

**6/14/26**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**  
**For Group Meetings from June 7<sup>th</sup> – June 13<sup>th</sup>**

**OUR MISSION:** As a missional congregation we *celebrate* Christ's presence, *invite* people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and *equip* them to *serve* in a broken world.

**Prayer of the Day:** God of compassion, you have opened the way for us and brought us to yourself. Pour your love into our hearts, that, overflowing with joy, we may freely share the blessings of your realm and faithfully proclaim the good news of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER:**

**Share:** How did last week's scripture (Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26) work in your life this week?

**Mission:**

- What was most satisfying about your ministry last week?
- Where do you see God at work?
- How did you participate in God's missional activity?
- How did inviting go last Sunday?

**Hear:** Matthew 9:35-10:8

**Explore Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

1. What three activities does Jesus engage in as he travels through the towns and villages
2. What does Jesus instruct his disciples to pray for?
3. What authority does Jesus give to the disciples?

**Connect Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

1. Have you ever felt "harassed and helpless" like the crowds Jesus describes? What helped you through that season?
2. When have been surprised by how God used you to encourage or help someone?
3. Can you think of a time when an interruption became a blessing?

**Memorize this verse:** "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36) When or where have you experienced compassion recently?

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:**

**Obey:** During this week follow through on your intentions.

**Meditate:** Meditate on Psalm 100. How does this speak into your life?

**Reflect:** What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

**Notes for ChristCare leaders:**

What stood out to me when reading this passage this week was this single line that serves in some ways not only as an introduction to Matthew’s characterization of the ministry of Jesus and his disciples, but might also shape our sense of our mission and ministry today: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (9:36). What I love about this line is both the brief description of the folks gathering around Jesus “harassed and helpless” and the equally succinct description of the motivation behind all that is going to take place across the rest of the pages of Matthew’s story of Jesus’ ministry: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them.”

The power of this description of the crowds rests in its truthfulness, and not just about the people then but also about us. How many of us, if we’re given the safe space to admit it, also feel “harassed and helpless”? The young parent at her or his wit’s end, feeling ill-equipped for this role, guilty about responding in impatience or anger to a child? Those of us unexpectedly in mid-life transition (or crisis) relating to a lost job? Those coping with the death of a spouse, sibling, or friend? Those whose relationships with their parents or children are simply not what they’d imagined? Those who feel they are seen, and dismissed, because of their age, gender, or ethnicity? The young people recently graduated from high school or college and see no clear future before them? The retirees who wonder if they are valued? If we take the time to allow ourselves to be honest, many of us have and do feel “harassed and helpless” but can scarce admit it to ourselves, let alone to others. Sharing this truth opens the door to hearing the second truth of this passage: that Jesus sees us and has compassion. The power of this description of Jesus also rests in its truthfulness. Jesus did not come primarily to teach or inspire, let along to judge, but rather out of the abundant compassion of God for the world and in order to demonstrate that loving compassion through word and deed.

And the thing is, these two truths go together. The first – the truth about our situation and need – opens us to hearing and being transformed by the second – the truth about God’s loving response. Without the honesty of the first, the second would be, at best, pleasantly irrelevant (“Thanks but no thanks for your compassion, Jesus, but I’m doing just fine.”) and, at worse, offensive (“Who says I need your compassion, anyway? – I’ve got it all together, thank you very much!”). The pressure exerted by our culture in various ways both explicit and implicit to have it all together, to be perfect, to have the ideal life and job and family is quietly crushing the spirit of many of us. And this is particularly true of that generation that has grown up having to display their (supposedly perfect) lives on social media. While the constant drive to take “selfies” and publish life updates and broadcast our thoughts via social media may, as many suggest, be a symptom of our increasingly narcissistic culture, it may also be a sign of profound and increasing insecurity, the futile effort of folks to deny that they are, indeed, harassed and helpless. So perhaps our opportunity this week is to hear these two truths. First, that we don’t actually have it all together or lead the perfect lives and probably are sick and tired of pretending we do, so that we can hear, second, that Jesus didn’t come for perfect people, that the church has never been made up of perfect people, that it’s okay – indeed, incredibly helpful! – to admit that we all feel at times harassed and helpless. And that’s exactly why God came in Jesus in the first place: to tell us that God loves not the people we’re trying to be or have promised to be or want to be, but the ones we are.

**Thanks be to God,**

Pastor Thadd (tbook@desertcross.org)

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*Traditional version:*

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us  
from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,  
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen

*Contemporary version:*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those  
Who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial  
And deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the  
power, and the glory are yours,  
Now and forever. Amen