Matthew 6:1 – 9:38

Thursday, January 7 – Matthew 6:1-6:24

1. In the first 24 verses, Jesus offers instruction about the Christian life. What does he warn us against? What does he tell us to do?

Friday, January 8 – Matthew 6:25-7:14

2. How does Jesus take a realistic view of this world in verse 34? What should we do?

3. A note on 7:1 - *"Do not judge."* This is not an absolute ban against judging the sins of others. After all, any time a Christian points out another's sins for that person's good, he or she is judging that other person's actions. He or she is telling that person what God says about sin and is urging that person to repent.

4. Jesus would send his disciples into the world to call people to repentance. The disciples would know how to do that, however, only if they did one thing. What was that? (verses 3-5) What lesson can we learn too from Jesus' words?

Saturday, January 9 – Matthew 7:15-29

5. When warning against false teachers, Jesus tells us to recognize them by their fruit. Yet he gives us no instructions on what kind of bad fruits to watch out for. How, then, are we to evaluate such false teachers?

6. In verse 22 Jesus grants the fact that false teachers may "drive out demons and perform many miracles." What should this alert us to when we hear of great healings and spectacular spiritual accomplishments?

Sunday, January 10 – Matthew 8:1-17

7. Jesus' disciples (who at this time were all Jews) needed to be taught about who could be part of Jesus' kingdom. Under the Old Testament laws, various classes of people were excluded from some or all of Israel's religious and social lives. Matthew records three miracles that Jesus performed which taught the disciples how things would be different after the law was fulfilled.

   The man with leprosy. (verses 1-4)

   Lepers were excluded from all functions of society—religious and secular. Jesus showed his love and care for the leper. He was willing to heal him. He also stretched out his

hand and touched him, which was strictly forbidden under the Old Testament law. The very fact that he commanded the leper to show himself to the priests (an Old Testament regulation when lepers were healed) showed that Jesus honored the law but that his power over leprosy proved he had come to fulfill the law.

The centurion. (verses 5-13)

The centurion was a Gentile. Gentiles could take part to a limited degree in Israel's worship life. However, Israelites were forbidden to enter the home of a Gentile lest they become unclean.

Jesus gave the centurion a chance to express his faith, which the centurion did. Jesus then contrasted the centurion and his great faith with the "subjects of the kingdom," that is, the Jews to whom the promises had originally been given. The centurion's faith, not his observance of the law, gained for him the power of Jesus' kingdom.

Peter's mother-in-law. (verses 14-17)

Jewish women were honored members of Jewish society under the law. However, there were some distinctions between men and women under the law. Yet Jesus healed her also.

Monday, January 11 – Matthew 8:18-34

8. Jesus teaches us more about the kingdom. In verses 18-22 Jesus warns against underestimating the commitment needed to work in the kingdom. What two attitudes do the potential disciples display? How do Jesus' words influence our understanding about what it means to be his disciples today?

Tuesday, January 12 – Matthew 9:1-17

9. What personal information does Matthew give us about himself, and what does that reveal to us about the kingdom of God? How do Jesus' words help shape our perception and understanding of the people Jesus came to serve? (Verse 12)

10. The Lord still "desire[s] mercy, not sacrifice" (verse 13). Give examples of when Christians today might perform external works at the expense of works of mercy.

Wednesday, January 13 – Matthew 9:18-38

11. Sometimes people interpret the phrase "your faith has healed you" (verse 22) by making faith the work that gives access to Jesus' healing. Interpret these words in the context of the kingdom of God.

12. We are told that the girl was dead. Why does Jesus say she was sleeping? How does Jesus' terming death as "sleep" ease the believer's fear of death and the "unknown" that might surround it?