



43A PENTECOST 2A BIBLE STUDY

A call to action

Abstract

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.

Matthew 9:35–37 (NIV)

43A Proper 6 Liturgy

jim@dejong.id.au

43A Pentecost 2A Bible Study

A call to action

SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 2020 | AFTER PENTECOST

PROPER 6

YEAR A

Old Testament & Psalm, Option I

Old Testament Genesis 18:1–15 (21:1–7)

Psalm Psalm 116:1–2, 12–19

or

Old Testament & Psalm, Option II

Old Testament Exodus 19:2–8a

Psalm Psalm 100

New Testament Romans 5:1–8

Gospel **Matthew 9:35–10:8 (10:9–23)**

Matthew gives an overview of Jesus' ministry – teaching, proclaiming the gospel and healing people. Then Jesus gives his disciples the commission and authority to replicate and extend this ministry more widely.

This week's resources explore: Jesus authorising and sending the disciples to do his work.

Welcome and opening prayer

A gathering prayer

Loving Lord, your grace draws us to your presence;
your peace unites us in your love;
your hope inspires us to praise your glory.
May our worship be worthy of you.

Prayer of Approach

We come before you, gracious God, just as we are.
We come with our weaknesses and our vulnerabilities.
We come with our fears and apprehensions.
We come with faith and doubt.
We come to offer and receive.
We come to you, the king of love –
in the name of your Son,
and in the power of your Spirit.
Amen.

Introduction

As we continue to consider the affect that the COVID-19 pandemic has on us, You may well be asking what does ail us? What does ail the world?

Today we're told Jesus went out to the towns and villages, teaching, preaching, and healing every kind of disease and sickness. But beyond the physical ailments he also noticed that the crowds were harassed, confused, and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Scripture tells us that we are, in fact, being stalked and attacked by the devil, who is compared to a roaring lion, sneaking and prowling around to find someone to attack and devour (1 Peter 5:8).

Harassed, helpless, and confused certainly sound like symptoms that fit our time and world. So many people feeling harassed and helpless, only now wishing they were locked into jobs and schedules that enslave and control them.

In this world where there is no absolute truth or certainty, we too can run, panicking and anxious like sheep in the face of an aggressive predator, looking for a quick fix from one self-help guru with a new or old idea, to the next.

Reading

The Workers Are Few

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.”

10 Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

² These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. ¹

Exegesis

Gospel Matthew 9.35–10.8,(9-23)

Matthew has previously introduced a block of teaching with a summary of the mighty acts Jesus performed (4.23-25, which is followed by the Sermon on the Mount). Here (9.35-38), Matthew follows the same pattern but uses the focus on Jesus’ compassion as an explanation of his subsequent summons and instructions to the disciples. They are given Jesus’ authority to cast out unclean spirits and heal, and they are sent out. (10.2 is the only place where Matthew refers to any of the disciples as ‘apostles’, that is ‘sent-out ones’.)

¹ [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Mt 9:35–10:8). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Jesus regards the people of Israel as ‘sheep’ (9.36; 10.6). This is common biblical picture language for the people of God, along with the image of God as their shepherd (e.g. Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34; Psalm 100.3). Similarly, the idea of them needing, or being without, a shepherd to care for and guide them is found in various Old Testament texts (Numbers 27.17; 2 Chronicles 18.16; Ezekiel 34.6). Here and elsewhere, Matthew’s Gospel pictures Jesus as a shepherd (25.31ff.; 26.31) who has compassion for his sheep.

Similarly, ‘harvest’ (9.37) is being used as picture language to refer to God judging and dealing with the world’s sin (cf. Jeremiah 51.33; Hosea 6.11; Revelation 14.14-20; Matthew 13). Harvest is portrayed as a time when sin will be separated from what belongs in God’s kingdom (see 13.26-30,36-43).

Elsewhere, Matthew clearly anticipates the gospel being preached to non-Jews (28.19-20), but here Jesus sends the apostles only to the Israelites, to tell them that ‘the kingdom has come near’ (10.6-7). This claim will be supported by their doing the same wondrous deeds as Jesus. They are not to charge for their work but are to be as dependent as possible on the support of those to whom they go. Some of the instructions seem extreme – who would go on a journey without sandals or staff? Since the parallel account in Mark (6.8-9) allows both, it seems likely that the sense is for them not to take spares. In a culture where hospitality was hugely important, their situation of dependence would then provoke responses, good or bad, from those to whom they went. The extended reading (vv.9-23) indicates that some will respond negatively towards the disciples and will face consequences for this on the day of judgement (Sodom and Gomorrah were used as classic examples of generally sinful behaviour as outlined in Ezekiel 16.49-50). The teaching goes on to indicate that there will be persecution of those who spread the gospel, and family divisions will result; but the ‘sent ones’ are to know that the Spirit of their Father will speak through them.

A sending out prayer

Go to serve; go to love;
 go to bring healing; go to bring peace;
 go in the strength of the Father;
 go in the power of Jesus;
 go united by the Spirit.
 Go – and know his grace.
 Amen.

Live your faith

Give at least someone a good-news card. Make sure that at least one recipient is someone who does not come to church