

## OPENING PRAYER

### Proper 28<sup>1</sup>

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written  
for our learning:  
Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn,  
and inwardly digest them,  
that we may embrace and ever hold fast  
the blessed hope of everlasting life,  
which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ;  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## MATTHEW 10<sup>2</sup>

### The Twelve Apostles

10 Then Jesus[a] summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. 2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus;[b] 4 Simon the Cananaean and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

### The Mission of the Twelve

5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not take a road leading to gentiles, and do not enter a Samaritan town, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’[c] 8 Cure the sick; raise the dead; cleanse those with a skin disease; cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. 9 Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, 10 no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff, for laborers deserve their food. 11 Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. 12 As you enter the house, greet it. 13 If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. 15 Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

### Coming Persecutions

16 “I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. 17 Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues, 18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the gentiles. 19 When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you at that time, 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. 21 Sibling will betray sibling to death and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, 22 and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in this town, flee to the next, for truly I tell you, you will not have finished going through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

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<sup>1</sup> Episcopal Book of Common Prayer pp.236

<sup>2</sup> All Bible quotations and footnotes are from Biblegateway.com, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE) Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

24 “A disciple is not above the teacher nor a slave above the master; 25 it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

### **Whom to Fear**

26 “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. 27 What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. 28 Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.[d] 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 And even the hairs of your head are all counted. 31 So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

32 “Everyone, therefore, who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven, 33 but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

### **Not Peace, but a Sword**

34 “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword.

35 For I have come to set a man against his father,  
and a daughter against her mother,  
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law,  
36 and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.

37 “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,  
and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me,  
38 and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.  
39 Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

### **Rewards**

40 “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.  
41 Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward,  
and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous, 42 and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

### **Footnotes**

10.1 Gk *he*

10.3 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) read *Lebbaeus* or *Lebbaeus* called *Thaddaeus*

10.7 Or *is at hand*

10.28 Gk *Gehenna*

**OVERVIEW<sup>3</sup>**

**The Mission Discourse (8:1-10:42)**

The sources for 10:1-42 are mainly Mark and Q and is in the context of sending out the 12 disciples as apostles (Gk “*sent ones*”, messengers/heralds) with authority. Jesus gives them his power to proclaim the kingdom (10:17; 4:17). The directives have the ongoing power to influence later missionaries in the early Matthean community.

The controversies for disciples/apostles we will focus on in Chapter 10 are: mission (10:5); division and sword (10:34-6); and taking up your cross (10:39).

**10:1-4 The Twelve Apostles**

Opens with an implicit call to imitate Jesus as a missionary. The disciples, who until now have been in the background, will repeat his deeds of healing and exorcism.

**10:5-15 The Mission of the Twelve**

10:5-15 A list of instructions for doing missionary work.

10:5 Appears only in Matthew

5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not take a road leading to gentiles, and do not enter a Samaritan town, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

The 10:5 Contradiction in Matthew:

It seems a surprising note in Matthew’s story. Jesus has already been welcome by gentile Magi (Chapter 2), located in fulfillment of scripture in Galilee of the nations (4:15), celebrated in all of Syria and the Decapolis (Gentile regions) (4:24-25), responded to a Roman’ soldier’s plea for help (8:5-13), and exorcised a Gentile demoniac on the non-Jewish side of the lake (8:28-34). Jesus own comments in response to the centurion (8:10-12) point decisively away from the idea of exclusivity for Jews in the presence of the kingdom of heaven. However, these are incidental encounters with Gentiles versus the focus of Jesus’ mission and ministry.

10:5-15 Jesus defines and restricts his mission and the mission of his disciples to the Jews twice in Matthew. Yet in 28:19 the resurrected Jesus extends his mission to “all nations”.

<b>Matthew 10:5</b>	<b>Matthew 15:24</b>	<b>Matthew 28:19-20</b>
5 “Do not take a road leading to gentiles, and do not enter a Samaritan town, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”	24 He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”	19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.”

