

# THE CHURCH PREACHES THE GOSPEL



## + SESSION OUTLINE

1. God's people are to pray for the world with compassion (Matt. 9:35-38).
2. God's people are to go into the world with assurance (Matt. 10:1-14).
3. God's people are to preach to the world with urgency (Matt. 10:15; Rom. 10:14-15).

Background Passages: Matthew 9–10; Romans 10

## + WHAT WILL MY GROUP LEARN?

God has sent His people into the world to tell others about Christ.

## + HOW WILL MY GROUP SEE CHRIST?

Just as Jesus came into the world so that people might come to have saving faith in Him, the church has been sent throughout the world to proclaim salvation that can only be found in Jesus Christ.

## + HOW SHOULD MY GROUP RESPOND?

Because we have come to know Jesus at least in part through the faithful evangelism of others, we embrace the duty and privilege of making Jesus known to the nations.

# GROUP TIME

**Group content** found in the Daily Discipleship Guide is included in the shaded areas throughout the session.



## SCRIPTURE HANDOUT

Scan this QR code for a reproducible handout of this session's Scripture passages.

## INTRODUCTION

**ASK:** As participants arrive, ask: **What comes to mind when you think about evangelism?** (fear because people might have questions that I don't have answers to; shame for not doing it; embarrassment at being too immature in faith to share; awkward; useless because these conversations sometimes don't go anywhere)

**TRANSITION:** Christians know that they should tell others about Jesus, but there's often a gap between what they should do and what they actually do. The book of Acts is filled with people who told others about Jesus. Throughout Acts, the apostles primarily focused on the resurrection to show others that Jesus really is the Savior of the world. This message is good news. This week's session will help us see Jesus's example in evangelism—both His motive, actions, and promise—so that we can more consistently share the greatest news of all.

**SUMMARIZE:** Help your group understand the **setting** for this session.

- In Matthew 9–10, Jesus taught about the kingdom of God and showed the kingdom's power through deeds of love and mercy. Jesus also set up and commissioned His disciples to follow the example He set for sharing the good news of the kingdom. Romans 10 reveals a glimpse of Paul's heart for evangelism. Paul was the foremost example of evangelism and church planting after Jesus's resurrection. His work spread the church through the known world of his day. Paul echoed Jesus's call for Christians to share the gospel to others.



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# POINT 1

## GOD'S PEOPLE ARE TO PRAY FOR THE WORLD WITH COMPASSION (MATT. 9:35-38).

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Matthew 9:35-38** from his or her Bible.

**35** And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. **36** When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. **37** Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; **38** therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

**EXPLAIN:** Call attention to **PACK ITEM 13: THE HARVEST** as you use **verses 35-38** and the main idea below to explain how we are to emulate Jesus (Daily Discipleship Guide [DDG] p. 126):

Knowing Jesus had compassion on people should compel believers to have compassion and share the good news of Jesus.

- Verse 35 describes the practices that Jesus had done throughout His ministry. First, Jesus taught in synagogues about the kingdom, urging people to "repent, because the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). Second, Jesus demonstrated the work of the kingdom through deeds of mercy and compassion. As He healed diseases and sickness, He painted a picture of what life in the eternal kingdom of God would look like.
- The word "compassion" is fairly mundane to most modern readers. But the term here means that Jesus's insides churned; He was torn up about the reality of the suffering and brokenness these people experienced. Jesus did not merely look at the crowd and move on; rather, He allowed their experience to touch Him deeply.
- Jesus used the image of "sheep without a shepherd" to describe the people as "harassed and helpless." Sheep without a shepherd are in a rough spot. They do not know how to find the safe paths on their own. They are in danger of being stolen by thieves or preyed upon by wolves and lions.
- Jesus used a metaphor of a crop overflowing and ready to be harvested, but there were too few people to go out and do the work to bring in the harvest. In other words, God is actively seeking and saving distressed and dejected people. But He chooses to use redeemed people to declare the message of Jesus they so desperately need to hear.
- Jesus instructed His disciples thus to pray that the Lord would send out more harvesters for the work of evangelism. The solution is prayer. This point should amplify what was modeled by the apostles in Acts 4. When confronted with persecution and threats, the church prayed for boldness (Acts 4:23-31).



