



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V21 N35 September 1, 2019

BRIDGES

“Invision: Seeing the Need”

Matthew 9:35-38

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Compassion

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

“Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

Psalm 82:3-4



The harvest is so plentiful—where should I begin?

According to Matthew 9:35-38, taking the good news of the kingdom of God to all the people who needed to hear it was more than one person could do alone, so Jesus chose to enlist the help of his twelve disciples (10:1-5). “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few,” he told them. In another place he said, “Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (Jn 4:35). The job proved to be more than the twelve could do alone, so Jesus later sent out seventy-two (Lk 10:1, 2), then 120 (Ac 1:8; cf., 15). It didn’t take long for the number of believers to swell to 3000, then to 5000, counting the men only, all of whom he commissioned to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19, 20). Over the centuries the harvest has only become more plentiful exacerbating the need for more and more workers.

When it comes to the harvest, no one can do everything, but everyone can and must do something. Everyone must “go beyond” into his or her neighborhood, church, and world in one way or another. The authors of *Irresistible Evangelism* are correct; “We are the messengers God is sending into the lives of our friends and family members, our neighbors and coworkers” (Steve Sjogren, Dave Ping, and Doug Pollock, *Irresistible Evangelism*, 60).

Going beyond is first a matter of the heart, having one like Jesus had, a heart of compassion for the lost. He saw the crowds of people in his world, and they reminded him of sheep without a shepherd. “Sheep

are defenseless animals,” observes one writer. “Without a shepherd they are vulnerable to any attack. Even without predators they are in trouble if they have no shepherd, for they are not good foragers. They need a shepherd to lead them in green pastures and beside still waters (Ps. 23:2). Goats manage very well by themselves, but sheep do not. *Sheep without a shepherd points to people who are in great danger and without the resources to escape from it*” (Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 239, italics added).

Unlike Jesus, when we see the crowds in our world, people in deep spiritual need living in darkness, we can feel anger instead of compassion. Thinking sinful people deserve condemnation, not compassion, comes easy. Going beyond is second a matter of mission. The harvest is the Lord’s; he has sent us to work in his harvest field. We need to see ourselves as people on a mission to “make disciples.” But the harvest is so plentiful; where should we begin reaping? Perhaps the best place to start is right around us in our own neighborhoods

FOR DISCUSSION:

Sam and Lucy recognize their neighbors. They always wave and occasionally engage in small talk, but have never been in their home; neither has any neighbor been in theirs. They don’t even know some of their neighbors’ names, let alone basic things like where they work or what they like to do for entertainment. They care about their neighbors and want to be “street lights” in their neighborhood, but don’t know where to start. What would you tell them?

1

EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Matthew 9:35-38

35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

READ in another translation

35 Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages. He taught in their synagogues and told people the Good News about God's kingdom. He healed all kinds of diseases and sicknesses. 36 Jesus saw the many people and felt sorry for them because they were worried and helpless – like sheep without a shepherd to lead them. 37 Jesus said to his followers, "There is such a big harvest of people to bring in. But there are only a few workers to help harvest them. 38 God owns the harvest. Ask him to send more workers to help gather his harvest." (ERV)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline "teaching," "proclaiming," and "healing" in v. 35.
- Bracket "of the kingdom" in v. 35.
- Insert "kind of" between "every" and "disease" in v. 35 (cf., NASB).
- Circle "compassion" in v. 36.
- Box "because" indicating *reason* in v. 36.
- Underline "harassed and helpless" in v. 36.
- Box "like" indicating *comparison* in v. 36.
- Circle "harvest" in v. 37.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 37.
- Circle "ask" in v. 38.
- Bracket "of the harvest" in v. 38.
- Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 38.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____"



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What do we learn about the extent of Jesus' Galilean ministry from verse 35?
 2. Would you say that the "good news of the kingdom" that Jesus preached and the "gospel of Christ" that Paul preached (Ro 15:19; cf., Php 1:27) are the same or different? Explain.
 3. Jesus went around "*preaching* the good news of the kingdom" and "healing every disease and sickness." What did his *healing* have to do with his *preaching*?
 4. Explain the *comparison* in verse 36.
 5. What do you infer about God from Jesus?
 6. Jesus identifies a problem using *contrast*. Explain the *contrast* and identify the problem.
 7. *Particularize*: put a contemporary face on the problem.
 8. Identify Jesus' solution to the problem.
 9. Describe the sense in which God is "Lord of the harvest" and any inferences you might draw from it.
 10. **Discussion:** Talk about what you can do in response to the "harvest" problem and Jesus' solution to it.
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Commentary On The Text

Matthew 9:35-38 may be a short paragraph but it occupies a strategic position in Matthew's Gospel. This observation is based largely on the similarity between 9:35, "Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness," and 4:23, "Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people." One author writes, "These verses form an *inclusio*, creating a 'bookends' effect that sets off the material in the chapters between them. In chapters 5-7 Jesus is the authoritative Messiah in word in the Sermon on the Mount, and in chapters 8-9 he is the Messiah at work in the miracle stories" (Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew*, 374).

