



A LIGHT TO LEAD US HOME

Term 4 Bible Study Book

BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM – TERM 4 2019

A Light to Lead Us Home

Matthew 1 – 4

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St Luke's Anglican Church, Miranda

ST LUKE'S
2020
VISION

Imagine a church:

Where delight in God
overflows into all of life

Where enduring truth
inspires courageous witness
and a heart for the nations

Where the lost surrender
to the mercy of Christ

Where a hunger to
know, love & serve Christ
renews every season

Where the broken find
a family and the outsider
is embraced

A Light to Lead Us Home

Matthew 1-4: Introduction

There are few parts of the bible more familiar to us than the early chapters of Matthew. Each December, as presents are wrapped and wreaths are hung, we return to the Gospel accounts of the birth of Christ. We hear again of Mary, pledged to be married. We see the Magi, following the star. Like all of our Christmas traditions, these stories have a sentimental aura. The season encourages a spirit of child-like naivety, and in that spirit we remember, again, the birth of Jesus.

Yet to isolate these passages as 'The Christmas Story' can leave us blind to the picture Matthew is painting of "Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham". These studies offer us a chance to weight these passages without carols ringing in our ears. Matthew crafts his account of the birth of Jesus in deep dependence upon the Old Testament scriptures. More than that, The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection as a continuation and fulfilment of the whole Biblical story.

When we hear this God breathed-history and follow where Matthew leads us new vistas open up. Jesus' identity, his mission and our expected response are presented through a tapestry of Old Testament quotations and allusions. As we take the time to consider these Old Testament echoes, the wonder of God dwelling with us in Christ can be captured again.

Study 1: The Genesis of Jesus

Matthew 1:1-17

Talk

How far back can you trace your genealogy? Anyone interesting back there?

Read Matthew 1:1-17

1) What stands out to you? What questions do you have? What names are unfamiliar to you?

2) What are the major structural divisions in the genealogy (cf 1:17)? Why may Matthew have structured the genealogy in such a way?

- 3) Within the genealogy there are some anomalies that you would not usually find in such a list. Do any stand out to you?**
- 4) Consider the 5 women who are included. Who are they? Are they linked in some way? What does the mention of these specific women communicate about Jesus, His mission and the family He was creating?**
- 5) Jesus' family tree embraces outsiders, and so too should the church that bears his name (*"Imagine a church where the broken find a family and the outsider is embraced"*). How might the different 'layers' of church be part of the inclusion of outsiders? Consider: Church services, network groups, bible study groups, families and individuals?**

6) Consider 1:2 and 1:11, where both Judah and Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) are linked to their brothers. What do these men do to protect their 'brothers' (Genesis 44:33 and 2 Kings 24:12)? How is Matthew pointing to Jesus' mission through this curious mention of 'brothers'?

7) Self-sacrificial love and service is in the 'DNA' of Jesus. We long to be a church where this same self-sacrificial love is part of our 'DNA'. How will you be serving your brothers and sisters in 2020?

Dig Deeper

8) Let's take a look at how Matthew begins and ends his Gospel.

- Matthew begins with the phrase "*A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ*". Literally, "The book of the genesis of Jesus Christ". A similar phrase is found 10 times through the book of Genesis (2:4, 5:1, 10:1, 11:10 and so on).

- Matthew ends the Gospel with what is commonly called 'the great commission' (Matthew 28:16-20). Importantly for us, the traditional Jewish ordering of the Old Testament also ends with a great commission. Have a read of 2 Chronicles 36:22-23, the traditional conclusion of the Old Testament scriptures.

9) Why has Matthew started and ended the gospel the way he does?

Prayers

Pray for Brett and Mardi, Evie, Harriet, Olivia, and Willow Middleton. Pray for Brett as Focus Pastor for 10am. Pray for Brett as he serves us as Senior Minister.

Pray for Matt and Lauren, Ezra, Joanna and Samuel Thomas and their mission work with OMF International to an unreached people group in South East Asia.