**ASK:** (DDG p. 126)

From Day 2 in the DDG: **How can you be diligent in praying for God to send more workers into the harvest?** (set a note on my calendar or schedule; ask a friend to remind you; make a note of it in your prayer journal)

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITY:** Take time here to lead your group in prayer for those workers who are already laboring in the harvest. Prepare beforehand to have a list of missionaries your church supports. Pray also that God would raise up more who would go, as well as for your group to be a light in their community, taking opportunities to share the gospel message.

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read the key doctrine (DDG p. 126).

**Key Doctrine #87: Evangelism:** It is the duty and privilege of every Christian and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all thus rests upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle.

**DISCUSS:** (DDG p. 126)

**How can we see evangelism as a privilege?** (knowing that we get to partner with God in His work and mission; knowing that we get a part in rescuing people from death and eternal punishment; knowing God has a purpose for us and can use our gifts and talents in sharing the gospel to others)

**TRANSITION:** Jesus reminded His people that we must pray for God to raise up more who will declare and demonstrate the kingdom's power and presence. Matthew 10 describes how Jesus commissioned His twelve disciples to commit to the work of the harvest.

# POINT 2

## GOD'S PEOPLE ARE TO GO INTO THE WORLD WITH ASSURANCE (MATT. 10:1-14).

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Matthew 10:1-14** from his or her Bible.

**1** And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. **2** 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 Thaddaeus; **4** Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. **5** These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, **6** but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. **7** And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' **8** Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. **9** Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, **10** no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. **11** And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. **12** As you enter the house, greet it. **13** And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. **14** And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town."

**HIGHLIGHT:** Jesus had ushered in the kingdom of God by teaching, healing, and casting out demons. But He knew that He would die on the cross, rise again, and return to the Father. In light of that, highlight the following as seen through **verses 1-4** (DDG p. 126):

Jesus entrusted to His disciples the responsibility to carry on His mission and empowered them to do the work.

- It's tempting to get lost in the details here, like casting out demons and healing the sick. One is tempted to spend time discussing how these realities are seen today. Space does not permit a full consideration of this question, but it's worth noting that the disciples were doing what Jesus had been doing.
- With Jesus's arrival and the birth of the church, the manifestations of God's presence were distinct and clear. Don't get lost in the "what about" questions, but instead focus on the fact that God uses people to do what He's doing in the world. And notice the people that Jesus uses—these are a random assortment of humans with no known connection or status except for the fact that they'd been with Jesus. Even here we see mention of Judas, who would betray Jesus. How astounding that Jesus would give this level of authority to someone like Judas.

### VOICES from THE CHURCH

"Jesus commands us to be his witnesses. It's going to be easier than we think and harder than we imagine. But Jesus does not send us out empty-handed. He gives us the divine means we need to obey his divine command."<sup>1</sup>

—Rebecca Manley Pippert

**ASK:** (DDG p. 126):

**As disciples, what are examples of things we can do to carry out the mission and work of God?** (pray for people and their needs; meet their tangible needs as we share about meeting their spiritual needs; support those who need funds to carry out the message to the world; support churches and organizations that are doing God's work; study and learn the Word more to be ready to preach the gospel when opportunity arises)

**CHALLENGE:** Looking at **verses 5-14**, in groups of 2-4, ask: "Why might Jesus give these instructions?" (so that they would trust in God more; so that they wouldn't trust in themselves; so they could move quicker with a lighter load; so they remembered that their mission was the primary focus; so they might pray more; so they would find the right people that God wanted them to)

**INSTRUCT:** Understanding some of the reasons why Jesus instructed His disciples the way He did, explain from **verses 5-14** (DDG p. 127):

Jesus sent out His disciples with authority, but He wanted them to understand that both the power and the provision for the work came from God.

- Jesus's instructions might have been the worst packing tips ever! Take nothing but the good news and the power to heal the sick and drive out demons. We do not know how long the disciples were gone, but by sending them out, the news of Jesus's identity and His kingdom could spread more broadly than He could spread it alone.
- Christians today live out this mission in places around the world, seeking to plant the seeds of the gospel. We should pray for them and also seek the Lord as to how we should best partner with them in the work.
- All Christians are called to testify to the truth of Jesus where we live, learn, work, and play. So whether we go far or stay local, we all should depend on God to provide for the needs of our mission, whether it be funds, or the right words, or the right opportunities.

