Ministering Like The Master

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[0:01] Well if we could this evening with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, could we turn to the Gospel according to Matthew in chapter 9. The Gospel according to Matthew in chapter 9, it's on page 814, if you're using the Pew Bible.

And we're reading just the closing verses of that chapter. Matthew chapter 9, we're reading at verse 35. I want to begin this evening by asking the question, what is a minister?
What is a minister? We talk about going in for the ministry. We talk about full-time pastoral ministry. We talk about being a minister of the Gospel.
But what is a minister? And in one sense, just like the question, what is a Christian? It's a relatively easy question to answer, but more difficult to live out.
Because a Christian is someone who has denied self, they have taken up their cross, and they are daily following after Jesus. A Christian is someone who has confessed Jesus Christ as Lord over their life, and they are living in light of that confession.
[2:02] But a minister? What is a minister? Well, he's first of all a Christian. And that's something a minister should never forget. He's saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

He's washed in the blood of Christ. He's adopted in the beloved. He's clothed with the righteousness of Christ. And he's loved with an everlasting love. A minister is a Christian.
But a minister is also called to serve. And yes, as Christians, we all have a ministry. We're all called to minister to one another. We're all called to serve in the communities that we're part of.
But without doubt, there is a specific calling placed upon a man when he's set apart and called by the Lord of the harvest to labor in the harvest field.
And like it is for every minister, that call, it's personal, it's powerful, and it's persuasive. Where you can't do anything else but submit to the authority and the Lordship of Jesus Christ and humbly enter into the harvest field.
[3:13] And you know, there are many books that have been written on how to be a minister. There are many, many books. But there's one book that I read years ago that was written by a man called Stuart Oliott.

Stuart Oliott became a minister at the age of 21. And now at the age of 76, he's still preaching all over the world. But Stuart Oliott, he wrote a little book called Ministering Like the Master.
Ministering Like the Master. And in the book, he talks about the way to preach, to state, illustrate, and apply. But the title, Ministering Like the Master, it means that the example that a minister must follow.
It's not only the example of other ministers, but the example of their master, Jesus Christ. And that's what we see in these verses here in Matthew chapter 9.
Jesus gives an example of what a laborer for the harvest field should look like. And Jesus gives the example by being the example.
[4:14] Because in these verses, Jesus teaches us how to minister like the master. And he does so by reminding us of the three main areas of a minister's life.

Preaching, pastoring, and praying. And I'd like us just to consider Jesus' example of ministering like the master. I want us just to use the following headings.
Preach about him, pastor like him, and pray for him. Preach about him, pastor like him, and pray for him.
So if we look first of all at preach about him. If we're to minister like the master, we are to preach about him. Now look again at verse 35. It says, Now I'm sure it's safe to say that many of us were familiar with the gospels and the account that they give of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

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We're familiar with Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But whenever we come to one of these gospels, we have to remember who wrote the gospel and why they wrote that gospel.
[5:29] Of course, each of the gospel writers, they all wanted to spread the good news that Jesus Christ is the remedy for the curse of sin and death. But each of the gospel writers, they all look at Jesus from a different angle.

Because Mark, when Mark writes his gospel, he considered Jesus as the suffering servant who came to give his life as a ransom for many. When Luke wrote his gospel, he viewed Jesus as the son of man who came to seek and to save the lost.
When John looked at Jesus, he saw Jesus as the eternal son of God and that by believing in him, we shall not perish but have eternal life. But you know, when we come to Matthew's gospel, we have to remember that when Matthew looks at Jesus, he sees a king.
Jesus is of royal descent. He's the descendant of King David. Jesus has royal blood running through his veins. But the interesting thing is that Jesus wasn't going to be the next king of Israel, like many of the Jews thought he would be.
Because the Jews, they all wanted this Messiah to be a conquering king. They expected their Messiah to be a warrior king, like King David. They thought that the Messiah was going to be their savior who would overthrow the oppression of the Romans and take control of the nation of Israel again.
[6:50] They thought that Jesus was going to be an earthly king with an earthly kingdom and have political power. But instead, the business of King Jesus, it wasn't the business of an earthly kingdom.

