

THE UNEXPECTED KING

Matthew's Account of Jesus

PRAYER GUIDE



What might happen if the entire BSF family around the globe united in prayer?

We believe that genuine, world-changing revival starts with prayer, so we've provided a 30-week prayer guide inspired by each week's lesson from the *Matthew* study. By praying through the ACTS model – adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication – may your BSF lesson take deeper roots as you humbly kneel before your Almighty Creator!

The ACTS prayer model is a simple way to approach God by keeping our focus on Him.

ADORATION – (n.) The act of paying honor as to a divine being; worship

We praise what we love. Over the decades many have written, “we become what we love.” To love God is to praise God. As we praise Him, we experience Him more deeply, we love Him more and become more like Him. That brings Him glory! Adoration of God motivates all other aspects of prayer. When we see God's holiness, we see our sin, which leads to confession.

CONFESSION – (n.) A formal acknowledgment or admission of guilt

Confession admits that sin is first and foremost against a holy God. With godly sorrow, the Holy Spirit moves us into repentance. Repentance is the way to spiritual maturity and transformation. True transformation comes from God alone. It's rooted in the gospel, God's just payment for our sin. Understanding the depth of the gospel leads us to thanksgiving.

THANKSGIVING – (n.) A celebration of divine favor or kindness

When we realize all we have is a gift from God, thanksgiving pours from our lips. Even in suffering, we can be marked by a spirit of thanksgiving that is fueled by eternal hope in the gospel. When we approach God with a thankful heart, we're prepared to offer God-centered requests.

SUPPLICATION – (n.) An act or instance of humble prayer, entreaty or petition

Rather than seek our own will and self-interest, the practice of adoration, confession, and thanksgiving prepare us to seek God's glory before our own. We root our requests in the knowledge of God and His ways. Offering our supplication to God draws us closer to Him as we intimately reveal the desires of our hearts. Offering supplication on another's behalf binds us closer to our brothers and sisters in Christ and promotes unity within the Church.

Intro

The New Testament, the Gospels, and Matthew

"Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."'" - Matthew 4:4

Adoration

You, O Lord, are trustworthy. You keep every promise You make. Nothing is better than trusting You. No one is more trustworthy than You, God. My flesh and my heart may fail, but You, Lord, are the strength of my heart and my portion forever (Psalm 73:26).

Confession

Forgive me, Father, when I foolishly trust other things – even good things like friendships, health, marriage, parenting – that cannot meet my deepest needs.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Lord, for the unity and beauty of Your Word. Thank you for this opportunity to study the Gospel of Matthew. Thank you for sending Jesus, my King, who reigns and rules over all the nations of the earth.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Jesus, please use this BSF study of Matthew for more people around the world to know You and experience fullness of life through the Holy Spirit.

LOCAL: Father, use my BSF class/online group to boldly proclaim Your Word, to stand against cultural patterns and modern worldly thinking. May we bring hope and eternal perspective to those in our community.

PERSONAL: Father, renew my sense of wonder in Your Word every time I read it. Help me to approach Your Word with reverence, awe, expectancy, and joy.



Are you ready to hear God speak through your study of Matthew? The Gospel of Matthew shows us God can use ordinary people in extraordinary ways. Ask Him for a deeper trust in Him and that He will show you how He wants you to invest what He gives you through this year's study.

1

Genealogy and Birth of Christ

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." – Matthew 1:21

Adoration

I praise You, Lord Jesus Christ, as my Deliverer, my Messiah. You left the splendors of heaven to come near to us. You, God, are eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. You became human to seek and save a sinner like me.

Confession

Father, Matthew 1:23 proclaims, "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means 'God with us')." Forgive me when I focus on daily concerns and worries with little thought of You. Forgive me when I don't draw near to You as You long for me to do (James 4:8).

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Father, for sending Your own Son to the world as a helpless baby to live a perfect life and die a painful death – for me!

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, You extend Your grace to every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. Use Your global Church to display Your grace and message to the world – that Jesus Christ accomplished and secured the eternal salvation of every believer who puts their faith in Him (Romans 8:38-39).

LOCAL: Father, may my BSF class/online group be a welcoming place of refuge for those who feel unworthy and broken. Help them to know that they do not walk alone. Jesus, You are the Savior we all need!

PERSONAL: Father, Mary told you "I am the Lord's servant. ... May your word to me be fulfilled" (Luke 1:38). Like Mary, help me to make Your will my priority. Help me to trust You with what I cannot explain or understand. Build my faith to give You everything obedience requires.



Do you have an area in your life right now where obedience seems difficult and costly? Write it down and reflect on how He reassured and guided Mary and Joseph, step-by-step. Ask Him to give you the next right step in your situation – be sure to write down His answer!

2

The Infancy of the Messiah

"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." – Matthew 2:2

Adoration

God, You are sovereign. Nothing in this world, my life, or eternity is outside the scope of Your control (1 Chronicles 29:11-12). Everything You accomplish is good, upholding Your glory and the highest and best purposes (Romans 8:28-29).

Confession

Forgive me, Father, when I think I'm sovereign and in control instead of You; when I desire knowledge and power that belongs to You alone. Forgive me for depending on myself and not resting in You.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Lord, for being my safe place (Psalm 46:1). You will always accomplish what You intend. I can obey without worry and rest without being anxious.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, we pray that just as you did for the Magi, you would lead many into the presence of Your Son. We pray You will draw many from every part of the world to humbly bow in worship of Jesus, the King of all humanity.