**DISCUSS:** (DDG p. 127)

**How can we take steps toward trusting God in equipping us for evangelism?** (praying for help and opportunities; planning alone or with a group an activity to engage with nonbelievers; reading books on evangelism or mission; taking a class to learn more)

**TRANSITION:** It was not just those who knew Jesus and ministered alongside of Him who were sent to share the gospel, but all subsequent followers of Jesus who seek to obey Him by proclaiming the availability of the kingdom through faith and repentance.

# POINT 3

## GOD'S PEOPLE ARE TO PREACH TO THE WORLD WITH URGENCY (MATT. 10:15; ROM. 10:14-15).

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Matthew 10:15** from his or her Bible.

**15** "Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town."

**FOCUS:** Jesus warned His disciples that some villages where they would take the good news would not welcome them. The hostility would not be aimed at them per se, but it would be a spiritual rejection of the truth about Jesus. As you read **verse 15** focus on this point (DDG p. 127):

God rightly judges those who reject Him and the good news of Jesus.

- Matthew 10:15 followed the exhortation in verse 14 that the apostles should shake off the dust from their feet and move on from villages and towns that responded to the gospel message with hostility. The image of shaking off the dust is a visual picture of judgment. The dust of their sin would remain on them, and the apostles would move on to other areas and people.
- Verse 15 provided the rationale for the disciples moving on. God will judge those who reject His gospel and His messengers. The implication of the text is not merely that these people are failing to show hospitality, but that they were rejecting the message of the apostles concerning Jesus.
- The fate of those who reject the message about Jesus today is the same—death, judgment, and hell. Every person who fails to respond in faith and repentance to the message of Jesus will be judged. And their judgment will be worse than that of Sodom and Gomorrah because the rejection is against Jesus Christ, the Son of God in the flesh, God's fullest revelation of Himself.
- Note that it is God who judges and condemns, not us. God judges rightly for He knows the hearts of each person. We do not, so we continue to have compassion and patience as we trust in God's sovereign will in their lives.

**ASK:** (DDG p. 127)

**Why is it right for God to judge those who reject Him?** (because He is Almighty God who is holy and sovereign, deserving to be praised and worshiped; those who reject Him show pride and wickedness in their heart for not believing what is true; only with God can there be true life)

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Romans 10:14-15** from his or her Bible.

**14** How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? **15** And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

### SODOM AND GOMORRAH

The judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah was total and decisive for their excessive wickedness, where not even ten righteous could be found (Gen. 18:20-32; 19:23-25). The people were given time to turn from their wickedness, but they did not, and God judged. His judgment was not arbitrary or excessive, but a measured and just response to their wickedness.

**HIGHLIGHT:** The progression of **verse 14-15** is very common in Paul's writing: sending, preaching, hearing, believing, and saving. Highlight the progression as you explain (DDG p. 127):

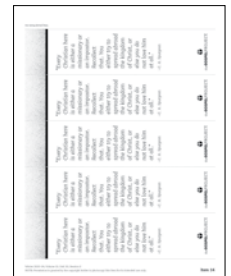
If we have hearts attuned to God's heart, we will want others to know Him, and yet, they can't know Him unless someone tells them of Jesus.

- Paul's intention of the progression in verse 14 was to highlight that each step is essential. People can't be saved unless they believe. And they can't believe unless they hear. And they can't hear unless someone preaches. And they can't preach if they aren't sent.
- We should praise God for those who have been sent. As Paul stated, these individuals have beautiful feet. Those who have lived on mission, bringing the message of Jesus to others are to be commended. The church should actively pray for, support, and encourage those who evangelize.
- Another way to be involved in the work is to make it possible for others to go. Our financial investment in the local church and in support of missionaries can make it possible for them to evangelize near and far. Also, those who are younger and more mobile might consider how to leverage their lives for the sake of the gospel. Maybe they aren't pastors or church planters, but they should consider how to use their vocation and family to be a part of the work of local church ministry in difficult places around the world as meaningful members and gospel witnesses.

