

September 22, 2024

Matthew 9:35-38 ESV

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. *36* When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for 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 laborers are few; *38* therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”



Following Jesus: Into the Harvest

Matthew 9:35-38

BIG IDEA: A laborer going into the harvest is the master plan of evangelism and all are called to go.

OUTLINE

1. The Model of a Laborer
2. The Heart of a Laborer
3. The Need for a Laborer
4. The Prayer for a Laborer

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers of various ages and stages in their walk with Christ. The sermon and an electronic version of this content are available on the FPC website.

1. What was Jesus’ model of engaging the lost?
2. What are some long term motivations to start and keep you laboring in the harvest?
3. What is the biblical doctrine of the eternal state of man without Jesus as Lord and Savior?
4. What are some ways to add “praying for laborers” to your prayer life and how can you be an answer to this prayer?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Matthew chapters 5 - 7 show that Jesus is the Messiah in word through his teachings. He now shows himself to be the Messiah in deed through the performance of many miracles, demonstrating that the kingdom of God truly has arrived. Matthew 8:1–9:8 describes healings, discipleship, and overpowering Satan's strongholds. Jesus' mission involves ministering to the marginalized, disappointing the messianic expectations of some who want to follow him, and overthrowing Satan's strongholds.

In today's passage, Matthew 9:36–38, the compassion of Jesus is a repeated theme in Matthew and is foretold in Deuteronomy 30:3, 1 Samuel 23:21, Psalm 103:13; Isaiah 49:15; 54:8 and Lamentations 4:10. By His examples Jesus teaches his followers to consider with compassion those in need to be "like sheep without a shepherd." The leaders have failed in their responsibility, but Micah 5:4 predicted that the Messiah would "shepherd" his people. Given the helplessness and the need of the crowds, Jesus urges the disciples to "pray earnestly" that the Lord (shifting metaphors) would send out "laborers" into His "harvest" since many are ready to receive the good news of the kingdom.

- adapted from the ESV Study Bible

Following Jesus: Finding Fulfillment and Faith in the One Who is Greater



*Raphael, School of Athens, 1509-1511, fresco
(Stanza della Segnatura, Palazzi Pontifici, Vatican)*

About the artwork.

What is the connection between an eighteen-by-twenty-five-foot wall decoration of ancient men in robes and the Gospel of Matthew?

Raphael, the rock star of the Renaissance, organized his painting of fifty-three of the most outstanding scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, poets, and artists of all time thematically into five groups. Each group contains a leader(s) and those following him/them. Matthew tells the good news of Jesus in a way that highlights the theme and invitation from Jesus to “follow me.” In addition, Matthew organizes his Gospel around five sermons: Kingdom Law, Kingdom Mission, Kingdom Nature, Kingdom Authority, and Kingdom Judgement.

Front and center in Raphael’s painting are the Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. Raphael placed Plato and Aristotle in the center to show that they represent the pinnacle of human philosophy. They were the “prophets” of their day. Plato pointing up and Aristotle pointing down. Matthew shows us that Jesus is the true and greater prophet who unites knowledge of heaven, truths known and experienced only through him, with earthly ephemeral realities that can be experienced and described empirically but understood through him.

Raphael chose a forum from ancient Rome as the setting. The architecture in the painting represents well the Roman arch, which was a symbol of victory. Matthew is known and loved by millions, though his life’s ambition was to follow Jesus. He told the good news that in Jesus Christ, we have victory and kingship because he is the greater son of David, the Messiah.

Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew.

Before he met Jesus, a Jewish man named Levi, who lived in Capernaum, worked in a booth collecting taxes for the Roman Empire. Because of his profession, Levi was the most hated man in town until Jesus walked by and said to him, "Follow me." About thirty years after Jesus was crucified and resurrected, Levi, whom Jesus renamed Matthew, was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write down his version of Jesus's life, the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew presents Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, King, Prophet, Son of David, and Son of God. Jesus ushers in and establishes the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the rule and reign of God here on earth. Jesus calls his citizens to embrace Him as king through faith, teaches them about this "new world order" as a prophet, and then calls them to follow Him as the redeemer by going out into the world to tell the nations. Because Jesus is King, he has all authority; as Prophet, what he says is true, and as Savior, only he can offer redemption.

Read or listen to Matthew's gospel. Look for King Jesus exerting his authority over the natural world through healing and the supernatural by casting out demons. Pay attention to what the crowds say about him. Listen to Prophet Jesus as he teaches, rebukes, and tells about who he is. See him as Savior life and the way to the coming Kingdom.

Each of the four gospels uniquely depicts the story of Jesus. The story is so vast that it takes four Holy Spirit-inspired men to attempt to capture it. Matthew organized his story around five of Jesus' discourses, teachings, and sermons. The sermon series walks through the discourses.

1st Matthew 5-7 Kingdom Law

2nd Matthew 10 Kingdom Mission

3rd Matthew 13 Kingdom Nature

4th Matthew 18 Kingdom Authority

5th Matthew 23-25 Kingdom Judgement

According to Pastor Bill, the big idea of Matthew's gospel is, "Come to Jesus and learn about the kingdom of God, then go into the world to advance His kingdom by following Him in faith." May you, like Matthew and countless others, come to Jesus, follow Him in faith, experience heart transformation, and advance His Kingdom in your home, work, neighborhood, and the world!