LOCAL: Father, shine Your light through BSF to illuminate truth and show Jesus for who He truly is. I pray every person in my class/online group will walk in Your light and grasp more and more of the wonder of You, Jesus.

PERSONAL: Lord, You know everything. You provided the next steps for Joseph and Mary at just the right time. I seek Your wisdom in the decisions of my life. Incline my heart to prayer, naturally and often.



Create a word cloud of words and phrases that come to mind as you intentionally think about the greatness of God and His love for you. Use it in a time of praise and worship to the Lord.

3

John the Baptist and the Messiah's Baptism

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." – Matthew 3:2

Adoration

Jesus, I praise You as the Savior of the world. Your new covenant promises forgiveness of sin, God's law written on my heart, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. You have given me a new heart and put a new spirit in me (Ezekiel 36:26).

Confession

Forgive me, Father, when I don't embrace repentance; when through my own determination I try harder to do better – instead of forsaking my sin and relying on Your power.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Lord, for the grace, kindness, and joy of repentance! Thank you, Jesus, for taking away the heavy burden of my sin.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, we ask that every person who is part of the BSF study of Matthew around the world will recognize their need for forgiveness and turn to Jesus.

LOCAL: Lord, I pray BSFers in my city will be heralds of the good news of the gospel! May John 3:30 be fulfilled in each of us, just as it was in John the Baptist: That You, Jesus, will become greater and we will become less.

PERSONAL: Father, use me as You did John the Baptist – to prepare hearts for Christ. Help me to fully surrender to Your plans for me, even if it takes me away from what is comfortable. Lead me to say as Jesus did: "Let it be so."



Repentance involves changed thinking and a changed life. Will you take time to think about how your life and thinking has changed since repenting of your sins? Who will you tell?

4

Jesus' Temptation and Entry Into Public Ministry

"Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."'" – Matthew 4:10

Adoration

Jesus, I stand in awe of the perfect human life You lived – without sin. Even though Satan tempted, You never sought to avoid the pain and suffering of the cross. Because of Your sacrifice, I am delivered from the penalty my sin deserves.

Confession

Forgive me when I try to battle sin in my own strength, not recognizing the power Christ has deposited within me through His Spirit. Forgive me when I allow my whims, thoughts, and impulses to carry unnecessary control in my daily life.

Thanksgiving

Adam and Eve led humanity into sin by yielding to temptation. Thank you, Jesus, for leading me into victory by resisting temptation. Thank you for being the High Priest who can empathize with my weaknesses because You have been tempted in every way, just as I am – but You did not sin (Hebrews 4:15).

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, we pray Your Word will go out with power from our BSF classes and online groups; that truth will be proclaimed and that Your Word will be hidden in our hearts so that we don't sin against You (Psalm 119:11).

LOCAL: Lord, Your Spirit is stronger than the weapons of the enemy. I pray for Your Spirit to work powerfully through my BSF class/online group. I pray Your Word will saturate minds and invade hearts and that displeasing You will lose all appeal.

PERSONAL: Jesus, You have broken sin's stranglehold on me; I'm no longer obligated to sin. In moments of temptation, help me to use God's Word as my shield and my sword. You are stronger than any temptation I will face. You are faithful and will not let me be tempted beyond what I can bear. When I am tempted, You will provide a way out so I can endure it (1 Corinthians 10:13).



The Lesson Notes say: "No substitute for obedience to God will deliver what is promised. Loving and worshiping God causes the tinsel of this world to lose its luster." What is more appealing to you than obeying God? Will you write this temptation down and take it Him regularly in prayer?

5

The Sermon on the Mount – Part One

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." – Matthew 5:16

Adoration

Only You, Jesus, can meet my desperate need for righteousness. You have no sin and are perfect in every way. Romans 10:9 says, "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." God, You have formed a new nature in me because of my trust in Jesus and now see me clothed in Christ's righteousness!

Confession

Forgive me, Lord, when I channel my efforts through my own ineffective willpower and fail to draw on Your power through Bible study, prayer, and service. Forgive me when I fail to yield to the Holy Spirit's work and wander from You, Jesus – my first love.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Father, for making me more and more like Jesus as I trust and obey You. Thank you for covering me with Your grace as I grow.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Your Word says, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteous, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:10) Father, we pray for those under religious and political systems opposed to Christ; those who follow Him under the constant threat of imprisonment or attack. Pour out Your grace so they might persevere joyfully and, reap great fruit in their lives; wash Your unexplainable joy over them.

LOCAL: Lord, I pray for myself and those in my BSF class/online group – that we won't be Christians content to be in the saltshaker. 1 John 4:4 says, "the one who is in [us] is greater than the one who is in the world." Help us fulfill Jesus' calling to be salt and light – to add the flavor of Christ wherever we go and to reflect His light more brightly.

PERSONAL: Jesus, within my own resources I am spiritually bankrupt. You alone remove the guilt of my sin and make me pure in heart. Help me to desire Your righteousness as much as I desire my next meal, to mourn over sin and pain in the world, and to hunger after deeper holiness. Fill me with Your fullest joy – right now in the life You have given me!



The Sermon on the Mount gives a colorful, detailed picture of Jesus. In it, we see the brushstrokes of the Messiah's heart. If you enjoy Bible journaling, consider drawing colors and words that the Holy Spirit brings to mind as you reflect on this passage.

6

The Sermon on the Mount – Part Two

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” – Matthew 5:48

Adoration

Father, I praise You for Your great love and compassion in sending Jesus to meet the standard of perfection that I could not meet. Lord Jesus, I praise You for attaining the perfection I could never attain. What a God You are! You provided the perfection You require for eternal relationship with You!

