God of the Gap — Delivery Transcript

Matthew 9:36–10:4 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, November 15, 2026 · *You Are Sent*

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If you've got a Bible, we're going to be in Matthew chapter 9. If you don't have a Bible, there should be one on the chair under you, or underneath the chair in front of you. There it is — there's the phrase: underneath the chair in front of you. All right. And it'll be on the screen, too. If you don't have a Bible, you can take that one. We want to be a blessing to you this morning if you don't own a Bible.

We're going through the Gospel of Matthew as a church. If you're new to Broadview, we typically go through books of the Bible. We're exploring the life of Jesus because people are asking questions about Jesus again. There's a fresh interest because of the brokenness in our culture. I believe people are giving it another go, giving another look to see what Christianity has to offer. And so we've been looking from the source documents themselves, from the eyewitness testimony of Matthew, at what Jesus was all about, what he had to say, and what we can learn from his actions in the world. We're in Matthew chapter 9, which is the very tail end of a series of encounters that Jesus had with specific individuals. And you need to know that Matthew's writing from a Jewish perspective, so sometimes we'll have to connect the dots between our context and his context.

The mission gap

But before we do any of that — I don't know how old everybody in the room is. I'm not going to get to guessing. But typically when you get to a certain age, something changes in your heart where you decide, "I need to do something with my life. I need to find a purpose. I need to find some kind of a mission worth giving myself to." And sometimes you don't figure that out until you're, you know, 18, 23, 25, 28, 37 — I don't know. Some take longer than

others, right? But there's generally some kind of an impulse in you to not just coexist off of your parents, or whoever it is that was helping support you as a young kid, and to make something of yourself.

And we all find different things in life to give ourselves to. Some of you are driven by things that other people are not driven by. But you find a job, you find a company, you find a cause, maybe you find a church, and you commit yourself. And for some of you it's just, "I'm going to commit myself to something that gives me a paycheck. I've got a problem: I've got to put food on my table, so I'm going to commit to this thing so I can provide for my needs."

The point is, as you commit yourself to a mission in life, you will eventually discover a gap between where you want to be — where you want to see things go — and where you are right now. I'm just going to call that a mission gap. And if you think about it, there are literally thousands and thousands and thousands of those gaps in your life, even maybe right now.

When you get married, there's often a gap between what each of you want — where the destination will be eventually — and where things are at right now. Maybe not even relationally; it's just in terms of the house you have, the number of children that you have, the kind of future that you've built. There's a gap. And your mission is essentially to close that gap. If you end up having children, the same thing exists. There's who your children are today, and then there's who you want them to become. There's a gap. And so your drive in life, in many ways, is to close that gap.

That can be the case in your company. If you're a business owner or a founder of a company, you're trying to close that gap. It could be related to a nonprofit you're working for, a local church. The point is: every worthwhile mission has a mission gap. Otherwise there would be no vision. There would be no reason to commit yourself to it — no reason for the sacrifices and the time and the money. All of that is driven by the gap.

And in what we're doing as a church right now, we're literally in a campaign called Close the Gap, where we're trying to close a gap between the number of people we want to reach as a church and the size of the facilities that we have to minister to them. So we're trying to close that gap. That gap is actually in service of a larger gap: trying to connect people to new life in Jesus. There are a lot of people in our city who don't experience life according to God's design. They're not flourishing according to God's purpose. And so we want to connect them to Jesus. We're trying to close that mission gap. I have a gap. You have a gap. We have a gap together. Every worthwhile mission has a gap.

Criticize the gap or close it

The problem is not that people can't see the gap. Everybody can see the gap. The problem is how people respond to the gaps that we see — especially when the gap that you see isn't

something that you've committed to. In that case you will generally have a tendency not to try to close the gap, but to criticize the gap.

The easiest thing to pick on, of course, is politics, because everybody likes to complain about the way the country is. And it feels kind of cathartic, and maybe even sounds like you're caring. But if you were honest, you know it's not helpful, and you probably don't care as much as it sounds like you care. But it feels good to complain about the gap, because things are not where they need to be, and it just kind of feels good to vent.

