

PREPARING AT HOME

June 12-18, 2017

Focus reading: Matthew 9:35– 10:8, (9-23) (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=362562017>)

Other lectionary readings: Genesis 18:1–15; Psalm 116:1–2, 12–19; Romans 5:1–8

Theme: Compassion

Matthew, writing to a primarily Jewish audience, often links Jesus and his ministry to the Hebrew Bible, specifically to Moses. Moses, who had once cared for the sheep of his father-in-law, spoke of the people of God as needing a shepherd. When he was about to die, Moses commissioned Joshua to carry on his work. In this week's passage, it is Jesus who expresses concern for the people who have no shepherd and sends others out to do his work. As born out in other places in the New Testament, Jesus thought that the last days of earth were upon them. The time was short to bring God's good news to "the lost sheep of Israel" (10:6). Jesus had not yet expanded his ministry to include Gentiles. Nevertheless, this passage tells us that Jesus "had compassion" on the crowds (9:36). Now in the days of the Roman Empire compassion was considered to be a character flaw, a sign of weakness in a society that valued strength. Showing compassion was countercultural, risky business. Many would not welcome their efforts. While Jesus' instructions to not waste time with such people may seem anything but compassionate, we must remember that Jesus was most likely motivated by a sense of urgency. Their limited time would be better spent where people were more responsive. With compassion for those who had yet to hear God's good news, Jesus urged the apostles to press on.

SENT OUT

Jesus sent out the disciples to proclaim good news and bring healing to those who needed it. Where would Jesus send you? Would you need to go far away? What good news do you have to proclaim? How can you bring healing to others?

LOOKING FOR COMPASSION

We see negative stories in our headlines every day. We don't have to look far to see examples of people who are selfish, uncaring, or violent. Help your child to see and hear stories of compassion. Where does your child see compassion? Who is compassionate? How are they doing Jesus' work? Give thanks for these people! If possible, thank them in person.

PRAYER

God of love,
We give thanks for those who proclaim your
good news!
We give thanks for healers.
Help us to do your work
wherever we go.
Amen.

Prospect Presbyterian Church, Maplewood, NJ, www.prospectchurch.org

Rita Boyer, rita@prospectchurch.org