

5 The gospel he gave us (Matthew 9–10)

Any questions from last time? Any questions you'd like us to address as we go through Chapters 9 and 10?

What gospel did Jesus present? What did the cross mean to Jesus? In these chapters, Jesus clarifies the message he sent his followers to present. It could reframe how we present the gospel, and our participation in his cross.

The gospel Jesus presented did not sound like a Coke ad, "Things go better with Christ." Neither did he sound like a Pharisee: "You're a sinner, in trouble with God if you don't change your ways."

So, what gospel did Jesus send us to announce? And how do we embody the good news of Jesus the Christ?

5.1 Setting his people free (Matthew 9)

We're one third of the way through Matthew, and for the first time Jesus starts talking about *sins* (9:2, 4, 5, 6). He once spoke of *offences* (5:29-30), once of *trespasses* (6:14-15). But so far he has never used the word *sin* (*hamartia*) and he has never labelled anyone a *sinner*.

Why start talking about sins now? How does Jesus' approach inform how we understand sin and accuse people of being "sinners"?

Authority to release people (9:1-8)

Jesus revokes the sins of a paralysed person, and it stirs up the hive:

Matthew 9:1-8 (my translation)

¹ Climbing into a boat, he crossed over, arriving at his own city.

² And look, they presented him with a paralysed person restricted to a stretcher. Having seen their trust, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Be encouraged, child, your **sins** are revoked."

³ Look! Some of the Bible scholars said among themselves, "He's blaspheming!"

⁴ Seeing how they were thinking, he said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? ⁵ What's easier? To say, 'Your sins are revoked' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? ⁶ So you can know that **the son of man** has authority on the earth to revoke sins," he says to the paralysed person, "Get up, pick up your stretcher, and head off home." ⁷ Having been raised up, he went off home. ⁸ When the crowds saw it, they were overawed, and honoured the God who gave such **authority to people**.

Why does Jesus introduce the topic of the paralysed man's *sins*? (verse 2)

Honour and shame were key values in Jesus' culture. Someone who could not contribute to the community was viewed as shamed by God. His friends were doing an honourable thing, and Jesus noticed *their faith*. But Jesus doesn't address them. He speaks directly to the shamed man, to encourage him.

Jesus is addressing the assumption that God has shamed this man because of his sins, that the man is incapacitated because he deserves it. Do you remember the conversations between Job and his friends? All his friends assumed Job was suffering for his sins, because God could not be unjust. God said they were wrong (Job 42:7).

Jesus revokes the man's sins because that undermines the assumption everyone was making. If he was crippled for his sins, and the sins are removed, he will not be crippled any more. Jesus addressed the very issue the man needed to hear.

But this undermined the power of those who liked to shame everyone for their sins. In their view, sin is an offence against God, so no one but God has the right to release people from their offences. He's insulting God by setting the man free (verse 3).

Jesus describes what they're thinking as *evil* (verse 4). They're judgemental because they want to keep everyone enslaved to them. Including Jesus!

Jesus asks if they'd have been happy with, "Get up. You're healed. Walk home." Surely it's easier to give absolution than healing? (verse 5) Healing is a sign that God has released the person, in response to Jesus' word.

And that's the point! The crowd sees this man released from his inner guilt, his communal shame, the imputation of guilt from the scholars who condemn to control, and released from his disability! It's wholistic healing.

The main point is the very thing the selfish scholars denied: *that God had given such authority to humans* (verse 8). God is restructuring human society.

The point is not, "Well, if Jesus walked around forgiving sins, he must be God." That's the same mistake the scribes were making! Jesus didn't do miracles to prove his divinity. His miracles were evidence that *God had given authority to people* (verse 8).

In the beginning, God gave authority to people. We abused that authority and became enslaved. God is giving that authority back to *the son of man* (verse 6)—*the human descendant* who releases us from our enslavement to each other, to the power of evil (sin), to everything that incapacitates our humanness.

The son of man has the authority to restore humanity into God's reign, into the relationship between heaven and earth that God always intended. It's happening! We're overawed, living to honour *the God has given such authority to people*.

Including the "sinners" (9:9-13)

So what are we to say about the "sinners"? Surely they have no part in the kingdom?

