

**Weekly Memory Verse**

Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

**Hymn of the Week:** Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee;  
Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse me from its guilt and pow’r.

Not the labors of my hands  
Can fulfill Thy law’s demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone:  
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling;  
Naked, come to Thee for dress;  
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me, Savior, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,  
When my eyelids close in death,  
When I soar to worlds unknown,  
See Thee on Thy judgment throne;  
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee.

Then above the world and sin,  
Thro’ the veil, drawn right within,  
I shall see Him face to face,  
Sing the story, saved by grace,  
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me ever be with Thee.

*Use your smartphone to  
hear this hymn’s tune:*



## Monday, January 17

*Proverb for the Day: "The rich man's wealth is his strong city; the destruction of the poor is their poverty." 10:15*

### **Matthew 11**

Matthew begins to describe various responses to Jesus, from the godly John the Baptist to unrepentant cities. John the Baptist's doubt about Jesus was answered by Jesus' doing the indisputable works of the Messiah (vv. 4-6). Jesus commended John the Baptist's character and ministry (vv. 7-10) but pointed out that the lowest citizen in the coming kingdom had a greater position than John did under the law (v. 11).

Jesus then noted the negative responses Jews had toward him as their Christ and King: scribes and pharisees were violent toward him (v. 12), Jews rejected both John the Baptist and Jesus (vv. 16-19), and the general population which did not repent at his preaching and corroborating miracles would thus experience judgment proportionate to their sin (vv. 20-24). Jesus praised the Father for honoring humble believers (vv. 25-27) and urged such to trust in him (vv. 28-30).

### Truths to Nail Down and Meditate On

1. Sinners' eternal judgment will be proportionate to their faith/unbelief (v. 22). Every sinner will be judged for his sin, and those who sin against greater light will have greater judgment. Today is the day of salvation! Trust in Christ, heed his invitation in verses 28-30!
2. Jesus' miracles were not an end in themselves but were evidences that his message was true. If there was not repentance and faith in response to Jesus' message and miracles, there was only "Woe!" (v. 21). Sinners who have physical needs met but don't trust in Christ face terrible judgment.
3. Jesus praised the Father for his absolute sovereignty in salvation (vv. 25-27) *and* invited every sinner to rely on him with repentant faith (vv. 28-30). Follow Jesus' example!

### Items for Prayer

- Friends In C. A.—Pray for wisdom in communicating with and the salvation of coworkers.
- Satan and wicked spiritual forces, Mark 4:15; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 6:12, 18
- Sinful hearts of the lost, Rom 3:10–18; 2 Cor 4:3–4; Eph 4:18–19
- Our own struggles with sin, Matt 26:41; Rom 7:13–25

## Saturday, January 22

*Proverb for the Day: "The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is worth little." 10:20*

**Read Acts 27-28**, which Pastor will be preaching from tomorrow.

### Items for Prayer

- Mike and Marie Brunk, South Africa—Pray for our plans for returning to South Africa. Pray that we can return soon.
- False teachers spreading error in the name of Christ, 1 Tim 4:1–3; 2 John 7
- Selfless, sacrificial love for all Christians, Acts 6:1
- Tendency to be "now" oriented rather than Christ and eternity, Matt 6:33; 2 Tim 4:1

## The Lord's Day, January 23

*Proverb for the Day: "The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom." 10:21*

**Think back on God's truth you heard or read this past week**, and how you could use that to minister to the saints today as the church gathers.

### Items for Prayer

- Jeremy, Caroline, Isobel, William, Priscilla, and Hudson Dion, Papua New Guinea—Pray for Silas and Alice as they minister here as part of their requirements for Bible School.
- Christ-likeness at home and "work," Col 3:18–4:1
- Not judge by externals, Jas 2:1; 2 Cor 5:16
- Persevering faithfulness in perilous times, Revelation 2–3; 21:7

## Friday, January 21

*Proverb for the Day: "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise." 10:19*

### **Matthew 15**

Another conflict between Jesus and Jewish religious leaders is given (15:1–20). Matthew's inclusion of this helped Jewish readers understand why Israel's religious leaders rejected Jesus. They rejected Jesus because they were hypocrites who disobeyed and dishonored God.

Three more miracles are related. The first contrasts the faith of a Gentile with that of Jews (vv. 21–28); Jesus' point in verse 26 is that of *priority* not *exclusiveness*: parents feed their children before pets. The other miracles (vv. 29–39) demonstrated Jesus' compassion, and his miracles resulted in praise being given to "the God of Israel" (v. 31).

### Truths to Nail Down and Meditate On

1. Human traditions are not *bad* but they are nowhere near the level of God's commands. Yet how easy it is to elevate traditions above commands! This is a problem of human nature, something we all struggle with. Beware of falling into this trap, for such nullifies, not strengthens, God's Word.
2. Listen to Jesus' words in verses 17–20. The character of your heart is seen by the character of your life.
3. Jesus gave thanks for food, even a little amount (v. 36). Pausing before eating a meal to give thanks to the Lord and ask his blessing is something *Jesus* did—be like Jesus! Be thankful!

### Items for Prayer

- Brian, Erin, Isabel, Emmett, Arthur, Owen, and Walter Bollon, Taiwan—Pray that we get to know our neighbors, and for good conversations.
- Always increasing Christ-likeness of Christians, Col 1:9–11; Heb 5:12–14; 2 Pet 1:5–11
- Governing authorities, Acts 5:29; 1 Tim 2:1–6
- Christians' worship, 1 Cor 14:24–25

## Tuesday, January 18

*Proverb for the Day: "The labor of the righteous leads to life, the wages of the wicked to sin." 10:16*

### **Matthew 12**

Jesus and his disciples went throughout Israel proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, that Jesus is Israel's promised King and Messiah and all must repent and believe in him. Now Matthew details Israel's religious leaders' denial and rejection of Jesus to be the Christ. Twice they accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath (vv. 1-2, 9-14) and asserted that his power to do miracles came not from God but from Satan (v. 24). Jesus responded that they judged contrary to the Scriptures, thus being against God himself (vv. 3, 5, "have you not read," v. 12 "it is lawful," vv. 31-32 "blasphemy of...speaks against the Holy Spirit") because they themselves were evil (vv. 33-37).