It's not just true of politics, though. It's true of a lot of gaps in your life — maybe even gaps that you've committed to. For example, if you've got children and one of your kids has decided to lose their mind and become mad, all right? And they are a prodigal son or daughter, right? They're running from the Lord. There's how you feel about that gap as a mom or a dad. And then there's how your child feels about that gap. Probably both people agree: "Yeah, it's not where it needs to be. Things aren't good." But they're responding in two totally different ways.

That's true in any gap. It's true in the marriage gap. It's true in the finance gap. It's true in the politics gap. It's true in the church gap. It's not a problem of seeing the gap. It's not even a problem of agreeing on what it would look like for the gap to be closed. The problem is how we respond to the gap. Some look at the gap and criticize it. Some can look at the gap and try and close it.

And what we're going to look at this morning in our passage is Jesus trying to close a gap that he sees. That was generally the way of Jesus. He was not prone to criticize or complain about the brokenness in the world. And there was great brokenness, and he did not avoid seeing it. He stepped right into the mess. But instead of complaining about it — instead of complaining about the people who had been impacted by the brokenness — he stepped in and did things to try and help.

I don't know about you, but when you're dealing with brokenness in the world — when you're ministering to people, or not even ministering, when you're having to live with people who have been negatively impacted by the brokenness in this world — it can be very challenging. People who are dealing with brokenness have a tendency to drain you of your physical and emotional resources. And if we're not careful, we can be so hesitant and self-protective that we distance ourselves from the very people God has called us to minister to, disengage from the very mission that we've been sent to address, separate ourselves from the very gap God has sent us to close.

And so I'm hopeful that today not only will we see what Jesus does in closing a gap, but how we can address the gaps in our life with the kind of resources and wisdom that Jesus does in Matthew 9.

Sheep without a shepherd

So are you there? Matthew 9. If you're new to Matthew, just remember: Jesus has been teaching and preaching and ministering. He's basically become pretty famous. Thousands and thousands of people were following him, listening to his sermons. At this point they were persuaded that he was special, because he was performing miracles that no one else could do. He was saying things that no one else would say, going places no one else would go. He was claiming to forgive people of sins, which is why some called him a blasphemer. He was saying things that would make him a blasphemer if he was not who he claimed to be — we'll just put it that way.

And so as Jesus grew in popularity, and more and more people began to follow him and believe in him as the Messiah, so also did a growing opposition begin to materialize among the Pharisees and the religious establishment — scribes, Pharisees. And they began to spin a lie about Jesus, saying that the reason he does the incredible signs that he does is because he's a demon. He's actually working for the prince of demons, Beelzebul.

Jesus looks at the same crowd that those Pharisees looked at, and instead of exploiting those crowds to protect his agenda like the Pharisees and scribes did, he looks at the crowds and it says that he has compassion. If you look there, Matthew 9:36, it says that he saw them as people who were distressed and dejected, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. In other words, the religious establishment, who was supposed to be feeding and leading these people spiritually, had begun exploiting them and feeding on them for their own selfish advantage.

And so he looks at these broken people, who were otherwise a drain on his physical and emotional resources, and instead of distancing himself or criticizing, he felt compassion — because they had been used and abused, thrown down on the ground. They had become worthless because they bought into the lies and counterfeits of their culture.

And then he says to his disciples — here's our text today — "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few." There's the gap. The gap is: the harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. So what do we need to do, guys? "Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest." And then, "Summoning his twelve disciples, he gave them authority over unclean spirits, to drive them out and to heal every disease and every sickness."

Now, you may be familiar with this passage. It's actually pretty popular, and it's a transitional statement between Matthew 9 and Matthew 10. It's a transition between what Jesus was doing and what his disciples now do.

The harvest

I think what's so fascinating is the language that Jesus uses of a harvest. He looks at these broken people who are distressed and dejected, who had been exploited, used, and abused by the religious establishment of their culture. Because they had bought into the counterfeits and the lies, their lives had been wrecked. And Jesus looks at that and says, "Man, the harvest is plentiful."

Now, when you and I hear "harvest" — I don't know what you think, but what I think is: good times. The good times are about to roll. I think of cotton crops, because I grew up in Roby. I think of allergies. I think of cottonseed thrown out to the cows, and them the happiest cows you've ever seen. I think of rich farmers who can finally pay their bills — you know, they go buy a new truck. I think life is good; it's the harvest.