To give you some idea of what the Pharisees were expecting when God's anointed came, this is from a song they wrote (not part of the Bible) a few decades earlier:

Psalms of Solomon 17:21-23 (Charlesworth translation)

²¹ See, Lord, and raise up for them their king, the son of David,
to rule over your servant Israel in the time known to you, O God.

²² Undergird him with the strength to destroy the unrighteous rulers,
to purge Jerusalem from gentiles who trample her to destruction;

²³ in wisdom and in righteousness to drive out the **sinners** from the
inheritance; to smash the arrogance of **sinners** like a potter's jar.

“Sinners” included the *unrighteous rulers* who held God’s people captive. It included both the non-Jews who trampled all over Jerusalem, and Jewish *sinners* who should lose their place (*inheritance*) among God’s people.

Among the worst “sinners” were those who financed the oppression of their own people by collecting tribute for Rome. Tax collectors and prostitutes were the scum of society, sinners blocking the restoration of God’s nation as a kingdom of God.

That was the Pharisees’ attitude. God’s anointed takes a very different approach:

Matthew 9:9-13

⁹ Moving on from there, Jesus saw a person named Matthew seated in the toll collection booth, and said to him, “Follow me.” He stood up and followed him.

¹⁰ When Jesus went home to eat, there were many tax collectors and **sinners** who came to share the meal with Jesus and his followers.

¹¹ The Pharisees noticed and queried his followers, “What’s this? Your teacher entertains tax collectors and **sinners**?”

¹² Overhearing what they said, Jesus said, “It isn’t those who are strong who need a healer; it’s the ones who aren’t doing well.

¹³ Go and learn what this is: ‘I want mercy, not sacrifice.’ [Hosea 6:6] I didn’t come to call those in the right, but **sinners**.”

That’s the difference between Jesus and the Pharisees:

- The Pharisees used their influence to name and shame the sinners. The goal was to pressure them to shape up or ship out.
- Jesus used his influence to accept people, even those the Pharisees declared unacceptable (i.e. “sinners”). The goal was help everyone find their place in the people of God.

Hosea’s phrase—*mercy, not sacrifice*—is salient. The Pharisees sacrificed the sinners. The Doctor tended their needs instead of shooting the wounded. Guess which view represented God’s heart!

Through church history, we’ve tended to follow the Pharisees on this one. The church of the Middle Ages focused on people’s guilt, requiring people to confess their sins to a priest and perform penance to receive their absolution. It was a power move, placing salvation in our hands, so the church could let people in or lock people out. Martin Luther realized that it is God who justifies by faith, not by performing the works of penance required by the church. But Luther never questioned why the church was trading in guilt, and he himself struggled terribly with his conscience.

Jesus rarely labelled people as “sinners.” When he did, he was reflecting a label imposed from the Pharisees, either implied or stated (as in verse 11). Matthew 26:45 is the only exception, and his target was not the people normally considered “unacceptable.”

When we label people as “sinners” we declare them unacceptable. We were never authorized to judge. We need to follow Jesus, not the Pharisees.



Breaking out of the old mindset (9:14-17)

The Pharisees called the whole community to fast weekly as the expression of their grief that they were not yet good enough for God to restore the kingdom to them (compare Deuteronomy 30:1-10). The tradition that went back to the exile: when the temple fell, they would fast on the feast days (Zechariah 7:3). They lamented the day the last good God-appointed king was taken from them (2 Chronicles 35:22).

John the Baptist's followers noticed Jesus was not participating in the communal fasts:

Mathew 9:14-15

¹⁴ Then John's followers came to him saying, "How come we and the Pharisees fast, but your followers don't fast?"

¹⁵ Jesus said to them, "It's not possible for the bridal party to grieve when the bridegroom is with them. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken from them, and they'll fast then."

On wedding day, you put aside your own feelings and rejoice with the happy couple. God's people had been fasting for reunion day, when earth and heaven would be rejoined. And if they could only see it, the God-anointed king was already here.

Jesus understands it's hard for the community to recognize the new thing God is doing:

Mathew 9:16-17

¹⁶ "No one puts a patch of new cloth on an old garment; for the fullness of it pulls away from the garment and the tear becomes worse. ¹⁷ Neither do you put new wine into old wineskins; if you do, the wineskins break, the wine is spilled and the wineskins are ruined. You put new wine in new wineskins and both are preserved."