Confession

Forgive me, Father, when instead of seeking true righteousness in Christ I seek behavior modification. Forgive me when instead of obeying from the heart, I try to reduce pleasing You to a checklist of what to do or not to do and ignore the inward root of sin.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Holy Spirit, for leading me to follow Christ; thank you for transforming me from the inside out. Thank you for changing my appetites, so I desire what Jesus desires and love what He loves.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, help Your global Church to love freely and without restrictions, to even love our enemies who seek to do evil against us. Use our love and prayers extended toward our enemies in a powerful way! Help us to pray for them as Jesus prayed for His enemies from the cross: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34)

LOCAL: Lord, I pray my BSF class/online group will be a place full of grace and compassion, where people don’t have to try hard to make their exterior look good, but instead can bask in the beauty of the gospel as we recognize together how much our flawed hearts need Jesus.

PERSONAL: Father, I’m not comfortable with feeling needy! I like to feel successful! Your Word says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3) Use Your Word and Your Spirit to reveal my deep, deep need for You. Help me to grow in constant dependence on Christ.



The Lesson Notes state, “Sinful actions spring from sinful desires. We commonly accept or excuse what we think no one else can see.” What personal sin do you most readily tolerate? Use 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 to pray against this sin in your life.

(This week's prayer guide is modeled after "The Disciples' Prayer" instead of the ACTS method.)

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven." – Matthew 6:1

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name..."

Father, You are highly exalted in heaven – You are set apart, holy, and like none other. I worship You in love and awe.

"...your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

God, my beloved King, I submit to You and to Your perfect will. I pray people everywhere will exalt Christ as King and submit to Him. I long for Your return, Lord Jesus, when God's kingdom will rule unopposed on earth just as it does in heaven.

"Give us today our daily bread."

God, You and You alone are my abundant Provider. You are the source of all I have and all I need. I depend on You today, Lord, for provision of all my physical and spiritual needs.

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Jesus, You paid my sin debt on the cross. I seek Your forgiveness and deliverance today for my specific sins. Lord, compel me to forgive others as You have so generously forgiven me.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Father, I pray for myself and every person in my BSF group, that we will recognize our vulnerability to temptation and will seek Your protection. We are weak and need Your sustaining grace, Lord. My confidence is in Your strength – not my own.



God delights to spend time with you and wants you to talk to Him. Are you enjoying the beauty of daily conversation with the One who knows you best? Draw near to God and speak with Him.

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” – Matthew 7:12

Adoration

Father, You are good and perfect and love to give good gifts to Your children. You satisfy my deepest heart longings and always seek my best interest.

“[You] did not spare [Your] own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will [You] not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32)

Confession

Please forgive me, Lord, when I do not consider my own sin before pointing out sin in others – when I fail to show mercy or understand the difficulties or struggles another person may face.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Father, for the wonder of being Your child. Thank you for the indescribable privilege of being invited into Your throne room and into intimate fellowship with You.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, I pray Your Church will show Your grace to the world. I pray we will not be judgmental toward people who sin and fail in the same ways we ourselves fail. Help us to display Your lavish generosity and seek the eternal welfare of others.

LOCAL: Lord, through this study of Matthew, I pray those in my BSF class/online group grow in gratitude for Your grace and goodness. May we all increasingly experience passionate faith-filled prayer and intimate personal knowledge of You. Like flourishing trees, may our lives give refreshment and nourishment to those around us.

PERSONAL: Father, as I relate to others, keep my own sinfulness and need for Your mercy before me. When I notice another Christian’s sin, give me a spirit of restoration not condemnation.



Matthew 7:28 says, “the crowds were amazed at his teaching.” Take time to write down what has amazed you most about Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Give thanks to the Lord for what He has shown you about Himself these last few weeks.

9

The Miracles of Jesus – Part One

“What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!” – Matthew 8:27b

Adoration

Jesus, I praise You for Your absolute authority. No power that stands against You and Your purposes ultimately succeeds. With a mere word, You can dismiss sickness, raging storms, and even demonic opposition.

Confession

Please forgive me, Jesus, when I do not fully submit to Your authority. Convict me when I try to hold back areas of my life from You instead of deliberately resting in Your steady hand.

Thanksgiving

Jesus, thank you for lovingly growing my faith and revealing truth to me in ways I can understand, just as You did for Your disciples. Thank you for showing Yourself to me, especially in the storms of my life.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Jesus, today people still wrestle with the question, “What kind of man is this?” I pray they will increasingly recognize Your undeniable authority and rejoice in the revelation of who You are.

LOCAL: Lord, help each person in my BSF class/online group to see Your authority as something to be sought and treasured. Help us to fully surrender so that we might flourish under Your loving care.

PERSONAL: Jesus, Your authority over my life and eternity is undeniable and unavoidable. Reveal Yourself to me in ways that are uniquely meaningful to me. I am listening!



Psalm 65:5-7 says, “You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds, God our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas, who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength, who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations.” What situation in your life is like a “storm”? Say or write a prayer to our all-powerful God about it.

10

The Miracles of Jesus – Part Two

“But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” – Matthew 9:6a

Adoration

Jesus, You are all-powerful. You heal, restore, and even overcome death. You are the author and giver of life. Isaiah 35:5-6 says of You: “Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.”

