

Rector's Message, Sunday, June 14, 2026

We Are Called, Harvest Is Still Now!
Matthew 9:35-10:8, (9-23)

Friends, from our Gospel reading last Sunday we have seen how Jesus called Matthew the tax collector to be one of His disciples. As we have been informed, tax collectors at that time are regarded as "sinners and unclean" whose lives are not worthy of any emulation because they are reputed to engage in acts of corrupt practices. In the same passage last week we see how Jesus also ate with "tax collectors and sinners", touched the untouchable with healing and with a miracle of bringing back the dead to life.

Now Jesus looks at His same audience, the same crowds who unfairly judge Him for eating with the "tax collectors and sinners" (the "unclean" people so to speak); He "went about all their cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness, and still "had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9:35-36). And moved with compassion to save this "helpless" generation of self-righteous humans, Jesus looks at the same crowds to call out His 12 disciples whom one might literally think are not also worthy of His task. He sends them out with zero clout, money, or any backup plans. This is Jesus' first 'missions manual' for the church. ***No resume required - salvation of soul is enough!*** These 12 guys were not scholars or society influencers. He chose them from among those who are willing and available, not just able. For the 21st Century church today God still uses the "Matthew" from Matthew 9:9, and like these amazing, willing 12 disciples, not just seminary grads.

For us as believers in 2026, this passage is basically God's basic Christian principles for us without relying on our own abilities. Jesus sees before He sends: He didn't recruit from the boardroom, nor does He recruit from expertise or knowledge. He walked the streets, looked people in the eye, and felt compassion for them. Jesus saw those who are vulnerable, "harassed" and made "helpless" and exhausted by the system they found themselves in. He calls 12 ordinary people: with diversity in His callings from fishermen to tax collectors, political zealot in the same group; Jesus unites mission over ideology (a huge word and great example for the global polarizations about how we see ourselves today). Those He believes would see the need to help others to achieve the same goal. Those He believes would be the voice of the voiceless, those He believes would "proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom." Those He believes would "teach, baptize and nurture new believers." Those He believes would "respond to human need by loving service." Those He believes would "seek to transform unjust structures of society (those He believes would respect the dignity of every human being), to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation." Those He believes would "strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth" (See our Five Marks of Mission - <https://www.anglican.ca/resources/marks-of-mission/>). And those He believes could help to support the ones that have been burnt out, those suffering from anxiety, grief/bereavements, those feeling lonely without care, those who need help. We should not see the crowds and people on our streets today as evil, they are just tired of the system that doesn't care more for them.

And before sending these 12 folks out, Jesus says, "Pray for the workers", those He would use to accomplish His mission in the world. ***God grows the church, we don't!*** And as such, He calls us and He equips us with the grace we need to accomplish His mission in the world (Ephesians 2:10). It's time to stop asking, 'How do we get people to church?' Instead we should be asking, 'Who around us needs help, weary, lonely, or is there anyone we see around us as "helpless?'" Just as to the 12 disciples that were sent out, Jesus is also sending us out with 4 things to take home this week:

1. *"Go to the lost sheep..."* Matthew 10 v.6 - Start something local, it could be small or big it doesn't matter. Your block, neighbour, street, community...and be a Christian example to be emulated.
2. *"Proclaim: The kingdom of heaven is near"* Matthew 10 v.7 - The message is Jesus, not moralism about how 'good and upright' you're.
3. *"Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons"* Matthew 10 v.8 - Don't undermine the power of God and the authority He has given you to do "greater things" (John 14:12).
4. *"Freely you receive, freely give"* Matthew 10 v.8b - Be Christlike as you share the good news of the kingdom ***without counting yourself-worthy*** of receiving 'a dollar-for-a-dollar', saying "nothing goes free!" You're Christ Ambassador.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

With every blessing,

The Reverend Wilson Akinwale
Rector