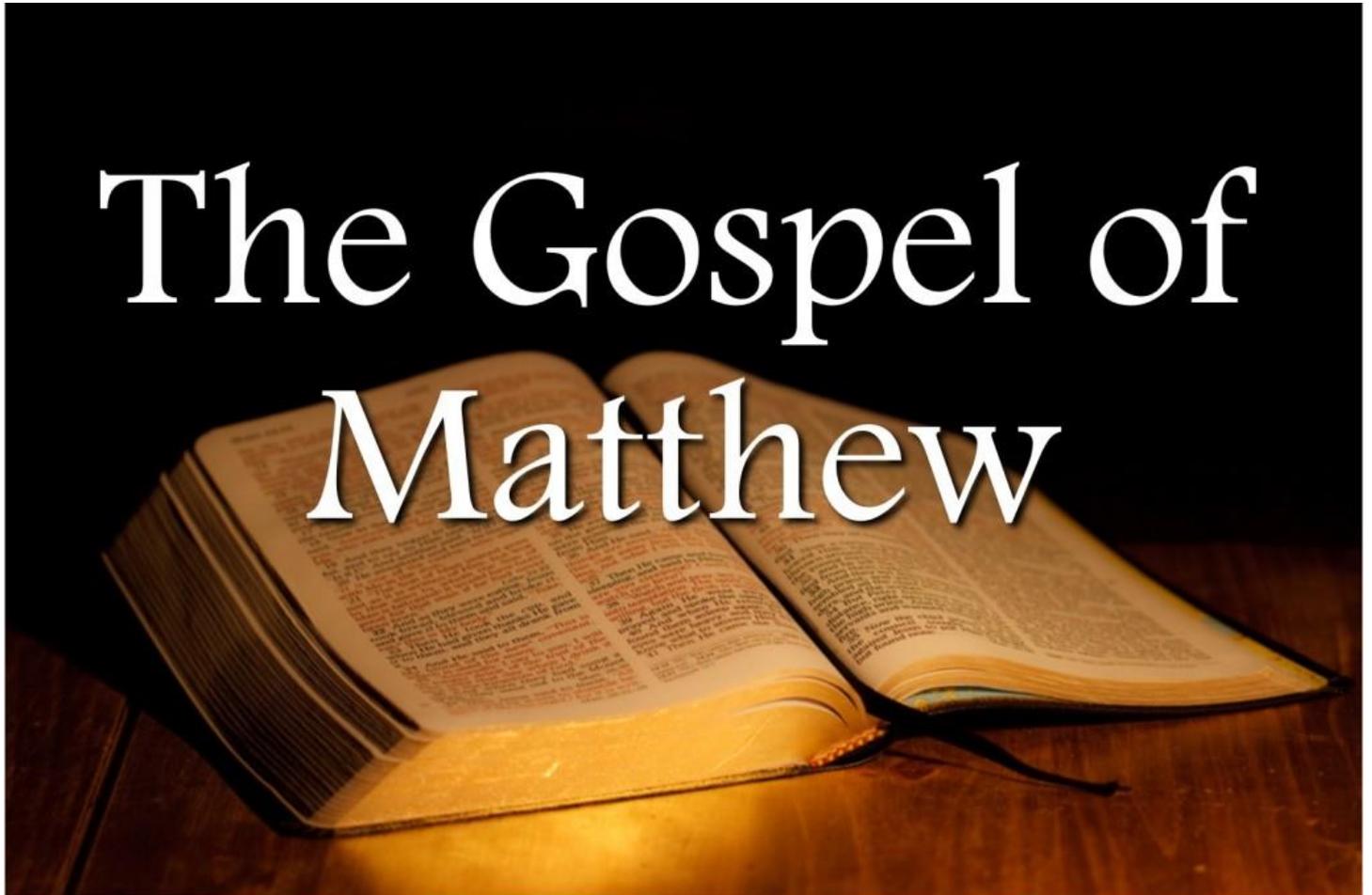


The Book of Matthew



2022 – Part 1

5 studies in Matthew's Gospel

Brief Outline of Matthew's Gospel

- 1:1 – 4:16 Introducing Jesus
4:17 – 16:20 Public ministry in and around Galilee
16:21 – 18:35 Private ministry in Galilee; preparing the disciples
19:1 – 25:46 Ministry in Judea
26:1 – 28:20 The death and resurrection of Jesus

Please Note the following:

1. It is helpful, but not mandatory, to prepare your answers before meeting with your group.
2. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you.
3. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information **MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL and NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP.**

Study 1 – The King’s Power: Peace to the Disturbed – Matthew 8:28-9:8

(Sermon on 30-Jan-22)

Before we begin: What sort of things can disturb our feeling of peace? (cf. Isaiah 57:21)

Our feeling of peace can be disturbed by:

- *Relationship problems – conflict or arguments*
- *Someone’s poor or angry or wicked behaviour [“There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.” Isaiah 57:21]*
- *Worrying about something that you have to face in the future*
- *Being very sick or having a disability*
- *Uncertainty and insecurity*
- *Fear of ageing and fear of dying*
- *Ruminating over the past*

Read Matthew 8:28-34 (other accounts in Mark 5:1-17 & Luke 8:26-37)

1. Locate Gadarenes (aka Gergesa, Gergesenes or Gerasenes) on the map in Appendix 1. Why was Jesus and his disciples there? (cf. Matthew 8:23-27)

See A on the map. Jesus and His disciples are there because they have been on the Lake during the storm; which Jesus calmed supernaturally.

2. What is wrong with the two men in verse 28?

They were demon-possessed (i.e., possessed by evil spirits).

3. Why would the two men be coming from the tombs?

- *Demons love death – their purpose is to destroy*
- *This is a place they can go – knowing people won’t follow them – because graveyards and dead people are considered unclean and offensive for the Jews.*
- *It encouraged superstition in others, fearing that the men were possessed by the spirits of the dead in the tombs.*
- *All these made the two men very frightening to others.*

4. **Ponder:** What sort of disruption would two demon-possessed men cause in the community?

The two men were very violent which disrupted the peace of the community, and made it difficult for anyone to pass the area they occupied.

5. From the other account of this story in **Mark 5:1-17** how had the community tried to deal with a person who was demon-possessed?

The community had tried to bind him, even with chains, without any success. He had even torn the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him.

6. What surprising knowledge do the two demon-possessed men have in verse 29? (cf. 2 Peter 2:4)

The demon-possessed men knew Jesus was/is the Son of God; they knew what lay ahead for them, as ultimately, they would be cast out into everlasting torment (Matt 25:41, 46); they knew their time was limited and so they wanted to be left alone to do as much damage as they could before the “appointed time”

*Peter says in 2 Peter 2:4 - For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for **judgment**...*

7. What is significant in there being a herd of pigs in the area? (cf. Psalm 50:10-11 and Matthew 12:12)

Pigs were unclean for Jews. Even though this was an area where both Jews and Gentiles lived and even if the pigs were owned by a Gentile; they should not have been in the area where Jews lived.

We should also note that God has ownership of all His creatures and humans (made in God’s image) are His most important creatures.

