

# MATTHEW

## 10:1-42

### Matthew 10:1-42

Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 9th February 2025 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

**Reading:** Mark 8:34-38

### Introduction

This morning, we're going to continue our study of Matthew's Gospel account, looking at all of chapter ten. And, reading this chapter (following Jesus' Sermon on The Mount, and the many miracles *He* performed) we now find that He sent out His disciples in His name to *preach* and perform *miracles* in *His* power. But it wasn't all those that had been following Him around that He sent out...

### Overview of chapter ten

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- **v1-4** — Twelve
- **v5-16** — Task
- **v17-26** — Trials
- **v27-31** — Trust
- **v32-39** — Troubles
- **v40-42** — Treatment

Rather, we find that it is **twelve** specific men that Jesus first calls, then enables, and then sends out with this specific **task** in mind. But He also warns them of the **trial** of persecution that they will face, and He teaches them to **trust** God, even when **troubles** come within their own families, because of their faith in Him. But finally, Jesus also speaks how others that **treat** them *well*, will be rewarded.

## Chapter ten

That's what we have before us to consider as we study the Bible together this morning. And we read in verse 1:

### Matthew 10:1

And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

Now, we'll find out *who* the twelve are in the next 3 verses, but first we should ask ourselves *why* did Jesus call these *specific* twelve men to be His closest disciples, and, as we'll read, His apostles?

Well, we'll see that Jesus didn't do this hastily. Remember what we read at the end of chapter 9?

### Matthew 9:37-38

Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest."

He said pray. And these words were followed up by action, for we read in Luke's gospel account:

### Luke 6:12-13

Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:

So He prayed *all night*. And what example there is in that He didn't delay. And He didn't merely pray while doing something else. He didn't fit in prayer between lots of other things He needed or wanted to do that evening. But rather, He removed Himself from distraction, and prayed for a long time. And it was following this, we read here, that He called twelve of His disciples to be His apostles, which means "sent out ones".

And oh, how we should make serious matters a matter of serious prayer in our lives. From where we live, to where we work, to who we date, who we marry, who we are friends with, where we go to university, where to send our kids to school, and so on. And how we ought to seek God's will in how we serve Him. Likewise, any appointment to ministry in a church or Christian organisation ought to only be done after much prayer. It shouldn't be left to popular vote, how we feel. We should be praying to know God's will in the matter.

Here, evidently, these twelve men were chosen by Jesus — not on a whim, but after much prayer. And we read that, having called these twelve, *He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease*.

That is, this power was to enable them to perform the same miracles that Jesus had just been doing, which verse 8 will give us more detail on.

And note, that these twelve were not to go in their own strength, but in His. Just as we read in John's gospel account that He said *without Me you can do nothing*.

And they were not to go out for their own purposes, but His. And He gave these specific men, this specific task, for this specific moment, which we ought not confuse with the Great Commission which has been given to all believers.

#### **Matthew 10:2-4**

Now 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; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

And so we have the twelve apostles, the *sent out ones*.

First, Peter (also known as Cephas), who is always listed first by the way (just as Judas is always listed last). Who often put his foot in his mouth, who cut off the high priest's servant's ear, who denied Jesus three times — yet was restored by Jesus, who preached the first sermon after Pentecost, who had the revelation from God that the gospel would go to the Gentiles, who was of prominence in the council in Jerusalem, yet still needed to be corrected by Paul in Antioch, and who was martyred (as was his wife). It is his gospel account that we are reading when we read the book of Mark, who wrote Peter's words down. Of course we have two of Peter's letters in the Bible too.

Second, was Andrew, Peter's brother, who was the first of Jesus' followers, and was the one who went to Peter and said "We have found the Messiah", and then brought Peter to Jesus. These were the two that left all behind when Jesus said to him and his brother, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." It is believed he was also crucified.

Third, there was James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John, so not to be confused with James, the son of Alphaeus, or the other James that was Jesus' earthly brother. This James was one of Jesus' three closest disciples, along with Peter and John (who was James' brother), who was present as Jairus' daughter was healed, who was there at Jesus' transfiguration, and again one of these three that Jesus called to come and observe Him as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was also the first of the apostles to be martyred, as recorded in Acts chapter 12.

Fourth, was John, the brother of James, who (of course) wrote John's gospel account, along with his three letters we find in the New Testament, and the book of Revelation too. John was the youngest of Jesus' disciples, and, as we read in his gospel account, he was the disciple that Jesus loved, and also the one to whom Jesus entrusted the care of Mary to, as He hung on the cross. And he stands out too as one of the few that died a natural death.