Confession

Hosea 6:6 says, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” Jesus, forgive me when I try to make God’s Law about religious rituals instead of the obedient heart You desire. Forgive me when I am harsh and judgmental toward other sinners instead of reflecting Your heart of compassion and forgiveness.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Lord, for Your amazing grace, which I did not earn and do not deserve. Thank you that I cannot lose my standing as Your child. Your love for me is not based on my contribution but on what Christ my Savior has done.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Jesus, You give life to the broken and hope to the desperate. I pray for any BSFers who don’t know You as Savior. Through the study of Matthew, may they respond to Your generous offer of life and hope. Move them to hear the call to follow You so that they can be made whole.

LOCAL: Jesus, I pray that those in my BSF class/online group and church will submit to Your unlimited authority and divine grace to forgive sins. Draw them to find a safe place to rest and thrive. Lord, lead us into fullness of life.

PERSONAL: Jesus, You not only see my physical ailments and weaknesses; you see my weary heart. You see me in my circumstances. Use my circumstances to speak to me – to grow my faith. I believe; help me in my doubt and unbelief.



What detail from the miracles of Matthew 8–9 is most significant to you? Take time to praise and thank God for how He has revealed Himself to you through these passages.

11

Jesus Commissions the Twelve

"Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it." – Matthew 10:39

Adoration

Jesus, I praise You for willingly leaving the comforts of heaven to secure the salvation of all who believe – a salvation we could never attain on our own. You were mocked, beaten, spit on, and crucified because You love me and so I could have a relationship with You. How awesome is Your love for me!

Confession

Father, while Your Word tells me to, "...deny [myself] and take up [my] cross daily and follow [you]" (Luke 9:23), I often choose my own comfort and desires over obedience to You. Forgive me when what other people think of me becomes more important than following You wholeheartedly.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Father, that while there are times that following You seems risky, I can rest in the fact that I am always secure in You; that no matter what I face, I have not only Your provision, but Your very presence with me.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, Your Word says, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." (Matthew 9:37) Give those in Your Church around the world a burden for the lost that overcomes our fear and desire to be comfortable. Call and send many to take the gospel message to every corner of the earth.

LOCAL: Father, I pray for those in my own BSF class/online group or my church who are facing rejection or hardship because of their commitment to follow You. May they know Your comfort. Show me and others in my BSF group and church how to support, comfort, and encourage them.

PERSONAL: God, please help me to love You so much that I no longer fear what my neighbors think, and I can love them and tell them about Jesus. Help me to follow You and be obedient to You, especially when it costs me something.



Every one of us has someone in our lives that needs to hear about Jesus. What fears do you have in telling others about Him? Take a few minutes and write a prayer to God, asking for His help in overcoming those fears.

12

The Increasing Opposition to Jesus' Early Ministry

"For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." – Matthew 12:50

Adoration

Father, You are faithful and will do all You have promised. I praise You because You not only saved me, but you continue to take care of me. You strengthen me, and transform me more and more into the likeness of Jesus.

Confession

Forgive me, Lord, when I reduce my relationship with You to rule-keeping and looking good on the outside instead of resting in the grace You provide to live a life pleasing to You.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Jesus, that Your call to salvation includes rest for my weary soul; that You give me relief from the bondage and weariness of sin and self-effort.

Supplication

GLOBAL: The world is filled with people who reject or are indifferent to Jesus. Father, give us broken hearts for those who don't believe and passion to pray for those across the globe who need You.

LOCAL: Lord, help me and those in my BSF class/online group and church to not stay in our comfortable Christian bubbles. Give us a willingness to engage in our community with the same love and gentleness as Jesus, so many will turn from their unbelief.

PERSONAL: Father, help me to never forget the privilege I have in knowing You. Give me a willing heart to invest in relationships with those who have rejected You so I can share my faith with them and they might have the same privilege of knowing You too.



Jesus calls all kinds of people to Himself. Take a minute and think about those in your family or workplace who look, act, and believe differently than you. How will you begin to pray for them?

13

The Parables of Matthew 13 – Part One

"But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear." – Matthew 13:16

Adoration

God, You are the righteous and perfect Judge. I praise You for saving me and from the penalty of my sin by sending Jesus to pay for it the penalty for my sin on the cross. How merciful You are!

Confession:

Lord, I confess that there are times when my heart is hard and I become prideful and unteachable. Please forgive me and give me a heart that is always receptive to Your Holy Spirit and the truth You want to reveal to me.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Father, that You led someone to sow the seeds of the gospel in me. And thank you that I have the privilege of doing the same for others.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, You know every person who will respond to the gospel. Cause Your global Church to live as beacons of light in this dark world so those You are calling will be receptive to Jesus. "Whoever has ears, let them hear." (Matthew 13:9)

LOCAL: Father, use this BSF study to grow roots deep in You so all who participate are growing in our spiritual disciplines and we become less and less prone to wander from You.

PERSONAL: Lord, the notes remind me that my calling is, "to plant seeds, not pull weeds." Help me remember it's not up to me to determine who the "weeds" are. Rather, allow me to joyfully spread the seeds of the gospel everywhere I go.



The parable of the weeds teaches us that God's judgment is serious. Take some time each day this week to praise God for saving you from judgment. When you're done, pray for someone you know who is still facing that judgment.

14

The Parables of Matthew 13 – Part Two

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.” – Matthew 13:44

Adoration

It is astounding to ponder the price Jesus paid to bring me into Your kingdom, God. I praise You for seeking me when I wasn't looking for You and making me Your own.

Confession

Forgive me, Father, for the times I desire to rule over my own life instead of surrendering to You. Help me remember the priceless treasure I have as a citizen of Your kingdom!

