

WEEKLY GROUP BIBLE STUDIES
PART 1 (MATTHEW)

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES



INTRODUCTION

Jesus knew the time would come when his disciples would need to be strong and courageous to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth, overcoming whatever problems, pressure or persecution would come along the way. To prepare them for this future time, Jesus readies them for a specific outreach mission and reveals to them prophecies and promises for their future; then He sends them out. These precious words apply to all Jesus' followers.

As we reflect on Jesus' words together, prayerfully consider what God is saying to you personally and to us as a church. May each study give us fresh strength and courage through the promises of Jesus for all His disciples!



STUDY 1: GOD PROVIDES POWER AND PEOPLE

A. RELATE

Share about a time you were serving God or others, and He provided for you (E.g. unexpected help or resources that came at just the right time).

B. READ

[Matthew 10:1-15](#)

C. REFLECT

As Jesus readies the disciples for a special mission, He gives them authority, instructions and restrictions. There are specific things He wants them to experience on the mission in preparation for the future. Consider what Jesus wanted the disciples to learn and why, and what this means to us.

If you would like to watch “The Chosen” depiction of the sending of the disciples click on the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ol9AHBcW1Fg>

D. RESPOND

1. What authority and responsibility did Jesus give to His disciples in this whole passage? What does this reveal to you about the nature of God’s kingdom?
2. Who were the disciples to focus their time and energy reaching out to and what does this reveal about both God’s heart and ours? (See also Matt 18:12-14)
3. Jesus reveals what must be a deep motivation for His followers: “Freely you have received; freely give”. What does this mean, and how should it drive our lives? What would the opposite look like?

STUDY 1: GOD PROVIDES POWER AND PEOPLE

4. What were the things Jesus told them not to bring and what do you think Jesus wanted them to learn and experience through this (v9-10)?
5. What are the disciples to do when entering a town or village and what kind of interaction were they to have with these people (v11-12)? What does this reveal about the way that God provides when we are on mission?

E. RELY

- Prayerfully consider how this passage applies to you in the following:
 - o What authority & responsibilities Jesus gives to us as His followers?
 - o Who Jesus wants us to spend our time and energy reaching out to?
 - o How God provides provision, people and places for mission?
- Who are some potential believers you could partner with to reach others?
- Pray with one another for fresh power, provision, people, places and peace for His purpose and mission for our lives.



STUDY 2: WISE AS SERPENTS AND INNOCENT AS DOVES

A. RELATE

Share about a time when you or someone you know experienced persecution or pressure because of being a follower of Jesus.

B. READ

[Matthew 10:16-26](#)

C. REFLECT

In the previous study, Jesus' words focused specifically on the mission they were about to go on. In these verses, Jesus speaks to a time they will face in the future and how they are to be ready for such times. May these words of Jesus give us strength and confidence to be bold in sharing Jesus with others!

D. RESPOND

1. Jesus explains that He sends His disciples out as sheep among wolves, which is why we should be wise as serpents and innocent as doves (v16). What does this reveal about the environment Jesus' followers live in and how we should be ready?
2. Jesus says "be on guard" because there will come times His followers shall be witnesses for Him in front of people in authority. What do we learn about Jesus' promise that can ease our anxieties about how to respond? (v19-20).
3. How do you respond to the painful reality that sometimes people despise us because we believe in Jesus, even those in our family (v21-22)? Have you experienced this before? What do you think it means to "stand firm till the end"?

STUDY 2: WISE AS SERPENTS AND INNOCENT AS DOVES

4. Jesus explains that: “The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!”. What truths does Jesus want us to understand? How does this change our perspective on being Jesus followers?

5. Jesus closing words in this segment are: “So do not be afraid”. How do these words encourage you when it comes to sharing Jesus with others?

E. RELY

- Pray for those who have persecuted you and for persecuted believers globally (<https://www.opendoors.org.au/get-involved/prayer/>).
- Pray that God would:
 - o Fill you with boldness
 - o Grow in us wisdom and godliness in how interact with unbelievers
 - o Give opportunities and words to share Jesus with others



STUDY 3: PROCLAIM JESUS, FOR YOU ARE PRECIOUS

A. RELATE

Share a time when knowing you were loved gave you confidence.

B. READ

[Matthew 10:26-33](#)

C. REFLECT

Up till this point in Matthew's gospel, Jesus has revealed many things to the disciples privately, but the time has come for them to publicly share these things with the world. Naturally, they might be afraid to speak these things which is why Jesus encourages them to not be afraid. May we too be emboldened by His words!

D. RESPOND

1. When publicly sharing Jesus' teachings with others, Jesus anticipates the disciples will be afraid. What do we learn about: who we should not fear; who we should fear and why (v28)? What is the difference between fearing God and fearing man?
2. By comparing God's loving care of the sparrows to His care for us (v29-31), Jesus gives a beautiful reason that we can be courageous when sharing His teaching with others. What do we learn through this comparison?
3. Why should the fact that we are so precious to God embolden us to share Him with others in the face of potential persecution or pain?
4. What do we learn about our acknowledgement or denial of God on earth; and its connection with Jesus' acknowledgement or denial of us before the Father in heaven? Why is this important to understand (v32-33)?