As Psalm 50:10-11 says: for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine.

*As Jesus says in Matthew 12:12 - **How much more valuable is a person than a sheep!**...*

8. What do we learn about demons in verse 31? (James 2:19)

The demons knew that Jesus was/is God and knew His power over them. As James 2:19 says: You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

9. How did Jesus resolve the problem in verse 32? What does this tell us about Jesus?

*He told the demons to go into the pigs – and they obeyed. It shows that Jesus only has to speak **“Go!”** and the demons obeyed. Jesus has the same authority as God!*

10. What did Jesus do for the men and the community?

For the men: Jesus restored peace in them, by removing the demons from them!

For the community: Jesus restored peace to the region; the community no longer had to fear what these demon-possessed men would do.

11. How did the community respond? How is this response to Jesus typical of many today?

Those tending the pigs ran off and reported what had happened to their pigs and what had happened to the demon-possessed men. The whole community went out to meet Jesus – and

sadly and surprisingly, rather than being grateful for what Jesus had done – they pleaded with Jesus to leave their region.

Isn't that typical of how people respond to Jesus today – they don't want Him in their lives – and they miss how he has brought peace between God and humans, through His death.

Read Matthew 9:1-8 (other accounts in Mark 2:3-12 & Luke 5:18-26)

12. Find Jesus' own town on the map in appendix 1 (cf. Matthew 4:13)

*Matthew 4:13 says this: Leaving **Nazareth**, he went and lived in **Capernaum**, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali*

*See Nazareth marked **B** and Capernaum marked **C** on the map.*

In the context of where there were in the Gadarenes, it's more likely they are in Capernaum.

13. What do we learn about the man in this story?

The man is paralyzed (literally palsy). He is unable to walk, hence lying on a mat.

14. What do we learn about the man's friends?

*His friends are **determined** to take their friend to Jesus. In Mark's account, because they could not get near Jesus, his friends dug and opening in the roof and lowered their paralyzed friend down to Jesus. His friends showed great faith!*

15. What "sickness" does Jesus address first in verse 2? Why?

Jesus addressed the most important sickness that we all need healing from. Namely our sickness of sin. Why? This was the man's greater problem. As bad as it is to be paralyzed, it's infinitely worse to be bound and lost in our sins!

We must not imply that the man was paralyzed because of his sin. This may be the case; but people can be paralyzed or sick just because we live in a broken and fallen world.

Matthew Poole gives 6 reasons why Jesus dealt with the man's sins:

- a. To show that sin is the root from which all evil comes – it disturbs peace!*
- b. To show forgiveness is more important than bodily healing*
- c. To show that the most important thing Jesus came to do was to deal with sin (Luke 19:10)*
- d. To show that when a person is forgiven – they become a child/son of God*
- e. To show that the response to faith (of the paralyzed man and his friends) is the forgiveness of sins*
- f. So that Jesus could begin a conversation with the teachers of the law and the Pharisees*

16. What do the teachers of the law think about Jesus in verse 3?

They think Jesus is blaspheming. Blaspheming is to say God's name in vain or to speak irreverently about God. By Jesus telling the man that his sins were forgiven was actually inferring that He was God, because God is the only one who can forgive sins; therefore, in the

eyes of the teachers of the law, Jesus was speaking irreverently about God. What they didn't realize is that Jesus was/is God.

17. What do we learn about Jesus in verse 4?

Jesus even knew what the teachers of the law were thinking! See Psalm 139:2 – “you [God] perceive my thoughts from afar”. Only God can do that!

18. What does Jesus mean in verse 5 by saying *“Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?”*

Both healing and forgiveness are impossible for a human to do. Yes, doctors can perform surgery to heal someone; this may take many operations and lots of time to recover and rehabilitate. Jesus' healing was instantaneous and therefore supernatural.

It was easy to prove that the man was healed – he could get up and walk. It was not so easy to prove that a person's sins were forgiven; you can't see that!

This seems to be an outworking of Psalm 103:3 – [God] who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases

19. **Discuss:** Is all sickness caused by sin? Does forgiveness of sins automatically mean all physical sickness is healed?

Not all sickness is caused by sin; we live in a broken world since the Fall of Adam and Eve. Sickness and death are a result/consequence of that Fall. There is not a one-to-one relationship between sin and sickness. Sin A does not equal Sickness A; Sin B does not equal Sickness B. Forgiveness of our sins does not necessarily mean bodily healing. Jesus could simply have forgiven the man's sins and left him paralyzed; but Jesus showed compassion and mercy. Jesus' point to the teachers of the law, is that it's more important to be spiritually healed than physically healed.

20. **Ponder:** By what means did God create everything and by what means did Jesus control the storm (Matthew 8:26) and cast out demons (Matthew 8:32) and restore the paralyzed man (Matthew 9:6). What does this say about Jesus?

*God simply **spoke** to create everything!*

*In Matthew 8:26 – Jesus simply rebuked (**spoke** to) the waves!*

*In Matthew 8:32 – Jesus simply **spoke** “Go!” to the demons!*

*In Matthew 9:6 – Jesus simply **spoke** to the paralyzed man “Get up, take your mat and go home”*

This says Jesus is God and has God's power.

It says Jesus is in the business of restoration and recreation!

Read Psalm 103:1-6

21. How do these verses from Psalm 103 relate to Matthew 8:28-9:8?

V1 – Like the people in Capernaum it is important to praise God with all our being!

V2 – *It's important that we don't forget all God's benefits and blessings*

V3 – *God forgives all our sins [as Jesus did for the paralyzed man and us] and heals all our diseases [as Jesus did for the paralyzed man]*

V4 – *God redeems our life from the pit – by showing love and compassion – in sending Jesus to deal with the disease of sin*

V5 – *God showers us with good things: grace, love, mercy, forgiveness, eternal life – His Word, His Spirit – all through His Son*

V6 – *God works righteousness – He makes us right with Him and approved by Him – through faith in Jesus – and He works justice – not only on sin and death – but also justice for the oppressed – as Jesus demonstrated by showing mercy to the outcasts of society: the lepers, the disabled, the tax collectors, the poor and the prostitutes!*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Matthew 8:28:9-8?**

Jesus brings peace to those disturbed



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?



How does this passage **apply to your life?**

- *We need to have faith like the paralyzed man and his friends. The friends' faith drove them to get the paralyzed man to Jesus because they knew He was the only one who could fix him. We need to show that same faith in bringing people to Jesus knowing He is the only one who can fix their sin and give them forgiveness and eternal life.*
- *Jesus has the same power and authority as God – and has control over demons, over sickness and disability – and more importantly He has authority over the sickness of sin!*
- *Jesus brings peace between God and human beings – through His death and resurrection which bring forgiveness and eternal life.*
- *Jesus can also bring peace to our lives – as we trust Him in all things (Phil 4:4-7; 13)*
- *How do we respond to Jesus' power? Like the community in Gadarenes? Like the teachers of the law? Or like the crowd in Capernaum who were amazed at Jesus' miraculous healing and praised God!*

- *Ask God to help us not to forget His blessings – He has redeemed us and forgiven us and given us eternal life – through Jesus – regardless of whatever else is going on for us in our lives right now!*

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

8:32 – Jesus simply says “Go!”