Fifth was Philip, not to be confused with the other Philip found in Acts chapter 6 and 8. *This* Philip was from Bethsaida, the same city as Andrew and Peter, and it was he who found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Philip was also responsible for bringing certain Greeks to Jesus in John chapter 12, soon after Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Sixth was Bartholomew (a name taken from his father or an ancestor) was also known as Nathaniel — and was, as mentioned, brought to Jesus by Philip, though his first reaction to what Philip told him was “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”. He is believed to have been beaten to death, and beheaded by King Astyages in Armenia.

Seventh in this list is Thomas, also known as Didymus, and who often gets called *doubting Thomas*, for, having failed to gather with the other disciples as Jesus appeared before them after His resurrection, said “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” But see Jesus he did, and believe he did. And actually it's believed he led many to Christ in India, though at the cost of his life — it's said that idolatrous priests there tortured him with red hot plates, then cast him into an oven which had no effect on him, and so they pierced him with spears until he died.

Now eighth, is Matthew, the man writing these words, that as I've previously noted was from the tribe of Levi, but had ended up working for the Roman government as a tax collector. However, upon Jesus calling him to follow Him, he left all, and never turned back from following Him, eventually being martyred in Ethiopia.

Ninth, is another James — and we're told in these verses that he was the son of Alphaeus, so not to be confused with the other two Jameses. And he was the brother to the next apostle in this list that is... Lebbaeus Thaddaeus, also known as Judas — but not the one who betrayed Jesus. It is reckoned that he was beaten to death in Persia by pagan priests.

Now, eleventh is Simon the Canaanite, who was also called Simon Zelotes — denoting that he was involved in a group that were trying to overthrow the Roman government. Quite the opposite to Matthew that had worked for them! And now both were following Jesus. In Simon's case, tradition says he was killed by crucifixion in Syria.

Last on the list, and always last in lists of the apostles, is Judas Iscariot, who, despite being sent out by Jesus, and empowered by Jesus, still betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver. And his end was a sad one, taking his own life in despair at what he had done.

And so, what an eclectic mix of men that Jesus chose — fishermen, tax collectors, religious zealots, doubters, and those who would deny or betray Him. Some brothers, some acquaintances. Some who had previously followed John the Baptist around. Yet choose them He did. And change them He did. Just consider how many of these men died brutal deaths for what they believed, and (in fact) what they knew to be true. This wasn't an ordinary group of guys, not because of who they were, but because the One who called them was the Son of God, who also empowered them, and sent them:

#### **Matthew 10:5-6**

These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

So while the gospel would indeed, in due time, go to the ends of the earth, the focus for now was to be on the people of Israel alone. Which means if you're going to try and apply verse one as a command for us *today* — that we should be going around healing the sick and raising the dead — then you should also limit yourself to the people of Israel! But, what tends to happen with those that twist verse one that way, is that they limit themselves not to Israel, but to where they might receive a large offering to support their ministry. And what you don't see, is such folks heading down to the hospital where they *really* could be of use to the sick and the deceased.

Now, I'm not saying God can't or won't work miracles today. But I do want to be clear that what He was commanding the apostles here, was for the apostles at this time, in this place. And very clearly so, with Jesus saying "*Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.*" But why? Because Israel were expecting the Messiah, the One who would ultimately reign over them. And now that One was here right in front of them. Therefore we read:

**Matthew 10:7-8**

And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

And so, the first priority was preaching, then the practical. Both are important. And good preaching should always lead to good works, *as well as* saved souls. But neglect the preaching, and all you're doing is propping up people until the day they die. We must not forget the principle of that today.

Furthermore, we read Jesus words; "Freely you have received, freely give." — and that is another principle that we should consider in today's context, for we shouldn't make merchandise out of the Word of God (we should never be charging entry to a Sunday morning service, for example). And given how much we have received at no cost to ourselves, and at unfathomable cost to Christ, we should all simply want to give out of the abundance of kindness He has shown to us.

However, that doesn't mean we should have the expectation that others should provide for our spiritual needs, without us caring for their practical needs, for we read on:

**Matthew 10:9-10**

Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.

And so the heart of those who serve in ministry should be to serve in response to what God has already done, and not seek to turn ministry in to industry. They should also trust that where God guides, He provides — not seeking to work out everything in their own strength. Yet at the same time, anyone who ministers, should be supported in their needs. What does that mean? Well here, Jesus told His disciples to not take money for their needs, or spare clothing for themselves — saying also their food should be provided. And in a similar way, Paul gives us other examples, writing in 1 Corinthians:

### 1 Corinthians 9:3-7

My defence to those who examine me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

Lest we be in any doubt of the point here, it's not *merely that* those those who serve in full time ministry should be provided for, but that those who are directly benefitting from their ministry should be the ones who make that provision — indeed Paul, in his second letter to the Corinthians, was really direct in his assessment of how other churches had supported him, writing *"I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you."*

Here, Jesus was laying these principles out to His apostles, but also teaching them to trust God, that *He* would ultimately be the one who provided for their needs — which we'll come to again in a few verses from now.

