

Jesus is the Source of... Mission Matthew 9:35-38

For 10 months now we have been studying the beginnings of Jesus' ministry. It's almost hard to believe isn't it? So far we have heard him preach a powerful sermon, heal many people in need, and called people to follow after him. What we have seen time and time again is what Jesus has done and what he has said, but now we get a glimpse into why Jesus does what he does. The reason behind his ministry. Now, we know why Jesus came, to die for the sins of man and raise in new life that we may as well, but what about his personal ministry? Matthew paints a reflective picture of Jesus. After time spent preaching, teaching, serving, and healing the people, it almost seems as if he is putting to words for the first time how he feels.

Wherever Jesus went, crowds gathered. People came from all walks of life with all sorts of needs. They were oppressed and afflicted by life. These are the people Jesus saw everyday. He saw their lives, their needs, and he had what they were looking for... hope. Specifically, hope that life was more than it appeared to be in the present. Hope. That's a complex word isn't it? We use this word "hope" and see it in a variety of forms and fashions from well wishes for an ailing loved one to political promises. Our world describes hope as "desire with expectation of fulfillment." Now, in Jesus' day, he noticed that people were looking for hope. They were looking to man to meet their needs, to bring them into the favor of God, but because their leaders' lives fell short, the people under their care suffered as well. This still sounds as the familiar story, doesn't it? Preachers, teachers, friends, mothers, fathers, community and natural leaders promise to help lead us to the best in life, but we are often hurt from time to time when we find out their lives don't always match up to the ways and will of God. Many times, most times, they are well meaning, but their leadership runs out over our lives, when we find they can't hold up to all the promises that they made, it leaves us devastated, doesn't it?

It's no different now that it was then. We are still harassed and left helpless by life just as the people in Jesus' day. But there's good news, just as he looked on the crowd that day with compassion, he does the same still today. That was the heart, the driving factor, of Jesus' earthly ministry, the request that he could never deny, mercy from the harmful and damaging ways of the world. Though the world and its ways may lead us into further hopelessness, God gives hope through Jesus that will never run out. It's a hope that was made possible through the power of the cross. The Apostle Peter reminds

us of this in 1 Peter 1:3-6. This is the hope Jesus came to bring to this world. He came to bring the message of the good news of the Kingdom of God, this message of hope that God desires to love us here and all the way to heaven. That God is a God who cares about our needs and hears our earnest prayers. That the troubles we have now will not be those we will have forever. And then, when our race on earth is run, when our time has come to an end, that God has something wonderful in store for us that even the one who has seen it could not even explain other than "it's great!!!" This is the God I hope in. These are the promises I cling to. Do you?

Do you really believe in him? Do you find your hope in him? Do you find that he is the source of forgiveness and redemption in your life? Do you believe he is the source of true calling in your life? Do you believe that he is the only source of fulfillment in your life? Do you believe he is the source of abundant life, a life meant to be enjoyed? Do you believe Jesus can be the source of peace in your life? If so, he has a purpose for you, a mission for your life.

Right before we began our study through Matthew, we studied the ideas of Rick Warren's book *Living a Purpose Driven Life*. In that study we found that God has a purpose for us, for you. It's to love him and live your life for him. Living your life for God results in the best that life has to offer, his love. But a life apart from his purpose for us results in difficulties, because we live against his design for us. There are so many people out there who are outside the love of God who are hurting because they have not accepted him. Then, there are those who are finding that serving God doesn't mean freedom from hardships and need a reminder that there is a purpose for their life and a reason for pressing on in the love of God. To these people, both groups, God calls us to minister to them. This is the mission of our lives. To have compassion on the harassed and helpless because we know what it was like to be like them. We remember what it was like to be outside of the love of God and that's the motivation that should propel us to share the good news we found in Jesus with others.

Rick Warren said something profound, yet simplistic, "Jesus calls us not only to come to him, but to go for him." Of course, Warren cannot take credit for this idea. Jesus said it first in John 17:18 (MSG), "In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world." God calls us to go for him to those who are in need of hope, to share Christ with them, and watch their lives change forever. But the reality is, as Jesus told his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." For us today, the question is, will you go for Jesus? Will you go and work in his harvest field? Will Jesus be your source of mission?