9:2 – When Jesus saw their faith... He said “Take heart, son, your sins are forgiven”

Finish in prayer: Thank God that His Son Jesus brings peace to the disturbed.

Study 2 – A Call to Discipleship – Matthew 9:9-17

(Sermon on 6-Feb-22)

Before we begin: What is a disciple?

Dictionary Definition:

- a. A special follower of Jesus Christ during His life, especially one of the twelve Apostles.
- b. A follower or pupil of a teacher, a leader, or philosopher
- c. Someone who adheres to the teachings of another or takes up the ways of someone else.

A disciple of Jesus will:

- a. Put Jesus first in all things (Mark 8:34-38)
- b. Follow Jesus' teachings (John 8:31-32)
- c. Produce fruit with as the Holy Spirit works in us (John 15:5-8)
- d. Have love for other disciples (John 13:34-35)
- e. Evangelism – make disciples of others (Matthew 28:18-20)

Read Matthew 9:9-13 (other accounts in Mark 2:14-17 & Luke 5:27-32)

1. Who is the tax-collector and what is wrong with being a tax-collector in Jewish eyes?

The tax collector is Matthew (referred to as Levi the son of Alphaeus in Mark 2:14 – it's likely Matthew's name was originally Levi and he became Matthew when he followed Jesus!)

*Tax collectors were seen as **collaborators** with the Romans against their fellow Jews. Nobody liked a man who sat at the tax office/booth. The Jews saw tax-collectors as **traitors** because they worked for the Roman government and they had the force of the Roman soldiers behind them to make people pay taxes. The Jews also saw tax-collectors as **extortioners** because they were allowed to keep whatever they over-collected. Tax collectors bid for a contract to collect tax in a city/town – like Capernaum; because the tax-collector bid for the contract there was an incentive for tax-collectors to over-charge and cheat any way they could, so that they made a profit. The Jews also saw tax-collectors as **outcasts**; a tax-collector was disqualified as a judge or witness in a court, he was excommunicated from the synagogue, and in the eyes of the community, he was seen as a **disgrace** to his family.*

*Note: in KJV – the word used for tax-collector is **publican** because the man dealt with the public and public money.*

2. What protocols does Jesus break here and what did Jesus say to Matthew; and why is that enough for Matthew to follow?

*Matthew as a tax-collector was seen as an outcast and people would not come up to him unless they had to pay tax. Jesus broke down all social barriers (spoke to tax-collectors, lepers, prostitutes and Samaritans etc.). Jesus simply said "**Follow me!**" – an economy of words. It suggests that Jesus had an air of authority about Him, that meant He could simply say "Follow me" and people couldn't resist. That's all Matthew needed to follow!*

3. Why would Jesus have dinner at Matthew's house with many other tax collectors and "sinners"?

It was an opportunity for Jesus to share the Gospel and gain many more followers. Jesus' mission was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10) and because God wants people to be saved through His Son; as Romans 5:8 says "God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that whilst we were still sinners, Christ died for us"

4. What objection is raised in verse 11 and by whom?

The Pharisees objection was that Jesus was eating with tax-collectors and "sinners". We can see "sinners" here as anyone who did follow the what the Pharisees' way!

5. What "picture" in verse 12 does Jesus give to answer the objection? And what "sickness" is Jesus referring to?

*Jesus gives a picture of sick people needing a doctor. The sick people are those who realize they have a **sickness of sin** and rebellion against God, and need to be healed. Jesus is the doctor, the only doctor, who can heal that sickness. Many of the "ordinary" folk knew they needed healing from the sickness of sin whereas many of the Pharisees, thought they had no need to be healed of this sickness because they were healthy and so saw no need for Jesus; how sad! As the beatitudes say in Matthew 5:3 – **"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God"***

6. What does Jesus mean by saying **"But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'"** in verse 13? (cf. **Hosea 6:6 and Micah 6:6-8**)

Jesus was pointing out to the Pharisees that they had no mercy on people like the tax-collectors, outcasts, poor, widows, lepers, prostitutes, "sinners"). Jesus quotes a verse from Hosea 6:6. In Hosea's day, God's people were still good at bringing sacrifices for sin (Hosea 5:6) but they did not practice mercy; in fact, they abandoned mercy because they did not understand that God is a God of mercy as well as a God who requires obedience and sacrifice. God would rather have people with hearts full of His truth and mercy, than people who just simply gave Him lip-service by making sacrifices.

The problem with the Pharisees was they looked righteous on the outside – but inside their hearts were corrupt – they oppressed people, they ignored those less fortunate and wrote them off as not being worthy of God's help.

7. What does Jesus mean by saying **"For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners"** also in verse 13? (cf. Luke 19:10 and 1 Timothy 1:15)

Jesus' point is: He's come to save people from their sin and rebellion and grant them forgiveness for their sin; He hasn't come or got time for, those who think they are already righteous (declared righteous by themselves and not by God!).

Luke 19:10 – For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost

*The Apostle Paul who used to be a Pharisee (Phil 3:5) says this in **1 Timothy 1:15** – “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst”. Paul realized as we all need to, that we are all sinful and fall short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23). **God’s Kingdom is a one-class society – for sinners only!***

8. Ponder: In what “wrong” sense were the Pharisees righteous?

They appointed themselves as righteous; where true righteousness is to be right with God and approved by God, which we can only get through Jesus.

As 2 Corinthians 5:21 says “God made him [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him [Jesus] we might become the righteousness of God.”

Read Matthew 9:14-17 (Other accounts Mark 2:18-22 and Luke 5:33-39)

9. What question do John the Baptist’s disciples have?

John the Baptist’s disciples asked why they and the Pharisees fast and Jesus’ disciples don’t?

10. What is fasting and what is its purpose?

Fasting was abstaining from food and sometimes drink, to focus on God for a particular need or help from Him. Sometimes fasting accompanied prayer to focus on a particular prayer need; and sometimes fasting accompanied repentance.

In John the Baptist’s ministry the focus was on people repenting and coming back to God; so, John fasted and his disciples followed his example. So, their fasting was done with humble and sincere hearts knowing their need to repent of their sin.

The Pharisees also fasted often twice per week (Luke 18:12) but they didn’t do it out of humble repentance but often just to impress other people with their spirituality (see Matthew 6:16-18). Whereas apparently, Jesus’ disciples did not fast and Jesus will go on to explain why.

11. What does Jesus’ answer mean in verse 15? Who is the bridegroom and who are the guests? (cf. John 3:27-30)

Jesus sees fasting as mourning or grieving our sin. So, His argument is that whilst He, as the bridegroom, is with His guests, the disciples, this is not a time to be mourning and grieving, and being sad, it’s a time for his disciples to have joy, because Jesus, the bridegroom is with them.

Also, it wasn’t right for Jesus’ disciples to imitate John’s disciples, they fasted in humble repentance and preparation for the one coming after John; which was Jesus and now He is here. And it wasn’t right for Jesus’ disciples to imitate the Pharisees fasting because they were being hypocritical in their fasting.

