

Christ's Compassion and Call

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[0:00] We can turn back to our reading in Matthew's Gospel in the end of chapter 9 into chapter 10. Our focus in particular is going to be on chapter 10, verse 1 to 15, but we need to see this in the context of what is said at the end of chapter 9.

These amazing words that we read of Jesus at the end of chapter 9. When we think of how people view God in this world, many people have this idea of God as being cruel, unjust, and so many different ways of looking at him.

But when we think of who God is and how he is in the three persons, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and as we read of Jesus here, we are reminded of the love of God and his concern for his people.

We see that in Jesus and how he views the people here in verse 36. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

[1:19] So that's the context of where we're coming into chapter 10. This great compassion that Jesus has for the crowds that he sees.

They were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. And then you come into chapter 10 and he says there, He called to him his 12 disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal every disease and every affliction.

We have the names of them. And then in verse 5, these 12 Jesus sent out. He sent them out. So we see here Christ's compassion and his calling in his calling of the disciples, but also the call that he gives continually to the church to be those who show compassion to all around us.

They were like sheep without a shepherd. And when he sees them like this, it's not just the case of seeing and doing nothing that Jesus has in mind.

This leads to action. It leads to prayer, as you see at the end of chapter 9. Pray to the Lord of the harvest. Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers.

[2:35] That there is this compassion, there's this concern for those who are harassed. And then as you see in chapter 10, this concern leads to Jesus sending out his disciples into the midst of the crowds.

It's what he desires for his people then. It's what he desires for his people now. When you read in 2 Peter 3, verse 9, it says there that God desires none to perish but all to come to repentance.

And so you ask, well, what's God's desire for people today? What's God's desire for the people of our town, our island, our nation? God's desire is still the same.

That none perish but that all come to repentance. And so this concern, this compassion that we see in Jesus at the end of chapter 9, is it a concern that's finished?

Is it a concern that's come to an end? No. It's more of a challenge to ourselves to say, is that still our concern as a church, as a people of God?

[3:44] That we see the people around us harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd and still have that longing, that desire that they would be brought to know Jesus.

Are we fulfilling our call from the Lord? And what is that call? That's what we want to think about this evening in a wider sense and in a narrower sense as well.

What is our chief calling in life? What is your chief calling in life? It's maybe often something that we struggle with. What does God desire for me?

What does God want me to be doing in this life? What does he have for me? Am I in his will? Am I in his plan? Am I doing as he wants me? It's often something that we can struggle with.

For some people, there's a specific call. You think of ministers, there's a specific call. Missionaries, there's a specific work they're called to. And you can always think of the call of God in that way, that it's all about a specific call and anyone else isn't involved in it.

[4:57] But there's a general call that goes to all of God's people. Our general call, and if you ask that of yourself, what is my call in life? When we look at it in a broad sense, for all God's people, it is to glorify God.

To glorify God. You think of the shorter catechism, the very first questions. Man's chief end. What is our chief end? It is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

So there is a wider sense of our calling. Our calling is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. But then you think, well, how does that work out?

How does it look in my life? How does that play out in what I am doing for him? Well, it's to seek the Lord's will. It's to seek his guidance and what's your purpose in my life?

And it's to give glory to him in whatever we are doing. That is his call to the people of God far and wide. It's not all about being ministers or missionaries.

[6:07] There's a wider sense of calling to everyone. To give glory to God. And that's what we think of when we think here, well, what is God asking of the church?

What is he asking of the church today? To still see a people around us harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. And to have compassion on them.

To have a desire for them to come to know the Lord. And so their calling is to follow him or to seek him if we are not already following him.

Because apart from being in his will, we will never be at ease. If we are outside his will, we are never going to be at ease. If we are kicking against him, if we are pushing away from him, we're never going to have peace.

But it's to find what his will is for us and to live in light of what he wants of us. So it's to give glory to God in all that we are doing.

[7:11] And when we think of ourselves as a congregation here, when we think of the preaching of the word, when we think of the mission of the church, we want to be encouraged in that sense of this is our foundation.

The gospel. The good news of Jesus. And also the fact that we see a need around us. That we have that eye of Jesus as we look around the people here.

That we see the harassed, the helpless, the ones who are struggling, the ones who are lost. And that we have that sense of compassion. That we have that sense of concern.

And when we have that as our foundation, then we see, well, what are we going to do about it? What does God want us to do about it? And so this passage has much to teach us.