Some early Christian sources interpreted the final commission to refer to pagans only (1 Clement 16:6). Others believe that the mission to the Jews was never abrogated. Jesus himself seemed to restrict his own mission to Jews only, the few Gentiles who encountered him (the centurion (8:5-13) and the Canaanite woman (15:24-28) are the exceptions, and they came to him. Matthew presents his gospel with Gentiles already represented in the genealogy; and their entry into the church by faith is foreshadowed by the genealogy and the two previous encounters of Jesus. Yet Matthew maintains fidelity

<sup>3</sup> Sources include notes from Barton and Muddiman, Biblegateway.com, Brown, Raymond E., S.S., Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV Version, Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr., France, R. T., Levine, Amy-Jill, and Marc Zvi Brettler, Morris, Leon, and Wright, N.T. (Tom).

to the Jewish tradition, and to Jesus own activities, by noting that the first stage of the mission is to the people of Israel.

Why would Matthew have adopted such a perspective on mission and what did it mean to him theologically?<sup>4</sup>

1. There was a stubborn historical fact, the Gentile mission did not begin until after the resurrection. There was no way to get around the fact that Jesus was primarily ministering to the circumcised.
2. The focus of Jesus upon his own people is a sign of God's covenant faithfulness. God offers salvation to the Jews first and then the Gentiles. This is proof that God is trustworthy and keeps his promises.
3. Matthew appears to have interpreted the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus as eschatological events which mark a decisive turning point in salvation history. The Gentiles are now welcome into the early church to allow God's promises to the Gentiles in the OT to be realized.

What is the origin of 10:5?<sup>5</sup>

1. Does the saying go back to Jesus himself?
2. Was it manufactured in the post-Easter period by the Jewish-Christian community opposed to the Gentile mission?
3. Or did Matthew himself create it in order to advance his own understanding of salvation history?

The authors, Davies and Allison, are torn between 1 and 2. 3 seems unlikely because if Matthew did invent the saying he could have made it more consistent with what will follow. It is up to the reader to seek a theological insight that harmonizes the two passages. (Note: Harmonizing a conflict may detract from the truth. There may be an inherent contradiction between Jesus of Nazareth, before resurrection, and Jesus Christ as discerned by the early Jesus movement.)

10:11-15 concern the reception and rejection of the missionaries and their response. The gift of peace is not just a social convention. Given the prophecies of peace for the eschatological age (Isa 52:7) and the eschatological context of the disciples/apostles mission, their greeting should be viewed as a sign of the inbreaking of the kingdom: God is bringing shalom (peace). But when a place does not receive the Good News, the Messiah's disciples shake the dust of the town off their sandals as they leave it. This action is a public demonstration of the breaking of communion and the repudiation of responsibility. It intimates a fate worse than that which befell Sodom and Gomorrah.

**10:16-25 Coming Persecutions**

The prophecies of affliction can describe Jesus own mission experience and apply to the post-Easter period to include later missionaries. Matthew passes from past to present and to the future without notice. Matthew's typification of the disciples is that they stand for later Christians as well as the period of Jesus' ministry. The eschatological character of the sufferings, reinforced by the parallels in 24:9-14 as well as in Jewish apocalyptic literature, imply that the pre- and post-Easter periods both belong to the messianic woes and will only be ended when the Son of Man comes on the clouds of heaven (Daniel 7). The problem is that in Daniel the persecutions is coming from Gentile invaders who oppress Jews. Daniel represents the loyal remnant of Judaism, i.e. some Jews collaborate with the oppressors.

10:16-23 reflects the passion narratives. The fate of the disciples is analogous to that of Jesus. Jesus too is handed over (26:45). He appears before the court of the Sanhedrin (26:59). He is whipped (20:19; 27:26). He is led before a governor (27:1-26). He is betrayed by a member of the group closest to him (26:47-56). And he is killed.

Chapter 10 is permeated by the implicit model of Jesus as a model missionary. 10:24-25 explicitly sets the mistreatment of Jesus beside the mistreatment of his disciples. Just as in 5:38-42, 10:17-23 shows that Jesus in his passion is the exemplar of suffering discipleship.