But Jesus goes on to tell them at the end of v15 – there will be a time when they will fast – in grief and mourning – when He is taken away from them and sent to the cross and crucified. This is the first indication/hint to the disciples that it will be the Pharisees who get Jesus killed

because their system and power and status is being threatened by Jesus! However, the disciples' sorrow and fasting would turn to joy, when Jesus' was raised from the dead!

12. What does Jesus mean in verse 16 & 17 when he talks about patching up an old garment and pouring wine into old wineskins?

Jesus uses two illustrations which have the same meaning. First, he says people don't sew a patch of unshrunk new cloth on an old garment, it will just pull away from the garment; and neither do people put new wine in old-wineskins, otherwise the skins will burst and the wine will be wasted; instead, you put new wine in new wineskins.

These two illustrations are to explain that Jesus did not come to repair or reform the old institutions of Judaism but to introduce the new covenant of His blood shed on the cross as the ultimate sacrifice for sins as opposed to the old animal sacrifices – and in doing so to establish the Christian church.

13. **Ponder:** As disciples, what is Jesus calling us to be like?

- a. *Repent and believe in the Good News of Jesus (see Mark 1:15)*
- b. *Follow Jesus – which means: leaving behind your old life, making Jesus a priority in your life, following His ways, His teaching, His life – leading to eternal life.*
- c. *A disciple essentially thinks, talks and acts like the Teacher. Everything the teacher does, the disciple should imitate; obviously we're not Jesus so it won't be perfect!*
- d. *And it also means making more disciples!*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Matthew 9:9-17**?

A call to discipleship



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?

- ➔ How does this passage **apply to your life**?
- a. *Like Matthew we are called to our new life in Jesus and leave our old life behind*
 - b. *Matthew made a great sacrifice to follow Jesus - what sacrifice will we make?*
 - c. *Matthew as a tax collector was written off by everyone as not being worthy of being accepted and forgiven. Who are we writing off as "unsuitable" or "unworthy" to be part of Jesus' Kingdom?*
 - d. *How we will serve Jesus as His disciple?*
 - e. *Are we merciful or unmerciful & religious like the Pharisees and many of the Jews?*

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

Jesus' economy of words always requires a response:

V9 – "Follow me"

V12 – "It's not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick"

V13 – "Go and learn what it means: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" and "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners"

Finish in prayer: Thank God that His Son, Jesus, calls us to be disciples and spread the Gospel; ask God to help us as we fulfil our role as disciples.

Study 3 – Restoration to the Broken – Matthew 9:18-38

(Sermon on 13-Feb-22)

Before we begin: In what ways can we be broken?

We can be broken in various ways:

- a. Broken by relationship problems*
- b. Broken by sickness or disability or ageing*
- c. Broken by mental health problems*
- d. Broken by trauma from an event in our lives*
- e. Broken by grief over the loss of a loved one; the loss of freedom; the loss of independence or the loss of position or job*
- f. Broken because of no hope*
- g. Separated from God because of unrepentant sin in our lives*

Read Matthew 9:18-26 (other accounts in Mark 5:22-43 & Luke 8:41-56)

1. What is surprising about Jairus' actions in verse 18?

A synagogue leader came to him and knelt down before him – a form of worship. At other times where such worship was offered; it was refused (Cornelius to Peter in Acts 10:25-26 and John to an angel in Revelation 22:8-9)

2. What compelled Jairus to come to Jesus and what's impressive about Jairus?

What compelled Jairus was the love of his daughter and the belief that even though she is dead [note: Mark and Luke's accounts say "dying" - Augustine explanation is that Matthew reports what Jairus "thought" –he thought that his daughter had died – whereas Mark and Luke state she is about to die. Knox offers an alternative explanation that Matthew combines two separate appeals made by Jairus.]; Jairus believes Jesus can bring her back to life just by laying His hands on her. Jairus' faith is impressive here! However, compare the faith of the centurion in Matthew 8 who knew Jesus could heal from a distance!

3. How did Jesus respond to Jairus' request?

He responded by going with Jairus.

4. How is Jesus interrupted in verse 20?

Jesus is interrupted by a woman who has been bleeding for 12 years and she simply touches the edge of Jesus' garment.

5. What is the woman's problem and what does she think will fix her problem? Why does she simply want to touch Jesus' garment rather than ask Jesus to help?

She has been bleeding for 12 years and according to Mark's account she had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and spent all her money on treatment; and instead of getting better, she got worse. She thought just by touching Jesus' garment [actually the tassels at the edge of the garment which reminded Jews they were God's people and reminded them

that they must obey His commands – see Numbers 15:37-41 and Deuteronomy 22:12]; she thought she didn't even have to touch his person just his garment, and that would heal her. Her reason for not touching Jesus in person: she would be considered ceremonially unclean whilst bleeding (see Leviticus 15:25-30) and so she was not allowed to touch anyone

6. How does Jesus heal the woman and what does he say has healed her?

According to Mark and Luke's account; as she touched Jesus' garment, He felt her touch and her need of healing and recognised her faith; and power went out of Him and healed her immediately.

Jesus says her faith has healed her!

7. Meanwhile, Jairus' daughter has died. What scene does Jesus encounter at Jairus' home?

The scene is a scene of mourning with probably paid mourners. The reason for saying they were not genuine mourners is because they soon ridiculed Jesus when He said the girl was asleep.

8. **Ponder:** Why does Jesus say "the girl is not dead but asleep" in verse 24? (cf. John 11:11-14; 1 Corinthians 15:6, 18, 20 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16)

John 11:11-14 – Jesus refers to Lazarus his friend being asleep (dead) – because with Jesus – death is temporary as He has the power over death and the gift of eternal life.

1 Corinthians 15:6, 18, 20 – refers to some of those who had seen the risen Christ as having fallen asleep (i.e., died); and also says that Jesus is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (i.e., died and now risen)

1 Thessalonians 4:13-16 – refers to those who sleep in death (v13); and refers to Jesus bringing with Him, on His return, those who have fallen asleep (dead) in Him (v14).

By the way: the Greek word for cemetery – koimeterion – means a place where people sleep.

9. Why did the crowd laugh at Jesus?

The crowd laughed because they took Jesus literally to mean the girl was asleep and they knew she was dead; so, they thought Jesus was crazy!

10. What does Jesus do for the girl? What is this miracle a foretaste of?

He took her by the hand at she got up – alive!

This miracle is a foretaste of Jesus' own resurrection when He left the tomb empty and testimony to the fact that Jesus can even defeat death. It's also a foretaste of our resurrection and the resurrection of all believers.

Read Matthew 9:27-31

11. How easy would it be for the blind men to follow Jesus?

It would not be easy for the blind men to follow Jesus – but they were determined and driven by faith that Jesus could heal them. They would have had to ask people to guide them and listen to every sound made.

12. What did the blind men know about Jesus in verse 27?

*They knew Jesus was the Promised Messiah because they referred to Him as the **Son of David**.*

13. Why did the blind men ask for mercy?

According to the thinking of the time; disability and sickness, such as blindness were seen as a curse from God for sin. The blind men asked for mercy - no mention of how they had suffered - and no demand for healing – just mercy.