Especially when we're grieving, our old garments feel warm and familiar, but we can't keep patching them forever. We like the old wine, but the old wineskins are too brittle to hold the new that's still fermenting. There's a new covenant coming, and the old cannot stretch to contain it.

Release from defilement and death (9:18-26)

We now have two intertwined examples of the new bursting out of the old. One is a powerful leader; the other is a defiled person who shouldn't be in the community:

Matthew 9:18-26

¹⁸ As Jesus was saying this, look, a ruler came up and bowed to honour him, saying, "My daughter has just died. But come and lay your hand on her and she will live!" ¹⁹ Jesus got up and followed him, along with his followers.

²⁰ And, look, a woman who had been haemorrhaging for twelve years came up from behind and touched the edge of his garment. ²¹ She was thinking, "If only I could touch his garment I would be delivered." ²² But Jesus turned and saw her. "Be encouraged, daughter; your trust has delivered you."

²³ Jesus entered the ruler's house, and seeing the mourning musicians and the agitated crowd, ²⁴ he said, "Out! The girl isn't dead; she's sleeping!" They laughed at him. ²⁵ After ejecting the crowd, he took hold of her hand and raised up the little girl. ²⁶ News of this spread throughout the whole land.

Losing a child is unspeakable grief. When a leader is grieving, the whole community grieves.

The bleeding woman also lives in grief, but few people know. She should not be out in the community because she's a carrier of uncleanness. She defiles anything she touches, and anyone who touches her is defiled (Leviticus 15:25–27).

She's desperate. Her plan is to touch the edge of Jesus' garment. He won't know he's unclean, and she'll be okay. Her plan backfires.

Jesus saw her! After twelve years, she'd become very good at hiding, slipping in and out of crowds without being seen. Jesus saw her. He speaks, but he doesn't shame her for what she's done. He sets the pattern for how everyone should treat her by praising her for her faith instead of condemning her actions.

So, is Jesus defiled? Can he still go to the important person's house? A priest who was unclean could not enter a house to minister (Leviticus 21:11). But Jesus says it's the mourners who shouldn't be in the house: the girl isn't dead.

Jesus touches the dead girl. Instead of death defiling him, life returns to her. He's undoing everything that destroys our humanness, even death itself.

Even the blind can see who he is (9:27-31)

There's no way for the old wineskins to contain the good news of the Christ. It's bursting out everywhere. Even the blind can see this is the anointed ruler sent by heaven to restore the kingdom:

Matthew 9:27-31

²⁷ As Jesus moved on from there, two blind people followed him shouting, "Have mercy on us, son of David." ²⁸ After entering the house, Jesus approached the blind people and said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord" they replied.

²⁹ Then he touched their eyes saying, "According to your faith, let it be to you." ³⁰ Their eyes were opened. Jesus strictly ordered them, "Make sure no one knows!" ³¹ But when they went out, they spread news of him across that whole land.

For their own safety, Jesus warns these men not to tell anyone. He does the same when his followers recognize him as the Christ (Matthew 16:20-24).

But it's a bit hard to hide the fact that you're not blind anymore.

Breaking the silence (9:32-34)

Demonic oppression degrades our humanness in strange ways:

Matthew 9:32-34

³² As they were leaving, look, they brought him someone who was unable to speak due to a demon. ³³ Once the demon was cast out, the mute person spoke. The crowds marvelled: "Nothing like this has ever been brought to light in Israel." ³⁴ But the Pharisees were going, "It's by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons."

What's important is that the demons are losing their power. The Pharisees have already judged Jesus as non-Torah compliant. He doesn't follow the fasts they proscribe (14). He doesn't sideline the tax collectors and "sinners" (verse 11). He claims to speak for God when he has no right (verse 3).

If that's true, how come he's releasing people from Satan's grip? They conclude he must be a commander with authority from evil. What a cop-out! Blind Freddy could see where Jesus' authority comes from to expel the powers of evil.

Gathering his people (9:35-38)

This concludes the first phase of Jesus' work. He will now share his authority by installing his apprentices as his public servants in the community (Matthew 10).

But first, Matthew recapitulates the mission of the anointed king with the same summary statement he used when it began (compare 4:23-25):

Matthew 9:35-38

³⁵ Jesus was visiting all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and announcing the **good news of the kingdom** and healing every disease and every affliction.

³⁶ Seeing the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and thrown down like sheep with no shepherd.

