

Lesson 6

Proper 6

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 9:35–10:20

In the second year of His ministry, called the “Year of Popularity,” Jesus focused on Galilee. He went out from Capernaum to the towns and villages. The Galileans were a mixed bag of people and included many Gentiles, so much so that Galilee was sometimes called “Galilee of the Nations.” Galilee was far enough away from Jerusalem that the Jewish communities did not feel the controlling presence of the Council (Sanhedrin) as strongly as those in Judea did. Large crowds came to Jesus, bringing the sick, the infirm, and the troubled to be blessed with healing. During this second year, Jesus called the Twelve to follow Him. The instruction of the Twelve occupied much of Jesus’ time and attention, and on several occasions He took them out of Galilee, away from the crowds, for that purpose.

82. What elements made up the ministry of Jesus? What motivated Jesus in His hands-on ministry to people in need?

The ancient world thought of the viscera as the seat of the emotions because that’s where we usually feel strong emotions such as compassion. The Greek word also referred to this and might best be rendered “His heart was stirred.” Hearing of Jesus’ deep compassion is indeed comforting.

83. What does “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” say about Jesus’ main concern for the crowds of people? How is this a good description also of many people in our crowded modern world? Why does supplying workers for the harvest begin with prayer to the Lord of the harvest?

A principle in teaching little children says, “If it’s not in the hand, it’s not in the head.” It says that they do not learn by having concepts or procedures explained to them, but by actively being involved in doing the concepts or procedures. To an extent, this is true of adults too, so Jesus gave the Twelve opportunities to learn by doing “fieldwork.” He sent them out to minister in His name. The Greek *apostello*, “sent out,” comes across in our English *apostle*.

84. Why were the apostles at this point still restricted to working among Jews? What message were they to announce? (See Matthew 3:1–2; 4:17.)

85. What was Jesus encouraging with His “You received without paying; give without pay”? How were their personal needs to be supplied? Why would their preaching result in such a strong either/or responsibility on the part of their hearers?

86. Jesus gives the same authority and responsibility to the Church today in our apostolic mission. How has the assignment changed? How is the message different? How are both shrewdness and innocence still important in today’s mission?

87. How do you reconcile Jesus’ “give without pay” with the Church of today having professional, paid clergy? (See 1 Corinthians 9:3–18.) What advantages and what dangers are there in having professional clergy who are paid by those whom they serve?

The Old Testament Lesson: Exodus 19:2–8

Israel had witnessed the mighty deeds of the Lord as He called them out of Egypt to go to the Promised Land as His chosen people—death of the firstborn had struck every home in Egypt except those where the first Passover was being eaten and where the blood of the lamb was on doorpost and lintel; the waters of the Red Sea had parted to allow their crossing on dry land and then had returned to drown the pursuing Egyptians; they had been sustained in the wilderness by the Lord’s provision of manna in the morning and quail in the evening and water from the rock; the attacking Amalekites were defeated as Moses held his hands up in blessing over the battlefield. And now Israel was camped at the base of the mountain that had been their immediate destination (Exodus 3:10–12).

Mount Sinai, which means “desert,” is in the southeast region of the Sinai Peninsula. It rises to some seven thousand feet in elevation. This “mountain of God” (Exodus 18:5) was the site of Yahweh’s appearance to Moses in the burning bush. When Moses later led his newly freed people to the mountain, he became the mediator of the covenant that Yahweh established with Israel as a nation—the covenant He had initiated with their ancestor Abraham six hundred years earlier. (See Genesis 12:1–4.) God interacted with Israel through Moses. Through Moses, He gave the Moral Law, the Ten Commandments; the ceremonial laws that governed their religious practices under the covenant of grace; and a system of civil laws aimed especially at their years as nomads on their way to their homeland. Israel revered Moses as the greatest of the prophets, the Lawgiver, the one who met with the Lord “face to face” (Exodus 33:11).

88. In establishing the covenant, how did the Lord again show that He is the initiator of His relationship with His people? (See Deuteronomy 7:6–9; John 15:16.) What was to be Israel’s response to His initiative? What assurance would be theirs as they kept the covenant?

89. How did the elders respond on behalf of the people? How faithful were the Israelites in keeping their promise? (See Exodus 32:1–4.) Why did the Lord never give up His love for Israel? (See Isaiah 54:5–10.)

90. How has God extended His covenant of grace to us? When have we responded to His initiative in the covenant?

91. How does this Old Testament Lesson tie in with today's Holy Gospel?

The Epistle for the Day: Romans 5:6–15

No words emphasize the gracious nature of salvation more clearly than “while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly” and “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Salvation is not something we work at; it is the work of God for us and in us.

92. We are justified and reconciled to God by the blood, by the death, of His Son. That's an accomplished fact. How then are we saved even more by His life?

93. Most religions encourage people to serve God. How does our Christian faith lead us to enjoy God?

Paul contrasted Adam and Jesus and the effect they and their actions had on all of humanity. It is the contrast between sin and righteousness, between death and life, between judgment and grace. Through the willful disobedience of one man, Adam, spiritual death, innate sinfulness that inevitably expresses itself in sinning, came to all. In contrast, God acted in one man, the Second Adam, His own Son born of woman as Jesus the Christ, to win righteousness and renewal of spiritual life for all, which is effectuated as His free gift of grace to all whom the Holy Spirit leads to believe in Jesus Christ and live in that faith.

Paul's opening words in verse 12 are a “seat of doctrine” for what is called original sin. Paul's sweeping words reach out to include every human being and place all of humanity under the reign of sin and death. The first page of *The New England Primer*, the first book printed in America, an alphabet book, reflected this as it taught: “In Adam's Fall, we sin-ned all.” Paul began his thought here with “just as,” but having stated his premise, he digressed, eager to give the argument that backs up his sweeping statement. At the end of the chapter, he picked up his premise again to state also the other side: “so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

94. Paul wrote, “Sin is not counted where there is no law,” but how did he then show that sin was present and did indeed have its effect also on people who lived and sinned without awareness of God's Law?

95. The Law instructs people in the true way of life, but coming as it does to people who are already sinners, what is always its first effect? (See Romans 3:19–20; 5:20; 7:7–13.)

96. In what sense was Adam “a type of the one who was to come”?

97. In what significant way is “the free gift” radically different from “the trespass”?