14. What allowed the blind men to be healed according to verses 28 & 29?

Their faith that Jesus could heal their blindness is what healed them.

Note: faith does not guarantee physical healing but certainly a lack of faith and no faith may cause people not to be healed.

Note: faith does guarantee spiritual healing – i.e., our faith in Jesus guarantees forgiveness and eternal life.

15. Why did Jesus say “**See that no one knows about this**” in verse 30?

Jesus’ mission was to seek people who were lost from God (Luke 19:10). He had a mission to teach and preach and bring people back to God. He was not here to heal people physically with miracle after miracle; although He did show compassion many times. He was here to heal people spiritually. It was not time yet, for Him to go to the cross; too much fame too soon, would have the authorities after him before His time. Also, people would start to believe He was leading a rebellion and crown Him as their King (as mentioned in see John 6:15), but He was a different King – and of a Kingdom, not of this world (see John 18:36).

16. Why did the men disobey Jesus in verse 31?

Despite Jesus’ warning, the men couldn’t resist telling others. Though we should not admire their well-intentioned disobedience, we can admire their excitement over the work of God and the healing power of Jesus. This was their only area of unbelief – they didn’t have the faith to obey Jesus as they should have.

17. **Ponder:** What is blindness a picture of? (cf. Isaiah 6:10; Matthew 15:14 and Romans 11:25)

*Isaiah 6:10 – refers to **spiritual blindness**, spiritual ignorance and unbelief– people blind to things of God*

*Matthew 15:14 – Jesus refers to the Pharisees as **blind guides** – like the spiritual shepherds of Israel in Ezekiel*

*Romans 11:25 – Paul describes that Israel has experienced a **spiritual hardening** until the full number of Gentiles has come in.*

Read Matthew 9:32-34

18. What is wrong with the man in verse 32?

The man is demon-possessed and cannot talk (mute).

In the Jewish understanding of demon possession, this man could not be helped. This was because most rabbis of that day thought that the essential first step in exorcism was to compel or trick the demon into telling them, its name. The name was then thought of as a handle by which the demon could then be removed. Therefore, a demon that made a man mute had cleverly prevented the revelation of the name of the demon inhabiting the victim, and therefore prevented the exorcism.

19. What response was there from Jesus' miracle?

From the man in verse 33?

After the demon was cast out; the man spoke

From the crowd in verse 33?

The crowd were amazed and said "nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel". The reason for saying this is because the no one had ever been able to heal a mute before (because of the reason above)

From the Pharisees in verse 34? Why would they say that?

*They accused Jesus of healing the man by the power of the "prince of demons". **Their status, power and authority as religious leaders is under threat** from someone, who is able to deal with demons and perform such amazing miracles. Also, **they were jealous of Jesus' fame and growing popularity**. They were **blind** to the truth and **blind guides**. By attributing Jesus' healing work as the power of Satan; they are rejected Jesus as from the devil – and in fact blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Once people say Jesus, the source of all that is true and good – is actually from the source of all that is false and evil – then people have gone too far and that is an unpardonable (see Matt 12:31-32 below). Carson says: "by this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, the Pharisees were lining up on the opposing side and putting themselves outside the scope of forgiveness!"*

20. What was Jesus' response to the Pharisees found in the parallel story in Matthew 12:22-32?

Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶ If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. ²⁸ But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house. ³⁰ "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. ³¹ And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the

*Spirit will not be forgiven. ³² Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit **will not be forgiven**, either in this age or in the age to come.*

Read Matthew 9:35-39

21. What situation was Jesus confronted with in verse 35 as he went about His ministry?

As He taught and proclaimed the good news of the kingdom – He was faced with many people who needed healing from every disease and sickness.

22. How did Jesus react to this in verse 36?

*He had **compassion** on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

Jesus saw the people as lost and needing a shepherd – He saw a wheat to be harvested – The Pharisees wrote people off and saw them as chaff to be burnt (Barclay). The Pharisees looked to destroy sinners – Jesus looked to save sinners!

23. **Ponder:** Why does Jesus' ministry have to include disciples? What does that mean for us?

Because the harvest is plentiful (that is there are a lot of lost sheep without The Shepherd")

We need to be one of the workers of the harvest – and we need to pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send out more workers.

24. What is the problem in verse 37 (cf. **Ezekiel 34:5-6**) and what is the solution in verse 38?

The problem: Harvest is plentiful (i.e., lots of lost sheep) – and not many workers telling people about Jesus and bringing them back to God.

*Ezekiel 34:5-6 – So they were **scattered because there was no shepherd**, and when they were scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and **no one searched or looked for them**.*

The solution: Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

They were to shepherd people to come to The Shepherd

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Matthew 9:18-38**?

There are many broken people (both physically and more importantly spiritually) and they are lost from God – they need a shepherd – we are under-shepherds



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?

The Pharisees made their tassels long – see Matthew 23:5 - Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long;

- ➔ How does this passage **apply to your life?**
- a. *The approach and faith of some of the people in the story was imperfect:*
 - *Jairus came to Jesus when all else failed. As Jairus was a synagogue leader, he wouldn't necessarily be a person in favour of Jesus' ministry. Imperfect motive.*
 - *The woman with the bleeding was perhaps touching Jesus' hem out of superstition. Imperfective faith.*
 - *The blind men cried out to Jesus as "Son of David" – not the most ideal title for Jesus as it led people to think Jesus was a military leader and king. Imperfect theology.*
 - b. *Nevertheless, Jairus; the woman with the bleeding; the blind men all showed faith (even if imperfect faith – they came to Jesus) in Jesus' healing – we need to have such single-minded faith in our lives. Faith is what brings us into contact with Jesus – and into His teaching; His strength; His way of living; His control of our lives; and into forgiveness and eternal life.*
 - c. *Those who don't have faith – get nothing: the crowd around the woman did not have faith (only the woman) and so they received nothing; the professional mourners and crowd were ejected (v25); the Pharisees did not believe (v34) and received nothing either.*
 - d. *No-one is ever lost in the crowd with Jesus!*
 - e. *Jesus' **healing of sickness and restoration from the dead** points to His healing of the sickness of sin through **His death** giving forgiveness and points to the **resurrection** from the dead that is available to ALL who faith in Jesus!*
 - f. *Jesus' healing of our sin sickness is **immediate** – once we repent and believe.*
 - g. ***Do we have compassion** on those who are lost like a lost sheep and need Jesus, the Good Shepherd? What will we do about?*
 - h. *The **harvest is plentiful** and the workers are few; therefore, we need to be one of His workers and **pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send out more workers**.*

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

V29 – *“According to your faith let it be done to you”*

V36 - *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

Finish in prayer: Ask God (the Lord of the harvest) to send out workers into His harvest field because the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

Study 4 – King's Ambassadors Part 1 – Matthew 10:1-23

(Sermon on 20-Feb-22)

Before we begin: What is an ambassador?

