

DIGGING DEEPER

Small Group Discussion Guide: Matthew 9:9-38

During this 5-week series in Matthew 8–10, we will watch the King in action. Jesus has just finished teaching with authority in the Sermon on the Mount, and now He puts that authority on display: over sickness, storms, and spiritual powers. Then He sends His followers out to join His mission. **Before you begin your discussion, take a moment to pray together.** Invite the Holy Spirit to open your hearts and minds to what He wants to show you. Ask Him to guide your conversation, help you listen well to one another, and reveal how He is inviting you to grow.

READ THE PASSAGE TOGETHER: Matthew 9:9-38

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Don't feel pressured to get through every question! Follow as the Spirit leads and spend your time on the questions that spark meaningful conversation.

1. **Read Matthew 9:9–13.** The religious leaders kept themselves "in quarantine" away from sinners, but a doctor in quarantine can't do his job. Jesus answers their objection about who he eats with by quoting Hosea 6:6: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." Where are we tempted to protect our reputation by keeping our distance? Who do we tend to keep our distance from? Why do you think that is?
2. **Read Matthew 9:16–17.** What "old wineskins" in your faith might struggle to hold what Jesus is doing? How can we tell a practice worth keeping from one that has hardened and should be discarded?
3. **Read Matthew 9:18–26.** A respected leader and an unclean woman end up in the same place: desperate and reaching for Jesus. What does it cost for them to come to Jesus that openly? What does His response show about how He sees people?
4. **Read Matthew 9:27–34.** Craig Keener warns that when we grow so sure of our system that we stop listening, we risk the same mistake that the Pharisees make in verse 34. Where might your certainty keep you from noticing what God is doing?
5. **Read Matthew 9:35–38.** Henri Nouwen wrote that compassion asks us to "go where it hurts." Jesus sees the crowds as "harassed and helpless," and the one thing He asks His disciples to do is pray for workers. Then He sends them. Why start with prayer? Who could your group pray for by name? How might God make us part of the answer to those prayers?

SHARE & PRAYER

As we watch the King in action in Matthew 8–10, we want to grow in recognizing the authority of Jesus in everyday life and in joining Him on His mission! We invite you to cultivate the practice of paying attention as you go about your week, pausing to reflect, noticing where you see Jesus at work, where He is asking you to trust His word, and who He might be sending you toward. As we learn to notice and name what the King is doing, we become more aware of His presence and more ready to take part in what He is doing. **Take on the weekly challenge to pay attention and come prepared to share with your group!**

- **SHARE:** Where have you seen God at work this week? Share a story, moment, conversation, answered prayer, unexpected provision, opportunity, or anything else that made you aware of God. (This could be in your own life, someone else's life, our church, or the world around you).
- **RESPOND:** What might God be inviting you to do, see, trust, change or participate in this week?
- **PRAY:** Share prayer requests and pray together. Incorporate this week's passage and ask: Where do we need to trust the King's authority and invite Him to act?



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MORE WAYS TO ENGAGE

Fair Oaks Church Sermon Podcast (Apple Pod & Spotify)
- Listen to Sunday messages posted weekly
- Listen to Cutting Room Floor episodes that further unpack sermons

UPCOMING EVENTS Learn more at fairoaks.church/events

- **2027 Mission Trip Applications Open** | Due by 11/30 | Submit online at fairoaks.church/missions
- **11/10 The Chosen Watch Party: Season 6 Episode 1** | 6-8p | Family Life Center – AMC | Join us for an early access event to watch Season 6 episode 1 of The Chosen!
- **11/11: Hope Gathering Widows Group** | 5–7p | Family Life Center (AMC Room) | For widows of all ages to find hope and healing
- **11/13: Distribution Day at FO/OV Food Bank** | 9a–12:30p | Volunteers needed to serve at the food bank | Sign up to help at fairoaks.church/missions
- **11/14: Grief Workshop Series** | 1:30p-3:30p | Kids & Youth Center – High School Classroom | no cost to participants | presented by David Howell, from CCA
- **11/18: Thanksgiving Basket Packing Party** | 6:30-8p | Family Life Center | Help assemble Thanksgiving Baskets for families in our community!
- **11/21: Men's Breakfast** | 8-10a | Family Life Center, AMC | Experience fellowship, food, community and time together!
- **11/22: Community Remembrance Service** | 1-2p | Wells Chapel | A community service to remember the dearly departed this holiday season | Facilitated by David Howell, from CCA
- **12/2: Deck the Halls** | 4-6:30p | Family Life Center | Come help us prepare for Christmas Kickoff and the Advent season | Volunteers of all ages are welcome.

STAY INFORMED

Check The Weekly fairoaks.church/theweekly - All church news in one spot!