It's not just this. There's a general, specific call here for the disciples. But we can look at it in a broader sense as well, as to what God is asking of us. And the first thing we see here as we go into chapter 10, with that foundation of the compassion, seeing the crowds in mind, the first thing we see is that he called them.

[8:27] He called them. That's what it says in verse 1. And he called to him his 12 disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal every disease and every affliction.

And then he lists the names of the 12 there. He calls them. And when you notice here, he had just said to his disciples in verse 37, He said to his disciples, The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. You wonder, did they even have a chance to pray that prayer when he called them to himself and he's about to send them out into the labor, into the harvest field.

They were about to become God's disciples in that sense of going out. They had been with Jesus. They had been with him seeing his ministry going on.

But now he's giving them authority. He's giving them power. But in order to know this, they had first of all to be followers. They weren't leaders immediately.

[9:45] They had to be followers. They had to learn. They had to be willing to give themselves. To give themselves into the hands of God.

Saying, here am I, send me, basically. That they might be used to the glory of God. So it's important for us all to think first. When God is calling us, when he's asking us, are we followers of him?

Not are we leaders, but are we followers? Are we followers first and foremost? There's a story told of a young woman who wanted to go to college.

And she had to fill in an application form. And as she looked at the application form, her heart sank when she saw one of the questions on it. And she said, in the application form, one of the questions was, are you a leader?

And she looked at this question for a while. And she thought, well, I've got to be honest. She was honest. She was conscientious.

[10 : 49] And she thought, I've got to be honest in this. And she wrote her answer, are you a leader? No. No. And she sent her application form. She filled out the rest. She sent it away and didn't expect to get accepted.

But then a letter arrived from the college. And this was what it said. Dear applicant, a study of the application forms reveals that this year our college will have 1,452 leaders.

We are accepting you because we feel it's imperative that they have at least one follower. So many people will just put them forward and say, I'm a leader, when they're not ready to lead.

When, first of all, it's important to follow and to learn. And when you look at Scripture, you see that example. You see it again and again going through the Old Testament, going into the New Testament.

You look at those who we would think of as great leaders. You think of Abraham. He's described as the father of the faith. You think to yourself, well, there was someone who was a leader for God.

[11 : 56] But was he a leader first and foremost? No, because God put him to the test. God put him through so much to recognize that he could do nothing apart from him.

That first and foremost, he had to be a follower. Follower of God then to become a leader. You think of Moses. You think of Moses. Impetuous in many ways.

Was he a born leader? You would say maybe yes. But did God not have to put him through many challenges first? Before he led the children of Israel out of Egypt into the promised, or to the border of the promised land.

He had to learn to follow God. To obey God. You think of David. A young shepherd boy. Used by God.

Again, to lead many people in many different situations. But what did he have to learn? He had to learn to trust. To follow the Lord first. You think of him going up against Goliath.

[12 : 58] Did he go up in his own strength or with the armor of others? No. It wouldn't have worked. Instead, he went trusting God. Following God. And so in all of these situations, what you see is that God saw the needs of his people.

Whether it's with Abraham, Moses, or David, or others. Used by God in scripture. He called his people. He made them followers of him.

And then he sent them. And so we see here an example for us. First and foremost, to be followers of God. And when you look at the names of the twelve, here's interesting how he names them all there in verse 2.

The names of the twelve apostles are these. And he goes through the list. You look at them. And you look at these names. And you think, well, they were great leaders.

But when you look at their backgrounds. When you look at where they came from. Ordinary people. From ordinary backgrounds. Who were followers of Jesus.

[14 : 07] Before they ever became leaders. And strong people who the church was built through. But God can use weak instruments for his glory.

When you look at these names. And what they were called to. As you see. Going through the New Testament. How many of us would say. That is a call I want to answer.

That's what I want with God. Well, it may not be so specific. As to be a disciple. In this sense. But we should all be saying.

Here am I. Lord, I am yours. I want to follow you first and foremost. And then I want you to show me. What you have for me to do.

We so often look at ourselves. And think. We've got nothing to offer. And yet God. Gives each and every one of us. Gifts to use. For his glory.

[15 : 08] That's what these twelve. Were to be used by God for. To spread the gospel. To reach the lost. To help the poor. All of these things.

And that is what the church is all about. God using people to his glory. As we make ourselves available. We have to draw near to the Lord.

To follow him first. So we can see. Well God. How can I be used? Christ. And it's great. It's so encouraging to see. When there's different things going on in the church.

How many people are involved in it all. We think of the breakfast last weekend. We think of the cruise ship days. When the church is open.

