

Third Sunday after Pentecost

Land of Confusion

Matthew 9:35–10:8

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Analysis by Peter Keyel

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. 36When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

10Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. 2These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' 8Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give

without payment.



Jesus Teaching on the Sea-Shore – By
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God cures the sick, raises the dead, cleanses the lepers and casts out the demons, without taking any payment. That this response is God's final response is seen when Jesus takes on our sins on the cross, dies, and is resurrected by God. No more does the cycle of sin, disease and death rule.

DIAGNOSIS: Harassed and Helpless

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem): Not Enough Hands

Jesus has his work cut out for him. He is wandering on foot, teaching and healing full time. Yet, He cannot heal fast enough and travel fast enough to reach all the people. There are crowds of people in need. Why aren't other people helping? Sure, "curing every disease and every sickness" is a tall order, but teaching in a synagogue is not. Even proclaiming the good news of the kingdom is doable.

Even today, it seems there aren't enough people fixing problems. Some of the problems facing the world seem insurmountable... like curing every disease and every sickness. Some are doable, but we're not doing them.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem): Aimless

But why aren't there enough people? It's not a numbers issue... there are lots of humans around. But there aren't enough people willing to help. The crowds feel "harassed." The crowds feel "helpless." In some cases, they don't know how to help. In others, they lack the drive and the aim to help.

They are aimless.

Today we still see this same phenomenon. People lack the direction and the drive to help, even with solvable problems. Zoomers get a lot of blame for this too—some are accused of sarcasm and nihilism. They feel helpless.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): Dying of Sickness and Disease

The crowds are helpless because they have been susceptible to the unclean spirits and diseases in the first place by God. In

some ways, this is a lethal cycle. Sinners facing the consequences of sin in the world become demoralized, which leads to more sinning via apathy and lack of caring, which leads to more consequences, continuing the cycle. If the sinners cannot escape by fulfilling the Law in the first place, what is the point of even trying? God and God's Law have made these people helpless. And God's response is that this is Hell.



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PROGNOSIS: Comforted and Empowered

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution): Curing the Sick, Raising the Dead

God has another response, one that supersedes the Law that condemns rebellious sinners to Hell. God comes into the world as Jesus Christ and breaks the cycle of lethargy. Those who were condemned to unclean spirits, sickness and disease are healed by Jesus. There is no cost to the people; this is a free gift given to them. God cures the sick, raises the dead, cleanses the

lepers and casts out the demons, without taking any payment. That this response is God's final response is seen when Jesus takes on our sins on the cross, dies, and is resurrected by God. No more does the cycle of sin, disease and death rule.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution): Purpose

Jesus breaks the cycle by giving the disciples purpose. How do they help? He gives them authority and clear instructions. This is received through the disciples' faith in Jesus, and his ability to give them authority over the forces that beleaguer God's people. Their faith gives them purpose. As a result, they are no longer aimless.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution): Enough Hands

The end result is that the disciples go out. They are armored with their faith, Jesus' authority to break the cycles of sin, and Jesus' explanation on how to do that. This does not make it an easy task. They will run into trouble (see Jesus' warnings in the rest of Matthew 10). But still they go out. There are enough hands because the Lord of the harvest sends more workers out into the harvest.