³⁷ Then he says to his followers, "While the harvest is plentiful, the workers are few; ³⁸ so implore the Lord of the harvest so he sends out workers into his harvest."

Sheep scattered without a shepherd: that was the well-used metaphor for a people with no king to lead them (e.g. Numbers 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17; Isaiah 13:14; Zechariah 10:2). In the exile, God had taken the kingdom from the *shepherds* who misused the sheep for their own ends (Jeremiah 23:1; Ezekiel 34:5; Zechariah 13:7).

For 600 years, God's flock had been scattered all over the Mediterranean, *harassed and downtrodden* under foreign rulers. Now Jesus was calling God's people back under divine leadership, as the kingdom of God again.

So, that's what he's been doing. He's been tending the wounds of his people. The time had come to gather them back, the way one gathers a great harvest.

But how can King Jesus regather his people? He'll need some help: some harvesters to help gather the harvest, some emissaries to send out to help gather his flock.

The king is about to authorize his apprentices with his regal authority.

5.2 Commissioned with the king's authority (Matthew 10)

Matthew's Good News is a person. He is:

- Anointed son of David, God-with-us saving his people (Matthew 1)
- King of the Jews, leading "out of Egypt" (2)
- Spirit-anointed Son of our heavenly sovereign, restoring God's reign (3)
- Defeating the enemy for his people, enacting good news of God's reign (4)
- Teaching kingdom life to his people, authoritatively (5–7)
- Son of man, with authority to release his people from afflictions (8–9).

The Christ is gathering people back to God's governance. Unlike the Pharisees, he's not judgemental that they've wandered: *he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd* (9:36).

The son of man has dominion over creation, the very thing God gave humans in the beginning. He uses that authority to release people from their sufferings, freeing them from oppression.

Unlike other kings, Jesus does not use this authority for himself. God intended it for humanity, so the son of man gives his authority to those who follow him.

In Chapter 10 we hear Jesus teaching his followers how to use his authority. The problem is that those who claim to be in power view Jesus' kingship as a threat.

Twelve emissaries of the king (10:1-15)

Apostle means sent-one, and emissary sent with the authority of the sender, an ambassador sent to represent the king's government:

Matthew 10:1-4 (my translation)

¹ Summoning his twelve followers, he gave them **authority** to drive out unclean spirits, and to heal every disease and every affliction.

² These are the names of his twelve emissaries:

- first **Simon** (the one called Peter), and **Andrew** his brother,
- **James** (son of Zebedee), and **John** his brother, ³
- **Philip**, and **Bartholomew**,
- **Thomas**, and **Matthew** the tax collector,
- **James** (son of Alphaeus), and **Thaddeus**, ⁴
- **Simon** the zealot, and **Judas** Iscariot (the one who handed him over).

Why twelve? He's sending them to *the lost sheep of Israel* (verse 6) to announce that *the kingdom of heaven has come near* (verse 7). Israel was originally twelve tribes. Twelve emissaries proclaim the restoration of the kingdom. They're enacting the authority of their king to free his people from every form of oppression.

Why males? There were cultural and practical reasons why sending women was not possible at this point. They were travelling without support (verses 8-10), in a culture

where women were not trusted, on a mission where they were likely to be abused (verses 16-23, 25, 28).

Jesus did treat women equally. He had women disciples (Luke 8:1-3) who sat and learned at his feet (Luke 10:39). The women were the first to carry his gospel when he was raised from the dead (Matthew 28:10).

Why in pairs? Matthew lists them in pairs. Mark 6:7 says Jesus sent them out “two by two,” as six teams. Maybe we do ministry better together.

Matthew 10:5-8

⁵ Jesus commissioned these twelve emissaries, saying to them, “Do not head off into the way of the nations; do not enter into a city of the Samaritans. ⁶ Rather, make your way towards the lost sheep of Israel’s household. ⁷ As you go, proclaim, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ ⁸ Heal the sick; raise the dead; cleanse lepers; expel demons. You received it as a gift [from/through Jesus]; give it as a gift.”

Why to Jews only? The good news of the restoration of God’s people in the anointed Davidic king was sent to the Jewish people first. They’re the people who had suffered as God’s representatives to the nations for so long. Regathering the lost sheep of Israel was the first stage. Later, *this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed through the whole world as a decree for all the nations* (Matthew 24:14).