Thanksgiving

Jesus, thank you for being a wise and faithful King. And thank you that I get to experience the blessings of Your kingdom both now and forever!

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, the people of Your kingdom are spread throughout the world. Help me to be faithful to pray for and support Your kingdom citizens all over the globe.

LOCAL: Lord, in placing me and my group members in BSF, You have filled us with the treasure of the knowledge of You. Show us how we can share that treasure with those outside of our BSF class/online group.

PERSONAL: Father, sometimes I struggle with things in the Bible I can't understand. But help me be faithful to boldly proclaim truth I do understand.



Christ pursued us to bring us into His kingdom when we were not looking for Him. How often do you ponder the wonder of this truth? Listen to a praise song that fills you with awe for Jesus and thank and worship Him for all He's done for you.

15

Ministry Leading Up to Recognition of Jesus as Messiah

"Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'" - Matthew 14:33

Adoration

Jesus, You are the Son of God and my all-sufficient Savior. Only You can truly meet my spiritual needs, and I worship You!

Confession

Father, I confess that I sometimes try to rely on my perceived sufficiency when I feel weak or am struggling. Help me to "...delight in my weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:10)

Thanksgiving

I thank you, God, that even when I struggle with my faith, You are faithful and You delight in growing my faith.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, we look at the world today and it's easy for us to be fearful. No matter what we see happening, help Your Church to remember You call us to faith, not fear. You are trustworthy.

LOCAL: Jesus, just as You patiently grew the faith of the disciples, I ask You to patiently grow the faith of everyone in my BSF group. Help us always be ready to boldly declare, "Truly you are the Son of God." (Matthew 14:33)

PERSONAL: Father, I often experience the storms of life. When they happen, I ask You to help me rest in Your presence and comfort, and that I would recognize the ways You are helping me to grow.



The Lesson Notes say: "God most often calls us to jobs that are too big for us and to problems we cannot solve. Only then do we cast ourselves on God to provide what we lack." In what situation of your life do you have "five loaves and two fishes"? As you humbly admit to God the inadequacy of your own resources and give Him space to work, write down or share with your BSF group how He multiplies what you bring to Him.

16

Jesus Opposes Empty Religion and Welcomes Gentiles

"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." – Matthew 15:8

Adoration

Jesus, You are the Savior of the world. One day, people from every nation will gather at the wedding supper of the Lamb – Your banquet table. You reward those who earnestly seek You regardless of race, nationality, or need. No one is beyond the reach of Your compassion and deliverance.

Confession

Forgive me, Lord, when I care more about what I do than who I am. Forgive me when I'm comfortable with empty expressions of worship or avoid the discomfort of looking within my own heart.

Thanksgiving

Romans 3:10 says, "There is no one righteous, not even one." Thank you, God, for meeting my greatest need by sending Your Son to conquer sin's stranglehold on my heart. Thank you for redeeming within me what sin has corrupted.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, use Your people to "feed" those inside and outside Your Church – in our neighborhoods, cities, nations, and to the far corners of the world. No one is beyond the reach of the gospel – awaken many to acknowledge their sin and come to Jesus for cleansing.

LOCAL: Lord, I pray no one in my BSF class/online group will be satisfied with a shallow experience with You. Give us hearts that are willing to go deep with You!

PERSONAL: Jesus, I too often seek help and hope in lesser places. The Gentile woman in Matthew 15 recognized that a "crumb" from You was better than anything this world could offer her. Give me faith that deliberately pursues You and looks to You to meet my deepest needs.



Make a list of God's attributes you see in this week's passage. Use them to give adoration and praise to the one true God!

17

Peter's Confession

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” – Matthew 16:15-16

Adoration

Jesus, I praise You as Messiah, Son of the living God! You came to save Your people. You are the center of God's purpose and plan.

Confession

Lord, forgive me, when I, like Peter, fall back on my own wisdom rather than trusting You for what I cannot understand. Forgive me when I think I know more about Your will than You do.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Holy Spirit, for changing my spiritual blindness into sight. Thank you for giving me wisdom to discern error and commit to truth.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Jesus, in Matthew 16:18, You said You will build Your Church and “the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” Your plan for Your Church is unstoppable! May the Church experience unity of the Spirit that overcomes divisions imposed by the world. Use the body of Christ, Lord, to strengthen each Christian, giving them courage and resolve to go into the world with the gospel.

LOCAL: Lord, I also pray for unity of the Spirit in my BSF class/online group and local church. May these be places where we celebrate and learn the deep truths of Scripture, pray together and for one another, and provide support and accountability.

PERSONAL: Jesus, You said, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24) Give me a desire to follow You at any cost. Jesus, I want You to have all of my heart! Help me to deny myself even when it feels costly.



Who is Jesus to you? Write down your answer –along with any questions, confusion, or doubts that you have about Jesus. Take time to pray and ponder about what you have written.

18

Jesus' Transfiguration

"While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!'" – Matthew 17:5

Adoration

Lord Jesus, You reveal God's glory completely. You are holy, divine, and radiantly splendid. All things exist for Your glory. Your glory belongs to You alone.

Confession

God, You want me to trust You on the mountaintop as well as in the valley. Forgive me when I don't trust Your provision for the everyday needs of my life. Continue to awaken my dull heart to the truth of who You are!

Thanksgiving

Hebrews 12:2 says about You, Jesus, "...For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame" Thank you for never wavering from the Father's plan of redemption and enduring the cross to deliver Your people from slavery to sin into glorious freedom!

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, one day "at the name of Jesus every knee [will] bow ... and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord." (Philippians 2:10-11) I pray You will awaken many people now to what is true – Jesus is Your Son!

