

Scripture Study

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle A



Exodus 19:2-6a

(Ps 100:1-2, 3, 5)

Romans 5:6-11

Matthew 9:36—10:8

Opening prayer

Overview of the Gospel:

- In this Sunday's gospel we continue to see Jesus in the first year of his public ministry. Up to this point it has been largely an individual ministry of healing and teaching (v 35).
- In the discourse we hear today, Jesus admits others to share both his mission and his powers, and commissions them to proclaim on a scale wider than he could reach personally. He directs them to go out to the "lost sheep of Israel."
- In the Old Testament, shepherd imagery is often used for Israel's leaders, for example, Joshua (Numbers 27:17), leader after Moses, and David (2 Samuel 5:2-3), their most famous king.
- God promised to set "one shepherd" over his people (Ezekiel 34:23-24; Jeremiah 23:1-6). Jesus draws on these images to illustrate his own role as shepherd and king (Matthew 25:31-34; John 10:16; 1 Peter 2:25).

Questions:

- What is it about the crowds that were coming to Jesus that "moved his heart to pity"? To what are the crowds compared?
- In verse 37, what is the harvest? Who are the laborers? What need is Jesus perceiving that needs to be filled? What does he say is the first and most important way this should be addressed?
- How does Jesus' action in verse 10:1 address the problem that he raised in 9:37? How does the ministry that he assigns to the disciples (10:1, 7-8) mirror aspects of his own (see 9:32-33, 35)? Why do you think he instructs them not to enter any pagan or Samaritan towns at this point?
- What is my attitude toward those in the world who do not know Jesus and are "like sheep without a shepherd"? Pity? Sympathy, but inaction? Indifference? How can I make Jesus' concern for them my own?
- *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that all of the Christian faithful—not just priests and religious—have an active apostolic role to in the work and ministry of the Church (CCC §§ 863-865). What role or roles in the apostolate am I currently filling? If I am not filling a role, how can I pray and discern that God show me what that might be?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 2611, 543, 1509, 2121, 2443

Closing Prayer

Remember to read and meditate this week on the daily Mass readings!

"If we were consistent with our faith when we looked around us and contemplated the world and its history, we would be unable to avoid feeling in our own hearts the same sentiments that filled the heart of our Lord"

St Josemaria Escriva

Jesus Gives His Disciples Authority to Heal and Set Free

GOSPEL READING: **Matthew 9:36-38, 10:1-8**

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; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." 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 infirmity. 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 Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out, charging them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And preach as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying, give without pay.

Meditation: Do you believe in the life-changing power of the Gospel and experience its transforming effect in your life? The core of the Gospel message is quite simple: the kingdom (or reign) of God is very near! What is the kingdom of God? It is that society of men and women who know God's love and mercy, and who willingly obey and honor



God as their Lord and King. In the prayer which Jesus gave to his disciples (the Lord's Prayer or Our Father), he taught them to pray for God to reign in their daily lives and in the world around them: May your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

When Jesus proclaimed the good news of God's kingdom he also demonstrated the power of the Gospel with supernatural signs and wonders. Jesus healed people who suffered physical, emotional, and mental illnesses. He freed people from spiritual bondage to sin and demonic powers. Jesus gave his disciples the same authority he had to heal and set people free from spiritual bondage.

The Gospel (which literally means "good news") which Jesus proclaimed is just as relevant and real today, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. If we believe in the Lord Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, and in the power of the Gospel, we will know and experience the freedom, joy, and power he gives us that enables us to live and witness as his disciples. No one can buy heaven; but if we know the love and mercy of Jesus Christ, then we already possess heaven in our hearts! Do you believe that Jesus can change and transform your

life and share with you the power and authority of God's kingdom?

Jesus chose ordinary people to do extraordinary work. Jesus commissioned his disciples to carry on the works which he did - to speak God's word and to bring his healing power to the weary and oppressed. In the choice of the twelve apostles, we see a characteristic feature of God's work - Jesus chose very ordinary people. They were non-professionals, had no wealth or privileged position. They were chosen from the common people who did ordinary things, had no special education, and no social advantages.

Jesus wanted ordinary people who could take an assignment and do it extraordinarily well. He chose these men, not for what they were, but for what they would be capable of becoming under his direction and power. When the Lord calls us to serve, we must not think we have nothing or very little to offer. The Lord takes what ordinary people, like us, can offer and uses it for greatness in his kingdom. Do you believe that God wants to work in and through you for his glory?

Lord Jesus, you have chosen me to be your disciple. Take and use what I can offer, however meager it may seem, for the greater glory of your name.

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