- a. *an official who lives in a foreign country as the senior representative there of their own country*
- b. *a person who represents or promotes a particular activity*
- c. *In Greek – word is – presbeuo – and is from the base word presbuteros where we get elder (Presbyterian) – and means to act as a representative. So, in the Bible, to be representative of Jesus (see 2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 6:20)*

Ponder: By whom is the **work** of salvation accomplished and by whom is the **witness** of salvation accomplished.

The work of salvation can only be done by Jesus (see Acts 4:12)

The witness of salvation needs to be done by Jesus' followers; the ones who have trusted Him and been saved.

1. What is the context of Matthew 10 – see Matthew 9:37-38.

Back in Matthew 9:37-38; Jesus said: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field"

So, the context is there is a big harvest (of people lost from God) but there are not many people to help people who are lost from God and point them towards Jesus. Therefore, Jesus, needs workers, that is, He needs ambassadors – people who represent Him and His salvation on offer.

Read Matthew 10:1-15 (other accounts in Mark 3:16-19 & Luke 6:14-16)

2. What authority were the twelve disciples given? Why?

They had authority: to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

Why? Because Jesus had compassion for those who were broken by evil/impure spirits and broken by disease and sickness.

Remember too; the purpose of miracles was to a) show who Jesus was and b) help people to have faith in Jesus.

They were also mirroring the ministry of Jesus as described in Matthew 8 and 9.

3. In verse 2, the twelve are called apostles; what does apostle mean?

The word "apostle" means: one who is called or one who is sent out with a commission (a role or job given to them). Barclay says an apostle means envoy or ambassador.

The reason for twelve apostles; to represent the twelve tribes of Israel.

*Note: They are called **disciples** in Matthew 10:1 and **apostles** in Matthew 10:2. "It is worthy of notice, that those who were Christ's apostles were first his disciples; to intimate, that people must be first taught of God, before they be sent of God." (Clarke)*

4. How is an apostle different to a disciple? (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:1; Acts 1:21-22; Ephesians 4:11; Ephesians 2:20; Acts 2:43; 5:12; 2 Corinthians 12:12)

Apostles must have seen the risen Jesus (1 Cor 9:1) and fellowshiped with Him (Acts 1:21-22); An Apostle had to be chosen directly by the Lord (Ephesians 4:11); the Apostles laid the foundation of Jesus' Church (Ephesians 2:20) and then passed from the scene. While all believers are sent forth to represent the King (John 17:18; 20:21); no believer today can honestly claim to be an apostle, because none of us have seen the risen Jesus (1 Peter 1:8).

5. From what you know of some of the twelve; what can you say about their backgrounds and life experiences? Why is that important?

Simon Peter = son of Jonah, a brother to Andrew. He was a fisherman, was married. Part of an inner circle of three with James and John, who were often with Jesus alone on several important occasions. Peter denied Jesus three times.

Andrew = brother of Peter. Formerly a disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35-40). Also, a fisherman. Tradition says Andrew was crucified at Achia.

James and John = sons of Zebedee and Salome; also, fishermen. Known as sons of Thunder (Mark 3:17). John went on to write 5 New Testament books. James was the first to be martyred, killed by a sword under Herod's orders (Acts 12:2). John seems to be the only one of the twelve to die of natural causes.

Philip = along with Andrew, Philip was a disciple of John the Baptist too. Philip was instrumental in bringing Nathanael as a disciple (Nathanael is only mentioned in John's Gospel; in the others it is Bartholomew). Tradition states that Philip went to Phrygia (in modern-day Turkey) as a missionary and was martyred there in Hierapolis.

Bartholomew = aka Nathanael. Bartholomew is a Hebrew surname meaning "son of Tolmai." So, Nathanael is the son of Tolmai, or Nathanael Bar-Tolmei. No other details.

Thomas = also called Didymus (John 11:26; 20:24) which is the Greek equivalent of Hebrew name, Thomas; both mean "twin". Thomas was deeply committed to the Lord and yet struggled with doubts and questions (see John 20:25). Yet Thomas declared "My Lord and my God" once He saw the risen Jesus (John 20:28). Extrabiblical writings and Christian tradition hold that Thomas took the gospel to either Parthia or India and that he was martyred for his faith.

Matthew = aka Levi and writer of Matthew's Gospel. Matthew was a tax-collector.

James, son of Alphaeus = aka James the Less or Younger (Mark 15:40). Tradition implies that it was James the Less who may have taken the gospel to Persia (modern Iran) and was martyred there.

Thaddeus = aka Judas, son of James, in Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13 but known as Thaddeus in Matthew 10:3 and Mark 3:18. We know Thaddeus, like the other disciples, left his former life to follow and serve Jesus Christ faithfully, enduring hardship and persecution. Some scholars believe Thaddeus wrote the book of Jude, although the more widely accepted view is that Jude, the half-brother of Jesus, penned the book. Extrabiblical literature says that, after Pentecost, Thaddeus took the gospel message north, where he performed miracles, preached, and founded a church in Edessa, an area in modern Turkey. One tradition says that he was either clubbed or axed to death for his faith, and another that he was crucified.

Simon the Zealot = It is usually assumed that he is called “Simon the Zealot” because, when Jesus called him, he was a member of the Zealots’ political movement. If so, the continued use of the designation does not address whether or not he continued to be zealous for Jewish independence while he was a disciple. In any case, we can assume that his priorities changed as he submitted to Jesus’ teaching, which included “giving to Caesar what belongs to Caesar”. (Matthew 22:21), and an emphasis on the kingdom of God, which was not of this world and was not established by use of violence and the force of arms (John 18:36). Simon would also have been informed by Jesus’ revealing that the temple would be destroyed and Jerusalem would be completely overrun by the Gentiles (Luke 21:5–6, 20–24). Keeping the “nickname” of “the Zealot” may simply have been a way to distinguish him from the other Simon (who later came to be known as Peter) in Jesus’ group. Perhaps, in later years, he was known to be zealous for the gospel. Tradition says that Simon the Zealot preached the gospel in Persia and was ultimately killed for refusing to sacrifice to the sun god. Having a zealot and a tax-collector in the same group was unthinkable; a zealot would have plunged a knife into a tax-collector, seeing them as a traitor.

Judas Iscariot = the treasurer and then the betrayer! He betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver; but later returned the money and committed suicide on the morning of Jesus’ crucifixion (Matthew 27:1-5)

Note: there are no religious people included; just ordinary men from different walks of life. As the Apostle Paul says in 1 Cor 1:27-29: But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.

6. Where are they to go and not to go in verses 5 and 6? How does this compare to Matthew 28:19-20? Why is it different? (i.e., compare the message of Matthew 10:7 with the message of Acts 20:24)

They were to go to the lost sheep of Israel (v6) and not the Gentiles or any town of the Samaritans; this was the pre-Pentecost limitations on the mission. This is different to the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20.

Christ's commission to the twelve men was "to the Jews first" (Romans 1:16) as "salvation is of the Jews" according to John 4:22. These twelve ambassadors announced the coming of Jesus' Kingdom just as John the Baptist had done (Matthew 3:2) and Jesus Himself (Matthew 4:17). Sadly, the nation of Israel in the main rejected Him and His ambassadors and the Kingdom was taken from them (Matthew 21:43 - Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit)

Once the Gospel had been taken to the Jews (and either accepted or rejected); the Gospel then went to the Gentiles!