LOCAL: Lord, please use this study of Matthew in magnificent ways to develop the faith of those in my BSF class/online group. Through the reading and teaching of Your Word, through the sweetness of Christian fellowship, and through quiet moments of prayer, move us to trust You in new ways.

PERSONAL: Father, show me Your steady and sure power as I navigate the slopes and valleys of daily life. You are the same powerful and majestic God even in the most ordinary and painful situations I face. Help me to trust You with my pain and my needs.



What ordinary need in your life is providing an opportunity for you to trust God? Take it before the Lord in prayer with open hands and ask Him to use it to grow your faith and to show His glory and brilliance.

19

Jesus' Last Discourse in Galilee

"And he said: 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.'" - Matthew 18:3

Adoration

God, Your heart is always turned toward Your children. I praise You as a jealous God - You preserve Your people from harm and from false gods that would draw us away from You.

Confession

Show me, Lord, where I'm allowing needless temptations into my life. Forgive me when I cause others to stumble by my example or foolishly excuse sin within myself.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for Your tenacious love for me, God! Thank you for intentionally weaning me from dependence on myself and purifying me of my idols. Thank you for supplying what I lack and leading me into greater faith and obedience.

Supplication

GLOBAL: I pray Your Church will not find greatness in human accolades and achievement, but rather seek the true greatness that comes from humble surrender to You, Jesus. Help Your Church to honor those the world fails to esteem and to put others before ourselves. Jesus, let this start with me!

LOCAL: Jesus, You say, "...Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35) I pray unity and love will persevere when inevitable conflict and sin faces my local church. Help us to be humble and to actively intervene when anything threatens to divide or corrupt.

PERSONAL: 1 Corinthians 13:5 says, "[Love] ... keeps no record of wrongs." Lord, help me reflect Your heart by establishing a habit of forgiveness. Help me to forgive freely and from the heart as You have so generously forgiven my incomprehensible debt.



Reread the parable of the unmerciful servant. This time, think of the king as God, the first servant as you, and the second servant as someone who has sinned against you. How does this change how you think about forgiveness? Take your thoughts and struggles before the Lord in prayer.

20

Jesus' Countercultural Kingdom Values

"Jesus looked to them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'" - Matthew 19:26

Adoration

Jesus, I praise You for the "upside-down" values of Your kingdom! You protect the exploited, exalt the humble, and welcome those least honored by this world.

Confession

Lord, forgive me, when I, like the rich young man, fail to recognize my idols. Forgive me when I value what the world promotes more than I love what You love.

Thanksgiving

Nothing compares to the greatness of knowing You, Jesus. Thank you for the promise of eternal life for all who follow You. No one can imagine the delights You have prepared for those who love You! (1 Corinthians 2:9-10)

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, You can do the impossible to redeem lives, hearts, and even marriages. I pray Your Church will be a safe haven for those in painful situations. As believers, help us to trust You to both stand on truth and show compassion to hurting people.

LOCAL: Jesus, You said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them" (Matthew 19:14) Father, I lift up those in my BSF class/online group and church who are ministering to children - so that even the youngest can accomplish great things for You. I pray they will see the power of the gospel at work as they pour themselves out in this worthy investment.

PERSONAL: Lord, no situation falls outside Your promise to work all things together "for the good of those who love [You], who have been called according to [Your] purpose." (Romans 8:28) Help me to find contentment and fulfillment in my current situation. I want a joy-filled life of radical commitment and complete surrender to You!



Write a list of people or things you sometimes place in your life before God. What needs to change in your life to put God before those things? Take your list before the Lord in prayer as you seek to more fully surrender these things to Him.

21

Jesus Set His Course Toward Jerusalem

"And whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." – Matthew 20:27-28

Adoration

Jesus, we praise You because You humbly came to earth to serve, not be served. In Your humility, You gave Your life to save me!

Confession

Father, You tell me, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23) Forgive me when I surrender to comfort and ease instead of denying myself and being obedient to You.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, God, for not wasting my suffering – for using it to mold me and break my dependency on people and pleasures when only You will satisfy my true needs.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, so many of Your people around the world suffer for following You. Strengthen and encourage them as they humbly carry their cross for Your glory.

LOCAL: Jesus, You came not to be served, but to serve. Help myself and those in my BSF group and my church to see practical ways to follow Your example and serve each other with joy.

PERSONAL: Far too often I look out for my own self-interests, Father. Help me to quickly recognize when I'm only looking out for myself so I yield to the Holy Spirit for His power to think of others and serve them well.



Jesus is our servant King who calls us to humble servanthood. Ask the Lord to show you who you can serve and how to do it.

"Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes"?"' – Matthew 21:42

Adoration

Jesus, I praise You because you bore the wrath of God, which I deserve, in my place on the cross. What a merciful and marvelous expression of Your great love!

Confession

Father, I confess that I sometimes display a flourishing exterior on the outside while I'm tolerating sinful behavior in my heart. Help me to hate my own sinfulness and quickly submit myself to Your authority in every area of my life.

Thanksgiving

Jesus, You tell me, "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." (Matthew 21:22) Thank you that the things that seem impossible to me are possible with You and I can bring my needs to You with confident, faith-filled prayer.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, there are people in every country around the world who reject Your authority over their lives. I pray that You would grow such beautiful fruit in Your Church that those You are calling would be humbly drawn to You, submit to Your authority, and find the refuge and rest only You provide.

