

Expanding His Reach

This Week's Readings at Mass

- ▶ Exodus 19:2-6a • Requirements of the Covenant at Sinai
- ▶ Romans 5:6-11 • Sinners Saved by Christ
- ▶ Matthew 9:36-10:8 • The Compassion of Jesus; Mission of the Twelve



Jesus is in the prime of his public ministry here as he sends the 12 apostles out to expand his work. People have been flocking to him as his reputation as a healer and great teacher grows, and he can no longer personally minister to everyone who needs his help.

Upon seeing the crowds of people harassed and helpless (remember that the Jewish people lived under the brutal occupation of the Romans) Jesus knows he needs others to extend his reach. He tells his 12 apostles to pray for more helpers, even as he sends them out to continue his work. Notice that Jesus gives them the power to do everything he has been doing: proclaim the good news that the reign of God is near, cure the sick, cast out demons, and even raise the dead! Clearly, Jesus wasn't selfish about keeping power for himself. In telling the apostles to pray for more laborers for the harvest, he suggests that others beyond their circle of 12 will be given the power to do what he was asking them to do too.

At this point, Jesus tells the apostles to focus on ministering to the community of the Jews, not expanding into Samaritan territory or Gentile (non-Jewish) territory. Of course, as a life-long Jew, that seemed the expected place for Jesus and his Jewish friends to start. (That is where the Jew Paul began, too.) Later in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, we will read stories of Jesus, the apostles, Paul, and later followers ex-



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"You have seen how I treated the Egyptians and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my treasured possession among all peoples."

Sheepish Question:

How does my church keep God's covenant?

panding their ministry and reach into Samaritan and Gentile communities.

Questions of the Week

1 Does it ever occur to you that Jesus might be asking you to do some of the same things he asked his 12 apostles to do? What might it look like for you to proclaim the good news, heal the sick, or cast out demons today?

2 Some people are called to work within and minister to the community they were born into, while others are called to move outside to a different community. What about you?

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