

**Matthew 9:35-38:** And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. <sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup> therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

**Intro:** Last week we saw Jesus' power over the eyes & ears of men: & this pointed us to Who He is! He is the LORD God come in the flesh Who is the Son of David, the Messiah, the King Who shall save His people from their sins! This week, we see a summary of what Jesus has been doing so far in Matthew's Gospel, and a command to pray for more laborers to give themselves to the work of spreading the Gospel. This is in anticipation of Jesus choosing His disciples, which, Lord willing, we'll see next week: He sends them out to do what He's been doing.

### **1. Jesus' Mission Was A Teaching And Preaching Mission**

**Matthew 9:35:** And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom

**a. Jesus went everywhere:** Jesus wanted to get His message out there! His message is vital! His message is important! It's the most important message that has ever come into the world! He wasn't hiding it – He was telling it to everywhere so that as many people as possible could hear and be saved and be radically transformed!

**b. His disciples followed in His steps: Acts 5:28:** We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching

**Acts 5:41-42:** Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

**Acts 8:3-4:** But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

**Acts 17:6:** These men who have turned the world upside down

**John Polhill:** These hostile opponents spoke better than they knew, for the spread of the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire was the beginning of a movement that would change the course of history forever.

May we learn from Jesus in this and imitate Jesus in this – and go everywhere telling others the Gospel!

**c. Jesus taught in their synagogues:** The synagogue was a place of teaching and learning. It was central in the life of the Jews of that day. There was only one temple, in Jerusalem, but synagogues were scattered throughout Israel, and this is where God's Word was taught and studied.

**(1) The teaching of God's Word has always been central to the life and health of God's people: Deuteronomy 33:1, 8, 10:** This is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the people of Israel before his death . . . <sup>8</sup> And of Levi he said . . . <sup>10</sup> They shall teach Jacob your rules and Israel your law . . .

**Ezra 7:10:** Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, & to do it & to teach his statutes & rules in Israel. **Nehemiah 8:8:** They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

**(2) Jesus believed the teaching of God's Word was central to the life and health of God's people: Luke 4:16-22:** And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the

blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." <sup>20</sup> And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

<sup>21</sup> And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." <sup>22</sup> And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth.

**d. Jesus proclaimed:** There is a difference between teaching and preaching: **John MacArthur:** Now this is a different word - kerusson - and it means "to proclaim," and it concentrates not so much on the didactic method, the relating of truth, the content, as it does on the very voice, the very style of proclamation. And it simply means "He heralded it out," "He cried out." . . . That's preaching. Teaching is where there is the careful, instructive relating of content. It's kind of from the mind to the mind. Preaching is the crying out, the impassioned cry of Jesus Christ to the people . . . There was never teaching without preaching, and there was never preaching without teaching, but the preaching is the crying out. It is the heralding of the Gospel.

## **2. Jesus Proclaimed The Gospel Of The Kingdom**

**Matthew 9:35:** proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom

**William Hendricksen:** 1) God's kingship, rule, or recognized sovereignty: **Matthew 6:10:** Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

2) Complete salvation – all the spiritual and material blessings – this is, blessings for soul and body – which result when God is King in our hearts, recognized and obeyed as such.

**John 3:3:** Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

3) The church: the community of people in whose hearts God is recognized as King. Local churches are little embassies on earth of the Kingdom of God.

4) The redeemed universe: the new heaven and earth with all their glory; something still future: the final realization of God's saving power.

These four meanings are not separate and unrelated. They all proceed from the central idea of the reign of God, His supremacy in the sphere of saving power.

**For all of this to happen, the King would have to die and rise again!**

## **3. Jesus' Mission Was A Healing Mission**

**Matthew 9:35:** And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.

Jesus healed every disease and every affliction! In chapter 9 alone we've seen Him heal the paralytic, heal the woman with a flow of blood, raise a little girl from the dead, heal two blind men, and cast out a demon and heal a mute man. As one has said, Jesus banished sickness from Galilee! In the presence of the King, you can't be sick!

**William Hendriksen:** 1) These miracles confirmed His message: **John 14:11:** Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

2) These miracles showed that He was indeed the Messiah of His message: **Matthew 11:2-6:** Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

**1 John 3:8:** The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

3) These miracles proved that, in a sense, the kingdom had even now arrived: **Luke 17:21:** the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

#### **4. Jesus Is The Good Shepherd**

**Matthew 9:36:** When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

**a. Jesus had compassion:** No one has ever cared so deeply for lost sinners and needy sheep like Jesus Christ! No one has ever loved like Jesus Christ – in thought, word, deed, or feeling. He felt a deep love & compassion.