No, Jesus, he was here on his father's business, which is the business of the kingdom of heaven. But as you know, when Matthew introduces us to Jesus, he doesn't introduce us to Jesus as this exalted and reigning king.
Instead, Jesus is revealed as this king who has humbled himself by taking upon himself the form of humanity. Because when you come to Matthew chapter 1 and 2, you have the opening narrative. And we have there the birth of this king. But it's not a royal coronation. It's an act of humiliation. Jesus is born in a stable in Bethlehem.
Then as the narrative in Matthew's gospel progresses throughout the years of Jesus' life, Jesus, he hasn't been exalted. No, it's more humiliation. He's going down, down, down, down, where his entire life is an act of humiliation.
[8:01] Where Jesus, he's tempted by the devil. He's rejected by his people. He's chased out of the synagogues and cities. He's opposed by the religious elite. And yet throughout this gospel, Matthew keeps reminding us, this is King Jesus.

This is a humiliated king, but he's still king. And for Matthew, everything is about King Jesus. Because when Matthew records the first sermon of Jesus, Jesus says, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
When Jesus gives his sermon on the mountain, chapters 5 to 7, he teaches about what it means to live in the kingdom of heaven. When Jesus tells his parables, he reveals what the kingdom of heaven is like.
But the kingdom of heaven, it wasn't going to be established without the cross of the king. And for Matthew, the humiliation of Jesus, it goes down, down, down, all the way to the cross.
But it's an act of self-humiliation. Jesus has humbled himself from the crown to the cradle to the cross. And he is, as we know from Isaiah 53, he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.
[9:18] The chastisement which brought us peace was laid upon him. And with his stripes we are healed. But as we know, that's not the end of the story. God raised him up.

God raised him from the dead. Jesus gloriously ascended up on high so that he could lead the captives free. The father exalted his beloved son and restored to the king what was rightfully his. All authority in heaven and on earth. And when Jesus was exalted, he was given a name that is above every other name. And it will be at the name of King Jesus that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.
And so what Matthew wants to remind us is that King Jesus has been enthroned on high. And because all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to this Jesus, he commands everyone, everywhere to repent.

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And for those who are to minister like the master, we have to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom. We have to herald the message of the king.
[10:32] We must preach about him. We must preach this gospel of King Jesus. And the importance of entering the kingdom of King Jesus.

You know, it was the apostle Paul who affirmed to the Corinthians, we preach Christ crucified. He said to them, we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.
To the young minister in Ephesus, Paul said to Timothy, and he said it with the authority of King Jesus, I charge you, preach the word to them.
Preach the living word. Preach to them Jesus. Nothing but Jesus. They need to hear about Jesus. Preach about Jesus.
Preach about his humiliation. Preach about his exaltation. Preach about his offices. That he's prophet, priest and king. Preach about his obedience. Preach about his character.
[11:33] Preach about his compassion. Preach about his authority. Preach about his forgiveness. Preach about his faithfulness. Preach about his love for sinners. Preach about what he says to sinners.

What does he say to sinners? Come unto me. Oh my friend. If the servants of God are to minister like their master.
Then we need to preach about him. We need to herald the message of the king. And proclaim the gospel of the kingdom. We need to preach the whole counsel of God.
We need to preach with passion. We need to preach with compassion. We need to preach with a love for people. We need to preach about holiness in the life of a saint.
We need to preach about hatred for sin. We need to preach about what a Christian should be. And what a Christian shouldn't be. We need to preach about where a Christian should be. And where a Christian shouldn't be.
[12:33] We need to preach about life. We need to preach about death. We need to preach about heaven. We need to preach about hell. you know sadly some people today think that we shouldn't preach about hell even ministers think like that they don't want to scare the children they don't want to hurt people's feelings they don't want people to leave their church because they were told the truth about hell but my friend how are they ever going to understand how good the good news is if they don't first of all understand how bad the bad news is how will they know that there's a heaven to be gained if they don't realise that there's a hell to be shunned oh we must preach about him because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God we must preach about him but if we're to minister like the master we not only have to preach about him we have to pastor like him and that's what we see secondly preach about him and then pastor like him we're told in verse 36 when he saw the crowds he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd and the interesting thing is that in the verses leading up to this one the verses of chapters 8 and 9 of Matthew's gospel in those chapters or those verses we see Jesus cleansing lepers we see him healing the sick casting out demons calming the storms raising the dead making the lame to walk the deaf to hear the mute to speak and giving the blind their sight in the verses leading up to this verse here in verse 36

