

Sunday 12/20 **The Lord's Day Sabbath:** Pray for the means of grace to grow our desire to repent of all the things that hinder us from seeing and following Jesus.

The Week of December 27

Matthew 3:13-17

Monday 12/21 **Psalm 116:** Meditate on the benefits of salvation. In what ways can you lift up the cup of your salvation and call upon the name of the Lord this week?

Tuesday 12/22 **1 John 4:1-12:** According to this passage, how can we know what is from God and what is not from Him? How should this truth affect the way we listen and learn from the things going on in our world?

Wednesday 12/23 Pray for the ministry happening at the Women's Extension that God would use it to reveal Jesus, His beloved Son.

Thursday 12/24 **Matthew 3:13-17:** Give thanks that Jesus fulfilled all righteousness. Meditate over God's declaration over Him that He is His beloved Son. Ask the Lord to grow your affection for Jesus as you meditate over the Father's affection for the Son.

Friday 12/25 **Colossians 1:11-14:** How has God been good to you this year? Give thanks to the Father for His steadfast love and faithfulness.

Saturday 12/26 Take time to pray for the worship service tomorrow. Pray that the Spirit would use it to grow our affection for Jesus.

Sunday 12/27 **The Lord's Day Sabbath:** Pray for the means of grace to increase our capacity to see and rejoice in Jesus's perfect fulfillment of all righteousness for us.