That's not what Matthew's audience would have thought. They weren't growing cotton, number one. And number two, in the Old Testament the harvest was almost always likened to a judgment day. The harvest was the day on which those who had sown wickedness would reap God's judgment — those who had lived in such a way that they were exploiting people, getting rich quick, lying, scheming, doing the things that they should not have done. Even though they might have momentarily gotten away with it, though they might have enjoyed it for a season, on the day of harvest what is due is going to be repaid. God is not mocked, right? Whatever a person sows, so will he reap. That is the harvest day.

And throughout the Old Testament the prophets would talk about the day of harvest, and you see it in two senses. One, there were harvest days where God would judge a nation because of their oppression of people. But there was this final harvest day, this final judgment, where God's wrath would crush his enemies and destroy the wicked.

Why does Jesus look at these broken people and say the harvest is plentiful? If you ask that question in light of that context, I think one thing becomes pretty clear. You even see this dynamic in the Old Testament: as a culture deteriorates and becomes worse and worse, simultaneously people become more and more open to the gospel. The culture gets sick with counterfeit worship, because the culture adopted the lie that "this will make me happy." Money's going to make me happy. Sex is going to make me happy. Pleasure is going to make me happy. Drugs will make me happy. It's happy for a season. It's happy for a time. But when the culture gets sick, the chickens come home to roost. The brokenness begins to spread. The misery begins to seep out everywhere. And people begin to think to themselves, "Maybe I was wrong. Maybe there's something to this Jesus thing. Maybe there's more there than meets the eye."

And so the day of harvest is not just a day of judgment on the wicked. Even in the Old Testament, it's also a day of deliverance for the righteous. It's a day of deliverance for the

humble. It's a day of deliverance for the faithful. It's a day that God vindicates his truth and goodness and those who commit to it.

And just like we see that in our culture today — it's one of the reasons we're going through the Gospel of Matthew. People are open again, and maybe discerning: "Maybe secularism is false. Maybe atheism and its assumptions are not going to give me a life of flourishing. Maybe there's something to this Christianity deal." Just like that's happening now, it was happening in the first century. In the first century, the Roman Empire was very wicked. The cultural religious establishment had become very wicked. They were self-righteous. They were exploiting people. They were driven by money and greed. And Jesus looks at that brokenness and says, "People are ready. People are ready to receive the kingdom that I've come to bring." The harvest is abundant in both ways. It's abundant for the wicked to be judged by God's wrath, and it's abundant for the humble and the righteous to receive the kingdom when it comes.

Some gaps only God can fill

Now, if that is what Jesus has in mind — and I think that's what's going on here — that means this is a gap that only God can fill. There are gaps in your life — and you need to know this is one of the big ideas of the message today — there are some gaps in your life you can't fix. Particularly the gap that comes as a result of sin. There are sin problems in your life as an individual. There are sin problems in your relationships, in your home, amongst your family members. There are sin problems in the workplace. There are even sin problems in our church. And if you try to bring your own personal resources to bear on solving sin problems, you will find yourself deficient, and the process will crush you.

Even Jesus looks at this gap — which is a missionary gap, of reaching people who are broken with the hope of the gospel — even Jesus says we need to pray. We need to stop and pray to the Lord of the harvest, because only God can close this gap. And if we try to close this gap without God's help, the gap is going to crush us.

And so: pray. And the word he uses for pray — I didn't know this until this week — is a word that Matthew only uses one time in the Gospel. It's not the normal word for pray. It's to beg God. To beg as if you have no other recourse. To beg as if you acknowledge, "God, I can't. I'm done. I'm tired. I'm worn out. I've given it all I've got. I literally can't do this. Only you can do this. Would you please, please, please send workers into the harvest?"

And why are you praying? You're not only praying because you're out of resources. You're also praying, Jesus would say, because you recognize that this particular mission — of seeing broken people healed, seeing sin driven out, seeing the brokenness of sin restored — is something only God can accomplish. He's the Lord of this harvest. It is his harvest.

Now, I'm telling you, when you look at the gaps in your life that are of that breed, and you remind yourself to pray — and by pray, I mean remind yourself that it's not about you, that your resources are deficient, and only God can fix this thing — when you humble yourself to pray and remind yourself of those truths, two things are going to happen to you, which is what's happening to these people.