Next, as Jesus continues giving these instructions to His apostles, we read:

### Matthew 10:11-14

Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. And when you go into a household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

That is, find someone of good reputation to stay with, and when you lodge there, don't be looking around for better options (for your ego or you belly), but be a blessing to those you are staying with. And if it turns out that their character is as good as you perceived, then be peaceable with them.

But if they will not listen to the good news of the kingdom that you bring, the simply get up, and move on — for there are others to reach — and as such there is not enough time to take their rejection of God as rejection of you, and be upset, or get the hump, or be awkward. So, just get up, and leave. Your job is not to condemn them, for they are doing that to themselves.

### Matthew 10:15

Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

Why? Because the Messiah (the promised One) had finally arrived, and in rejecting Christ, these people were rejecting the *only* One who could possibly save them.

Now, up to this point, Matthew has recorded *who* Jesus chose, and *what* He empowered them to do. However, rather than send them out just yet, we see Jesus now gives both warnings and encouragement to them, of all they will encounter along the way. And we read in verse 16 the first of those warnings that is followed by instruction:

**Matthew 10:16**

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

I'm not sure that was the news they wanted to hear, but it was necessary to hear. And because of such people who would willingly tear them apart, Jesus said to be wise as serpents — aware of their surroundings, and able to see what people were up to — but harmless as doves, that they would not be poised to attack others, for that was not their mandate. Indeed, they would need much patience, for the trials they would face would be many. And Jesus continues:

**Matthew 10:17-20**

But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

Jesus was saying to His apostles, that when this persecution came, God would give them the words that they should say. And indeed, God still does guide even the most thoroughly prepared preacher that is obedient to Him, even right there as they speak the words God has laid on their heart. But what this doesn't mean, is don't prepare for preaching or teaching the Bible. To do that is to be negligent, and poor steward of God's Word, for those who teach are to labour in the Word and doctrine. There is no shortcut to preparing a Bible study. Diligence is required.

But here, Jesus is talking about those moments where His disciples would be pulled before rulers, such as Peter and John would later be pulled before the Sanhedrin in Acts chapter 4, where we read *"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. And they realised that they had been with Jesus."* In such moments, it would be God that would speak through His Holy Spirit. And so it will be with us, if we walk with Him too, if we walk in the Spirit.

But speaking of what would happen imminently, Jesus continued speaking to His apostles, saying:

**Matthew 10:21-22**

"Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

Why was He saying this? Because He didn't want them to be discouraged, thinking that somehow something had gone very wrong. No, no. They were, in fact, to anticipate, even expect these trials to come as they went throughout Israel preaching that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

And we read on:

**Matthew 10:23**

When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.



That is, speaking of His first coming, and specifically the point where He would be manifested before the nation, Jesus told His apostles that they would not be able to get to every city in Israel, so they were not to waste time staying in places where there was not an open door to preach.

Neither were they to expect any better treatment than they had seen Jesus receive. He said:

**Matthew 10:24-25**

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!

And that certainly reminds me of what we read last week, where, having cast the demon out of the mute man, the Pharisees had said of Jesus *"He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons"* — yet more than that, Jesus was saying that they He had literally been called the devil by some, so His apostles shouldn't expect anything more favourable than that!

**Matthew 10:26**

Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

In other words, Jesus was saying; don't worry about what others say about you if you are being faithful to Him, for having a right standing with God is infinitely more important than having a right standing with man. And indeed, God knows everything about us too — our thoughts, our secret actions, our search history, our private messages, our playlists and more.

Therefore, Jesus continued, saying:

**Matthew 10:27-28**

"Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

What perspective that is! We read on:

**Matthew 10:29-31**

Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

So then, on one hand we really ought to remember that God is our Creator, that He is all powerful, all knowing, and holy. We should fear Him — not cowering in a corner, but having the utmost respect and reverence for who He is.

But on the other hand, we are to remember His great love for us, and that He hears each cry, and knows every tear that falls. And that we are worth abundantly more than the birds of the air. Furthermore, He knows us better than we know ourselves, better than a mother knows her own baby whose side she has never left. And this should bring great comfort to us.



So, the immediate application for the apostles was to have both reverence, and to be obedient, but also to be comforted, knowing that in all their persecutions that were to come, that God would be with them. As Cromwell put it (when asked about his bravery); *"I've learned that when you fear God, you do not have any man to fear."*

Jesus continued:

#### **Matthew 10:32-33**

*"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven."*

These are serious words, so we must ensure our understanding here is correct. That this is not talking about a momentary lapse of judgement or denial under pressure. How do I know? Peter. For He would go on to deny Jesus three times in less than 24 hours. And what did Jesus do? He restored Him. And He used him in a mighty way in the early church, leading thousands to salvation. And of Peter's own personal salvation there is no doubt.