LOCAL: Lord, like Israel, You have given me a status of privilege by giving me Your Word and bringing me to a place of in-depth Bible study. Help me and everyone in my BSF class/online group and church to not squander our privilege, but to grow in our knowledge, love, and obedience to You.

PERSONAL: Father, my ultimate purpose and fulfillment is found only as I surrender to You. Give me a heart that quickly and willingly surrenders to You, no matter what You ask or where You call me.



Like the Pharisees, we can sometimes project an exterior of righteousness while rejecting God's authority in some area of our lives. Write a prayer asking God to reveal those places to you and ask Him to help you trust and follow Him as you submit those things to Him.

23

Final Charges Against the Religious Leaders

"For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." – Matthew 23:12

Adoration

I praise You, Jesus, because You did not reject me because of my sin. Instead, You offered Yourself, covered my sin, and saved me – not just from the wrath I deserve, but for Yourself.

Confession

Lord, Your Word says, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind'...And...'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:37, 39) I confess I fail at this often. Please forgive me and grow my capacity to love You more. Pour the abundance of Your love out on me so I can love others well.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Father, that in Christ I am free to live for You – surrender my selfish desires; live a life pleasing to You; and loves others, even my enemies.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Lord, many times I struggle to love those who don't think, believe, or even look like me. Jesus, You expressed sorrow and compassion for those who rejected Your call. I ask You to give me Your heart for the lost. Help me to love them and reach them with the gospel.

LOCAL: Lord, I ask You to protect those in my church and my BSF class/online group from hypocrisy. And where there is hypocrisy, I ask for the Holy Spirit's conviction to lead us in humble submission to You.

PERSONAL: Father, Your coming judgment proves that what I do and how I live matters. Help me to take my sin and Your holiness seriously. Give me grace to face the sin in my own heart so I can humbly submit to Your will, love You, and love my neighbors without judgment.



Jesus' response to the religious leaders of His day shows that only He knows the true motives of our hearts. Ask Him to reveal any wrong motives you may have and to replace them with motives pleasing to Him.

24

Jesus' Olivet Discourse, Part 1: Prophecy About the Last Days

"So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." - Matthew 24:44

Adoration

Father, You are the faithful promise-keeper who is sovereignly in control of the past, present, and future. While the world looks like it's in chaos, my future is secure because You hold the future. I praise Your powerful name!

Confession

Jesus, You tell me to, "... keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." (Matthew 24:42) You are returning, but I confess that there are many days I live without being watchful and am more concerned with my own life instead of Your kingdom. Forgive me and help me live and work with joyful expectation of Your certain return.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Father, that I don't have to wonder or worry about the future. You graciously tell me all I need to know to settle my anxious heart and grow my faith. Thank you that Your past faithfulness assures me You will be faithful to keep Your future promises, including the return of Jesus!

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, You warn Your people to, "Watch out that no one deceives you." (Matthew 24:4) As the day of Christ's return draws nearer, protect Your Church from deception and cause us to be totally committed to the truth of Your Word.

LOCAL: God, as we wait for the return of Jesus, You have given us work to do. Help me, those in my BSF class/online group, and my church to be passionate about sharing the gospel and building Your kingdom as we wait.

PERSONAL: Father, my heart's desire is to "... stand firm to the end..." (Matthew 24:13) Please strengthen the places where my faith is feeble so I don't simply endure, but I stand firm in You.



Jesus said, "For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many." (Matthew 24:5) What are you doing to ensure you are not deceived? What else might you need to do? Take this prayerfully before the Lord.

25

Jesus' Olivet Discourse, Part 2: Parables About Christ's Return

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'" – Matthew 25:21

Adoration

Jesus, I praise You because all You do is good and is accomplishing Your sovereign plans, including Your return. You are the coming King who will reign without rival!

Confession

Father, I confess that looking at the world sometimes causes me to doubt Your goodness and Your plans. Please forgive me and give me a heart that looks and longs for Your return so I have proper perspective.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Father, that the day is coming when, "... The kingdom of the world [will] become the kingdom of our Lord and his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever." (Revelation 11:15) Thank you for the privilege of being part of Your kingdom.

Supplication

GLOBAL: Lord, we know that many are unprepared for the return of Jesus. Give Your global Church the urgency to lovingly warn the unbelieving of Jesus' return. Holy Spirit, prepare hearts to hear and receive the warning.

LOCAL: God, You have given me, my church, and my BSF class/online group a bounty of spiritual treasure. Show us how You are asking us to invest it for Your kingdom.

PERSONAL: Jesus, You said, "... I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me...." (Matthew 25:35-36a) You call me to love others through ordinary acts. Give me eyes to see who I can serve through a simple acts of love.



Jesus calls us to be faithful with what He has given us. How are you using the gifts and talents He has given you? Take some time to thank God for the gifts He's given you and ask how He might want you to invest them further.

26

The Evening Before the Cross

"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." – Matthew 26:28

Adoration

Jesus, I praise You for willingly setting aside the glory due to You to associate with unworthy sinners. You came to make sin's slaves Your own beloved children. You are heaven's King and Your worth is immeasurable!

Confession

Forgive me, Jesus, for the times I hold back my worship when, like the faithful woman of Matthew 26, I should extravagantly pour it out. Forgive me when I fear others' criticism and the cost of unrestrained worship.

Thanksgiving

1 Peter 1:18-19 says that I was not redeemed with "perishable things" but with Your "precious blood," Jesus. You are the Lamb of God without blemish or defect. Thank you for faithfully embracing the physical and spiritual suffering of the cross to redeem me – an unfaithful sinner!