Why this message? Well, what was Jesus’ message? How was he expressing it? (Hint: Matthew 9:35). They’re proclaiming and enacting the same message as Jesus: the gospel of the king (verses 7-8).

The gospel of King Jesus emancipates people from enslavement to other powers (just as the Exodus did). We don’t buy our freedom: it’s a *gift* from the king. Yet the gospel does come with an obligation to the King who freed us.¹⁰

So how will the apostles live if they’re not paid?

Matthew 10:9-15

⁹ “Procure no money or coins for your wallets, ¹⁰ no backpack for the road, no spare shirt or shoes or walking stick, for the worker is worthy of his keep. [Compare Deuteronomy 24:14-15]

¹¹ “Whatever city or village you enter, inquire who would be a worthy host, and stay with them until you leave. ¹² As you enter the household, give it your welcome. ¹³ If the household proves worthy, let your peace rest on it; if it’s not worthy, let your peace rebound to you. ¹⁴ When someone doesn’t welcome you or hear your message, as you leave that household or city, take nothing—not even the dust on your feet.

¹⁵ Truth is, the land of Sodom and Gomorrah will fare better than that city on judgement day.”

Why travel light? As Jesus told the scribe, *the animals and birds have places to stay, while the human descendant has no place to rest his head* (8:20). The king who has no palace for himself has no quarters for his servants. They’re completely dependent

¹⁰ For a great study on grace, see John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Power of Grace* (Eerdmans, 2020).

on the hospitality of the towns they visit, towns that need to listen to their message about God restoring his kingdom, and treat them as kingdom servants.

Instead of levying taxes, King Jesus expects his people to look after each other and take care of the public servants he sends them. With no money and no visible means of support, they're to practice this kingdom life (as in 6:24-34).

What if people don't respond? Jesus' emissaries are to work on the assumption that people will respond to the king. They're to bring his peace greeting to everyone. If a community is unresponsive, they're not to react in anger. Just imagine how Herod's servants would respond if they were treated like that! Sometimes Jesus' servants felt like burning down the towns that rejected Jesus' authority too (Luke 9:54).

Jesus insists they take *nothing* from the town, not even the dust on their sandals. Shaking off the dust was a public response to the town's rejection, effectively saying, "Okay, we're moving on. Now you answer to God for how you treat his anointed."

Conflicting kingdom agendas (10:16-31)

Up to this point, the shepherd has been with them. Now he's sending them out among the wolves:

Matthew 10:16-23

¹⁶ "Look, I'm sending you like **sheep among wolves**, so be as wise as the serpents and as innocent as the doves.

¹⁷ "Be aware of what people will do: they'll hand you over to courts, and flog you in their meeting halls. ¹⁸ You'll be led before governors and kings because of me, to give evidence to them and to the nations.

¹⁹ "Whenever they hand you over, don't be apprehensive over how or what to say: what to say will be given to you in that moment. ²⁰ It isn't you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking in you. ²¹ A brother will hand his brother over to death, and a father his child. Children will revolt against parents and have them killed. ²² You'll be hated by everyone because of my name. The person who lasts to the end survives.

²³ When they chase you in this city, escape to another. Truth is, you won't get through all Israel's cities until the son of man arrives."



<https://theexpandingshrink.org/2015/06/28/lambs-among-wolves/>

The history of the world is largely about who rules. We've seen how King Herod reacted to the news that *the king of the Jews* had been born (2:1-16). There's a long history of the rulers overstepping their boundaries to take God's people captive (1:12-21). The anointed son of David was born to save his people (1:1-21). Even before Israel was born as a nation, the nations were rebelling against God's authority. God had to deal with the problem of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20-21).

God's anointed expects to face the life-threatening rejection of his authority. He expects his servants will face it too. This is not a safe mission.

This understanding of Jesus' mission isn't obvious to us today because we don't understand his mission as he did. We think of Jesus coming to die in my place, for my sins, so I can be saved. That's how we understand the cross. But for Jesus, the cross was a reaction against his authority by people in power.

Four rulers (tetrarchs) reigned in the immediate vicinity. Two of them—Herod and Pilate—would crucify *the king of the Jews* (27:11, 29, 37). Along with the Jerusalem temple leaders, these representatives of nations' rebellion against God conspired against the God-appointed representative of heaven's reign (Acts 4:27). In rejection of God's wise sovereign authority, the kings of this age crucified the splendid ruler (1 Corinthians 2:8).