Number one, you're going to be reminded: those people are his people. And you've been maybe avoiding them. Maybe you've been abusing them. Maybe you've been criticizing them. You are criticizing, abusing people made in God's image. You notice Jesus says it's his harvest. They're his people. And so be slow to criticize the gap, because in this kind of gap you're dealing with people God has made. Just like he made you, he made them. One of the things that prayer does is it reminds you of that fact: it's his harvest.

It also reminds you he's the Lord of the harvest — meaning he's the sovereign. He's the boss. He gets to call the shots. And so even though you may not feel like doing this, even though you may be tired and exhausted, there's a sense in which he's the Lord. It's his harvest. It's his mission. He gets to decide, and there's nothing you can do about it. It's like your parents, if you're living in their house: "My house, my rules. Get over it or leave." If he's the Lord of the harvest, there's a sense in which prayer positions you to move forward with the right mindset.

Now, what I want to do with the time that we have left is to try to explain what that mindset looks like. What did Jesus see that his disciples couldn't see? What do we need to see so that this kind of gap in our lives can be closed? How can we close the gap between broken people and seeing them delivered — anything that's broken because of sin in your life, from the workplace to the home to the church to anything? How can we see God's harvest reaped, so that wickedness is judged and the righteous are delivered? The way you do that is you recognize, through prayer, the following.

1. Only God can gather the right workers

Number one: only God can gather the right workers. Jesus tells his disciples, "I want you to pray to the Lord of the harvest" to do what? To send out workers into his harvest. And then chapter 10 comes, and Jesus chooses twelve disciples. He gives the command to all of the disciples — not just the Twelve, but all of them. We don't know how many there were. Some say 72, some say more than that, some say less. Doesn't matter. The point is there were more than twelve. All of them are called upon to pray for God to send: "God, you choose the workers. You know who needs to go. You know who you want to use. And we want to ask you to choose them."

And so the first reason we pray, if you want to see this gap closed, is because only God can pick the right people for this mission. And there are two subpoints under that, and they're all in verse 1, implied in this little Greek word translated "summoned." Jesus summoned his twelve disciples.

God chooses whom he sends

All of that is instructive on so many fronts. The fact that he chooses twelve disciples is Old Testament imagery, because in the Old Testament God had chosen Israel for his covenant purposes. And before God chose Israel, he chose a man named Abraham. He chose Abraham among all the peoples of the earth. He chose Isaac, not Ishmael. He chose then Jacob, not Esau. And then Jacob had twelve sons. And at every point along the way, what you see in the Old Testament is that God is sovereignly choosing who he wants to use. Why God chooses Jacob and not Esau, Isaac and not Ishmael — we don't know.

Just like in this case, we don't know why he chooses these twelve men, because there's nothing special about them. They're not the poorest people in the first century, but neither were they rich. You've got normal guys like fishermen — four of them are that. You've got a tax collector — he wasn't necessarily wealthy, but he was very despised. He also has a political zealot that was the opposite of the tax collector. So he's picked people who are on different ends of the political spectrum. He's picked people who are not movers and shakers. Okay? There were no scribes, no Pharisees, no Sadducees, no power players, no influential people. He chose the weak and the foolish. And Paul says in First Corinthians that's the way God always does it: he chooses the weak things of the world to shame the strong; he chooses the foolish things of the world to shame the wise.

What we need to remember is that he gets to choose. God gets to choose, because it's his mission. It's his harvest. So he gets to choose. And if God chooses, it's wise for us to accept it. And the only way you'll be able to discern that he's chosen one and not another is if you're in a posture of prayer and proper discernment. So you need to pray, because God chooses whom he sends.

And if that's true for you — if God is maybe even this morning calling you, choosing you, appointing you for a particular task in his kingdom — maybe God's choosing you for salvation. He's knocking on your door and saying, "Hey, I want you on my team." And you would say probably what Matthew said: "Are you kidding? Why would you use me? Why would you choose me? Look at what I've done. I'm no good for nobody. I am the scum of the earth. Why would you choose me?" Or maybe you would say, "Why would you use me, God? I've got this or that in my past. I'm not seminary trained. I'm not smart. I'm not a good speaker." Moses said the same thing. The point is, if you're not in a posture of prayer, you're going to disqualify yourself. The only thing that you need to be qualified to serve is for God

to choose you and say, "I want you to serve." And so you've got to pray, because God chooses who he wants to serve.

