

**Worship Material**  
**Keep it simple**  
**Materials from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 18th June**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Eternal God,

we hear your story, read your story, feel your story.

As we gather together now, may we know deep within us that your story lives on and that your story involves us, and is woven through the history of time with us as a part of it.

**Amen.**

**Read Matthew 9.35-10.8(9-23)**

**Bible notes**

The section of Matthew's Gospel opens with a summary statement, emphasising that Jesus acts out of compassion – his heart breaks as he sees people harassed and helpless. And so, as the good shepherd, (v.36b) he offers to lead people where they need to go – into healing and a new community of sharing and support for everyone. He likens our neighbours to a harvest that's ready to be brought in (v.37). That's our job, and so he challenges his followers first to pray (v.38), and then he sends them into their neighbourhoods in answer to their prayer.

Matthew presumably tells us about this mission of the Twelve so that his readers have models as we share the good news about Jesus. There are three things to note: firstly, they are called to spend time learning at his feet and watching what he does. Secondly, he shares his authority with them (v.1b); they will be doing his work and he will be working through them (vv.7-8). And thirdly, the mission is urgent – the harvest is ready (9.37-38) and it will spoil if it's left in the field.

What Matthew offers in the rest of this chapter (vv.5-42) is not a blueprint for mission, but some key principles, hinging on verse 16: the need to think carefully about what we're doing because this is not a risk-free enterprise. Here he talks about methods – where to go, what to do and how to live. So, he tells them to start local (vv.5-6): the Twelve should start on their home patch and not go to regions beyond Galilee – i.e. learn how to do mission among people who speak their language. Then he says that mission is a mixture of works and words (vv.7-8): Jesus sends us to get alongside people in their needs, hopes and aspirations so that they can see, through what we do as well as through our words, what Jesus could do for their lives.

Then he tells them to travel light (vv.9-10). Jesus calls on us to trust two sources simultaneously for our support: God and the kindness of strangers. This is the thrust of the proverbial saying at the end of verse 10 (Paul uses it in 1 Corinthians 9.14 and 1 Timothy 5.18, suggesting it was a Church principle). Jesus assumes his followers will be offered and accept hospitality in the towns to which they go. It's about getting alongside people on their home ground, to more effectively share how Jesus can meet them in the midst of their struggles and disappointments.

Finally, he says hospitality might come from many sources but we should seek out those who appear to be open to our message. If there's openness there, you'll know it, says Jesus; so stay, accept their hospitality and continue to share your life and good news.

## **Prayer**

### **A prayer of praise and thanksgiving**

We sing to the Lord and worship with joy;  
for we never forget that the Lord is God.  
God made us and to God we belong;  
we are God's people, we are God's flock.  
We gather with each other to give thanks to God,  
we enter with praise and thanksgiving in our hearts.  
For the Lord is good, the Lord's love is eternal,  
and the Lord's faithfulness lasts for ever.  
God's story has led us, inspired and transformed us,  
called us, acknowledged us, loved and redeemed us.  
Almighty God, our voices sing your praise,  
our hearts offer our thankfulness.

**Amen.**

### **A prayer to conclude**

Transforming God,  
as we go from here,  
may we be full of your amazing story,  
wanting to share it with those we meet,  
so that more lives may be transformed.

**Amen.**