But on the contrary, look at Judas, who walked with Jesus, talked with Jesus, and was one of these twelve that were sent out with the power of Jesus to perform miracles. But I'm certain that he'll be one of those whom Jesus referred to in His Sermon on The Mount, saying *"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*

How can we be sure that Judas falls into this category? Well, we have a clue in John's gospel account, for he records Jesus say *"Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"*

For us, we'll know them by their fruits. But for Jesus, He'll know them by their hearts. For as we've read, *there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.*

Oh, let us walk with Jesus! Not merely pretend to walk with Jesus. But if we do walk with Him, if we do confess Him before others, if our faith is genuine, then there will be consequences. We read:

#### **Matthew 10:34-36**

*"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and a man's enemies will be those of his own household."*

And this not in the sense that Jesus' intent was to start fights and family feuds. But rather, it is an inevitable consequence of sin, that some people (sadly) do not want to entertain the thought that they could be a sinner, and hate the people that show them up as such.

Furthermore, what we believe will, in so many ways, be divisive. We believe there is only one way to Heaven. We believe in right and wrong. We believe in a holy God who cannot tolerate sin. And we believe that all men and women have sinned, and are in desperate need of a Saviour. And not everyone wants to hear that, or the many implications of that.

And the result is that if we believe one thing, and others choose to believe something else, that is division right there. We cannot agree with sin, or take part in it. At best, others will think we're odd (as Peter notes in his first letter). But at worst, it will drive friends, even families apart. And in that, we have a choice, which Jesus next notes:

**Matthew 10:37**

He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

Does that mean we don't love our parents or our children? No. Does it mean we love Jesus more? Yes. We must put Jesus first. Not instead of, but ahead of. And there is a difference. We read on:

**Matthew 10:38-39**

And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

And so, three times in these 3 verses, Jesus uses the phrase "not worthy of me". And I wonder, how many times do we need to hear this for it to truly sink in?

For a moment, please put down your devices, your notebooks, or anything else you are holding in your hand. And consider this... have you found every success in life, but not found Jesus? Have you found contentment in the things of this world, but not in Him? Everything you have here is temporary. Even your marriage — for remember, it is until death do us *part*. All your school projects, assignments, and achievements. All your qualifications, your LinkedIn endorsements, and your degree, your employee of the month badge, or the name plate on your desk or your office door — all of that is going to burn. There will be nothing of that to show in Heaven.

So why are you making it your priority now? I'm not saying give up at school, or become a bad employee, or a sloppy parent, or a poor steward of your time and money in retirement. No, no. We are to work well, work hard, and honour God in all we do. But I *am* saying *don't* put all those temporary things above the things of the Lord. And let me tell you, that there is nothing more fulfilling than walking with the Lord and serving Him. Not one thing. It doesn't mean we can't enjoy the many blessings God has poured out on us. But there is something wonderful about finding your life in Christ, walking with Him, serving Him as *He* has called you to do.

And should you need any more convincing, look at how the world is desperately seeking identity, not knowing which way to turn. But for those of us who know Jesus, our identity is truly found in Him. And not one thing we give up for the sake of following Christ will ever be a mistake.

Let me remind you again of some of what we read in Mark's gospel account earlier in our service today, which records:

**Mark 8:34-38**

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Don't make this world your home. That would be building upon the sand, such as Jesus warned against in His Sermon on The Mount. Instead, build upon the rock that is Christ and His Word, the Bible. You will never go wrong in that.

Now, as we draw a close, let's consider the final verses of this chapter. We read from verse 40 on:

### Matthew 10:40-42

He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

Jesus, still speaking to His apostles here, instructing them as He sends them out, speaks of the treatment they will receive from others, effectively saying that those that are not only open to *hearing* about Him, but are willing to *receive* Him, will be willing to receive *them*. And by this they will know who is God's side, by the kindness and generosity others show to them as they preach.

Further more, as one person put it, *the minutest details of goodness, if done for the right person and with the right motive, will be rewarded by God*. When will that reward be received? *Maybe* now, but definitely in Heaven. While others may forget a kind word or action, God will not forget. So let *us* press on serving Him too, and loving others. Dying to self, and living for Christ.

## Application questions

As you go home today, please consider these questions — not as an academic exercise, but as a way to apply this passage to your day to day lives:

- Are the serious matters in your life a matter of serious prayer?
- Are you trusting God to provide in *your* ministry? (and we should all serve!)
- Are you willing to support those that minister to you?
- Do you fear God more than man?
- Are your priorities in Heaven, or on Earth?

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