Those chosen must respond

The other reason you want to pray is so that you can respond when he calls. Because just as it is always true that God chooses who he wants to use, it is also always true that those chosen must respond. If they don't respond — if there is no faith, if they don't come when God draws them near — then they will not be sent on mission. They will not go out. And so there is this mystery between God's sovereignty and human responsibility. I'm not here to solve that mystery, and I can't do it in 30 minutes, or however much time I have left. The point, though, is that sovereignty works alongside human accountability.

And in this case, Jesus summoned his disciples. What did they have to do? They had to come. That's what the word translated "summoned" means. It doesn't say Jesus was like, "Hey, yo, John, how's the fishing trip?" It's a much different word than that. It's the word used of a king summoning his citizens into his presence. Jesus is basically saying, "I'm your superior. I'm your commanding officer, and I want you to come here. I want you to come into my court. I need to talk to you about something." If they were not willing to respond to that call, then they would not have received what they needed to receive. And if they did not receive what they needed to receive, then they would not be effective in what they were sent to do.

This is so, so, so important. If you're going to see God close the gap in your life: before God will send you to close the gap of brokenness, he will first call you to him to give you what you need. If you try to go without first coming, you will try and operate in your power, not his. You'll try to operate according to your wisdom and in your strength, and you will make a mess, and the gap is going to crush you. First, Jesus calls them to himself. He says, "Come into my presence. Let me give you what you need."

In fact, you can even see it in the words that are chosen. Look at verse 1. It says that Jesus summons his twelve what? What does he call them? He summons his twelve disciples. And then look at verse 2: "These are the names of the twelve" what?

(Congregation: "Apostles.")

He changes the word. They go from being disciples to apostles. So notice the shift. You've got lots of disciples who are praying. Twelve[1] disciples who are chosen are then called by Jesus to come into his presence. And only then, after they respond to that call and he gives them something, are they sent as apostles — which is what the word *apostle* means: a sent one, one sent out. The only thing that happens between them being disciples and becoming apostles is that they respond to the call, and they draw near and receive.

And so if you want God to use you to close the gap of brokenness — whether it's in your marriage, or your family with your children, in our church, in your workplace, among your friends — the gap is real. It's bad. If you're going to see God close the gap, the first thing you've got to do is come when he calls. Draw near. Receive strength through communion.

Mary and Martha

It reminds me of Luke 10 with Mary and Martha. You guys remember the story of Mary and Martha? Martha was getting ready. Jesus was coming over, so she's like, "We've got to get the house ready." And she's sweeping and she's cooking and she's — whatever people do. I don't do that part. Well, I try to help do that part, but that's beside the point. I don't know what all is entailed; I just know what I'm supposed to do. So she's doing all of that stuff, and what's Mary doing? Mary's sitting at the feet of Jesus with the disciples. She wasn't in the kitchen helping. She wasn't doing her social duties.

And she sighs heavily. That's not in the text, but I just imagine she sighs heavily, as some women do. I don't know — maybe. She sighs heavily: "Jesus, are you not going to tell my sister to help me?" And instead of rebuking Mary, what does Jesus do? He rebukes Martha. He says, "Martha, Martha, Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted about many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the better portion, and it will not be taken from her."

What Martha needed to learn in that moment is that service is a good thing. It's not a bad thing. Getting stuff done, activity, mission, diligence — great. But if it comes at the expense of intimacy, if it comes at the expense of relational closeness with God, then you've missed it. And the gap is going to crush you. It's going to lead you to sin. It's going to lead you to getting angry and mad at Jesus, because you tried to serve without first receiving what you need.

We get this mixed up so often. I'm preaching to myself just as much as anybody else. Activity — if you're not careful, and this is just true in general — activity and intimacy are enemies. Intimacy in a relationship requires margin. It requires presence. It requires time. It requires everything. Activity steals. Activity will steal your intimacy with God, which is why you want to be active from a place of communion. And so first they come to him, before they're sent out, so that they can receive what they need to receive.