We think of the holiday club. This coming week. We can often look at those who are maybe seen. Maybe out front as it were. But every one of us is involved.

[16:08] Every one of you is involved in it. Because everyone's got a part to play. Not just those who are in the hall. Or in the church. Working away there.

It's so many of the little things. The preparation that's been made for the holiday club is incredible. How many different people have been involved. And everyone who is able to pray for it as well. So it's not the work of a few. It's the work of us all. We are all involved in this. You think I've got no part to play in the ministry here.

In the preaching of the gospel. You do. Because every one of you has to pray. For the preaching of the gospel. That it might be blessed. And to be aware of those prayers.

Is such a blessing to me. And all who come to preach here. And so the work is not just what's seen to the front. It's what everyone is involved in.

[17:07] When you follow Jesus. You are part of the kingdom work that he has. We are all called in that sense. Matthew Henry once put it like this.

The best preparation for the work of the ministry. Is acquaintance and communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. The work of the ministry. Is far reaching.

But it all comes with an acquaintance and communion. With the Lord Jesus Christ. To be close to God. That is what we see with the twelve who were called.

They were close. They were followers. They were being used by God for his glory. And that is what we should seek for ourselves as well.

That close acquaintance. That communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. To grow in that relationship. And therefore from there to be used by God to his glory.

[18:06] In all the parts. In all the aspects. Of our congregation here. When you think of the twelve here. Who are named. Later on.

In the gospel. It was in John's gospel. The disciples of Jesus. Are described in this way. That they had been with Jesus. It was clear.

They had been with Jesus. What a compliment. That is for them. And how they go on. And how we say they went.

They went from followers. To being those who the church. Would later be built upon. Three years later. Following the death and resurrection of Jesus. What do you find in the book of Acts.

Chapter one. You find a list of names. There as well. The very same names. That you have here in chapter 10. In verse 12 of Acts chapter one.

[19:02] They returned to Jerusalem. From the mount. Called Olivet. Which is near Jerusalem. A Sabbath stay journey away. When they had entered. They went up to the upper room. Where they were staying.

Peter and John. And James. And Andrew. Philip and Thomas. Bartholomew. And Matthew. James the son of Alphaeus. And Simon the cellar. And Judas the son of James. All these were of one accord.

Devoting themselves to prayer. Together with the woman. And Mary the mother of Jesus. And his brothers. And so there we see.

They were called. And in many ways you can see. They continued to follow Jesus. But also to become leaders. Those who God would use. For his glory.

In building. In building. The church. Someone described. A hunger. For the Lord. In this way. Are you a beaver. For the Bible.

[20:01] Beavering away. Is a phrase. That we always hear. And if you look at beavers. The animal. They're used. To doing. So much. Bringing down.

Threes. Building dams. Making channels. They're beavering away. All the time. Very often. It's seen in. Just. Little. Ways. But when you see.

The finished work. It's incredible. How they can build a dam. It's amazing to see. You would never think. When you see them start. That it would be possible. And that's the same. With ourselves. The things that we see. It's not possible. There's no point. By beavering away. For the Lord. So much. Becomes possible.

As we do all. For his. Glory. So he called them. We are all called. To be used. For him. And to his. Glory. The second thing.

[20 : 56] We see here. Is that. He sent them. He sent them. He called. The twelve. To them. And then in verse five. It says. Then. These twelve. Jesus sent out.

Instructing them. And he gave them. Specific. Instructions. So he sends them out. And again.

This is what continues. To go on. It's not just a case of. This was a one off. He had a particular. Ministry. For them. To fulfill. And we were given. Great instructions.

As to what it was. In verse six. But go rather. To the lost sheep. Of the house. Of Israel. So they were to go. To the Jews. And not to the Gentiles.

It's very specific. There for us. There was. These two groups. Of people. As you look through. The New Testament. The Jews. And the Gentiles. And the Jews.

[21 : 50] Were often seen. As the people. Who were closest to God. The people. Who belonged. To God. And he had a particular. Ministry for them. Here. To go. To the Jews.

To bring. The good news. Of the kingdom. To them. And so their work. Was bearing witness. To the Jews. And it was for a short.

Time. Here. This mission. Was for a short time. But from there. The gospel. Goes out. The gospel. Spreads. And.

He speaks here. Into a very specific. Situation. But in a wider sense. It speaks. To our situation. As well. We are always.

As we are instructed. In the scriptures. To remember the Jews. God's chosen. People. We see. In. Maybe especially. In the book of Romans.

