

03/29/2026

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**MATTHEW**

## **He Gave Them Power**

### **Matthew 9:35 – 10:25**

- I. The Laborers Are Few
  - a. Ever walk into a room and forget why you walked in there?
    - i. Good illustration for the American church – we have arrived at this moment at time and we left asking the question – why are we here? What are we supposed to be doing?
      1. Am I supposed to be arguing on social media?
    - ii. Or am I supposed to just survive until Jesus comes and gets me?
      1. Hunker down, avoid sinning, and wait for Jesus to come get me
      2. Like a kid waiting to get picked up by mom from school – kicking rocks, looking at the clock, messing with our phones, just trying to pass the time until we see that minivan come around the corner
    - iii. Is that really all that Jesus saved us for? “Okay, I’ve brought you back to life, given you a new nature, adopted you into my family, made you my brother, empowered you with my very Spirit. Now just hang out for a bit and I’ll swing by and pick you up when I get a chance.”
      1. Sounds ridiculous but it is easy to fall into that mindset. To lose sight of our purpose.
      2. When you don’t know who you are, you won’t know what you must do.
      3. Salt, light, city on a hill, image bearers, ambassadors, the body of Christ – that doesn’t sound like passive spectators watching the world burn

***Mat 9:35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest (chief harvester) to send out laborers into His harvest.”***

- b. Jesus’s ministry is summed up in verse 35 – identical to Matthew 4:23 – teaching, preaching, and healing
  - i. Teaching – who God is, what He has done, and what He is doing
  - ii. Preaching – what we must do
  - iii. Healing – making people whole again
  - iv. Rooted in a heart of compassion – the heart of the true shepherd, caring for the flock – moving towards the lost, broken, and hurting
    1. All with authority and power that the people of Israel had not heard or seen before
- c. ***Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.***

- i. ***Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest (chief harvester) to send out laborers into His harvest.***
- ii. Article – Preachers Are Servants, Not Celebrities
  1. Author was sharing lessons he learned from Charles Spurgeon
    - a. Seek Godliness over Giftedness - As shepherds of God’s people, we are to give ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word, but it is far easier to spend five hours in preparation for a sermon than it is to consecrate five minutes to prayer for our people. We think the congregation needs our giftedness, but the truth is, what they really need is our godliness.
    - b. Cultivate the Heart of a Shepherd - Following the example of his Good Shepherd, Spurgeon was filled with compassion for sinners and longed to see them safely returned to the fold of God. Spurgeon firmly believed God loved saving the lost. It was a conviction that fueled his ministry.
- iii. Do you ever feel like the time for the gospel message has passed?
  1. That no one really wants to hear it anymore. America has been evangelized, the Word has gone out and those who have accepted it have accepted it and those who have rejected it have rejected it
  2. The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. – The primary problem isn’t that people don’t want to hear it, the primary problem is the lack of laborers

***Mat 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. 2 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; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. 5 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. 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. 9 Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, 10 nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food. 11 “Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. 12 And when you go into a household, greet it. 13 If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 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. 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!***

## II. Which Commission?

- a. When we think of the disciples being sent out, we think of the great commission
  - i. ***Mat 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.***

- ii. *Mark 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*
- iii. *Luke 24:46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things.*
- iv. *John 20:21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."*
- v. *Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*
- b. Before the Great Commission, we have what is before us today, known as the Limited Commission
  - i. Rules of Bible Study – observation, interpretation, and then application – context is key
    - 1. Without doing the work of observation and interpretation we are going to walk out these doors thinking we need to throw away our wallets and avoid sharing the gospel with anyone who is not a Jew
  - ii. This is a distinctly different commission than the Great Commission. That does not mean that there isn't any application to be found
- c. Guardrails – the reason it is called the Limited Commission
  - i. Limited in Audience - Jesus explicitly tells them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans" - It was restricted strictly to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel."
    - 1. You probably noticed the Great Commission from most of the gospel authors included the phrases all nations or the all the world
  - ii. Limited in Preparation – Don't bring money, don't pack a bag, don't bring an extra tunic
  - iii. Limited in Time - The disciples eventually returned to Jesus to report what happened
  - iv. Limited in Scope – Proclaim the "Gospel of the Kingdom," not yet the "Gospel of Grace" – Jesus had not died and rose again
    - 1. In the Old Testament, when a King was coming to a city, he sent messengers ahead to prepare the way (John the Baptist, but now on a larger scale)
    - 2. That is the key difference between this message and the message of the Great Commission
      - a. This was a "herald" mission – announcing the good news that the King is here! And His Kingdom is at hand!
    - 3. Our message is now - "The King has come and conquered sin and death itself. His victory is complete. Come and join Him in that victory."
      - a. The King has come versus the King has won!
  - v. That doesn't mean there isn't practical application in Jesus' second discourse known as the "Missionary Discourse"