Pray for our Church Wardens: Colin Adams, Colin Contessa and Joel Garlato. Pray for our Parish Councillors: Laurie Davidson, Amanda Garlato, Elise Adams, Nathan Pollock, Simon Veltmeyer (also our treasurer) and Kath Telfer. Pray for our Parish Nominators: Michael Easton, David Francis, Amanda Garlato, Louise Parkes, and Lloyd Zietsch. Pray for our Synod Reps: Michael Easton and Amanda Garlato.

Pray for the wide range of outreach opportunities that we have with local schools. Pray that our scripture teachers would be diligent and loving as they teach classes. Pray that our school chaplains would effectively model Christ in the way they love and support the school community. Pray that our Kids Hope mentors would be a loving and stable relationship for children with social needs. Pray that School Lunch program leaders will be bold in their example and witness to their school communities. Pray for the volunteers running Breakfast Club at Miranda Public and Port Hacking High School.

Pray for SYNOD, 14-16 October & 21-22 October.

Pray for the Acts2too group as they have fellowship together on their outing to Kiama on 26th October.

Study 2: The Birth of Jesus

Matthew 1:18-25

Talk

Can you remember a moment in your life when you needed saving? Could you have saved yourself, or were you utterly helpless?

Read Matthew 1:18-25

1) What initial thoughts, questions or insights arise from the passage?

2) Consider Matthew 1:18-25 beside Luke 1:26-38. How are they different?
How are they similar?

3) Some people find miracles such as the virgin birth impossible to believe. Is belief in such things difficult for you? Have you ever had to defend your belief in the miraculous?

4) *“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about (Matthew 1:18)”*. God could have caused the Christ to be born to a happily married husband and wife. God could have caused the Christ to be born to a single woman. God could have formed the Christ from the dust! Yet God chose that it would come about this way.

- **A virgin.**
- **Pledged to be married.**
- **Found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.**

Why this way? What biblical themes lay the groundwork for these curious details and make Jesus’ peculiar birth fitting in the big story that leads up to it.

5) Many religions have mechanisms by which people can balance out their sins and save themselves. How does the miraculous birth of Jesus squash any such ideas creeping into Christianity?

6) We know little of Joseph beyond what Matthew writes in chapters 1 and 2. What do we discover about his character from the following verses?

- **1:19**

- **1:24**

7) Justice, mercy and courage. Which of these do you share with Joseph? Which would you love to grow in? How might you begin to grow in these? Are there situations in your life right now where you need to pursue justice with mercy?

8) Consider the names given to Jesus in these verses. At which points in your life has it been particularly important to know you have a 'saviour' or that 'God is with us'? Who would you love to come to know Jesus in this way?

Digging Deeper

9) What meaning did God's promise, quoted in Matthew 1:22-23, have at the time it was first spoken? Have a read of Isaiah 7-9. What would the promise have meant to King Ahaz? What was its fulfilment in Isaiah's time? In what sense can Jesus also be the fulfilment?

Prayers

Pray for Jennie and Don Everist. Pray for Jennie as Focus Pastor of the 8am congregation and as Pastoral Care Minister for St Luke's. Pray for Jennie's Pastoral Care ministries, especially in her work in visitation and Bible Study in our local retirement villages.

Pray for Shane and Ruth, Kye, Joel, and Finn Sparks and their mission work with Pioneers making disciples in Gijon, Spain.

Pray for John and Jodi, Gemma, Amber, Zoe, Jasmine, Claudia and Elias Lovell. Pray for the family as they return to Sydney for John to take up the position of General Secretary for the CMS NSW & ACT Branch.

Pray for our Prime Minister and government. Pray for our state and federal members, our Premier and government. We pray also for our local Council including our Mayor.

Pray for those who serve to protect our country. Pray for health and safety for the service men and women and their Chaplains both here and overseas. Pray for their families waiting at home.

Pray that the word of God we heard on Sunday might shape how we live during the week. Pray that we would be respectful of workplace boundaries, but that we'd also *"be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks [us] to give the reason for the hope that [we] have"* (1 Peter 3:15). Thank God that we have the opportunity to represent Christ in how we speak and act in the workplace.