[22 : 45] How precious. They are to him. And how we are to pray. For them. And we are also shown. From there too. That. The gospel. Goes out. Beyond that.

As well. It goes. To the Gentiles. He says. There I am. Sending to the lost sheep. Of the house. Of Israel. But we see too.

That. In. In. The end of chapter 9. When he saw the crowds. He had compassion. Because they were like sheep. Without a shepherd. So there was a great crowd.

A great host. Of sheep. And. He speaks elsewhere. I have other sheep. Not of this house. And we see that. The sheep are everywhere. The lost sheep.

The scattered sheep. Are all around us. The harassed. The helpless. They are all. Around us. And so. They are to go.

[23 : 41] They are sent. But what are they sent with? Well. They are sent with. The good news. In verse. 7 and 8.

And proclaim. As you go. Saying. The kingdom of heaven. Is at hand. Heal the sick. Raise the dead. Cleanse lepers. Cast out demons.

And so. It goes on there. And you think to yourself. Well. These are things. We cannot do. And we. Many of these things. We can't. Jesus gave special authority. To these disciples.

At this point. And they are often things. That we would love. To do. But. The first part. We can do. Say. The kingdom of heaven.

Is at hand. The kingdom of heaven. Is at hand. The message of the kingdom of heaven. Is applicable. In every day. In every generation.

[24 : 36] Because that is what the gospel. Is about. The kingdom of God. Is at hand. God is near. And our time. Is short.

And we have people. All around us. Who need to hear. This good news. The good news. Of the kingdom. Of God. We are sent.

To the people. Who are around us. We are sent. To our communities. We are sent. To the families. That we have around us. To the homes. That we see around us. Not just to the people.

That we know. Not just to the people. We are comfortable with. But to all. Who are helpless. And harassed. Like sheep. Without a shepherd. We come back to.

Well what is. God's desire. For people. It's that all be saved. Not just a few. But that all be saved. And come. To repentance.

[25:33] So it's not for us. To look and say. They don't deserve it. They're not interested. They don't want it. We are to take. The gospel. The good news. To them.

And then we can see. As we go down there. He says. If they receive it. That's great. If they turn away. He says. Then shake the dust. Off your feet. But we have given.

The gospel. That no one could say. When it comes to the day of judgment. I never heard. I never knew. Nobody told me. We preach.

We proclaim. The gospel. We show. The love of Christ. To all around us. We show that compassion. To the helpless. To the harassed. And God will do.

What he wants with that. But he is saying. We are to be faithful. They were sent out. To villages. To towns. To people. Here.

[26:32] There. And everywhere. They were sent. To proclaim. The kingdom of God. Is at hand. And that is what we. Are to be about as well. To bring the gospel.

To all. Who we see around us. We have that purpose. We have that call. To be a people. Who show the love of Christ.

To all. Around us. So we are sent. As well. The third and final thing. We see here is. He equipped them.

He equipped them. In verse nine. Acquire no gold. Nor silver. Nor copper. For your belts. No bag. For your journey. No two tunics. Nor sandals.

Nor staff. The laborer. Deserves his food. And so he is saying there. He will provide. He will provide. They weren't to take.

[27:30] He would provide. You may have heard. The phrase. Put in some way. God doesn't call. The equipped. He equips. The called. Or whom he calls.

He equips. Both of these. Are kind of. The phrases. That you hear. First time I heard that. I thought. What version of the bible. Is this from? Where do you read that?

And as I went. Searching forward. I couldn't find it. God doesn't call. The equipped. He equips. The called. Or. Those whom he calls. He equips. I thought. I couldn't find it.

And yet. It made sense. Made sense. He still does to me. Because God does. Equip. All who he calls. And yet.

You can find it. In scripture. In a general sense. In Hebrews 13. Verse 20. And 21. Because there. You see the principle of it.

[28:26] It's the benediction. At the end. Of the book of Hebrews. Now may the God of peace. Who brought. Again from the dead. Our Lord Jesus. The great shepherd.

Of the sheep. By the blood. Of the eternal covenant. Equip. You. With everything good. That you may do. His will. Working. In us.

That which is pleasing. In his sight. Through Jesus Christ. To whom be glory. Forever. And ever. Amen. So we are reminded there.

Of the power of God. And the peace of God. The peace. And the power. That brought. From the dead. Our Lord Jesus. And he describes.

The great shepherd. Of the sheep. And how he equips you. With everything good. That you may do. His will. So there is. That sense of God.

[29:22] Will equip. Those. Whom he calls. And what you notice. In this verse. Nine and ten. Is that. The Lord will care.

