

STUDY ONE | MATTHEW 10:1-31

WORKERS FOR THE HARVEST

OVERVIEW

Following Jesus' prayer of Matthew 9:38 asking to the Lord to send out workers for the harvest, chapter 10 begins to explain how it will be answered. The Kingdom strategy is that the ministry of Jesus will be shared initially with the apostles (and eventually all his followers). This chapter is something of a mini-commissioning before the Great Commission (28:18-20), but is less about the potential success of the mission and more about managing expectations (10:16).

KINGDOM WELCOME | VERSES 1-15

Jesus summons the twelve and gives them authority for the mission. Matthew mentions them by name, even identifying Judas as the betrayer in a troubling indicator of the nature of Jesus' own mission (v 4). The twelve are sent out with instructions to go to the lost sheep of Israel (cf. 9:36) in a ministry marked by Kingdom restoration (healing) which authenticates their particular apostolic ministry, and Kingdom generosity which multiplies grace (v 8). They are to rely on 'the worthy' to support them in the mission (v 11) ie. those who will welcome them and their message of peace (v 13). Likewise those who reject them (homes and towns, v 14) face the withdrawal of peace and remain under the serious judgment reserved for the last Day (v 15).

A gospel ministry to the Gentiles will follow but it is a sobering reality that it is the nation of Israel (God's chosen people) who need to hear the message of repentance as a priority (just as in the ministry of John the Baptist cf. Paul in Acts 28:24-26).

KINGDOM WISDOM | VERSES 16-23

Jesus reveals the nature of their ministry in v 16, which will require both wisdom (snakes) and integrity (doves). The experience of the apostles in vv 17-20 could be short-term but is more likely outlining the opposition that will characterise their ongoing mission for the Kingdom, as the book of Acts testifies. They should expect hospitality from an unbelieving world who will even betray families in opposition to the gospel (v 21).

'COME UNTO ME'

JANUARY 31

MATT 10:1-31 WORKERS FOR THE HARVEST

FEBRUARY 7

MATT 10:32-42 THE UNDIVIDED DISCIPLE

FEBRUARY 14

MATT 11:1-30 KNOWN & UNKNOWN

FEBRUARY 21

MATT 12:1-14 LORD OF THE SABBATH

FEBRUARY 28

MATT 12:15-37 THE TOUGH & TENDER SERVANT

MARCH 7

MATT 12:38-50 WHO ARE MY FAMILY?

MARCH 14

MATT 13:1-23 THE SOWER & THE SEEDS

MARCH 21

MATT 13:24-43 THE WEEDS, THE SEED & THE YEAST

MARCH 28

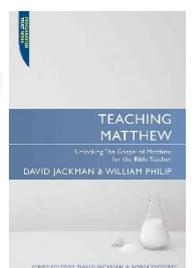
MATT 13:44-58 THE TREASURE, THE PEARL & THE NET

RESOURCE

TEACHING MATTHEW

JACKMAN & PHILIP

(PROCLAMATION TRUST)



Two words of comfort are provided for the twelve. Firstly, by His Spirit the Father will give them the words to say when called to account before authorities (vv 19-20), and secondly, the salvation will come to those who endure (v 22). Jesus provides counsel about how to deal with persecution in v 23 and a time frame for their mission. The reference to the coming of the Son of Man before the conclusion of their mission has been the subject of much discussion. Interpretations encompass the coming of the Son of Man to the Almighty to receive his Kingdom after the resurrection (Dan 7:13); the judgment upon Israel in the destruction of the Temple in AD 70; and of course Jesus' second coming. While an event in the apostles' lifetime might be favoured, Jesus' emphasis was to provide assurance and encouragement to press on in the knowledge that vindication from the Son of Man would come.

KINGDOM WORTH | VERSES 24-31

The essence of Jesus' parable in vv 24-25 is that the messenger embodies the message and is loyal as an ambassador to their leader. This works in both proclamation of the gospel (not in it alone) and opposition for the gospel (expect it to be more than just individual). This leads to Jesus' urging in vv 26-27 to declare boldly the news of the Kingdom whenever and wherever these is opportunity.

'Do not be afraid' brackets the paragraph formed by v 26 & 31 while Jesus gives perspective on the right place for fear in v 28. Fear of humans is to be set against the eternal destiny and judgment that awaits us at the hand of God. Physical death pales in comparison with the prospect of eternal punishment. Yet this is also a message of assurance for the apostles who can entrust themselves to the God who has given them greater worth than the sparrow and whose sovereign care over their lives extends to knowing the number of hairs on their head (vv 29-31).

GETTING STARTED

1. When it comes to sharing the good news about Jesus which of the following apply?
 - It's more the job of the minister than me
 - People will be saved by the way I live more than what I say
 - God has chosen who is in his Kingdom, so what difference does it make what I do?
 - Those who live morally upright lives are more likely to become Christians
 - I fear I will be rejected
 - People who don't know Jesus aren't really in that much trouble
 - God has saved me, so I guess he could save anyone!

INTO THE TEXT

READ VERSES 1-15

2. What is the message of the apostles in v 7? What do you think nearness means?
3. How would the apostles' unique authority for healing in v 1 & v 8 authenticate their mission (see Matt 4:23-24)?

Instructions for the mission are outlined in vv 9-15. The apostles are to look for persons, households and towns who would welcome their message, and then receive support for their work. They would either let their peace rest upon the home or have it return to them as they were to 'shake the dust off your feet' (v 14).

4. Explore what you believe the following meant in the apostles' ministry:
 - a. peace resting upon a home?
 - b. shaking the dust off your feet?

5. Is this still the same reality today when the gospel is proclaimed?

READ VERSES 16-31

A number of pictures are used in this passage. Jesus sends the apostles to the lost sheep of Israel (v 6) and then tells the twelve he is sending them as 'sheep among wolves' (v 16). They are to be shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves.

6. How do these pictures prepare the apostles for their mission?

Jesus speaks about the timeframes associated with the work in vv 22 & 23. They are encouraged to endure to the end and made aware that their mission will be unfinished business, for the Son of Man will return before its completion.

7. What are the assurances/resources the apostles are given as they go about their work?

When we share the good news about Jesus it generally isn't received that way. Jesus is at pains to provide a level of realism for the apostles as they set out on their mission. None the less he urges them to be bold in proclaiming their message (vv 26-27) and to not let their fears overcome them.

8. What does the passage teach about how to deal with opposition to the gospel?

TAKEAWAY

9. In that ways do think the passage does not apply to us today?

10. Would this be a good passage to use for someone thinking about vocational gospel ministry?