

Dennis R. Wiles
First Baptist Arlington

Flourishing Together

First Baptist Arlington

2025 – 2030

2025: Flourishing Together: *Rooted in Christ*

1 Corinthians 2:6-16 (Gospel Guide: Matthew)

LENTEN EASTER 2025: *The Real Story*

Gospel of Matthew

March 5 (Ash Wednesday) – April 26, 2025

All four Gospel accounts tell the real story of Jesus Christ. Each Gospel writer has a particular perspective on the life of Jesus. Matthew paints an unforgettable portrait of the Kingship of Jesus in his Gospel. *The Real Story* is that Jesus Christ is The King of Kings and Lord of Lords! He was the most purposeful human being who has ever lived!

As King, Jesus established the Kingdom of God on earth. He invited the people of His day, and He now invites all of us to live as citizens of this new Kingdom. The work of redemption accomplished by King Jesus renders it possible for human beings to be delivered from the powers of a sin-filled earthly kingdom and join the Kingdom of God in order to live purposefully into His will.

God, through Jesus, has made it possible for us to live life as He intends. This is at the heart of human flourishing!

Our Lenten/Easter Season will be given to a study of Matthew's unique account of the life, witness, example, death, resurrection, and commission of Jesus Christ. Matthew opens His Gospel with a declaration that Jesus is born a King. He will close the story with the account of the death of Jesus, the King of the Jews. He will finally declare that the King – Jesus Christ lives! Jesus, the King has established His Kingdom on earth. He issues an invitation for all to follow to live in His Kingdom now and forever. This is *The Real Story!*

LENTEN EASTER 2025: *The Real Story*

Gospel of Matthew

March 5 (Ash Wednesday) – April 26, 2025

March 5, 2025: *Thy Kingdom Come*

Ash Wednesday **Matthew 6:5-15**

We will begin the Lenten/Easter Season in prayer. We will use the insights from the Lord's Prayer to prepare our hearts for our Lenten journey. Jesus taught His followers how to pray. This model prayer connects us to the life God intends us to live. We will begin the Lenten/Easter Season with a time of reflection, repentance, and renewal.

Lenten Season Weekly Reading: Matthew 6:5-15

March 9, 2025: *Born a King!*

Matthew 1:1-17

One of the key themes of Matthew's Gospel is his presentation of Jesus Christ as King. Matthew bridges the gap between the Old and New Testament with his riveting account of the life, teachings, witness, example, sacrifice, and Kingship of the Lord Jesus. His unique genealogy sets the stage for his account of *The Real Story*.

Lenten Season Weekly Reading: Matthew 1:18-2:23

March 16, 2025: *A Servant King*

Matthew 3:13-17

The Lenten/Easter journey is just that – a journey. Jesus offers us the example to follow again and again in the Gospel accounts. In this text, Jesus submits Himself in humility to be baptized by the prophet John the Baptist. From a theological perspective, there is much to digest from this event that connects to our understanding of salvation history. However, from a personal perspective, this expression of humility offers us much to ponder as we give consideration to how we will be prepared for a life of service in the new Kingdom.

Lenten Season Weekly Reading: Matthew 3

March 23, 2025: *Heavenly Construction Instructions*
Matthew 7:24-29

As citizens of the new Kingdom, our lives are to reflect our new identity, our new sense of purpose, our new priorities, and our new mission. This begins with us allowing God to guide us in how we construct our very lives. Our foundation for Kingdom living is the truth we have discovered in Christ. As followers of Jesus, our lives are built upon His values, His principles, His revelation, His priorities, and His truth!

Lenten Season Weekly Reading: Matthew 4

March 30, 2025: *Transformed for Life in the Kingdom*
Matthew 13:1-9

The Real Story includes the power of God at work in the individual lives of the followers of Jesus. Jesus used this famous Parable of the Sower to help His followers understand the power of the Gospel to transform them to be able to live as Kingdom citizens. As sinners, we do not naturally desire the “things” of the Kingdom of God. However, if we are receptive to God’s work within us (i.e. we are “good soil”) then we can be transformed and become productive members of the Kingdom. This productive life is a flourishing life!

Lenten Season Weekly Reading: Matthew 13

April 6, 2025: *The Messiah’s Church*
Matthew 16:13-20

The Real Story includes a plan put in place by Jesus Himself. While He was on a trip to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus shared His plan with His disciples. While there was a time limit on His earthly ministry, He prepared His followers for life on earth after His ascension. In our text today, Jesus shares His intention to establish His Church on earth. The Church will be the instrument through which He will accomplish Kingdom purposes. His followers will serve through the Church and thus, God’s plan will be on display for all to see. The Church is a crucial part of The Real Story!