2. God gives them the authority they need

What do they receive? Matthew uses the word *authority*. So God gathers the right people, and he gives them what they need. I think in your notes I said "the power that they need." That's an unfortunate word, because the text says he gave them *authority*. The word

authority is so much more than just power. It's the Greek word *exousia*. It's been used throughout Matthew's Gospel. It's a word that means the right to use the power of someone else.

Imagine if someone who had a billion dollars signed a check, and then they gave it to you. You don't have a million dollars — or whatever I said it was. They have the money, but now you have the right. It's different. It's different than Jesus saying, "Hey, Peter, you're such a great guy. You're talented, you're gifted, you've got the little vein on your bicep. I think you're going to be an effective evangelist. The problem is you're just a little bit moody and quirky. So I'm going to magically peel that part of you away. I'm going to add this little bit. I'm going to turn it up to 11. You know — go on mission, be successful." That's not what Jesus does. He doesn't strengthen what they have. He gives them his authority. Big, big, big, big difference. He gives them his keys to the kingdom. He entrusts it to them.

Why does that matter? It matters because if you think the gap is only going to be closed if you pray and get God to get you all jazzed up and excited — "and I'm going to go out and apply my skills and wisdom and fix this" — the gap's going to crush you. Because it doesn't need your skills and abilities. It doesn't need your strength or power. It needs the authority of heaven, because only the authority of heaven can penetrate the darkness that is this gap. This gap will not be closed with human persuasion. It will not be closed with a master's degree in psychology.

Driving out unclean spirits

Matthew says he gave them authority to do two things. The first was to cast out, or drive out, unclean spirits. The second was to heal, or cure, sickness and disease. Both of them require the authority of heaven. Neither of them can be accomplished by your own strength.

Like I said, I've been in ministry for a little while. I've dealt with people with unclean spirits. I've dealt with people who have a spirit of addiction, a spirit of lust, a spirit of gambling, a spirit of — you name it, I've seen it. And never once have I seen an unclean spirit say, "You know what? I've tortured this guy long enough. I think I'll leave now." I've never seen it happen. What I have seen happen is: through pain and suffering and tears and failure and dependence and submission and discipline and the Word of God and the daily graces of church attendance and small groups, I've seen God drive out unclean spirits almost against their will. Drive the unclean spirit out — because that's what's required. It requires the authority of heaven.

I'm not smart enough. I don't have enough education. Even the smartest counselor in the world — the problems that created the gap cannot be solved by those vessels, by those tools.

You need a different tool set. You need a different power source. That's the authority of heaven. So Jesus says, "I'm going to give you what you need to drive out darkness."

And notice, he's driving it out. He's not cooperating. He's not managing the darkness. He's not saying, "Hey guys, it's really bad out there. Let's try to come to some peace agreement where we can just make it livable for the next little while." No — we've got to drive this out, because until this sin is gone, until this idolatry is gone, until this brokenness is gone, this gap is going to grow and spread. Only the authority of heaven can shrink this gap.

And the point is having workers who believe that. The point is having workers who are on mission, who are quick to say to themselves, "It's not me, but God. It's not my wisdom, but God's power. And so I'm going to pray as though that's the case. I'm not going to put all my hope in my human persuasion. I'm not going to put my hope in my speaking abilities. I'm not going to put my hope in this one little book, or this one little event, or this one little conversation with my prodigal son or daughter. My hope is in heaven. My hope is in the Lord. Only the Lord has the power to drive out this unclean spirit."

Healing disease and sickness

The same thing with healing disease and sickness. We said last week [October 25],[2] when we looked at these two words, that it's a twofold image. We used the analogy of a drive shaft being bent. When a drive shaft gets bent, it wears out the bearings, and they become warped and tired and weary and not operational. That is the imagery of disease and sickness. Disease is that your body and your soul have become disordered. They've become misaligned, broken in a real physical way. It's not just physical brokenness; it's the brokenness of the heart and the soul. It's jacked.

And what the power of God can do is come in and heal it. It can heal that broken wound in your heart that you got from your dad. It can heal that broken wound that you got from your boyfriend in high school. It can heal that thing in you that got twisted. And because it's been twisted for however many years — decades, it's been twisted — you're so tired. You're so weary. You think that it's hopeless: "I'm never going to get free of this. I'm never going to have a life." And only heaven — only heaven — can bring power that straightens and heals your soul, and gives you strength so you're not weak, and gives you hope again, and gives you purpose again, and gives you a vision of what could be, and the energy you need to pursue it with all of your heart.

