

Matthew: Then the Sons Are Free

Discussion Guide for May 16 and 17, 2026

Summary

In Matthew 17:22-27, two scenes sit side by side that, at first glance, seem unrelated. In the first, Jesus tells His disciples – for the second time – that He is going to be betrayed, killed, and raised again. In the second, tax collectors approach Peter about the temple tax, and Jesus uses the moment to teach something extraordinary about identity. Together, these scenes reveal a Savior who knows exactly where He's going, willingly walks toward the cross, and pays a price He doesn't owe – so that we can stand before God as beloved sons and daughters. This passage invites us to trust an all-knowing Jesus and to live from the identity He secured for us.

Ice Breaker

Think about a time someone paid a price on your behalf – picked up the check, covered a mistake, took the fall for something. How did it feel to receive something you didn't earn?

Key Verses

1. Matthew 17:22-27
2. Exodus 30:11-16
3. Acts 3:23-24
4. 2 Corinthians 6:19

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus predicted His death and resurrection multiple times, very specifically. Why do you think He wanted His disciples to hear it in advance – and what does that tell us about the kind of Savior He is?
2. The disciples were "greatly distressed" when Jesus told them what was coming. When have you struggled to trust Jesus with something He was clearly telling you, simply because it was hard to hear?
3. "As an omniscient Savior, Jesus is worthy of our trust." Where in your life right now do you sense Jesus inviting you to trust Him with something you can't see the end of?
4. The temple tax existed because of atonement – humanity needed to be reconciled to God. Jesus, as the Son, owed nothing. But He paid it anyway. What does that picture stir in you?

5. Charles Spurgeon said, "You stand before God as if you were Christ because Christ stood before God as if He were you." Which half of that sentence is harder for you to actually believe – and why?
6. If you really lived like a beloved son or daughter of the King this week, what would change? What would you stop carrying? What would you stop trying to earn?

Life Application

Receive what He paid for – Identify one way you've been trying to earn what's already yours – God's love, approval, or acceptance. Write down the truth that counters it and keep it somewhere you'll see it.

Key Takeaways

1. Jesus predicted His death and resurrection clearly and repeatedly – not because He was resigned to it, but because He was sovereign over it. He knew, He chose, and He walked toward it for us.
2. An omniscient Savior is a trustworthy Savior. If Jesus knew the cross was coming and still kept walking, He can be trusted with what He's asking you to walk through today.
3. The temple tax was about atonement – being made right with God. Jesus didn't owe it, but He paid it. That's a picture of the whole gospel in miniature.
4. Because of what Jesus paid, we are not strangers, employees, or applicants before God. We are beloved sons and daughters of the King.
5. Your identity as a child of God is wholly different from anything the world offers. It's not earned, it can't be lost, and it changes how you live in every other room of your life.