Supplication

GLOBAL: Jesus, we live in a world that does not know how desperately they need to be redeemed. I pray You will open the eyes of many to the magnitude of their sin debt and they will turn to You, their faithful Redeemer, to be set free.

LOCAL: Jesus, I lift up the sacrament of Communion in my local church – that we will not merely go through the outward motions of this observance, but that we would grow in our realization of Your deliverance from sin and of the joyful life You provide now and for all eternity.

PERSONAL: Jesus, in the days before Your crucifixion, You fellowshiped with friends, gave thanks, ate, sang, and prayed. Help me joyfully trust Your plans and timing in my own difficulties and pain and when following You requires costly obedience.



Do you believe that God will transform for your good what the enemy plans for evil in your life? Honestly pour out your heart in prayer and surrender your will to God as you reflect on this question.

"But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." – Matthew 26:56a

Adoration

Jesus, I praise You because You chose to stand as my substitute. You took my death sentence. I was guilty and yet will stand perfectly forgiven and clothed in Your righteousness throughout eternity. "[You] bore [my] sins in [your] body on the cross ... by [your] wounds [I] have been healed." (1 Peter 2:24) You are beyond amazing!

Confession

Lord, forgive me for the times I don't yield to truth – when, like the Jewish leaders, I elevate my opinions and view of myself above truth; when like Pilate, I value self-preservation more than truth.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for laying down Your life, Jesus. Thank you for Your willing surrender to the evil plans of wicked men. You were spit on, beaten, mocked, denied, and betrayed to take the judgment I deserved. How can this be? I stand in wonder and awe of Your love!

Supplication

GLOBAL: Father, help every BSFer who is facing persecution and unjust authorities in their home countries to trust You for the strength to obey You in their difficult situations. No dishonest government, bureaucracy, or ruler rises without Your sovereign hand accomplishing Your good plan.

LOCAL: Lord, through the power of Your Holy Spirit, allow my BSF class/online group and church to be places where we give up human "rightness" to pursue the righteousness of Jesus. I pray we won't weaponize our opinions or hold up God's truth in unkind or unloving ways.

PERSONAL: Jesus, like Peter, I too often strive in my own strength. Help me to overcome the challenges I'm facing not by trying harder, but by coming to the end of myself and turning to You to persevere.



The lesson notes say, "God's sovereign plan took Jesus to the cross. God's sovereign plan for your life can be trusted." Are you facing a situation where obeying God is difficult? Go before the Lord in prayer to be affirmed in His goodness and to ask for the strength to obey.

"And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit." – Matthew 27:50

Adoration

I worship You, my sinless Savior. Because of my sin, You endured the undeserved pain of every nail, every taunt, and the excruciating separation from God the Father. You allowed Yourself to be tormented and murdered by the very people You loved and came to save. I stand in amazement of the love that sent You to the cross and the obedience that kept You there!

Confession

Forgive me, Jesus, when I gloss over the agony you experienced. Convict me anew as I study my BSF lesson this week of what it cost for me to walk and talk every day in intimate fellowship with my Holy God.

Thanksgiving

Jesus, thank you that I wake up every morning knowing that the weight of God's wrath no longer hangs over me. Thank you that because of Your undeserved rescue I no longer carry a burden that I cannot bear. I sing praises of gratitude to You: "Jesus paid it all; all to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow."
(*Jesus Paid It All*, written by Elvina Hall)

Supplication

GLOBAL: God, Your work cannot be measured by how things appear. Despite the evil in this world, Satan has not won. Give Your Church strength to persevere in faith. Jesus, Your death looked like defeat but triumph and victory were soon to come. Help us to trust that You are doing more than we can see.

LOCAL: Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrated his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Lord, I pray the truth of this changes the lives of every person in my BSF class/online group – give us wholehearted trust and commitment to You!

PERSONAL: Holy Spirit, give me a fresh look at Jesus' suffering and fresh amazement at how much I am loved!



Romans 8:38-39 says, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Take this glorious declaration before the Lord in prayer, giving praise and rejoicing in the joyous security Jesus won for you!

29

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." - Matthew 28:19-20

Adoration

I praise You, my Risen Savior! You are alive forevermore. You have victory over Satan, sin, and death. "... the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality ... thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

Confession

Lord, forgive me when I fail to access the spiritual power Jesus won for me - when I settle for tame Christianity and fail to "go" where You call. Convict me to do my part to carry the gospel to the world.

Thanksgiving

Thank you, Jesus, that You are with Your children *always*. Thank you that You draw near to me even in the midst of my failures, weaknesses, and neediness. Thank you for the unshakable hope I have because of Your victory on my behalf - a victory that no one can take from me!

Supplication

GLOBAL: Jesus, You said, "Go and make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19) Give Your Church ever-increasing global influence to reach every single nation and people group on earth with the good news of the gospel!

LOCAL: Lord, I pray those in my BSF class/online group and church won't hoard the lavish spiritual blessings of salvation, but the Holy Spirit will propel us out of our comfort zones and into our neighborhoods, city, country, and the world to share those blessings. Direct our steps toward people who need You, Jesus.

PERSONAL: Jesus, You are with me in my darkest places and hardest seasons. You speak through me when I don't have the words. You give me strength when I am weak. I am never alone because You are always with me. Because You stand for me, no one can stand against me. Help me to constantly remember these truths; take me to new horizons of faith.



As our study of Matthew closes, what have you learned that has changed the way you think or live? In prayer, ask God to continue to transform you through the wonders you have studied in His Word and for Jesus' glory to shine ever brighter in your life and into our world.