**Hymn:** There's not a Friend like the lowly Jesus: No, not one! no, not one!

None else could heal all our souls' diseases: No, not one! no, not one!

Jesus knows all about our struggles; He will guide 'til the day is done:

There's not a Friend like the lowly Jesus: No, not one! no, not one!

**b. The people were harassed & helpless: Dorinai:** The word "harassed" means "flayed." Their skin, their flesh, is torn & mangled. The word "helpless" literally means "thrown down." They are wounded, prostrate, & helpless.

**Ezekiel 34:2-5:** Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, & with force & harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, & they became food for all the wild beasts.

**James Boice:** The reason they were helpless is that they did not know the Bible. They should have known it; they had possessed the O. T. for centuries, & their teachers should have been teaching it to them. But they were like people today. They had not been taught, & they did not have the inclination to seek out Bible truths themselves.

**GOSPEL: Isaiah 53:6:** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way . . . .

**c. God has come to be our Shepherd: Ezekiel 34:10-16:** Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against the shepherds, & I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them. For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep & will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, & I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds & thick darkness. & I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, & in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, & on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, & on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, & I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, & I will bring back the strayed, & I will bind up the injured, & I will strengthen the weak, & the fat & the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

- **Isaiah 49:13:** Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! for the LORD has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.

- **John 10:11:** I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. **GOSPEL**

#### **5. Pray For More Laborers To Go Into The Lord's Harvest**

**Matthew 9:37-38:** Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup> therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

**R. T. France:** The Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, and even Jesus Himself used the image of harvest as a picture of coming judgment.

**John: Revelation 14:14-20:** Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. <sup>15</sup> And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." <sup>16</sup> So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped. <sup>17</sup> Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. <sup>18</sup> And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." <sup>19</sup> So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. <sup>20</sup> And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia. [184 miles]

**R. T. France:** Here . . . as in John 4:35, his thought is rather of men's readiness now to respond to the Gospel by "fleeing from the wrath to come." The context shows that the laborers here are not angels sent out to execute final judgment on the nations, as his Jewish hearers would expect, but men sent out to rescue others from judgment.

**a. Laborers were few then:** Compared to the multitudes who needed to hear, the workers were few!

**b. Laborers in our churches in the U. S. are few now:** I fear that very few Christians share their faith regularly. Let's be one of the few! You be one of the few! And may there be no few no more – but a bunch!

**c. Laborers who go to the most needy places in the world are few: David Platt:** There are 3.2 billion people with little to no access to the gospel. That's 40% of the world's population. They're called the unreached. Of all the resources given to all of the missions organization around the world, only 1% goes to the unreached. Only 1% goes to the people with the most urgent spiritual & physical needs!

**Adoniram and Ann Judson (missionaries to Burma (Myanmar):** I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world? Whether you can consent to her departure to a heathen land, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life? Whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death? Can you consent to all this, for the sake of Him who left His heavenly home and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing, immortal souls; for the sake of Zion and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this, in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with a crown of righteousness brightened by the acclamations of praise which shall redound to her Saviour from heathens saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?

**David Platt:** Gratefully, Ann's dad said "yes," the couple was married, and a year later they set sail. Ann's dad would never see his daughter or son-in-law again [But they would, soon and very soon, in heaven!] In fact, Ann would lose her life sharing the Gospel with people who had never heard the good news of Jesus Christ. As a result of the Judson's service, today there are nearly 4,000 Baptist churches with more than half a million followers of Christ in the heart of Buddhist Burma/Myanmar.

**d. So let us pray: Matthew 9:37-38:** Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup> therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

**Matthew 10:5:** These twelve Jesus sent out

Jesus was harassed and helpless like no other! Jesus is the Good Shepherd, but He is also the Lamb of God slain for sinners!

Christ Jesus Taught And Preached And Healed  
Compassion Showed And Mercy Willed  
The True Good Shepherd God Revealed  
The God-Man Christ Redemption Sealed  
The LORD Of Glory They Have Killed  
He Died And Rose From Wrath He'd Shield  
By Faith Alone We're His And Yield  
God's Holy Plan No More Concealed  
We Praise And Worship Bow And Kneeled  
But Multitudes Are Dead And Wield  
Their Hearts For Sin And Evil Filled  
May Workers Go In Faith And Skilled  
To Preach The Christ And He Will Build  
His Perfect Kingdom From The Field  
So Pray For Workers Strong And Thrilled  
To Go And See God's Word Fulfilled!