STUDY 3: PROCLAIM JESUS, FOR YOU ARE PRECIOUS

5. How do you personally respond to Jesus' call to proclaim His words to the world; His words alongside your fears; and His love against your worries?

E. RELY

Take some time to pray with each other for:

- Boldness to share Jesus' words with others and acknowledge Him before those who don't yet know Him
- Fear of man to be replaced by reverent awe of God
- A revelation of God's precious love and care for you



STUDY 4: SOMETIMES THE TRUTH DIVIDES

A. RELATE

Share a time when your faith in Jesus may have caused tension with someone.

B. READ

[Matthew 10:34-42](#)

C. REFLECT

Jesus continues His encouragement to the disciples, knowing that they will face fear and persecution in the future. In this specific passage, the call to follow Jesus gets more personal and challenging. The divisive nature of the gospel will lead to conflict potentially even within families, and it will mean some tough choices will need to be made about loving and following Jesus. As we reflect on this passage, may it inspire an even greater commitment to loving and following Him together!

D. RESPOND

1. Jesus reveals that His kingdom and His words of truth can sometimes divide communities, even families (v34-37). He uses the “Sword” as a metaphor for separating people who believe from others who do not. Why does that make things hard for Jesus followers?
2. Verse 37 reveals the choice that believers will need to make when loving and following Jesus is challenged or opposed by close family in their lives. What do we learn about the person who is worthy of Jesus and the person who is not?

STUDY 4: SOMETIMES THE TRUTH DIVIDES

3. Sometimes we oversimplify or downplay the meaning of taking up our cross and following Him. The path to the cross would mean public shame and humiliation; the destination of the cross was death. To follow Him therefore means to be willing to walk the path of humiliation and death together with Him. How do you respond to these words of Jesus?

4. What does v39 reveal to you about how we might lose life, but more importantly how we will find life?

5. What final truths and promises do we find in v40-42 to boldly share Jesus and His words with those around us?

6. Would you follow Jesus knowing it might cost you your job, your reputation, or close relationships? How do Jesus' words speak to this?

E. RELY

Share about:

- When following Jesus has led to tension or division in family or community.
- How Jesus' words are personally challenging your commitment to Him in light of special relationships in your life or your goals in life?

Pray for one another for strength and courage to daily take up our cross and follow Jesus on that path that is unashamed of humiliation, harm or death in His name. Pray also for believers who are facing risk of death or imprisonment for following Jesus.

This may be a good web resource to pray more purposefully:

<https://www.opendoors.org.au/get-involved/prayer/>

STUDY 5: THE DISCIPLES COMMISSIONED!

A. RELATE

Imagine it's the last time you gather with close Christian friends whom you will never see or speak to ever again. What would you say to them and why?

B. READ

[Matt 28:16-20](#)

C. REFLECT

After revealing Himself to His disciples on a number of occasions after His resurrection, Jesus instructs the disciples to meet Him on a mountain in Galilee. This would be His final visitation to His disciples before returning to God the Father in Heaven, and subsequently, the sending of the Spirit at Pentecost. As we read this account and Jesus commission to His disciples, receive these words with fresh faith and may we respond by being strong and courageous in obedience!

D. RESPOND

1. Before Jesus gave the disciples the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, He explained the authority He had now been given (v18. See also Matt 10:1). What is the extent and the scope of this authority?
2. How does Phil 2:5-11 add to our understanding of this authority?

STUDY 5: THE DISCIPLES COMMISSIONED!



[Phil 2:5-11 \(NIV\)](#)

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father

STUDY 5: THE DISCIPLES COMMISSIONED!

3. What do you think is the significance of “Therefore” between Jesus’ statement of His complete authority and the Great Commission given to His disciples (v19)?

4. After establishing He has all authority, Jesus commissions His disciples. What is the significance of each unique part of the call?

- a. Go and make disciples of all nations
- b. Baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- c. Teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you

If you were to summarise it in a few key words, what are the main aspects or big headings of the great commission?

5. Jesus closes the commission with a promise: “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”. Why is this promise so important for the disciples and for us? How does it link with God’s promise in Joshua 1:9?

6. For the Great Commission to be an integrated and more regular part of your life:

- a. What changes would you need to make?
- b. Who would you start reaching out to?
- c. How would you go about it based on Jesus’ words in this passage?
- d. Is there any support or help you would enlist?

E. RELY

Pray about the changes you’d like to make, the people you’d like to reach out to, the help you might need.

Pray for the Spirit’s fresh empowering and commit to taking some simple steps of faith to obey Jesus’ Great Commission.

NOTES:

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