

What do we do in the Gospel Bible Study class?

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A group of about twelve of us have been meeting on Sunday mornings (lately on Zoom) at 8:30 a.m. since we began over a year ago. It was not long after we became a Matthew 25 church that Paulette started leading the class in the study of the gospel of Matthew. We are not even up to chapter 25 yet! That might give you an idea of how much depth there is to this study... verse by verse by verse, which sometimes becomes word, by word, by word! With three pastors (Paulette, Donovan Burkert-Kerr, and Jim Moiso) contributing to the discussion, you can see we have a wealth of theological insight, as well as the cultural, linguistic and historical context within which this gospel was written.

Here is a just a sample of how we attempt to discern this gospel:

❖ Matthew 20:20a, 21b-22: Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him (Jesus)... She said to him, "Command that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?"

It was unusual for a woman to question a man. Why was she bold enough to do this? Why was she asking for favoritism for her two sons? What if she had had more than three sons? Where would she have asked for them to be seated? What did Jesus mean by asking if she could drink the cup he was to drink? What does it mean to be seated on his left and his right? Why does he defer to the Father? Why can't he alone make this decision?

❖ Matthew 21:2b, 5: "Go into the village opposite you, and you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me... Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass."

How did Jesus know where an ass and a colt were tied? Did they belong to a friend? Did this fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9? How did Jesus ride on an ass and a colt at the same time? How does this compare to the entry of rulers at the time?

❖ Matthew 21:21-22: And Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and never doubt, ...if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith."

What did the word 'doubt' mean in the original language of Greek? What happens when we pray for something that does not come about? Is it because we lack faith? Or is the mystery that is God beyond our understanding?

As you can see, we will continue in our Gospel Bible Study to try to come closer to the true meaning of that which may be beyond our comprehension, but which still brings us closer to becoming the disciples of Christ that we are meant to be.

Come, join us. We read, we laugh, we ask many answerable and unanswerable questions. We learn how to become more faithful followers of Christ, in the midst of the mystery that is God's word for us.