

Family Bible Study

6/14/2026



Matthew 9:35-10:8

Jesus Commissions the Twelve

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.”

^{10:1} And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. ² The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶ but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷ And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.

13. Why do you suppose Jesus instructed the disciples to stick to their fellow Jews and not preach to Gentiles, or non-Jews, or Samaritans, Jewish heretics (v5)?
14. How does Jesus’ sending of the disciples here compare with the Great Commission at the end of Matthew’s Gospel (Matt 28:16-22)? How does this mission here in this passage fit into God’s larger plan for the salvation of the world?
15. Why do you suppose Jesus told his disciples not to take any money or supplies on their journey (v9)? Was their time in the villages supposed to be brief, and therefore supplies weren’t necessary, or was there another reason? What relationship does this instruction have with the power given to the disciples?
16. What gifts have you freely received from God?
17. To take this instruction metaphorically, what “baggage” do we carry when we share the gospel? Or what “supplies,” other than God, are we tempted to rely on when we share the gospel?
18. In contrast to much of Christian history, we can without a doubt recognize that truth today of Jesus’ saying, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” How are we as a church providing laborers? Sending missionaries? Being missionaries in our city?
19. Jesus saw a needy world and responded with compassion. How does his example challenge the way we see people around us?
20. What does this passage teach about the heart of God for those who are lost, hurting, and searching?
11. After the denominational split in 2006, the Diocese of Virginia has put a halt to all new church plants. This, despite the fact that the population has grown 5.8% in Virginia and 11% in Richmond in the past decade. Meanwhile, attendance in Diocese of Virginia and Diocese of Southern Virginia churches have both declined 31% between 2015 and 2024. Given that new churches are the best way to reach the unchurched, what can we do to encourage the Diocese and the Region to support new churches?

Questions to Wonder with Kids

- In this passage, Jesus has been making a name for himself among the people of Galilee. What special or amazing things has he been doing?
- Jesus really cares about the people and feels compassion towards them. What does it mean to “have compassion”? I wonder what it is about the crowds that so moves him...
- Jesus talks a lot about sheep. Have you ever seen a sheep? What are sheep like? Why do you think sheep need shepherds?
- I wonder what Jesus meant when he said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few” ...
- Because his ministry and his message is so important, and because the people are so lost, Jesus wants his followers, the disciples, to share in what he is doing. Who are the disciples? Can you name them?
- What did Jesus say the disciples will be able to do? Which of these would you be most excited to have the power to do?
- Where does Jesus tell his disciples to go? Where are they not to go? Who are “Gentiles”? Who are the “Samaritans”? I wonder why he said they are not to go to them...
- I wonder what Jesus meant by “the kingdom of heaven” ... I wonder what he meant when he said that “kingdom has come near” ...

Questions for Adults

1. In this passage, Jesus’ ministry is really taking off. What specifically is he doing that captures peoples attention (v 35)?
2. Why do you think Matthew emphasizes both teaching and healing (v35)?
3. What does Jesus mean when he describes the crowds as “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (v36)?
4. What kinds of people in our society fit that description today? If Jesus looked upon our community today, what might move him to compassion?
5. Why is compassion an essential part of Christian ministry? What is the difference between feeling sorry for people and having Christ-like compassion?
6. When have you experienced God's compassion most deeply in your own life?
7. Why does Jesus describe people as a "harvest" (v37) rather than a problem or burden? Why is that characterization significant?
8. Why do you think Jesus first tells his disciples to pray before he sends them out (v38)? What does this passage teach about the relationship between prayer and mission?
9. How would you explain Jesus’ message, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand,” (10:7) to someone who is unfamiliar with Jesus?
10. What is the relationship between this message and the conventional way we Christians describe the Gospel (“Jesus died for our sins and rose again”)?
11. Looking at the ordinariness and diversity of the disciples listed in v2-4, what encouragement does this offer Christians who feel inadequate for ministry?
12. Jesus gives his disciples not only a commission but power to work what we call “miracles” (heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons, v8). What power is he giving them? Is that power available to us, his latter-day disciples, today?