

Fields - Matthew 9:36-37, 10:5-16
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

We have a deep conviction about the importance of community in the task of discipleship. To be honest, there really is not a genuine way to grow deeply in the faith without having a community of believers around you who are encouraging each other, praying for one another, and pushing their group toward depth in Jesus. It was the way of Jesus, and there is really no plan B. Now, to be honest, there are ways this can happen in people's lives other than being in a Community Group. Yet, every church must hear the commission of Jesus to make disciples and therefore must take seriously their plan to obey Jesus' call. And every follower of Jesus must hear the voice of Jesus calling out, "Follow me," and realize that this invitation is to both believe in Him and belong to His community. Here at Genesis, Community Groups is our intentional effort to obey the voice of Jesus, and we believe that it is the best way for those hanging out at Genesis to press in to being growing disciples.

Yet, there is always a danger with any small group ministry. It is really easy for people to find a crew that thinks, believes, and acts just like them, and then to pull in to this group to form closed and cut off groups. It would have been so easy for the 12 Apostles to attach themselves to Jesus and spend the rest of their lives as a holy huddle reminiscing about Jesus' ways, telling stories about His miracles, and enjoying each other's company. The goal of discipleship was never to create homogenous small groups functioning as echo chambers. The goal was to prepare His followers to join His mission.

Matthew 9-10 is such an interesting section of Scripture. Matthew 9 tells the story of Jesus ministry reaching various cities in Galilee. He taught in their synagogues, proclaimed the good news about the entrance of God's Kingdom in the world, healed their diseases, and cast out demons. Most importantly, Jesus sees the people through the eyes of great compassion and mercy. But at the end of chapter 9 He invites His small group to lift their eyes and see the crowds through His eyes. When they do they will realize that the harvest is plentiful, yet the laborers are few. So Jesus invites them (and us) to become praying people, crying out to the Lord of the Harvest. And while they are to pray for the salvation of these people, the specific prayer Jesus gives them is to pray that the Lord of the Harvest (which is Jesus, Himself) will send workers into the harvest to gather people into the Kingdom.

Chapter 10, then, gives a brief summary of the small group community that has become the 12 disciples. They are followers, learners, apprentices to Jesus in His ministry. But in verse 2 the language changes, they are called Apostles. Last week we explained that the title Apostle only applies to these men, sent directly by Jesus. But the larger idea reaches us as well. An apostle is a person sent as an emissary or ambassador in the name of and in the mission of the sender. This was the point of their discipleship, to prepare them to be sent, to be on mission. So the text this week shows us how that happened for the first time. Up until this point in the story of Jesus' life He did ministry with them. But now He is sending them to the other villages and cities around Galilee, and they are sent with His authority to do the same basic things He was doing. To proclaim, heal, deliver, announce the Kingdom. At the current time (in Matthew 10) they are sent only to reach out to fellow Jews. And their ministry is fruitful. But after the resurrection Jesus clearly expands the mission to make disciples of all the nations. SO HERE COMES THE MAIN POINT. They become the answer to their prayers from Matthew 9. They pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send workers, and Jesus sends them. The more they see the culture through the eyes of Jesus, the more burdened they become, the more they pray in

community, the more Jesus prepared them.

The Gospel has an engine that both gathers and propels. It gathers us in that to truly believe the Gospel does include feeling the call into community. To pursue a small group of people who are different from you, and yet, whom you grow to love deeply while following Jesus together. But the goal is not to join a group that becomes a holy huddle. The goal is to allow Jesus to shape your life and those of the people in your Gospel community so that you too lift your eyes and see the fields, that together you will notice the urgency of the harvest and the desperate needs of people. And in doing so, the more Jesus through the Holy Spirit will shape you and your community to live in His authority and for His mission.

Gospel ⇒ Community ⇒ Mission. This is our strategy because it is the way of Jesus. This is how He made disciples who made disciples. Join in as we launch our groups for the coming year.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Exodus 16	Exodus 17	Exodus 18	Exodus 19	Exodus 20	Exodus 21	Exodus 22

Reading from this past week's sermon: Matthew 9:36-37, 10:5-16

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Jude 1:1-5

Family Worship

Song - *Take you at Your Word*

<https://youtu.be/HDpPjtkowpl?si=o1DPh4ZMwTRI9zYE>

Gospel Project

Unit: A Troubled Kingdom

Story: The Kingdom Divided

Big Picture Question: How many gods are there?

Answer: There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

Scripture: 1 Kings 11-13

New City Catechism

Question 37: How does the Holy Spirit help us?

Answer: The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, and he enables us to pray and to understand God's Word.

Verse: Ephesians 6:17-18

Matthew 9:36-37, 10:5-16

- What was the mission given to the disciples in Matthew 10? How did it go?
- How is the sending of the disciples in Matthew 10:5-8 connected to the prayer he gave them in Matthew 9:36-37?
- What are some ways Jesus used the small group community He had with His disciples to prepare them for the mission He was sending them on?
- What happens to our discipleship if we try to live on mission without community? What happens if we do community without mission?

Prayer

*Pray that our church and groups would lift our eyes to see the fields and hear the call of Jesus to be sent to our neighbors and to the nations.

*Pray for the launch of our Community Groups and for our 10 group leaders and hosts.