KINGDOM of HEAVEN

A SERIES IN THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Community Group Material

Matthew 10:1-15

Week of 10th to 16th September

The Offence

Leader Preparation

Read through the passage so that you are familiar with it. This week we are going to contrast the compassion of Jesus that we have seen through chapter 9 with the offence that he can cause in chapter 10.

This passage is known as the Missionary Discourse. Just as Jesus has been revealing himself through his ministry, he calls his disciples to participate in the harvest. This may be a good opportunity to share something about how you have experienced God calling you to follow him.

Read through the material on pages 17-18 of the CG leader manual, familiarising yourself with the parts that were not taught in the sermon. Focus on the questions most relevant to your group in the discussion time.

Spend some time praying for the members of your group, and asking God to guide you as you lead your time together. Read through the questions, particularly looking for ways to share openly with your group. Remember, sharing in a genuine and open way yourself is the best way to encourage group members to be honest and open in the group.

Time allowance:

Different groups meet for different times. Here is a suggested time allocation for your group get-together:

Tea / coffee	15min
Sharing	10min
Recap	5min
Bible discussion	40min
Response & prayer	20min

Group time

Getting to know you

Spend some time catching up with the members of your group. You might like to just ask for the "highs and lows" of the last week, or perhaps discuss this question:

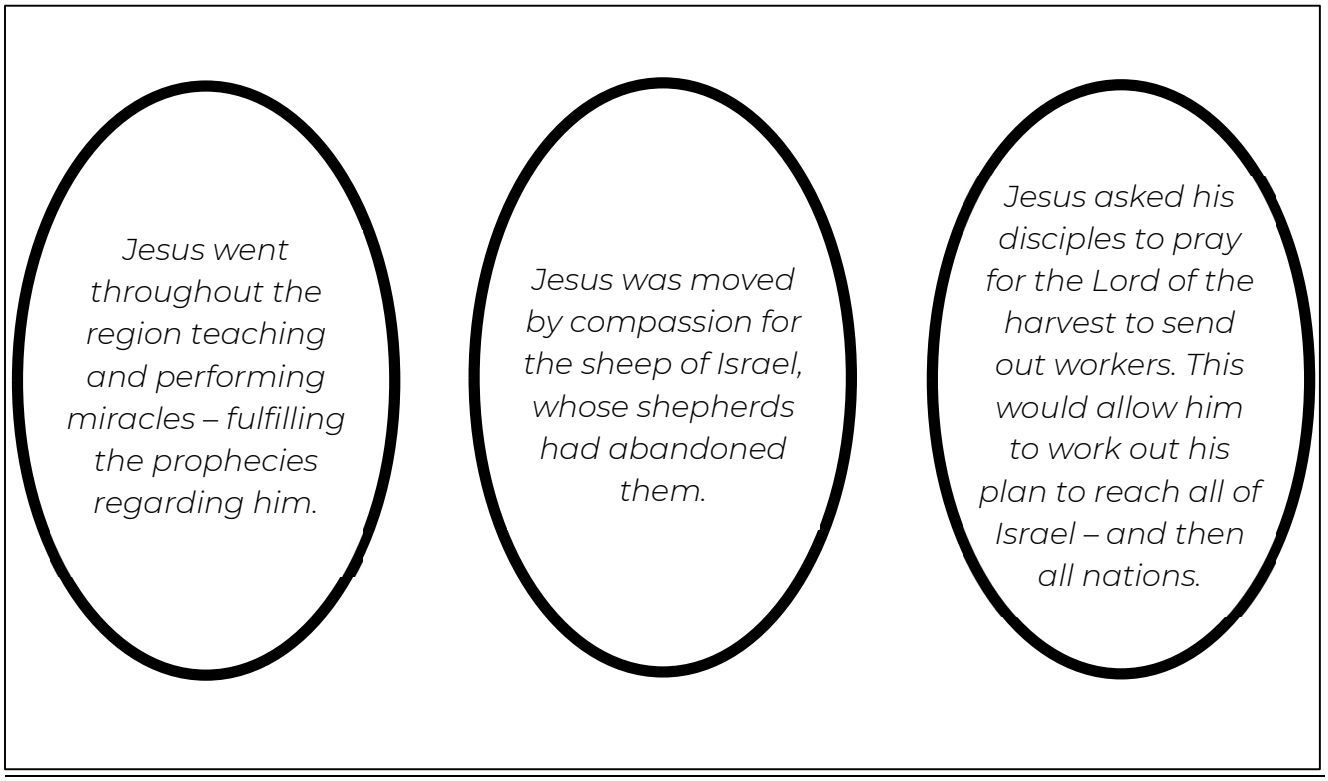
> *Do you have any opinions that differ from other members of your family?*