For those. Whom he calls. He will provide. For them. Do not acquire. All of these things. He says. Instead. Trust. The Lord.

Trust. The Lord. And when we think of it. Ourselves. Here. That is what we are to do. As well. To trust. The Lord.

That he will provide. And we see amazing provisions. Again and again. Made for the work. Of the gospel. Here. Whatever the work. That's going on. Whatever we are doing.

We always get encouragement. That God provides. Through people. Through encouragements. Through means. God equips.

[30:18] God. When we think of. The many things going on. Over the summer. The busyness of it. It's been amazing to see. How God. Through the generosity of his people.

Has provided. Because there's a sense of. We all long. For the kingdom of God. To be known. For the power of God. To be in our midst.

To fulfill. Our ministry here. We all. Have a part. To play. And the greatest. Encouragement is. That as we go.

He is with us. We have here. A commissioning. If you like. Of the disciples. But at the end of Matthew. You have the great commission. Matthew 28.

Go therefore. And make disciples. Of all nations. All nations. Baptizing them. In the name of the Father. And the Son. And the Holy Spirit. Teaching them.

[31 : 14] To observe. All that I have commanded you. And behold. I am with you always. To the end. Of the age. He equips.

He is with. And that's the great blessing. Then whatever we do. As we see the disciples here. The Lord was with them. We see it for ourselves.

As well. So as we go. To the sheep around us. Those who are helpless. And harassed. Those who are like sheep. Without a shepherd.

As we fulfill our commission. He will provide. So we see. The lost sheep. We have a feeling of being inadequate.

Ill-equipped in many ways. To fulfill. God's purpose for us. God's purpose for us. And yet. We have everything that we need. With him.

[32 : 12] So let us go. In faith. And continue to do in faith. In everything that we are doing. Our chief end is to glorify God.

And to enjoy him forever. There are specific calls on people. But there is a general call to us all as well. To see God's kingdom.

Come in our midst. To see a people saved. To see a people going on. In the strength of the Lord. Two quotes just to finish.

Maud Royden said this. When you have nothing left but God. Then you become aware. That God is enough. When you have nothing left but God.

Then you become aware. That God is enough. We have to come to that point. Where we see.

When we have God. We have enough. And then C.S. Lewis.

[33 : 14] Who said this. He who has God and many other things. Has no more than he. Who has God alone. We need God. In all things.

But that's the amazing promise. That we are to be followers. First and foremost. We are called. And then when we are sent. When we do his work.

We see the promise. That he is with us. And that he is more. Than enough. Let us pray. Lord our gracious God.

We thank you for the ministry. That you give to us. Each and every one of us. We thank you for the call. You put on our lives. To follow. To follow Jesus. As our Lord.

And as our Savior. And as we follow him. To seek his will for us. In all that we do. Whether it's a specific. ministry for us. Or whether it's just a general.

[34 : 14] Ministry that we are involved in. All is to be done. With the glory of God in mind. And we thank you. That you encourage us. In our involvement. That you bless us Lord.

As we go about. The work of your kingdom. And we pray. That you will continue. To be with us.

That we would see. That with God. With us. We have all that we need.

So may you remain faithful to us. As we seek to remain faithful to you. Bless us. Keep us. Go before us. Pardoning all our sin. In Jesus name.

Amen. We're going to conclude. By singing to God's praise. In Psalm 126. The Sing Psalms version.

Page 171. Psalm 126. The tune is Denfield. We'll sing the whole of this psalm.

[35 : 13] When Sion's fortunes. God restored. It was a dream come through. Our mouths were then. With laughter filled. Our tongues. With songs anew. Verse 6.

The man who bearing seed to sow. Goes out with tears of grief. Will come again. With songs of joy. Bearing the harvest sheaf. We have that hope. In God.

That he will bring. His harvest in. We'll sing Psalm 126. The whole of this psalm. To God's praise.

When Zion's fortune coming short, it was a dream come true.

Our mouths were there, and we'd love their fill. Our chance, their songs are here.

The nations said, the Lord has done great things for Israel.

[36 : 21] The Lord did mighty things for us, and joined our hearts to well.

Free stone and fortune's gracious Lord, like things in this earth's joy.

A joyful harvest will reward the leading sowers' joy.
The mountaineering, sing to soul, rose out with tears of fear.
Welcome again, blessed songs of joy, in His highest year.
[37 : 26] Amen. After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my left. We'll close with the benediction.
Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, rest upon and abide
with you all now and forevermore.
Amen. Amen. Amen.