

Study #5 - Matthew 9.35-38

Q1 - What does it say?

"He had compassion" – 'esplanchnizei' in Greek, the verb connotes a response from deep within one's being. It is related to the word for inner organs or entrails ('splanchnon'), which represented the seat of emotion and affection in the ancient world. Jesus is reacting viscerally.

There is an interesting use of the "historic present" in the Greek of Matt 9.37. It's perhaps impossible to translate perfectly into English, but the verse also carries the sense "then he says to his disciples."

- This section is a very tight sequence of action. What are the three settings/scenes/emphases in the passage (vv.35, 36, 37)?
- Why do you think Jesus talk about "workers" in v.38, instead of directly addressing the disciples?

Q2 - What does it mean?

Immediate context:

- In response to seeing the crowds, what does Jesus say?

In Matthew:

Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom – Matt 4.23

One who will shepherd the sheep – Matt 2.6, 18.12-14

Parable of the harvest – Matt 13.24-30

Review: We've witnessed a flurry of healings and teachings in chs.8-9, which form part of a larger structure which began in Matt 4.23 and come to a close in 9.35. How has what the disciples have heard and seen through this section prepared them for receiving THEIR mission from Jesus (10:1)?

Elsewhere in scripture:

Sheep without a shepherd – Num 27.17-18; Ezek 34; Zech 10.2-3; Mark 6.6, 34

Sheep-y parables – John 10

Q3 - What has been revealed about Jesus through this passage?

- Matthew doesn't come out and say it, but why is he talking about shepherd-less sheep?
- What did the LORD promise in the OT (e.g. Ezek 34.23)?
- What motivates Jesus' command to the disciples?
- Jesus commands the disciples to ask the Lord for laborers, in v.38. What does this reveal about his mission?

Q4 - How will I respond? What will I pray?