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<sup>4</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII, The International Critical Commentary Notes

<sup>5</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, Dale C. Jr. Matthew Volume II Chapters VIII-XVIII, The International Critical Commentary Notes

### The Holy Spirit in Matthew:

The Holy Spirit or Spirit, (the Spirit of God), is referred to multiple times in Matthew and is present in other Synoptic Gospels:

#### Birth Narrative:

“Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:35)

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:20)

#### Baptism:

(JohnBap) “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16, 22)

“And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God’s Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him.” (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 3:22)

#### Temptation:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. (Matthew 4:11; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1)

#### Persecution:

Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.” (Matthew 12:32; Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10, 12)

#### Great Commission

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)

The presence of the Spirit in times of crisis and difficulty was a key tenet of the early Jesus movement (10:19-20). Three observations about the Spirit and Matthew:

1. Matthew grounds Jesus’ birth, baptism and temptation with God’s initiative working through the Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus is the possessor of, and vehicle for, God’s Spirit. Later the disciples become vessels of the Spirit because they have been authorized by Jesus.
3. The promise of the Spirit is construed in eschatological terms. Judaism looked forward to a special outpouring of God’s spirit in the latter days. Thus it is possible that the promise of the Spirit is an eschatological motif<sup>6</sup>.

“Do not worry” (10:19) is the same verb to govern the disciples attitude to material provision and security (6:25-34) is applied here and implies do not worry but leave everything up to God. Matthew’s relatively few references to the Holy Spirit include references to the Spirit as active in both the ministry of Jesus

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<sup>6</sup> Albert Schweitzer in “*The Quest for the Historical Jesus*”, saw Matthew Chapter 10 as an eschatological chapter, “a prediction of the events of the “time of the end” events... in which the supernatural eschatological course of history will break through into the normal course (pp. 363).

(3:15; 4:1; 12:18; 12:28), and in various ways in the experience of God's people (empowering Mary's conception (1:18, 20), inspiring David's words (22:43)). But this is the only passage in which Matthew gives practical substance to the promise in 3:11 that Jesus will baptize people in the Holy Spirit, in that only here is a particular gift

10:23 is not a reference to the resurrection, Pentecost, or the destruction of the Temple. The missionary endeavor takes place in the latter days, and the suffering of the missionaries is the manifestation of the birth pangs which herald the advent God's new world.

The theme of the imitation of Christ becomes explicit on 10:24-25.

**10:26-33 Whom to Fear**

10:28 reveals the true meaning of death as an eschatological element of God's truth.

V29 declares God's sovereignty over the present. It leaves unanswered how God can be sovereign over a world where the saints suffer persecution and death? 10:30 offers the lesson from Job. God knows what we do not.

10:32-33 reflects a high Christology with acceptance/rejection of Jesus and those he sends out, being the basis for judgement in heaven. Receiving them is receiving him and rejecting them is rejecting him and God who sent him. Thus the mission of the disciples involves extending God's salvation to all.

**10:34-39 Not Peace, but a Sword**

V. 34 "I came" maybe an incidental revelation of something of Christ's person. It is not an expression most people would use about why they came into the world. Had he had an experience prior to his earthly birth, and his coming to earth was for a purpose?

Matthew 10:34-36	Luke 12:49-53
	49 "I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already ablaze! 50 I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed!
34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword.	51 Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division!
35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, 36 and one's foes will be members of one's own household.	52 From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; 53 they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

V. 34 "I have not come to bring peace" is a startling statement for a messiah. Actually the word peace is seldom used in Matthew. (10:13 and here.) The peace he came to bring is not simply the absence of strife, it is the peace that comes from overcoming sin and the bringing in of the salvation of God. That means there will be a war with evil and its supporters.

V. 35 The "sword" Jesus brings is conflict not a literal sword. The conflict is between good and evil. But his presence, actions and teachings are divisive and cause strife. The sword could be representative of Jesus as a divisive figure, or the truth as a cause of division and strife.

Note: vv. 34-36 Some of the commentaries use a Pauline or Johannine lens to interpret this text. The text could be as straight forward as saying “I have embarked on this ministry to” and not an elevated statement of pre-existence or Christological identity.

