

# ST. MATTHEW

The Gospel according to

5

## OPENING WORSHIP

To begin your Bible study, read together **Isaiah 52:7-10**. How beautiful are the feet of those who come as ambassadors of peace, bringing the message of salvation!

## INTRODUCTION

Be careful what you ask for!

It is a wonderful and noble thing to be patient and longsuffering, and we do well to pray for such traits as fruits of the Spirit, in the desire to produce such fruit more abundantly. But patience often comes only as the result of difficult times of testing, so when we pray for patience we may, essentially, be asking for trouble. Be careful what you ask for!

At the end of Matthew 9, Jesus observed that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. He instructed his disciples to “ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field.” We assume that the disciples prayed, as instructed. The result was that Jesus sent . . . them!

## MESSENGERS FOR THE MASTER

**Read Matthew 9:35-10:4**

How does Matthew describe the crowds that Jesus served? Why were they this way?

What do we know about the disciples’ backgrounds?

What did following Jesus mean for the disciples?

In the previous lesson, Jesus responded to a teacher of the law who wanted to follow him, “*Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.*” Another disciple said to him, “*Lord, first let me go and bury my father.*” But Jesus told him, “*Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead*” (**Matthew 8:20-22**). Why do you think Jesus would say those things to people who wanted to follow him?

What special authority did Jesus give to his twelve disciples? What is the significance of *authority*?

**Read Matthew 10:5-20**

Jesus hasn’t called you away from family and profession and sent you on the same mission as the twelve. However, you still live and work in the same world into which the apostles were sent. Which difficulties mentioned above do you identify with as a Christian today?

Why were the disciples instructed to go only to “the lost sheep of Israel”?

Why were the disciples instructed to “travel light,” as Jesus directed them?

What was the significance of the disciples’ shaking the dust off their feet?

What is the meaning of the phrase “shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves”?

Is being innocent the same thing as being naïve?

Can you think of practical situations when a Christian especially needs to act or deal shrewdly in this world?

Why are Christians so commonly persecuted? What promise does Jesus give his disciples when they encounter persecution?

**Read Matthew 10:21-42**

How do you think these words initially struck the disciples? How do they strike you as you ponder and apply these truths in your life?

How might family relationships get in the way of a walk with Christ? How can this be a blessing to the Christian faith?

Is it wrong to run away from persecution? When is it right to run from persecution, and when does it become a matter of a hired hand running from the flock when he sees the wolf coming (John 10:12-13)?

What does Jesus mean when he says, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell"?

If Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), how can he say that he has not come to bring peace?

Jesus certainly desires unity and peace, not disorder and disagreement. However, in what sense does holding to his Word cause division?

Give examples of ways in which family relationships can undercut a relationship with Jesus Christ.

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**VERSE TO REMEMBER**

**Matthew 10:28**      *Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*

**For next time read Matthew chapters 11-12.**