

***Matt. 9:35-10:10***

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, implore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

Then Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles; first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cannanaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions. “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news. “The kingdom of heaven has come near. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for the laborer is worthy of his hire.”

***The Gospel of the Lord***

## Reflection Questions

- 1) “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness” (vs. 35). This verse echoes the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount (4:23-24), which essentially summarizes what Jesus’ ministry will be about. Jesus’ ministry can be broken down into three main parts: *1*) teaching/proclaiming, *2*) healing and *3*) casting out demons (Matt. 10:1). The ministry of the disciples is an extension of Jesus’ ministry. In what way (s) is the ministry of our Church a continuation of the early ministry of Jesus (teaching, proclaiming, healing and casting out demons)? In what ways does the ministry of the Church not really reflect the early ministry of Jesus? Why?
  
- 2) Verse 1 of Chp. 10 tells us that Jesus “summoned the twelve and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out and to cure every disease and every sickness.” When Jesus calls us to share in His mission, He also *equips* us. Jesus is aware that as He sends His disciples spread the realm of God, His servants will run into the realm of Satan (demons and unclean spirits) that need to be expelled, and that we will come across people who need to be taught the faith and He will equip us to teach them. Jesus also knows that we will encounter those who are not well in mind, body or spirit and He equips us to heal. How has Jesus given you authority over unclean spirits and empowered you to heal (either in mind body spirit or relationally) and to teach? How do we recognize these works as part of our call as Catholic Christians to help bring about the reign of God?
  
- 3) Verse 35 in Chp. 9 tells us that Jesus went about teaching, proclaiming and curing and giving His disciples a share in this ministry. How has He invited us to share in various aspects of His ministry with Him?
  
- 4) The following verse tells us that He had “compassion on the crowds because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” The word for compassion here is the Greek “splagchna” (meaning bowels) which speaks of a compassion so strong that it comes from the deepest part of one’s being. His love for them comes from the deepest part of Himself. He calls us to have the same kind of love for others. Sheep, unlike other ‘herds of animals’, need a shepherd to guide them and protect them. When sheep are left without a shepherd, they are very vulnerable to predators who may harass them or fleece them. They are extremely vulnerable and can become “helpless” without a good

shepherd. When we see sheep who are harassed and helpless, how does Jesus move us from the “bowels” of our being to protect and provide for them?

5) “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. *Implore* the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” Here Jesus asks the disciples to beg the Lord of the harvest to send out more laborers. The kind of laborers Jesus is asking for are not necessarily the skilled person, the brilliant scholar, or the person of great wealth. No, He asks for the common person who is willing to do the work of a common laborer so that the harvest may be reaped. Are we willing to do the “not-so-glamorous” labor of the common worker so that none of the harvest will be lost? Do we call people to join us in ministry for the same reason? Are we clear enough about our common vision in order to joyfully invite people to labor beside us for the work of the kingdom?

6) When we look at the list of disciples who were called, we realize that Jesus calls both Matthew the tax-collector and Simon the Zealot (Luke 6:15). A tax collector worked directly for the Romans and the Zealot was a person who conspired to expel the Romans from his nation. What an odd combination of people! But through God’s Grace they work together on behalf of the profound mission of Love. Still today we have wide varieties of people who worship at any given local church. How do we witness God calling various types of people to work along side each other in a common mission?

7) We know that throughout His ministry, Jesus reaches out in a very positive way to the Gentiles and Samaritans. We are aware that Jesus’ call in verse 5 Chp. 10 not to go anywhere among the Gentiles or Samaritans, “but rather to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” was a temporary call. Why do you think Jesus wanted the disciples at first only to focus on evangelizing the house of Israel? What purpose did that serve for larger Kingdom Building? (e.g. the early apostles connection with various synagogues throughout the region). Do we see this in our own Church’s methods of Evangelization today? In what way(s) are we called to re-engage and re-evangelize the “lost sheep” of our own household of faith (e.g. inactive Catholics which constitute several million people just here in the U.S.)?

8) Verses 8 and 10 seem contradictory. “You received without payment; give without payment”...and “the laborer is worthy of his hire.” Here Jesus is reminding us that the Gospel is a *free* gift from God, but the laborers of the

gospel still need to eat and deserve to be fed and housed for their work. How have you seen God provide for the spreading of the Gospel that you are willing to do?