Rather than conclude the previous section, another author argues that it introduces the following one. "Verse 35 is very similar to 4:23, and it may be that the two are meant to bracket the intervening section on the authority of Jesus for teaching and healing. But perhaps it is more likely that for Matthew each passage forms an introduction to an important section on the teaching of Jesus. Here he goes on to bring out the compassion of the Master and his call to prayer for the sending out of those who would bring in the spiritual harvest" (Morris, 238). But who says it has to be one or the other? Perhaps the paragraph functions in two ways, to *conclude* one section (v. 35) and *introduce* the next (vv. 36-38).

The paragraph is easy to analyze; it falls into three parts. The first (v. 35) contains a summary statement describing Jesus' ministry in Galilee expressed in three parallel participles: "teaching," "preaching," and "healing." Matthew goes out of his way to stress the scope of Jesus' Galilean ministry. Clearly Jesus wanted everyone to hear the good news so he went through all the towns and villages, each and every one of them. As he went, he preached the good news that the kingdom of God promised in the Old Testament was near because the king was at hand. The

fact that he healed the sick regardless of their malady substantiated that he was the long-awaited Messiah. The second (v. 36) contains Jesus' expression of compassion for the crowds to whom he ministered. They were like shepherdless sheep harassed by predators and helpless to provide for their own needs. One author writes, "These crowds are experiencing distressing difficulties and are unable to care for themselves. The job of the shepherd is to make sure that the sheep are led peacefully beside still waters and that they lack for nothing, but these leaders are harassing the helpless crowds. They are suffering under the oppression of the occupying Roman forces, plus they have all of the daily concerns, heartbreaks, and difficulties of life beating down on them" (Wilkins, 375). What causes Jesus' deep compassion at this point, however, is not the number of sick people he has healed but rather the great spiritual illness of the people "whose lives have no center, whose existence seems aimless, whose experience is one of futility" (Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 33a, *Matthew 1-13*, 260). The same is true of people today. And the third (vv. 37, 38) contains his description of the problem facing him and his disciples and his solution to it. He frames it in the form of a *contrast*. On the one hand, "the harvest is plentiful," but on the other, "the workers are few." No matter how hard the workers work, they will not be able to gather in the whole harvest. His solution: he does not challenge workers to work harder; instead, he asks them to pray that the one to whom the harvest belongs will send out more workers. "In an age like ours we would expect a call to more vigorous and effective action ourselves (and situations continually arise when that is the right course to pursue). But Jesus points to prayer as the really effective thing" (Morris, 240).

Word Studies/Notes

vv. 35-38 “By means of an almost verbatim repetition of 4:23, 9:35 brings to a satisfying conclusion the great complex consisting of the Sermon on the Mount (chaps. 5-7) and the miracles collection (chaps. 8-9). It reiterates the priority of teaching and preaching over healing (see comments on 4:23). To this summary Matthew appends material whose purpose is to introduce the second great compendium of Jesus’ teachings, the mission discourse of chapter 10” (Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew*, Interpretation, 108).

v. 35 *kingdom* The “good news” Jesus preached pertained to the coming kingdom of God promised in the Old Testament. “A key feature in Old Testament eschatology [last things] concerns a future kingdom that God will set up on this earth and which will be everlasting in duration. We can see this in Daniel 2:34-35, 44; Isaiah 2:2-4; and Micah 4:1-8. This kingdom is not simply a higher order of spiritual reality that coexists with the present course of affairs, but it is a complete *replacement* of present conditions on earth with a new worldwide and multinational world order. Promises found though out the prophets regarding the future restoration of Israel are coterminous with this expectation of a worldwide kingdom. Personal and national blessing are extended to Gentiles as well. Messianic prophecy also finds its fulfillment here. Daniel’s future kingdom on earth, introduced in Daniel 2, is re-presented in 7:12-14, 27, under the rule of ‘one like a Son of man.’ God’s rule from Zion over all nations in Isaiah 2 is revealed in Isaiah 11 to be the rule of a future Davidite, ‘a shoot . . . from the stump of Jesse’ (11:1), who ‘will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom . . . from that time on and forever’ (9:7)” (Craig A. Blaising, “Premillennialism,” in *Three Views on The Millennium and Beyond*, 193, 94).