A preacher cannot do that. A Christian husband or wife cannot do that on their own. They need the keys of heaven. And that's what Jesus says: pray like you need those keys. It's God's mission. They're God's people. Only God's power can fix it. So pray to the Lord of the harvest. He'll help you cast out unclean spirits. He'll help you cure disease and sickness.

3. God gets the glory

As you minister, never forget: it's all about him. And so, as you're sent, give God the glory. Here's what happens when you forget that God gets the glory: when the fruit doesn't materialize, it's going to crush you. You put all your eggs in your basket, and when you fail to deliver, it's a bad day. Trust me, I've been there. You thought, "If only I could say the right things in the right way, and if we could just do this little process, then it's going to magically get better." And as soon as it doesn't, you take it personally, and it crushes you. You're crushed beneath the weight of the failure. Why? Because your hope was wrongly placed. Your confidence wasn't in the Lord.

But when your confidence is in the Lord and things go great — guess what? God gets the glory. And when your hope is in the Lord and it goes really poorly, and your worst nightmare comes true, and the gap widens — guess what? God gets the glory. Either way, my hope is in the Lord.

And Jesus wants his disciples to learn this, because if they don't learn this, they won't succeed. They have to come to a point where they realize: this is God's harvest. These are God's people. It's his mission. It's his power. You've got to unlearn yourself. You've got to get over yourself. You've got to decrease and let him increase. You've got to die to yourself. And maybe then God can use you. But you're just a jar of clay. The riches, the glory, the pleasure — that's him. He's using earthen vessels to do what only he can do.

And so pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest. He gathers the right people. He sends them on mission. He gives them the authority and the power that they need to drive out unclean spirits and to heal disease and sickness. And he gets the glory when the gap is shrunk.

The Twelve

After Jesus gives them the power, Matthew lists off their names. We're almost done — I promise. I can feel you fidgeting. Don't worry, we're almost there.

He lists the names. First, Simon Peter — or Simon, who's called Peter — then Andrew, his brother. Then James, son of Zebedee, and John. So the first group of four — Peter, Andrew, James, and John — they're all fishermen. They're part of the inner circle. Then Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew the tax collector. And then the last four: James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

But notice: Judas gets a special little extra — "who betrayed him," or "who also betrayed him" — which none of the others get. Matthew a little bit — he's "the tax collector" — but only Judas gets commentary: "Oh, and this is what he did." And sometimes you can read

that and go, "Man, Judas — he's such a Judas, you know. He's so bad." I've said the same thing.

But it's crazy. This word translated "betrayed" is built on the Greek word "to give." And so what you see is a framing between verse 1 and verse 4, built around this main verb, "to give." Jesus gave them the authority of heaven to close the gap. Judas gave Jesus over to be crucified. And so even though Judas had received from the Lord Jesus the power to heal — the power of heaven — still he gave him over. You see how it's working? It's hard to see in the English, but boom, it's right there in the Greek. You cannot help but see it. It's the same word, *didōmi*, except down here it has a little preposition, *para*: *paradidōmi*. He handed him over. He gave him over.

The gap of grace

What does that mean? It means that Matthew is foreshadowing another gap. I don't know how else to say it. It's another gap. What's the gap? It's the gap of grace.

This is what happens. Judas betrays Jesus in Matthew 26. He betrays him with a kiss. And when that happens, one of the disciples tries to cut off the ear of the high priest's servant[3] who came to arrest Jesus, and Jesus said, "Nope, we're not going to do that. I'm going in." And when he surrenders, it says that all of the disciples deserted him. All of the disciples deserted him — and what else? — and they ran away.

So before you point your finger at — what's his name? Judas. Before you point the finger at Judas: the other eleven aren't special. Judas might have betrayed him, but we all desert him. Which means we've got a gap problem.

And what Jesus did is he closed that gap all by himself. He walked alone into Jerusalem. He was falsely tried, beaten, tortured within an inch of his life. He was nailed to a Roman beam of wood, in his hands and his feet. He was hoisted up and executed in front of everybody. And so many people focus on the physical torture of the crucifixion. But the thing that was really significant about the crucifixion was what Dustin talked about last week [November 1]:[4] Jesus in that moment was absorbing the wrath of God. He was paying the penalty for your sin and for mine. He was paying for the sin of Judas. He was paying for the Twelve who ran. He was paying for sins past, present, and future. So when he cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" — he was forsaken by God so that he could close the gap.