That's why Paul was constantly jailed. He was proclaiming *another king* (Acts 17:7), the *kingdom* arriving in *our Lord Jesus Christ* (Acts 28:30). All Jesus' apostles were killed or exiled in this conflict with the rulers of this world. Sheep among wolves.

The gospel is not primarily a message about my personal forgiveness. The good news is the Christ rescuing God's world from every oppressive power, restoring earth as a kingdom of heaven in the God-anointed ruler (Christ our Lord).

The gospel is the announcement that God is taking the government from the beasts, giving it to the human descendant (son of man). According to Jesus, God would do that before they could visit all of Israel's towns (verse 23).

But it isn't just the foreign oppressors who rejected the Messiah. Israel's own leaders would also treat him as a threat. It feels even more tragic when your own people reject you (verses 21-22).

The apostles walk a tightrope to survive this mission. On the one hand, must be *as crafty as serpents* to survive. On the other hand, they must be *as innocent as doves* (verse 16).

Did you notice there was a *zealot* among the twelve? (verse 4). Zealots were terrorists who would kill to overthrow the Roman oppression. Simon the zealot needs everything he knows about avoiding capture and staying safe (*wise as a serpent*). From his new commander, he also needs to learn to love his enemies (*harmless as a dove*).

Other rulers have armies to protect them and enforce their rule, but Jesus offers no military protection. Sheep among wolves. Those who view Jesus as the enemy treat his agents as enemies too:

Matthew 10:24-25

²⁴ "A follower isn't over the teacher, or a slave over his master.

²⁵ It's enough for the follower to become like their teacher, and the slave like their master. If they label the head of the house Beelzeboul, how much more his family."

Beelzeboul probably means "lord of the house." The house of Israel was meant to be ruled by God, but had been captured by enemies. They had many names for the force behind the empire that held them captive: *Beelzebub* (lord of flies, probably a corruption of *Beelzeboul*), *Belial* (lord of wickedness), *Mastema* (hostile one), *Satan* (enemy).

It's propaganda they keep repeating (9:34; 12:24). They keep painting Jesus as aligned with the enemy in order to silence him. The disciples' only defence is to love their enemies, demonstrating that they're aligned with the Father who loves all his people perfectly (5:43-48) and therefore with the anointed son he loves (3:16-17).

Our natural tendency is to fight back when we feel threatened:

Matthew 10:26-31

²⁶ "So don't fear them. Nothing has been concealed that won't be revealed, nothing hidden that won't be known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, repeat in broad daylight. What you learn privately, broadcast openly.

²⁸ "Don't be fearful of those who kill your body but cannot destroy your life. Be more fearful of the one who has the power to terminate both your life and your body in Gehenna.

²⁹ "Isn't a pair of sparrows sold for a pittance? Not a single one of them falls to the ground without your father noticing. ³⁰ But you: every hair of your head counts! ³¹ So don't be fearful: you are more precious than many sparrows."

It's war, the conflict of powers over who reigns. Truth is the first casualty in war, so expect disinformation (as in 5:11). If that doesn't work, it's imprisonment or death to stop them spreading the good news of King Jesus.

Their lives are precious to the heavenly Father. Even a little bird's life is precious, and he's aware of every bird that falls. But just as he doesn't stop the birds from dying, God does not usually prevent such evil (e.g. Acts 12:2). The God whose reign Jesus represents is not a tyrant who forces his will on his subjects. Fear of God is the wisdom that prevents God's servants from doing evil against their enemies.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_World_sparrow

Responses to the good news of Jesus' kingship (10:32-42)

This whole battle over who reigns comes down to who you recognize as leader:

Matthew 10:32-33

³² "So everyone who will acknowledge me before people, I will also acknowledge them before my Father in heaven. ³³ Anyone who denied me before people, I will also deny them before my Father in heaven."

That's how Jesus wants us to respond to his gospel. Our response to the good news is not a statement about me ("I am a sinner"), but a statement about him ("Jesus is Lord," as in Romans 10:9).