Study 3: A light to lead us

Matthew 2:1-12

Talk

Other than God (obviously), what would people close to you say you worship?

Read Matthew 2:1-23

- 1) What initial thoughts, questions or insights arise from the passage? Are there any parts of the Old Testament of which this passage reminds you?

2) What is the political tension in verses 2:1-2? Why is Herod and 'all Jerusalem (probably meaning the hierarchy or Jerusalem)' disturbed?

3) Herod may be King, yet he is not of the royal Davidic line. Rather, his family are Edomite converts to Judaism.

- **Why might his place on the throne be offensive to many Jewish people (Genesis 49:10, 2 Samuel 7:12-13, Isaiah 16:5, Ezekiel 37:25)?**

- **What is the origin of the Edomites (Genesis 25:30)? How does this background further colour Herod's claim of the throne?**

4) Jesus, we read, is born King. Is this how you think of and pray to Jesus? What impact might it have on our decisions, priorities and interactions with our world to truly live with Jesus as King? How may Jesus being born king colour what it means to have 'faith' or 'trust' in Jesus?

5) When Herod enquires as to where the Christ was to be born, the chief priests, reliant on Micah 5:2, point to Bethlehem, the birthplace of king David. Read Micah 5:1-5. What gospel themes emerge as you consider the verse context?

6) Keeping in mind the Exodus echoes throughout the passage, look again at the Magi, noting the details Matthew gives. Who in the Exodus story do the Magi most remind us (compare Exodus 13:21 & Matt 2:9-10, Exodus 8:1 & 2:11)?

7) Matthew's ironic reversal is to recast the gentile Magi in the role of Israel. Spend some time considering their worship. Who is it directed towards? Of what does their worship consist?

8) We long to be a church where "*delight in God overflows into all of life*". What may we learn from the Magi's "*delight in God*"? How may this Christmas season and the New Year provide you an opportunity for a refocus on the worship of Jesus?

Prayers

Pray for Tim and Shona, Annika, Hamish, Edward and Hugo Goldsmith. Pray for Tim as Focus Pastor for the Miranda North and Church at 5 congregations. Pray for Tim as he heads up our Local Mission profile for St Luke's and focuses on outreach and evangelism.

Pray for John-Francis and Anup Wallace. Pray for John-Francis as Pastor of Shalom Calvary Church. Pray for the Wallace's and their local mission work in Indore, North India.

Pray for Sarah Prabhakar and her work in India with BCTI and SIM.

Pray for peace and wise leadership in our world. Pray that there would be opportunities for Christians to share the love, peace and saving grace that Jesus offers to all.

Pray for English as a Second Language classes each Friday during school term. Give thanks for Marina and her team as they teach and encourage those who come along. Pray for the end of term Easy English Service, that people would attend and understand the Bible and Jesus' saving grace.

Thank God for the many and varied resources available to us as a parish. As we seek to witness to the goodness of God daily, pray that we might make the most of opportunities to invite people we know to events at church. Pray that God would be preparing the heart of people we could invite to an upcoming event.

Pray for Square One Camp (8th – 10th November)

Pray for Year 10 camp (8th – 10th November)

Study 4: Vision Feedback Week

Seven years ago St Luke's Miranda launched its 2020 Vision. Throughout this period, our vision statement has proved to be a valuable unifying and guiding document. However, as 2020 approaches, the time has come to begin a new vision setting period and to discern together the sort of church God may continue to grow here at Miranda. Take some time as a group to reflect on the impact of our 2020 vision and to share together how we may sharpen the communication and implementation of any future vision statements. Feedback from all groups will be shared by group leaders with the staff team soon after this vision feedback week. A summary of the feedback from this session will be made available to all groups.

St Luke's 2020 Vision

Imagine a Church:

WHERE DELIGHT IN GOD OVERFLOWS INTO ALL OF LIFE

We have been striving to be a church where our simple enjoyment in belonging to God transforms all of life: work, rest and play; the good times and the bad.

- Have you found St Luke's to be a place that delights in God's love?

- What are some good examples of where you have seen this happening?

