

13th September – A Royal commission #3 – Ordinary People, prepared differently**Matthew 10:1-16 (Luke 9:1-6)**

1. The disciples move from watching Jesus to being sent out by Jesus. Where do you find yourself more comfortable: watching, learning, or actually stepping out and doing something? Why?
2. The disciples were ordinary people, but Jesus gave them an extraordinary message, power and authority. What do you think stops us from believing that Jesus can use ordinary people like us?
3. The talk suggested that we can sometimes think, “God could use them, but I'm not sure he could use me.” Have you ever felt like that? What particular qualities, experiences or abilities do you tend to think you need before God could use you?
4. Jesus tells the disciples to “take nothing” for their journey. What are the modern equivalents of the “bag, bread, money and spare tunic” that we tend to rely on for security and confidence?
5. The talk described Jesus' instructions as “being prepared differently” rather than being unprepared. What do you think it looks like in practice to be prepared to trust Jesus rather than simply being prepared by having everything under control?
6. Jesus makes the disciples dependent not only on God but also on other people. Why can receiving hospitality, help or support from others sometimes be harder for us than giving it? What might God want to teach us through that?
7. The talk says, “We don't need to wait until we have everything sorted before we respond to God's call.” Is there something you sense God might be asking you to do that you have been postponing until you feel more ready, confident or equipped?
8. Jesus prepares the disciples for rejection. They are called to be faithful, but they aren't responsible for controlling how people respond. How can the desire for people to respond positively affect the way we share our faith, serve others or step out for God?
9. Think about the question from the end of the talk: “What do we pick up on our way out of the church doors?” What do you personally tend to “carry” — knowledge, experience, planning, confidence, resources, fear, something else? Which of those things can become a substitute for trusting Jesus?
10. “The challenge is: Do I trust the one who is sending me?” What would trusting Jesus in this way look like for you this week? Is there one practical step you could take as a result of this passage?

20th September – A Royal Commission #2 – The other Lord's prayer
Matthew 9:35-38

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word 'mission'?
2. Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the church?

Read Matthew 9:35-38

In vs 35 Jesus describes the Kingdom as 'good news'.

3. What does the Kingdom look like in Jesus' life in Matthew's gospel so far? (Chapters 5-7, 8-9 will help)
4. Where do we see signs of the Kingdom today? What might explain the difference from what we see in Jesus?
5. Why do we forget that the Kingdom is 'good news'?

In vs 36 we're told of Jesus' compassion towards the crowds.

6. Why might Jesus view the crowds as like 'sheep without a shepherd'?
7. In what ways are people vulnerable (helpless and harassed)?
8. What is the mission of Jesus grounded in?
9. How does seeing that counter our fears or anxieties about mission?

In vs 37-38 Jesus reveals the catalyst for mission

10. What motivation does Jesus provide in vs 37?
11. How does that contrast with our own experience/assumptions?
12. What is the first thing that Jesus expects his followers to do?
13. How can you be involved in the mission of Jesus?
14. What would help you to keep praying this Lord's prayer as much as you pray the other one?

13th September – A Royal commission #1 – An invitation like no other
Matthew 11:25-30

1. How would you describe your ideal rest? When do you feel most 'rested'?
2. And what are the things that are weighing on you most at the moment? Where do you feel most 'heavy-laden'? **If appropriate, take a moment to pray for each other at this point.**

Read Matthew 11:25-30

3. Jesus prays at the end of what seems like an unsuccessful time of ministry. Why is the tone of his prayer surprising?
4. *Who* does Jesus say that the Father has things from, and to *whom* has he revealed them?
5. What has been handed over to Jesus, and what is the only way to truly know the Father and the Son?
6. While there is a deep mystery in God's sovereignty, how do vs 25-27 underline what we need to truly know God?
7. Why do we struggle with the idea that we can't just work out who God is on our own?
8. Where are you tempted to rely on your own resources (intelligence, common sense, friendship) rather than coming to God like a child?
9. What is the only thing that we need to bring to Jesus?
10. What three invitations does Jesus give in vs 28-29?
11. What does he promise will be the result?
12. It seems like a paradox, but how can taking a 'yoke' result in 'rest for our souls'?
13. How does Jesus describe his own character in vs 29? Why will that make a difference to the 'yoke' he offers?
14. What, or who's, yoke are you carrying at the moment? If you feeling weighed down, burdened or burnt out at the moment, what might you need to receive from Jesus to find rest?