7. How are the people of Israel described in verse 6? (cf. **Jeremiah 50:6; Isaiah 53:6**)
They are described as "lost sheep".

Jeremiah 50:6 - My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds have led them astray and caused them to roam on the mountains. They wandered over mountain and hill and forgot their own resting place.

Isaiah 53:6 - We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

8. What are the twelve to do according to verses 7 and 8?

V7 - proclaim the message "the kingdom of heaven has come near" – the same message as Jesus gave in Matthew 4:17 [Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near] but over a broader area.

V8 - "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons"

9. How are they to provide for themselves in verses 8b to 15?

Jesus didn't charge His disciples anything for His ministry and He expected them to minister to others free of charge.

They were to expect God to meet their material needs and to not be too concerned about their own needs; knowing the Lord would provide.

When they came to a town, they were workers in that town and worthy of being put up (kept). They were to find a worthy person who would let them stay at their home and give them food and shelter.

10. What will happen to the homes and towns that do not listen to the Apostles' words?

The apostles were to leave such homes and towns – by shaking the dust of their feet – signifying that that home or town had not listened to God and would face judgment.

The problem with such homes and towns was a) they didn't listen to Jesus' Words from His ambassadors and b) they didn't receive Jesus' ambassadors in their homes.

Such homes and towns will receive a judgment on the Day of Judgment – worse than Sodom and Gomorrah!

Read Matthew 10:16-23

11. In what ways do verses 16 to 23 seem to have a slightly different context to verses 1 to 15? *These verses have a **different “atmosphere”** that verses 1 to 15.*

*Here, Jesus speaks of **persecution** [sheep among wolves (v16); handed over to local councils (v17); brought before governors and kings because of Jesus (v18); witnesses to Gentiles now and not just Jews (v18); arrested (v19); but we have no record of the twelve suffering persecution during this mission; only later on in the future, after Jesus has died, rose and ascended.*

12. What does Jesus say will happen as they are sent out in verses 16 to 18?

V16 - They will be in danger (like wolves threaten sheep)

V17 – Flogged in the synagogues

V18 – Brought before governors and kings

13. What will happen as they are brought before governors and kings in verses 19 to 20? How would that be comforting?

They do not need to worry what they will say to governors and kings; they will be given words from the Holy Spirit – which is not given until Acts 2 and Pentecost; therefore, Jesus is now talking about the future!

It would be comforting that the Apostles would receive the words to say from God Himself!

14. What will be the extent of the persecution in verses 21 to 23?

The extent of persecution will even be in families; where some family members will reject Jesus and the Gospel and betray, even have killed, those in their family, who accept Jesus and the Gospel. The persecution will also lead to some people fleeing to another town or city to escape.

15. How can we explain Jesus' words in verse 23 **“truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes”**?

*This is one of the hardest-to-understand statements of Jesus in Matthew. Could Jesus really mean that He would return to this earth before the disciples would make it through all the cities of Israel? If so, this would make Jesus plainly wrong in this prediction. Instead, it is better to see His “coming” in this passage as His **coming in judgment upon Judea in ad 70** which did happen before the gospel came to every city in Israel.*

In many ways, the judgment poured out by God upon Judea through the Roman armies in ad 70 was worse than the judgment that came upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

Other suggested explanations are:

- a. "The Son of Man comes" refers to His triumphant "coming" after His resurrection when He appeared to His Apostles and gave them the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) to make disciples of all nations! Where Jesus says in Matthew 28:18 "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"
- b. "The Son of Man comes" refers to His triumphant ascension and "coming" to His Father
- c. Some suggest it refers to His Second Coming, but this cannot be correct. However, we need to appreciate that the Early Christian Church, because of their constant persecution, had the fervent belief that Jesus Second Coming (The Parousia) was imminent. In fairness, we hear people today, say things like "Jesus will return in our life-time" because of the stuff that is happening in our world today!

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Matthew 10:1-23**?

What being an ambassador of Jesus looks like.



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?



How does this passage **apply to your life**?

- a. The people Jesus called to be His disciples (including the twelve) were ordinary people (even outcasts!); not scholars; not religious; not super rich; just working-class people. In their weakness and inadequacies, God showed His glory and His strength and His power!
- b. Jesus needs disciples because God has ordained "the church" as the vehicle to bring the Gospel.
- c. Jesus needs disciples because the harvest is plentiful and the workers are few!
- d. We are to go to the "lost sheep" – those lost from God
- e. We are to go to the broken – the sick, the diseased, the disabled, the poor, the orphans, the widowed.
- f. Our job is not to persuade, argue, ram the Gospel down people's throats – yes, we can persevere in sharing the Gospel, but we are "sheep" (gentle, humble) and not "wolves" (harsh, angry) – we are not to look for trouble (innocent as doves), we are to avoid trouble (shrewd as snakes)
- g. We will be persecuted (v23 says "when" not "if") and hated as we share the message of Jesus
- h. The Holy Spirit will give us the words to say!
- i. We must stand firm!

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

Matthew 8:20 - for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Finish in prayer: Ask God to help us as we go out to be witnesses of Jesus. Ask God to both protect us and give us the words to say as we tell people about the Good News of Jesus

Study 5 – King's Ambassadors Part 2 – Matthew 10:24-42

(Sermon on 27-Feb-22)

Introduction: In the last study we began to see what being an ambassador of King Jesus was like; and we continue to see in the remaining part of Matthew chapter 10, what this looks like in reality.

Before we begin: Summarize what we learnt in Study 4...

- *We are ALL ambassadors for King Jesus – and it implies we are to be “good” representatives of Jesus and bring Him honour – and we are not to be “bad” representatives of Jesus and bring Him dishonour*
- *Being ambassadors of Jesus looks like:*
 - *Ordinary people who can do extraordinary things because of Jesus’ power/name*
 - *Having a specific mission to do: to bring the message of Jesus to lost sheep and to help those who are broken*
 - *Relying on God’s provision in that mission*
 - *Expect opposition because we are ambassadors of Jesus*

Read Matthew 10:24-25

1. What reason does Jesus give in these verses as to why we must face persecution as one of His disciples?

V24 -As The Message puts it “A student doesn’t get a better desk than the teacher. A labourer doesn’t get paid more than the boss”. In other words – we will get treated like Jesus did – rejected, mistreated and persecuted.

2. What does Jesus mean by saying **“If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!”** in verse 25? (cf. Mark 3:22-30)

V25 -If they call Jesus, “Beelzebul (a name for the Devil) then we can’t expect any better treatment. ” As The Message puts it “If they call me, the Master, ‘Dungface’ what can the workers expect”

[Beelzebub or Beelzebul is a name derived from a Philistine god, formerly worshipped in Ekron, and later adopted by some Abrahamic religions as a major demon. The name Beelzebub is associated with the Canaanite god Baal. In theological sources, predominantly Christian, Beelzebub is another name for Satan. He is known in demonology as one of the seven princes of Hell. The Dictionnaire Infernal describes Beelzebub as a being capable of flying, known as the "Lord of the Flyers", or the "Lord of the Flies".]