- Where might we be falling short?

3) Herod, in true Pharaoh style, orders the death of all boys under 2 in Bethlehem. Again, Matthew sees this moment as a fulfilment of prophecy and quotes Jeremiah 31:15. Read through Jeremiah 31:1-17 together. What themes from Jesus life do you hear in these verses? How does this chapter of Jeremiah find fulfilment in Jesus?

4) How does Matthew 2:19-21 continue the Exodus theme (Exodus 4:19-20)? How is Matthew continuing to allude to Jesus identity and mission?

5) Matthew states that Jesus settling in Nazareth is also a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. The problem is, the phrase “he will be called a Nazarene” is found nowhere in the Old Testament. What indication does Matthew give that he is not quoting a specific prophet, but rather broader prophetic theme?

6) In these verses we see Jesus beginning to replay Israel’s history. As we, Christ’s body, live in imitation of him, how might we also replay this history? What parts of Israel’s history most resonate with the situation of Miranda Anglican today (think through the stages of Israel’s history: Egypt, the wilderness, conquest of the land, the kingdom under David, the decline of the Kingdom, the exile, rebuilding after the exile, waiting for the Messiah)?

7) Alongside explicitly stating Jesus identity (1:1), Matthew expects readers to discover it through the prophecies and narratives of the Old Testament. Deep reading of the Old Testament scriptures is necessary, it seems. What has your bible reading pattern been throughout the year? Has it helped you worship Jesus? What are your reading plans for summer and 2020?

Prayers

Pray for Sam and Jess, Percy, Lois and Finn Morton. Pray for Sam as Focus Pastor of Night Church. Pray for Sam as he heads up Youth Ministry at St Luke's – coordinating our youth groups on Friday nights and high school Scripture in our local schools. Pray for Sam as he also heads up Young Adults ministry and Young Adults Bible Studies.

Pray for Eloise Bull as she supports Sam in ministering to the youth of St Lukes.

Pray for Andrew and Adele, Isaac, Lucy, and Finn Southerton and their church plant in Wellington, City on a Hill, New Zealand.

Pray for Miranda North; that there would be many opportunities to connect with the local community through school and other activities.

Thank God for his loving provision in drawing us to him and making us his children and heirs. Pray for members of our families and those close to us who do not know Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Pray for both wisdom and boldness in how to share the good news we have with those who are nearest and dearest to us.

Pray for the Craft Christmas Lunch on 21st November.

Study 6: New Exodus

Matthew 3:1-17

Talk

Have you ever had a 'watershed moment' in life, where, for whatever reason, you had to make a brand new start?

Matthew 3:1-17

1) What initial thoughts, questions or insights arise from the passage? Are there any parts of the Old Testament of which this passage reminds you?

2) What is the deal with John's outfit (consider 2 Kings 1:7-8)? What does this communicate to God's people?

3) What is the deal with John's diet (consider Exodus 10:12 and Exodus 33:3)? What does this communicate to God's people?

4) What is the deal with John's baptism in the desert (3:1) at the Jordan River (3:5-6)? Consider Joshua 1:2 and Ezekiel 36:24-27? What would this communicate to God's people?

5) John's baptism marked a significant moment of recommitment. Have you ever had such moments in your Christian life? How may our regular moments of confession at church help us do so each week?

6) How does the Isaiah 40:3 quote, when read in context (Isaiah 39-40), reveal:

- **The significance of John's ministry in salvation history?**

- **The true identity of Jesus?**

7) What attitude amongst the Pharisees is John condemning? Are we at St Luke's at risk of imitating them?

8) To begin a relationship with Jesus is to experience a baptism of Spirit and fire. We have the new life of the Holy Spirit but it is not without the refining of fire (judgement, suffering and discipline). Has this been the case for you throughout 2019? How would you like Christ to grow and refine you through 2020?

Digging Deeper

9) Consider 2 Kings 2 alongside Matthew 3:1-12. What resonance do you notice between the two parts of scripture? What is the symbolism of the geographical movement of Elijah and Elisha? What is the ironic reversal as John and Jesus recapitulate this moment?