### III. Sent to Deliver and Heal

- a. What can we take away? *He gave them power (authority)*
  - i. Instead of focusing on the "what", let's focus on the who

- ii. Jesus is sending the disciples out as representatives of God with a distinctly different message and method than that of the Scribes and Pharisees
- b. Can we all agree that we are creatures of conformity. By nature, we conform to our environments
  - i. We don't want to appear different
    - 1. Asch conformity experiments - demonstrated that individuals often conform to a group's incorrect decision, even when the correct answer is obvious. In these studies, about 75% of participants conformed to the group's wrong answer at least once.
    - 2. People will say what the group says, even when their eyes tell them otherwise.
  - ii. A low tide lowers all ships
    - 1. The "broken windows" theory, introduced in 1982 by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling, posits that visible signs of disorder - like broken windows, graffiti, or litter—create an environment that encourages more serious crime. It suggests that unaddressed minor disorder signals a lack of community care, fostering fear and inviting lawlessness.
  - iii. How are we to live in a wicked world?
    - 1. ***1 Cor 15:33 Bad company ruins good morals. - Rom 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world,***
- c. The Scribes and the Savior
  - i. The Pharisaical Model: "Protection through Separation" – the world is wicked, how do I protect myself?
    - 1. If a "clean" person touches an "unclean" person, the clean person becomes defiled.
    - 2. To stay holy, you must push away. You build walls. You avoid the leper, the tax collector, and the sinner because you are a "creature of your environment" and you're afraid the environment will win.
    - 3. It's a holiness based on fear. Fear that evil is more "contagious" than good.
  - ii. Christ and His Kingdom offer a new way, a better way
    - 1. ***Rom 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind***
    - 2. He doesn't view holiness as fragile; He views it as transformative.
    - 3. When Jesus touches a leper Jesus doesn't become a leper. The leper becomes clean.
      - a. He is not a victim of His environment.
  - iii. This is miraculous, this is true power - C.S. Lewis said the real miracle isn't just that God changes a person; it's that He can change them and then send them back into the same world without them becoming what they used to be.
- d. Jesus grants to His disciples His same power and authority that allows them to move towards the hurt and broken of the world without fear
  - i. ***Romans 1:16 NIV For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.***

***Mat 10:16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18 You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a***

*testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 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; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. 21 “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. 22 And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 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. 24 “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 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!*

#### IV. Preparing the Disciples

- a. Did any of these things happen?
  - i. Some rejection, some local hostility to the message, some disinterest or opposition
  - ii. But what you don’t see recorded during this trip
    1. Trials in synagogues, being dragged before governors and kings, widespread persecution, family betrayal, and death
- b. What is Jesus doing here?
  - i. Something He often does – He is preparing them, teaching them, shaping their faith, growing their trust
  - ii. He’s forming them for what lies ahead after He is gone – the principles of apprenticeship – I do it, you watch – I do it, you help – You do it, I help – You do it, I watch
    1. This is a small sample of what they will experience after the Jewish people reject the King, crucify Him, He rises again, ascends to the Father, sends His Holy Spirit to and end well and empower His church, and sends them out with the full message of the Gospel of Grace
  - iii. He’s preparing them for the life they’re about to live. What begins as a short mission to Israel will become a lifelong mission to the world, and the opposition they taste in part will one day come in full.
- c. To share in the nature of Jesus and His message, is to share in His sufferings as well
  - i. There is a cost, a price to be paid – healthy expectations
    1. This was what Jesus communicated to the expert of the law when he said he would follow Jesus anywhere – “No you won’t”
    2. “If the world is hostile towards Me, the master of the household, how much more will they be hostile to members of my family!”
  - ii. If they accused, me of doing the work of Beelzebub (the prince of demons) you will receive the same treatment
    1. This part of Jesus’s teaching is conveniently left out of many pulpits in America
  - iii. Jesus never promised a life of acceptance in the world – but He did promise power
    1. ***2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.***