Read Matthew 10:26-31

3. Even in the midst of persecution, why should Jesus’ disciples not be afraid?

They do not have to be afraid of those who are persecuting them because everything is going to come out in the open. Jesus’ disciples could have confidence that the truth would prevail, so they should go out and preach it with boldness, despite the danger of persecution.

Jesus promised His persecuted followers that the truth of their honorable sacrifice would be known, even if the persecutors did their best to hide it among the pages of history. God would reveal all and justify His servants and reveal the crime of those who thought they had hidden it. The judgment of eternity gives us great confidence in God's ultimate justice. Those who seem to cheat justice on earth will never cheat it in eternity.

4. What is the warning in verse 28? (cf. **Proverbs 29:25; Psalm 56:4; Isaiah 8:12-13; Hebrews 10:31**)

Proverbs 29:25 - Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

Psalm 56:4 - In God, whose word I praise- in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?

Isaiah 8:12-13 - "Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread.

God is the one to fear, not the men who persecute the followers of Jesus. The worst they can do is to destroy the body, but being a coward before God can have eternal consequences.

5. What do we learn about God's care for His people in verses 29 to 31?

God really cares for His people; even down to the most minute detail. God knows the number of hairs on our head! Sparrows are two a penny; and we humans are worth more than little sparrows; so, there's no need to be afraid. If God takes care of little sparrows, He will take care of us.

6. What phrase is used three times between verses 26 to 31? Why do you think this is so?

"don't be afraid" is repeated three times because God, through Matthew, wants to emphasize there is no need to fear those who persecute; God is in control of all things.

Read Matthew 10:32-39

7. What attitude must Jesus' disciples be equipped with in verses 32 to 33

We must always acknowledge Jesus.

The Greek for acknowledge (homologeho) literally means speak the same as someone else. So, the disciples are to speak the same words as Jesus; that's the attitude they should have.

They are not to disown (literally deny) Jesus.

8. What can we not escape in verses 34 to 39?

We cannot escape conflict because of our faith in Jesus and because of our public declaration of being one of His followers.

This will offend people and Jesus recognizes that is the case. That's why He says – He hasn't come to bring peace between people – when some people believe His truth and others reject it – they will be in conflict. This conflict can be experienced in families – where some will speak the same words of Jesus and others in the family, will reject it!

The sword Jesus speaks of, is not a literal sword but the sword of His word (God's Word) which can wound and heal – because it's a double-edged sword – see Hebrews 4:12).

Conflict in families may come, because Jesus demands that our devotion to Him must come ahead of our love and devotion to our families!

Some times our love and devotion to our families can make Jesus second best or just an afterthought; instead of being our first thought!

9. What does Jesus mean in verse 38 by **“taking up their cross and following Him”**?

The disciple must follow Jesus even to the place of taking his cross. When a person took a cross in Jesus' day, it was for one reason: to die. The ancient Roman cross did not negotiate, did not compromise, and did not make deals. There was no looking back when you took up your cross, and your only hope was in resurrection life.

Cross here isn't meant to be whatever particular trial or trouble we're going through. The cross means one thing: death – death to self, but resurrection life unto God.

This is the first mention of the cross in Matthew's Gospel, and it is not directly associated with Jesus' own crucifixion. Such an extreme statement – likening discipleship with the horror of crucifixion, something too terrible to be mentioned in polite company – must have jarred the disciples.

The disciple knew what the cross was all about. “Crucifixion itself was not an uncommon sight in Roman Palestine; ‘cross-bearing’ language would have a clear enough meaning, even before they realized how literally Jesus himself was to exemplify it

10. What does Jesus mean in verse 39 by **“Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.”**?

Here we have a paradox.

Paradox = a seemingly absurd or contradictory statement or proposition which when investigated may prove to be well founded or true.

Examples: This is the beginning of the end; They must go to war to make peace.

Sometimes you must be cruel to be kind!

A disciple of Jesus lives in a paradox. They can only find life by losing it, and they can only live by dying. Resurrection life can only come after we take up our cross to follow Jesus.

Read Matthew 10:40-42

11. In contrast to the persecutors, what will happen to those who welcome Jesus' disciples? (cf. Hebrews 6:10)

Those who welcome Jesus' disciples (His ambassadors) actually welcome Jesus Himself. And because they welcome Jesus Himself; they will be rewarded for any kind gesture to His disciples; even a cup of cold water. Every kindness people show to Jesus' disciples, will be remembered by God and rewarded by God!

12.Ponder: When people receive us as Jesus' disciples, they welcome King Jesus, because we are His ambassadors. **Read 2 Samuel 10** for an example of what happens when people mistreat the envoys (ambassadors) of the King. What did you discover?

When the King Nahash of the Ammonites died, David showed compassion and kindness to his King Nahash's son, Hanun, just as Hanun's father had shown David. So, David sent "ambassadors" to express his sympathy.

Hanun's advisers stupidly advised him that David wasn't fair-dinkum and so Hanun seized David's ambassadors and humiliated them by shaving half of each man's beard and cutting off their garments at the buttocks.

David responded with his army. You don't mess with the King's ambassadors!

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Matthew 10:24-42**?

Being an ambassador for Jesus is demanding but we are not to be afraid; we are saved for eternity.



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?

If God is involved in the life and death of a little sparrow; how much more is He involved in the details of our lives (v29)



How does this passage **apply to your life**?

- a. *We can expect the same treatment (mistreatment) as Jesus.*
- b. *Fear God, not human beings. Human beings can destroy our bodies but not our souls!*
- c. *God knows us and cares for us intimately; He knows every detail of our lives!*
- d. *We are not to be afraid to be an ambassador for Jesus, because we know God cares for us*
- e. *We are to confess (speak the same as Jesus) in public – without fear! (Romans 10:9-10)*
- f. *We are not to deny Jesus.*
- g. *Jesus has to be our first priority.*
- h. *In following Jesus; when we die – we live on into eternity and have eternal life.*
- i. *As we represent Jesus and present the Gospel; we will either be received or rejected. Those who receive us and our message of Jesus will be rewarded. In that way we are blessing to others!*
- j. *People shouldn't mistreat King Jesus' ambassadors.*

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

V28

Finish in prayer: Ask God to help us to not fear other human beings but instead to have a reverent fear and respect for God, Himself. Thank God that He cares for us. Ask God to help us

to be bold and confess Jesus. Ask God to help us to persevere through opposition to the message of Jesus. Ask God to bless those who both proclaim and receive the Gospel.

Appendix 1 - Map of Galilee



Studies prepared by Paul O'Rourke
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Resources:

The MacArthur Study Bible

New Bible Commentary (Carson, France, Moyter & Wenham)

Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible (G. Campbell Morgan)

The Message of Matthew (Michael Green)

Focus on the Bible: Matthew (Charles Price)

Matthew Volume 1 (Barclay)

Be Loyal Following the King of Kings NT Commentary on Matthew (Warren W. Wiersbe)

Notes/Prayer Points