v. 35 *healing* Healing was one of Jesus’ works that authenticated his messianic identity (cf., Mt 11:1-6).

v. 35 *every* Not that Jesus healed every single sick person in Galilee but that he healed people regardless of their malady. It “may mean every illness that was brought to him, or ‘every kind of disease and sickness’ (GNB). It is a comprehensive expression that brings out Jesus’ mastery over all ill health” (238).

v. 36 *compassion* “Jesus’ human emotions

reflect a deep, *gut-level* ‘compassion’ for this sea of humanity” (Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 166). “In the New Testament this verb is always used of Jesus or by Jesus in his parables; it is particularly associated with him. H. Köster comments, ‘outside the original parables of Jesus there is no instance of the word being used of men. It is always used to describe the attitude of Jesus and it characterises [sic] the divine nature of His acts.’ He finds in Matthew’s use of the term ‘a Messianic characterization of Jesus rather than the mere depiction of an emotion’ (*TDNT*, VII, pp. 553, 554)” (Morris 238, 39).

v. 36 *harassed* . . . “The translations employ a variety of expressions: ‘worried and helpless’ (GNB); ‘harassed and helpless’ (NASV, REB, NIV); ‘distressed and downcast’ (NASB); ‘harassed and dejected’ (JEB). The imagery is that of shepherdless sheep, sheep wounded and torn either by hostile animals or by thornbushes and the like, and then prostrate and helpless. *Harassed* is probably as good a translation as we can find for the first term, while *cast down* is almost exactly what the second conveys” (Morris, 239).

v. 36 *shepherd* “The leaders in Israel’s history had also been likened to shepherds. Joshua was appointed leader after Moses, so that ‘the LORD’s people will not be like sheep without a shepherd’ (Num 27:17). But that is what Israel is like in Jesus’ day. The leaders have not fulfilled their responsibility to guide and protect the people, and therefore the people are ‘harassed’ and ‘helpless.’ These crowds are experiencing distressing difficulties and are unable to care for themselves. The job of the shepherd is to make sure that the sheep are led peacefully beside still water and that they lack for nothing, but these leaders are harassing the helpless crowds. They are suffering under the oppression of the occupying Roman forces, plus they have all of the daily concerns, heartbreaks, and difficulties of life beating down on them” (Wilkins, 375).

Other Texts to Consider

Matthew 28:18-20
Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples, of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Help is needed to harvest a bumper crop, so ask God to send more workers into his harvest field as you, too, get to work.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

School started this week, and I have a confession: it took about 26 seconds in the school drop off line for me to set aside my Jesus glasses and view others through my own personal worldly lens. You know what I'm talking about. There's nothing that quite raises the blood pressure like the first day of school drop off. It gets worse when you've got kids in high school and teenage drivers enter the mix. We were inching along trying to leave the high school campus Monday afternoon when BAM! The first car wreck of the year happened. The driver of the offending car tried to park but failed to take her car out of reverse, and things got considerably worse. My heart broke in two for this sweet girl. What a bummer of a first day! It certainly didn't help that the person she hit got out of her car with arms flying. I was instantly convicted, knowing I might have had the same reaction. What a great opportunity for me to put my Jesus glasses back on and talk to my kids about compassion. God wants us to be concerned for the suffering and misfortune of others. Jesus always viewed people with love and was filled with compassion for them! This is the perfect time to remind your kids that each person in their class, playground, and cafeteria are radically loved by our Savior. We are praying your kids view others through the lens of the Gospel this year!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Matthew 9:35-38

1. What did Jesus do?
2. What did Jesus have for the people and why?
3. What did Jesus tell the workers to ask for?

What Do You Think?

What do you think verses 37 and 38 mean? Put those verses in your own words.

What Do You Do?

Make a list or draw a picture of places you go this week. How you can be on mission at each location?

CORE COMPETENCY: Compassion

I believe God wants me to help others in need.

MEMORY VERSE: John 15:12

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME _____

GRADE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CORE BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CORE VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CORE PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share the Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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