Matthew details Israel's spiritually wicked and unfaithful character in verses 38–45. They rejected the truth Jesus taught yet wanted to see signs and miracles (vv. 38-42; cf. 1 Cor 1:22-25). Despite the good done through the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus, because of Israel's unbelief and rejection of Jesus they would be worse off than they were (vv. 43-45). Only those who hear, believe, and obey Jesus will be blessed (vv. 46-50).

These passages are important for by them Matthew details and explains why Israel did not believe that Jesus was the Christ. This marks a turning point in Jesus' ministry: he no longer preached the gospel of the kingdom to Israel but began preparing his followers for his death.

### Truths to Nail Down and Meditate On

1. "Surely the kingdom of God has come upon you" (v. 28) refers to the person and power of the King, Jesus. This does not mean a "spiritual form of the kingdom" was present, as "you" refers to the Pharisees who just asserted that Jesus was empowered by Satan.
2. "The unpardonable sin" (vv. 31-32) was a one-time event occurring when Israel's religious leaders attributed Jesus' power to Satan—a wicked spirit—not the Holy Spirit. This was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus viewed, evaluated, and responded to attacks from the standpoint of the truth of Scripture. You must do the same!

### Items for Prayer

- Izaac, Kim, Ashlyn, Brenna, and Carson VanderSchel, Camp—Pray for wisdom as we look for a new vehicle.

- Boldness in the face of opposition and resistance, Acts 4:29; Eph 6:19
- Fear of and love for Christ, 2 Cor 5:11, 14
- Selflessness, Luke 9:23–26

### Wednesday, January 19

*Proverb for the Day: “He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray.” 10:17*

#### **Matthew 13:1–52**

Immediately after the Jewish religious leaders’ rejection of Jesus as Israel’s Christ and King, Jesus began teaching the public in parables (v. 3), and the disciples asked why he did so (v. 10). Jesus said that from then on, the truth he taught about the kingdom (“mysteries of the kingdom,” v. 11) would be taught in such a way that its meaning would be obscured to those who rejected him (vv. 12–15) but explained to and understood by those who believed him (vv. 16–17). Jesus’ teaching in parables was judgment on unbelieving Jews for their rejection of him as the Messiah, hardening and confirming them in their unbelief (vv. 13–15). Each parable makes one point and the parable’s details must be understood in relation to that one point.

Jesus does not redefine or change the nature of the kingdom in his teaching here. Through these parables Jesus prepares his disciples for the time between his coming death and his Second Coming, detailing the kingdom program during that time until he returns and establishes it.

#### Truths to Nail Down and Meditate On

1. When you tell someone about Jesus there will be different responses to the message (vv. 19–23). Don’t conclude that immediate “belief” is true belief (vv. 20–22)! True faith is evidenced over time by good fruit (v. 23).
2. There will be a judgment of the just and the unjust (vv. 24–30, 37–43, 47–50). There are only two ends or destinations, eternal life in the glorious kingdom or unending suffering in the furnace of fire. Where will you be?
3. Though the message about Jesus is insignificant to this world (vv. 31–32) it is of greatest value (v. 33, 44–46). How precious is Jesus to you? How is your “value” of him seen in what you seek for in this life?

#### Items for Prayer

- Dan, Amy, Joshua, Emma, and Genevieve Baker, Australia—Pray for Dan as he helps at least one young man prepare his first sermon to preach to our church.

- We will always be “going,” Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47–49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8
- Salvation of souls, 2 Thess 3:1
- Faithfulness, 1 Cor 1:18

### Thursday, January 20

*Proverb for the Day: “Whoever hides hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.” 10:18*

#### **Matthew 13:53–14:36**

Two events relate how Jesus was rejected, first those of Jesus’ hometown, Nazareth (14:53–58), and second, Herod’s beheading of Jesus’ forerunner, John the Baptist (15:1–12). Both the Nazarenes and Herod rejected the message that Jesus was the Messiah and that they must therefore repent of their sins.

Three miracles are then related (14:13–36), showing Jesus’ compassion (14:14) and credentials as the promised Messiah and King of Israel. Jesus’ authority over creation is demonstrated by his feeding of well over 5,000 people (vv. 13–21) and walking on the water (vv. 22–33), followed by his authority over sickness (vv. 34–36) and readiness to associate with and touch those who viewed as unclean.

#### Truths to Nail Down and Meditate On

1. While some will repent of their sins and trust in Christ, the sad truth is that most will not, whether regular people or great rulers. Don’t evaluate ministry “success” by numbers; be faithful!
2. You may well be persecuted for righteousness’ sake, like John the Baptist was. Jesus was himself rejected by his own hometown, so don’t expect to experience anything different! (John 15:20) Jesus said those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake have a sure future ruling with him (Matt 5:10). Rejoice that you’re counted worthy to suffer for his name’s sake (Acts 5:41), knowing that suffering for Christ goes hand-in-hand with believing in him (Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 3:12).

#### Items for Prayer

- Tom, Stephanie, Daniela, Nino, Angelo & Gabriella Boehm, Italy—Pray that we will trust God to open hearts and eyes.
- Open doors, Col 4:3
- Spirit-led, dependent, and empowered (tendency to follow our sin natures), Gal 5:16
- Always content in Christ, Phil 4:11–13