Jesus' leadership divides the world:

Matthew 10:34-39

³⁴ "Don't think I came to bring peace to the land. I came not to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵ For I came to split 'a man against his father, and

a daughter against her mother, and a bride against her mother-in-law,
³⁶ and a person's enemies will be from their own family.' [Micah 7:6]

³⁷ "To choose father or mother over me is to be unworthy of me. To choose son or daughter over me is to be unworthy of me. ³⁸ To not grasp your cross and follow me is to be unworthy of me. ³⁹ To find your own life is to lose it. To lose your life on my account is to find it."

Jesus did not literally bring a sword; he forbids us using one (26:51-55). But the anointed king takes responsibility for the fact that people react to his authority by taking out their swords.

Jewish families have divided over the question of whether Jesus is the Messiah. The Hebrews who recognized the Christ *endured in a great conflict full of suffering ... insult and persecution ... prison ... confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions* (Hebrews 10:32-35).

To stand as an agent of King Jesus is to follow him in his way of overcoming evil: not by fighting back, but by absorbing the evil within ourselves, by taking up our cross like our teacher.

Taking up a cross is the alternative to taking up a sword. It's the cross, not the sword, that liberates the world.

James was the first to fall to Herod's sword (Acts 12:2). Nearly all of them died violent deaths.

At the end of the first century, John had a vision where the martyrs asked God how long his people needed to keep suffering like this. They were told to be patient. Many of their brothers and sisters would be killed just as they had been (Revelation 6:10-11). God has the throne (Revelation 4:2-10), and the crucified Messiah is sharing in God's reign (Revelation 5:6-13), and he's breaking the things that binds God's script from playing out (Revelation 6), but the cross-bearing people of God are crucial to how God sets the world right.

And as we embody the cross and bear away the injustice, some will respond to Jesus' kingship.

Matthew 10:40-42

⁴⁰ "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me. Anyone who welcomes me, welcomes the one who commissioned me. ⁴¹ Anyone who welcomes a prophet for the authority behind the prophet will receive a prophet's reward. Anyone who welcomes an upright person for the authority behind the upright person will receive an upright person's reward. ⁴² Anyone who gives a cold water to one of these unimportant disciples for the authority behind him, I'm telling you, they won't miss their reward."

We live in that hope. Your thoughts?

5.3 Conclusion

After hearing the message Jesus entrusted to his followers, how does this reframe your understanding of the gospel and our part in it?

- What gospel did Jesus present?
- What did the cross mean to Jesus?
- What gospel do we present?
- What response do we ask people to make?
- How do we embody this gospel?
- How do we participate in his cross?

To meditate on specific instructions Jesus gave, see:

Mat 9:2	<u>What about sin?</u>
Mat 9:2-8	<u>Jesus' authority on earth</u>
Mat 9:5-6	<u>What is forgiveness?</u>
Mat 9:9-12	<u>What's with tax collectors?</u>
Mat 9:13	<u>Meditating on mercy</u>
Mat 9:13	<u>Where did Jesus learn mercy?</u>
Mat 9:13	<u>When did Jesus label people "sinners"?</u>
Mat 9:14-17	<u>Managing criticism</u>
Mat 9:18-26	<u>The king understands his people</u>
Mat 9:27-31	<u>Personal Saviour or Son of David?</u>
Mat 9:32-34	<u>Do you recognize the king's authority?</u>
Mat 9:35-38	<u>Jesus our shepherd</u>
Mat 10:1	<u>Why did Jesus appoint 12 apostles?</u>
Mat 10:1-4	<u>Why no women among Jesus' apostles?</u>
Mat 10:2-4	<u>Mentoring is ministry</u>
Mat 10:5-8	<u>How the Shepherd gathers his sheep</u>
Mat 10:9-15	<u>A grassroots kingdom</u>
Mat 10:16	<u>Sheep among wolves</u>
Mat 10:17-23	<u>Clash of kingdoms</u>
Mat 10:24-25	<u>Like our teacher</u>
Mat 10:26-31	<u>Where's God's justice in an unjust world?</u>
Mat 10:28	<u>What does the Bible say about hell?</u>
Mat 10:29-31	<u>The kingdom is God with his creatures</u>
Mat 10:32-33	<u>Where's your allegiance?</u>
Mat 10:32-33	<u>Responding to the gospel of the kingdom</u>
Mat 10:34-39	<u>A disarmed kingdom</u>
Mat 10:40-42	<u>Righteous people?</u>

The links are from <https://allenbrowne.blog/scriptureindex/>

In preparation for our next session, please read Matthew 11–12.