**DISCUSS:** (DDG p. 127)

**How can we stress the importance of evangelism to ourselves and others in the church?** (by sharing testimonies of evangelistic or mission work; by giving people stats and stories of how people are coming to Christ locally or abroad to stir hearts; by researching opportunities for ourselves or others to give or go; by studying Scripture to see the importance of evangelism)

**CHALLENGE:** Before you finish this session, make sure to challenge your group to think about the mission they are called to wherever they live. Pass out **PACK ITEM 14: MISSIONARY** bookmarks as a reminder of our desire as believers to be missionaries. We might think about the process of Romans 10 as applying solely to full-time missionaries or pastors, but the paradigm applies to our mission. We can be sent in just the same way when we take the gospel to our neighbors or coworkers. After all, how are they going to hear unless someone tells them, and how will they believe unless we are sent? Time permitting, ask your group to think of ways they can be on mission this week individually or as a group.





# MY RESPONSE

**SAY:** Just as Jesus came into the world so that people might come to have saving faith in Him, the church has been sent throughout the world to proclaim salvation that can only be found in Jesus Christ. Because we have come to know Jesus at least in part through the faithful evangelism of others, we embrace the duty and privilege of making Jesus known to the nations.

## HEAD:

The message about Jesus is good news. If we understand the truth about Jesus—that He is the only way one can be saved and apart from Him people are destined for destruction—then it must shape our actions. Those who have been saved by Jesus should be abundantly grateful for the hope they have to receive life and avoid God’s wrath, and they should long for those they love to experience this great salvation.

**How does your salvation change the way you think about the work of evangelism?**

## HEART:

Like Jesus, we should be moved with compassion for those who have rejected Him. We should look at them with a broken heart that sees them as people who are distressed and dejected—sheep without a shepherd. If we don’t feel this sense of compassion, we should ask God to give us His heart of love for others.

**How do you need to grow in genuine compassion for the lost?**

## HANDS:

Evangelism is fundamentally something we do. It’s not enough to merely acknowledge that Jesus is the only way to be saved, we have to actively do something about that knowledge and talk to others about Jesus. We should pray for others, look for ways to share truth with them, and give a clear witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**How can you grow in the work of evangelism?**

**PRAY:** Father, we believe that You can save any and all who come to You in humble faith. We ask that You empower us to share the good news about Jesus while we have time. We pray for those who have been sent to difficult places around the world where they are living on mission. Help us speak up when opportunities to share the gospel present themselves.

### VOICES from THE CHURCH

“In light of God’s coming judgment, Jesus knew the desperate condition of those to whom He ministered. These were people who were separated from God and who, if nothing changed, would one day stand before God in their sin and be cast into eternal darkness. This is why Jesus had such compassion on them. How much more so should this be true in our day?”<sup>2</sup>

—David Platt

# EXTRA

## **POINT 1: GOD’S PEOPLE ARE TO PRAY FOR THE WORLD WITH COMPASSION (MATT. 9:35-38).**

### **+ ILLUSTRATION**

The image of people as sheep isn’t the most encouraging picture. Sheep are not smart animals. Without the care of a shepherd, they are lost. They will wander aimlessly without someone pointing them in the right direction. They can’t find food to eat on their own. Often they will follow other sheep off a cliff to their death if no one redirects them to safety. People are like this. The big crowd Jesus saw was distressed and dejected because they were aimless just like sheep. They had no one leading them, pointing them in the right direction, helping them avoid harm, and leading them to places where they could flourish.

## **POINT 2: GOD’S PEOPLE ARE TO GO INTO THE WORLD WITH ASSURANCE (MATT. 10:1-14).**

### **+ COMMENTARY**

“His . . . disciples’ suggests that the Twelve have already been chosen (see under 5:1), but to date they have apparently always accompanied Jesus. Now he is sending them out on their own in twos (Mark 6:7). Matthew pairs their names accordingly. This grouping no doubt enabled the disciples to support, protect, and empower each other better than if each went alone, and it perhaps was patterned after the law that required at least two witnesses (Deut. 19:15). By not staying together as a larger group, the disciples also maximized their ability to reach large numbers of people. Timeless principles for discipleship and missions appear here.”<sup>3</sup>

#### **References**

1. Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Stay Salt* (Epsom, United Kingdom: The Good Book Company, 2020), Ch. 1 [eBook].
2. David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, eds. Daniel L. Akin, David Platt, and Tony Merida, *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2013), 133.
3. Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 167.

# SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

## **VOL 1: FROM CREATION TO CHAOS**

(Genesis) Fall 2021

- Unit 1:** The Heavens Declare the Glory of God
- Unit 2:** Let Us Make a Name for Ourselves
- Unit 3:** I Will Make Your Name Great

## **VOL 2: FROM CAPTIVITY TO THE WILDERNESS**

(Exodus–Deuteronomy) Winter 2021-22

- Unit 4:** Out of Egypt I Called My Son
- Unit 5:** To Dwell in the House of the Lord
- Unit 6:** Be Holy, Because I Am Holy

## **VOL 3: FROM CONQUEST TO A KINGDOM**

(Joshua–1 Samuel) Spring 2022

- Unit 7:** Lord, Teach Me Your Statutes
- Unit 8:** Fear the Lord and Worship Him
- Unit 9:** There Is No Fear of God Before Their Eyes

## **VOL 4: FROM UNITY TO DIVISION**

(1 Samuel–1 Kings) Summer 2022

- Unit 10:** Because of Your Hardened Heart
- Unit 11:** Create a Clean Heart for Me
- Unit 12:** If You Walk Before Me with a Heart of Integrity

## **VOL 5: FROM REBELLION TO EXILE**

(1 Kings–The Prophets) Fall 2022

- Unit 13:** Your Passions Wage War Within You
- Unit 14:** Seek the Lord, All You Humble of the Earth
- Unit 15:** He Has Made Every Nationality

## **VOL 6: FROM CAPTIVITY TO RESTORATION**

(The Prophets, Ezra, Nehemiah) Winter 2022-23

- Unit 16:** The Lord Keeps His Eye on Those Who Fear Him
- Unit 17:** Take Refuge in the Lord
- Unit 18:** For Look, the Day Is Coming

## **VOL 7: FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH**

(The Gospels) Spring 2023

- Unit 19:** Here Is the Lamb of God
- Unit 20:** God’s Love Was Revealed Among Us in This Way
- Unit 21:** Without Faith It Is Impossible to Please God

## **VOL 8: FROM WONDER TO REJECTION**

(The Gospels) Summer 2023

- Unit 22:** The Works That I Do in My Father’s Name Testify About Me
- Unit 23:** The Kingdom of God Is in Your Midst
- Unit 24:** God’s Glory in the Face of Jesus Christ

## **VOL 9: FROM DEATH TO RESURRECTION**

(The Gospels) Fall 2023

- Unit 25:** Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Who Kills the Prophets
- Unit 26:** The Hour Has Come
- Unit 27:** The King of the Jews

## **VOL 10: FROM MANY PEOPLE TO ONE PEOPLE**

(The Gospels, Acts) Winter 2023-24

- Unit 28:** I Am with You Always
- Unit 29:** You Will Be My Witnesses
- Unit 30:** Every Day the Lord Added to Their Number

## **VOL 11: FROM ONE NATION TO ALL NATIONS**

(Acts and Epistles) Spring 2024

- Unit 31:** Every Knee Will Bow
- Unit 32:** The Power and the Wisdom of God
- Unit 33:** A Prisoner of Christ Jesus

## **VOL 12: FROM THIS WORLD TO THE WORLD TO COME**

(Acts, Epistles, Revelation) Summer 2024

- Unit 34:** Ambassadors for Christ
- Unit 35:** That I May Gain Christ
- Unit 36:** A New Heaven and a New Earth



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## FROM MANY PEOPLE TO ONE PEOPLE

God so loved the world that He sent His Son into the world to save the world, to die for our sins and rise again, just as He had foretold. And then the resurrected Savior sent His people into the world to share this good news. Yet He did not send them out alone. God the Son promised to be with them, so He sent them God the Spirit, who would give them words, power, and boldness to proclaim His gospel. In this way, the church was born and the church grew, just as it does today. God takes sinners saved by grace through faith and joins them with His one people to serve Jesus together, to love one another, and to share His good news with many more.

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