10:34 is about the proper interpretation of the present, and the main point is this: the time of Jesus and his church is not, despite the presence of the kingdom of God, the messianic era of peace. Jesus has not come to “turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers (Malachi 4:6). The coming of Jesus means that the last struggle has begun, not the dawn of peace. Now more than ever is a time of confrontation. In other words, the advent of the kingdom must not lead to a utopian view of the here and now. Tribulation is still the believers’ lot.

Matthew 10:37 has been heavily edited to create two parallel statements that would match those in 10:39. 10:37 is all but universally by commentaries credited to Jesus. The statement says that if family ties stand in the way of discipleship, then they must be broken. It is not an attack on family as much as a statement of priorities.

10:38-9 For Matthew the cross is the outstanding symbol of self-denial. *Taking up the cross* appears five times on the synoptics: Source Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; Matthew 16:24; and Source Q: Matthew 10:38; Luke 14:27. Mark’s version appears to be the older version.

There is no consensus on what the original meaning was of “taking up his cross”. The different interpretations include:

1. The expression was a pre-Christian catch phrase, perhaps associated with political revolutionaries – Jesus is using it to prepare his disciples for punishment by the Romans;
2. Jesus foreseeing the fate that in fact befell him, demanded of his followers preparation for the same or similar fate.
3. Or the church later formulated the saying with the view of martyrdom as a possible outcome for followers.
4. Jesus, whose audiences were familiar with the sight of a condemned man carrying his cross, asked his listeners to take up their crosses in a metaphorical manner; taking the road to discipleship and self-denial is like carrying a cross to the site of execution;
5. The saying understood metaphorically had to do with the mark of the Taw, the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet, sometimes represented with an X or a T and is God’s signature.
6. The saying originally referred to the suffering of Abraham’s son Isaac who had to carry the wood for his fire on his shoulders.

10:39 Because the sayings about self-denial and taking up one’s cross are joined in Mark, possibly Q and in John 12:26, the connection behind them must be very old. From a historical criticism standpoint, the authenticity of the statement is widely held academically, and the theme of self-denial was surely part of Jesus’ message.

The demand for loyalty is further brought out by relating to taking up the cross. In Jesus’ time the cross metaphor is something everyone would have seen and understood. It meant the total destruction of a person by the state. The loss of all claims to the self. The person who took up the way of the cross died to a whole way of life. Jesus demands from everyone who follows him nothing less than death of the self.

#### **10:40-42 Rewards**

The theme is compensation. Those who welcome the eschatological messengers of Jesus, welcome Jesus himself and so gain eschatological reward. The “little ones” are Christian missionaries. 10:42 is a word not for them but for others – those who, although not itinerants, can share in the Christian mission.

## REFLECTION

Does the conflict over Jesus' original mission and the later mission of his followers matter to you? Matthew assures us that the Holy Spirit will be with us in times of conflict, have you experienced it that way?  
How can God be sovereign over the world and his disciples still suffer persecution and death for their faith?

## CLOSING PRAYER

We thank you, heavenly Father,  
for the witness of your apostle and evangelist,  
Matthew, to the Gospel of Beatitude and Grace  
which you have given us in your Son, our Savior;  
and we pray that, after his example,  
we may with ready wills and hearts obey  
the calling of our Lord to follow him;  
through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

*The Rev. Zoila Schoenbrun*

## GOSPEL COMPARISON<sup>7</sup>

Pericope <sup>8</sup>	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Commissioning the Twelve	10:1-16	6:7-11 3:13-19	6:12-16 9:1-6 10:3	
The Coming Fate and Persecution of the Disciples	10:17-25 24:9-14	13:9-13	6:40 12:11-12 21:12-19	13:16
Exhortation to Fearless Confession	10:26-33		12:2-9	
Divisions within Households	10:34-36		12:51-53	
Conditions of Discipleship	10:37-39		14:25-27 17:33	12:25
Rewards of Discipleship	10:40-42	9:41	10:16	13:20

<sup>7</sup> Source: <http://www.gospelparallels.com/>

<sup>8</sup> An extract from a text, especially a passage from the Bible, "a book of pericopes"

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