And what gap is that? It's the gap between God being just and loving. The gap between God being holy and merciful. In the early service we read Exodus 34, where God reveals his name to Moses: "The Lord, the Lord … slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love," et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. He's so forgiving. He's so kind. He's so good. And yet he by no means clears the guilty. You wouldn't want a God who wasn't just. That's not a good God.

But that's a problem. There's a gap. Because the God we need to be just is a God who is just toward us. And if we're broken and sinful, his justice requires our punishment. Our sin requires his wrath. The harvest is plentiful in your life and in my life. We deserve death.

But in order to save us from that death — in order to give us a harvest of grace instead of wrath — Jesus drank the cup. Jesus drank the cup of wrath. And Jesus could uniquely absorb the wrath of God because he wasn't just a human. He was God in the flesh. And he wasn't a pretty good person; he was a perfect person. And so he absorbed the penalty that you and I deserve. And then he buried it into the cross, and he sent it to hell where it deserves. And now anyone who would repent and put their faith in Jesus will be justified — meaning it will be just as if you had never sinned. Paul says this in Romans 3: because of Jesus, God is now both the just and the justifier of those who believe — because Jesus closed the gap.

Respond

And so as we enter into this time of worship with the Lord's Supper, and we take the cup, let us not forget: this is the cup of God's wrath that Jesus absorbed into his body. Jesus says, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And maybe this morning you need to remember, because you have forgotten how to fix the gap. You've been trying to fix the gap of your sin with effort and church attendance and, you know, hope and a prayer. And the reality is there's only one way to close the gap of sin, and it's through repentance and faith in the one who closed it for you. Some gaps only God can fill, and this is one of them.

If you've never received Jesus and the forgiveness that he brings, then this morning you can do that. There's a card on the chair in front of you. You can just — right there where you're seated — say, "God, I admit I'm a sinner. I believe Jesus died for my sins, and I confess him as Savior and Lord. I believe he alone can close the gap."

Others of us this morning need to be reminded that the mission gap that we see is God's mission gap. And you've been trying to close it yourself. You're so tired. You are stressed. You're angry. You are done. And maybe this morning God brought you here to remind you: "That's my gap. That's my person. That brokenness is something only I can heal. Only I can fix it." And he's way better than Donald Trump — only he can fix it.

But you've got to give him something to work with. Which means: when he calls, respond. When he calls you in, come; draw near. Stop hesitating. Stop waiting. Stop the excuses. Stop whatever you're doing that's postponing the thing that he wants to do in your life right now. Stop it, and come, and let him give you what you need. Let him give you grace. Let him give

you patience. Let him give you strength. Let him give you forgiveness. Let him give you the endurance. Let him give you what you need to see him close the gap — because you will not do it on your own. It will crush you in the process.

And so let's respond as the Lord leads, in light of those things.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "13 disciples"; Matthew 10:1–2 says Jesus summoned his *twelve* disciples, named as the twelve apostles. Source: Matthew 10:1–4 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "last week." Wes's previous sermon, where he explained "disease" and "sickness" (Matthew 9:35) with the bent drive shaft analogy, was "A Leader You Can Trust" on October 25, 2026. Guest preachers spoke on November 1 and 8. Source: Broadview delivery transcript, "A Leader You Can Trust," October 25, 2026 (Matthew 9:35–36), and the Master Sermon Index. ↩
3. Transcript note: spoken as "the ear of the soldier"; Matthew 26:51 says the disciple "struck the high priest's servant and cut off his ear" (John 18:10 names him Malchus and the disciple as Peter). Source: Matthew 26:51 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩
4. Transcript note: spoken as "last week"; Dustin Malone's sermon on Christ bearing God's wrath ("The Magnificent Swap," 2 Corinthians 5:21) was preached November 1, 2026, two weeks earlier. Vernon Ferguson preached on November 8. Source: Broadview Master Sermon Index and the delivery transcripts for November 1 and 8, 2026. ↩