Lenten Season Weekly Reading: Matthew 16

HOLY WEEK 2024

Matthew has painted a portrait of the King in his compelling Gospel account. Jesus is introduced on the first page of the Gospel as the Messiah, the Son of David, and the Son of Abraham. He then provides a comprehensive record of the teachings and the example of Jesus Christ. His focus is the establishment of the Kingdom of God and subsequent life in that Kingdom. He connects the life of Jesus with the revelation of God found in the Old Testament.

Matthew also introduces tension in the narrative when he notes that Jesus plans to travel to Jerusalem and offer up His life (Matthew 16:21ff). As the story unfolds, the drama builds, and Matthew's readers become fully aware that the death of Jesus is going to be intentionally a part of *The Real Story* (Matthew 17:22-23). We now come to that part of story as we begin our annual Holy Week journey.

April 13, 2025: *Jesus the Nazarene*

Palm Sunday **Matthew 21:1-11**

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week. Jesus gave specific instructions to His disciples to prepare for His entry in Jerusalem. Matthew draws upon prophecy from both Isaiah Zechariah as he shares this powerful story. Jesus was born a King and now enters Jerusalem hailed as the Son of David! When people began to ask in Jerusalem about His identity, some simply responded that He was Jesus the Nazarene. After all these years ----- and for eternity ---- we all stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene!

Palm Sunday Reading: Matthew 21:1-11

Holy Monday: Matthew 21:12-19

Jesus entered the Temple on Monday in Jerusalem. His actions would signal the end of the Temple Era in the life of God's people. As many theologians have pointed out, He didn't so much "cleanse" the Temple as He rendered it useless. His death on the cross signaled the end of the need for the sacrificial system. He was about to offer up His life as the Lamb of God for the sins of the world. Take time today to reflect upon the death of our Savior and Lord.

Holy Tuesday: Matthew 22:34-40

While He was in Jerusalem on Tuesday of Holy Week, the Sadducees and the Pharisees began to challenge Jesus on various points of the Law in order to find some reason to condemn Him and His teachings. In our passage today, one of the experts in the Law

asked Jesus to provide His understanding of God's greatest command. Jesus answered with one of His most famous statements. He took two very famous passages from the Old Testament Law to inform all of His followers as to the very foundation of the Law itself. We are to love God and love one another! Today, take some time to express your love for God and others in some tangible ways.

Holy Wednesday: Matthew 24

New Testament scholars tend to agree that we don't have any clear information regarding the activities and teachings of Jesus on Wednesday of Holy Week. However, the famous Olivet Discourse will serve as our text for today. Jesus was seated at the Mount of Olives when He delivered this very famous teaching. He weaves together both the immediate future of Jerusalem as well as the events connected to His return at the end of time. As you read this very challenging text today, reflect upon the sovereign Hand of God in history. We believe God prepared the world for the birth of His Son. We also believe He prepared the world for the ministry and mission of His church. We also believe He is preparing the world for the return of His Son!

Maundy Thursday: Matthew 26:17-46

We now come to the final night of the earthly ministry of Jesus. He is gathered with His disciples in Jerusalem for the celebration of Passover. The symbolism of this season is not lost on Jesus. The Jews would be feasting and celebrating the incredible story of the Exodus during this time in Jerusalem. Jesus was about to be offered up as the Lamb of God to provide deliverance for sinners from the powers of darkness and evil. This is the New Exodus! The Lord's Supper will take the place of the Passover Meal for the followers of Jesus. We continue to commemorate His sacrifice for us each time we partake of the elements of the Lord's Supper. Today is a time of reflection and an expression of thanksgiving.

Good Friday: Matthew 27:11-66

Matthew opens His Gospel account with the declaration that Jesus was born a King. He will now share the story that Jesus will die as King of the Jews. Today, we join hands and hearts with followers of Jesus across the world as we consider the cost of our salvation-----the very death of our Lord. Now we wait.

Silent Saturday

Today, we wait in silence.

April 20, 2025:

He is Not Here, He Has Risen!

Easter Sunday

Matthew 28:1-15

Praise God! He is risen! He is risen indeed! Matthew's Gospel opens with a genealogy that includes the names of various women. He now closes His Gospel with the first appearance of the resurrected Lord reserved for women! They become the first evangelists of the resurrection. The disciples receive the testimony. Jesus is alive! Forever! *Everything has changed!*

Lenten Season Weekly Reading: Matthew 28