Prayers

Pray for Cam, Katrina and Peyton Harte. Pray for Cam as he heads up Children's Ministry, including KOS (Kids on Sunday), Primary Scripture, Alive (lunch-time Christian group at Miranda North Public School), Homework Club, Children's Thursday night programs, Breakfast Club and Kids' Clubs.

Pray for Jess Moran our Early Childhood Ministry Coordinator as she oversees our Crèche and Playtime programs. We pray for energy and enthusiasm as she looks after this age group as well as providing support and encouragement for the parents.

Pray for Geoff and Liz, Johanna, Will, Tom and Zoe Robson and their work with Christian Union in Canterbury University, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Pray for Rob and Jo, Lili, and Jemma Copland. Pray for Rob's work as the Anglican Chaplain at the University of Wollongong and for his work as Campus Director of the University Bible Group.

Pray for our ongoing and various Children's, Youth, and Young Adults Ministries; that God would be using the leaders and volunteers to sow seeds and help people grow into mature and loving relationships with Jesus. Pray that this would be a great witness to the wider community.

Pray that St Luke's as a community would be a welcoming family to the new person who walks through our doors, as well as the person who's been walking through our doors for many years. Pray that God would help us to love the people as he first loved us. Give St Luke's a spirit of hospitality, care and inclusivity.

Pray for Care and Share Christmas lunch on 28th November.

3) Jesus goes through the waters at his baptism and then is led by the Spirit into the desert? What part of Israel's history is being replayed?

4) Jesus is led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. The purpose of his time in the desert is that He experiences temptation. How does this connect to his mission to 'fulfill all righteousness'?

5) The bible is quite clear that temptation does not find its origin in God (James 1:13-14). Yet the Bible is equally clear that the trials we face are of great importance if we are to persevere to the end (James 1:2-4). How have periods of trial and testing refined your faith?

6) Spend some time considering the temptations Jesus faces. How do the temptations escalate in location and power?

7) What is the rationale behind these particular temptations?

- **Compare Exodus 16:1-3 and Matthew 4:1-2 (cf Deuteronomy 8:1-4)**

- **Compare Exodus 17:1-2, 17:7 and Matthew 4:5-7 (cf Deuteronomy 6:13-16)**

- Compare Exodus 32:7-8 and Matthew 4:8 (cf Deuteronomy 6:13-16)

8) What gives Jesus the strength to endure temptation? What is the 'armour' he wears into this battle? Are we similarly equipped to face temptation? How are you sharpening your weapons against the devil?

Digging Deeper

9) Consider Deuteronomy 9:7-21 and Matthew 27:32-50. How do each resonate with Matthew 3 and open up insights into Jesus' ministry?

Prayers

Pray for our Student Ministers Russ Denten, Amani Kazogolo and Isaac Shumack as they join us on Sundays while studying at Moore College during the week.

Pray for Sharyn as Office Administrator and Eddie as assistant bookkeeper. Pray for Lisa and Gabby as office assistants.

Pray for David, Kathryn and Reuben Luis. Pray for David as Campus Director of Geelong Christian Union at the Deakin University Campus in Victoria.

Pray for Peter, Katharine, Noah and Atticus Yock. Pray as they work amongst the students at the campus of Griffith University.

Pray for Kylie Zietsch and her work at Johannesburg Bible College, South Africa.

Praise God for our Bible Study leaders and for their faithful work in teaching and ministering to us throughout the term.

Pray for our witness to families that bring their children along to Thursday Children's groups, Kids' Clubs, and Friday Youth groups. Pray that church families would be given opportunities to befriend families who don't come to church, and that hearts may be softened to the gospel.

Pray for our witness to our local community – especially as more units are developed and more people move into the area. Pray for opportunities to connect with our community.

Pray for the Men's breakfast on the 30th November.

Pray for the Women's Christmas Event on 7th December.

Pray for the 7pm Confirmation Service 8th December.

Pray for the Family Christmas Fair on Thursday 12th December.

Pray for the 2pm Lessons and Carols Service 14th December.

Pray for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Services.

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