

# EPIPHANY AS DISCLOSURE, NOT IMPROVEMENT

## Six Weeks in Matthew

Epiphany is not about human insight climbing toward God. It is about God showing up where we would not place him, speaking a verdict before we have earned it, and revealing glory precisely through submission, weakness, and conflict.

Matthew's Epiphany does not prepare us for Lent by prescribing moral warm-ups. It drives us there.

### Week 1 — *"The Heavens Were Opened"*

#### Matthew 3:13–17 — The Baptism of Jesus

**Epiphany Theme:** God revealed among sinners

**Focus**

- Jesus insists on baptism not to display obedience, but to *stand where sinners stand*.
- John resists because he understands too much—and obedience begins where understanding ends.
- The voice from heaven speaks before Jesus has done anything publicly.

### Week 2 — *"Led by the Spirit into the Wilderness"*

#### Matthew 4:1–11 — The Temptation of Jesus

**Epiphany Theme:** The kind of Messiah Jesus refuses to be

**Focus**

- Each temptation is a reasonable messianic strategy.
- Satan's use of Scripture mirrors the church's worst habits.
- Jesus refuses power, spectacle, and control—even for good ends.

## **Week 3 — “*Repent, for the Kingdom Has Drawn Near*”**

### **Matthew 4:12–25 — The Beginning of Ministry**

**Epiphany Theme:** Light appears in the wrong place

**Focus**

- Jesus begins not in Jerusalem but in Galilee of the Gentiles.
- Repentance is not moral improvement but exposure to the nearness of mercy.
- Discipleship begins with interruption, not decision.

## **Week 4 — “*He Went Up the Mountain*”**

### **Matthew 5:1–12 — The Beatitudes**

**Epiphany Theme:** Blessedness redefined

**Focus**

- The Beatitudes are descriptions, not instructions.
- Jesus does not admire these people; he claims them.
- Blessedness is detached from success, virtue, or visibility.

## **Week 5 — “*You Have Heard... But I Say to You*”**

### **Matthew 5:21–48 — The Law Intensified**

**Epiphany Theme:** The law revealed in its full severity

**Focus**

- Jesus strips the law of manageability.
- External compliance is exposed as inadequate.
- The law is no longer a ladder but a mirror.

## **Week 6 — “*When You Pray*”**

**Matthew 6:1–18 (with focus on 6:9–13) — The Lord’s Prayer**

**Epiphany Theme:** Dependence disclosed

**Focus**

- Prayer is stripped of performance and leverage.
- Daily bread names creaturely dependence without shame.
- Forgiveness is assumed, not negotiated.