

Daily Discipleship

Sunday, June 12-18 (A) – Matthew 9:35 - 10:8

Tips of Discipleship: *Be On a Mission*

Focus Question: *How do you partner with Jesus in his mission?*

word of life

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” Matthew 9:37 (NRSV)

Read Matthew 9:35-10:8

After Jesus is baptized, he spends time being tested and prepared in the wilderness. Once his ministry is launched, he proceeds to call his disciples and trains them about his mission. Jesus expands his mission outreach efforts by commissioning and sending his disciples.

1. *What is important for Jesus to teach his disciples in their first year together?*

In the Gospel of Matthew, by the end of chapter nine, Jesus is heavily engaged in teaching, proclaiming the good news, and curing illnesses. He has compassion for those he meets on his travels “because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36 NRSV)

2. *What does it feel like to be harassed and helpless?*
3. *What does it mean to be a sheep without a shepherd?*

Jesus sees great need and hunger in people as he travels throughout the cities, villages, and countryside. He compares it to a harvest time when the crop is ready and laborers are needed. If there are not enough laborers to maximize the moment, then the full benefit of the time is lost.

Jesus believes prayer is the first step. To pray is to acknowledge a need for assistance, particularly in dealing with people who have needs. The laborers of Christ still need a shepherd. Jesus says, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” (Matthew 9:37 NRSV) It is not just laborers who are needed, but those open to labor for Christ.

4. *How might prayer assist in getting laborers?*
5. *Why might the Lord be concerned about the harvest?*

God has blessed Jesus with laborers – his disciples. Thus, Jesus gathers his own disciples whom he has called, and gives them authority to heal. It is interesting to note the disciples listed in Matthew 10:2-4 are in pairs. Perhaps these are the missionary teams sent by Jesus.

6. *What would it feel like to be a student of Jesus and commissioned to heal and cast out unclean spirits?*
7. *Is this our calling today? How so?*
8. *Describe how you imagine the life of the disciples during their first year with Jesus.*

Jesus gives clear instructions to his disciples to not interact with the Gentiles. The time is not right to harvest that crop. Jesus places a priority on the Jews and requests his disciples to begin their work with them in very specific ways. He mandates, “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.” (Matthew 10:7-8 NRSV) Plus, do it without pay.

9. *What is the most surprising aspect of the commissioning of the disciples?*

word among us

Homer's home congregation was struggling. No doubt about it. There was controversy over the color of the new women's bathroom, the hymns sung at worship, and even about where to allow the children to drink their punch after worship. All aspects of church life seemed like such hard work. It appeared to Homer like his beloved congregation had lost its focus and mission.

1. *What advice would you give Homer?*
2. *If a congregation loses its focus on mission, what can be done?*
3. *Describe a congregation centered on the mission of Jesus Christ.*

Homer's grandson lived out of state. He had fond memories of summers spent with his grandfather, so he pursued his first job after college graduation in Homer's hometown. Proudly, Homer took his grandson to church, but he became embarrassed by all the bickering heard before and after worship. Over lunch, Homer shared his profound sadness about his congregation which had lost its way despite the profound needs of his community. He had a sense of urgency as he expressed concern over his church's apathy. It was his grandson who suggested beginning with prayer. They committed to pray daily for a change of direction for Homer's church.

4. *How might prayer impact the situation?*
5. *How do you explain a congregation which loses its way?*
6. *How might some new members help change the direction of a congregation?*

Jesus compared the opportunities of his day to harvest time. He was well aware of the urgency associated with the season of harvest. There was no time or reason to procrastinate. Jesus knew workers were needed to do specific tasks in a timely manner.

7. *How is it "harvest time" for your community?*
8. *How does your congregation understand and implement the mission of Christ?*

In order to expand his mission, Jesus called his disciples and sent them out by twos. They were asked to do tasks beyond their human powers. Specifically, they were asked to cure, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and even cast out demons. They could do none of this without God's Spirit empowering them to do so.

Jesus continues to call disciples to be sent out on his mission – to do those things beyond their human capabilities. There is such need as people search for meaning and healing in their lives. Today – no matter the season of the year – is harvest time.

9. *What does it mean for you to partner with Jesus Christ in mission?*

Prayer

Christ, thank you for calling me to follow you and to serve as your disciple. Help me to grasp your mission and ways to partner with you. Amen

Dig Deeper

Romans 5:1-8

last word

Each day,
prayerfully ponder the opportunities
to partner with Jesus in mission.



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