Try to give an opportunity for each person in the group to share something.

Before you read this week's passage, see how many of the 12 disciples the group can name!

Recap

Last week opened the theme of Jesus' mission – his purpose, and his heart – and his need to send out workers into the harvest.



Exploring the Passage

READ Matthew 10:1-15

THE CALL: (v.1-2)

The disciples have been witnesses of all the miracles performed by Jesus. The term disciple in this biblical context didn't just refer to an academic student. A disciple was someone who chose to follow a teacher so that they could watch, learn from and imitate them in all things. How might the disciples have felt about now being sent out to do the same?

How have you felt, in the past, when someone has asked you to take a risk and step out of your comfort zone to do something for God?

In what ways have you seen God use you beyond what you thought he was able to?

THE COMMISSION: (v.3-11)

The audience: Why do you think Jesus limited the scope of the apostles' mission at this stage to only the Jews? (consider Genesis 12:2-3)

The prohibitions: why do you think Jesus prohibited the apostles taking the particular items listed? What would be equivalent instructions he might give to us today?

The response: think about some of the different responses that people had to Jesus as he went around Israel ministering to people. How do you think the disciples expected to be received as they were sent out? What kind of responses do you expect from people when you reach out to them to share the gospel?

THE CONSEQUENCES: (v.12-15)

What is the significance and symbolism of shaking the dust from their feet when a home or village rejects their message?

Why do you think Jesus said it would be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on judgment day than for those Jews who rejected the apostles?

BACKGROUND

"Reception of the disciples is linked to the response to their message. Refusal to heed the message is rejection of the messenger. The disciples are to demonstrate the gravity of such rejection by a symbolic act of renunciation, shaking the dust of such homes or villages off their feet as they leave… the action symbolizes the severance of relationship: the disciples reject those who have rejected the kingdom message and leave them to their inevitable judgment. The rejection of the disciples is more egregious than Sodom and Gomorrah's outrageously shameful treatment of God's angels (Gen 18-19). Judgment more severe than that of those two notorious cities awaits those who reject Jesus' messengers."

From 'Matthew' by David Turner

How do these instructions change your response to those who reject the gospel? How should Christians respond in this situation?

Sent out

Take time to consider some of the ways that God is sending you out into the world. Some of the roles mentioned in the passage were specifically for the first 12 disciples. Some are still roles God calls us to today.

- Is there someone you know who needs to hear that “the kingdom of heaven has come near”?
- As you think of what you have received from God, what might he be asking you to now give to others?
- Are you willing to find strength in God even when people are offended or angered by the message you bring?
- Is God calling you to trust him to take care of an area of your life that you are holding on to?
- Are you following God’s instruction to pray for workers to go into the harvest?
- Are you willing to be a worker as God leads you?

Prayer

Spend some time praying in your group about these responses and any needs you may have.

> Heavenly Father, thank you for the book of Matthew and the beautiful truth that Jesus is the messiah of Israel and the coming king. Thank you that even though Israel rejected Jesus, you have not finished with your chosen people. Thank you that in your grace, you used the first disciples to reach out to the world around them with your good news. Would you enable us, in your strength, to share the blessings we have received in you with those around us. Teach us to rely on you for all we need as we minister to others. Make us a blessing to all who receive you. In Jesus' name we pray, AMEN.