Jesus has not stopped helping those in need and Matthew tells us that he has gone throughout all the cities and villages of Israel not only proclaiming the gospel to people but he's also pastoring the gospel to people because all these miracles that Jesus performed they were evidence to the crowds that the gospel of the kingdom is able to change hearts and transform lives but notice Jesus went through all the cities and villages Jesus went everywhere proclaiming the gospel to people and pastoring the gospel to people Jesus went everywhere meaning that Jesus there was nowhere that Jesus was not willing to go there was no boundary that Jesus was not willing to cross there was no class there was no class of people that Jesus was not willing to reach out to there was no person in society that Jesus was not willing to speak to and provide help for
Jesus went everywhere he didn't stay within his holy huddle he didn't stay within his comfort zone with those around him who were like minded and of the same class as him no Jesus went everywhere and Jesus went to everyone there was nowhere that Jesus was not willing to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom and there was no one to whom Jesus was not willing to pastor by the gospel of the kingdom and as those who are to minister like the master that's our example that's our example but why did Jesus do it why did Jesus go from village to village and town to town and city to city why was there nowhere that Jesus was not willing to go why was there no one to whom

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Jesus was not willing to reach out to well Matthew tells us in verse 36 when he saw the crowds he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd my friend
Jesus went everywhere and he went to everyone because he had compassion I love the way the authorised version puts it it says that Jesus moved with compassion it's a beautiful phrase Jesus moved with compassion King Jesus he pastored and preached with compassion he didn't judge he didn't he didn't speak ill of his congregation he didn't avoid his congregation he didn't stay away from his congregation no this Jesus he moved with compassion towards his congregation and don't you just love those words they're scattered all over the gospels Jesus moved with compassion and he moved towards the multitudes to the leper to the tax collector to the sick and to the suffering to the dying to the prostitute he went to all the outcasts of society there was nowhere and there was no one to whom
Jesus was not willing to go Jesus moved with compassion there was no one who was exempt no one was turned away no one was rejected no one was excluded from coming to Jesus and you know that's what the gospel of the kingdom is all about it's about a compassionate Christ who doesn't turn anyone away as I know what Jesus said he who comes to me I will in no wise cast out but you know the wonder of this passage is that it reminds us that they didn't come to Jesus they did it other times but in this passage we're told that Jesus came to them and Jesus came to them because he could see that they were harassed and helpless they were like sheep without a shepherd they were lost sheep and they were in need of a good shepherd and what's so beautiful about Jesus the good shepherd is that he looked at the lost sheep and he loved them and he wanted to lead them in paths of righteousness
[19:12] Jesus looked he loved and he led the lost sheep he looked loved and led them Jesus the good shepherd how does he lead his lost sheep to himself well we're told in John 10 Jesus says I am the good shepherd the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep then he says my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give to them eternal life and they shall never perish neither shall they be plucked out of my hand Jesus looked loved and led them because they were like sheep without a shepherd and you know as ministers if we are to minister like the master that's how we ought to be we need to look love and lead those who are like sheep without a shepherd when we climb into our pulpit lord's day after lord's day we need to look out at our congregation and love them we're to love the lost we're to challenge the wayward we're to help the helpless we're to encourage the weak we're to comfort the mourning we're to bring hope to the sick as ministers we need to look at our congregation we need to love them and we need to lead them to this good shepherd we need to lead them to the shepherd so that they'll hear his voice because as we were singing in the shepherd psalm of psalm 23 when the lord is their shepherd they will not be in want he will provide for them the green pastures he will direct them to still waters he will guide them in the paths of righteousness and this good shepherd promises to lead his flock he will go before them to lead them and he will come beside them to comfort them and he will follow behind them to assure them to assure them that when they trust the good shepherd goodness and mercy shall surely follow them all the days of their life and that their final dwelling place will be the house of the lord the palace of the king if we're to minister like the master we need to look at our congregation we need to love our congregation we need to seek to lead our congregation to this good shepherd because to whom else can we go he alone has the words of eternal life we need to proclaim the gospel we need to pastor the gospel if we're to minister like the master then we're not only to preach about him and pastor like him we also have to pray for him and that's what I'd like us to consider last of all preach about him pastor like him and pray for him pray for him look again at verse 35

Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction when he saw the crowds he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd then he said to his disciples the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest now we read earlier from Psalm 72 and Psalm 72 was written by King Solomon and it was a prayer in which Solomon he is praying for the greater than Solomon Jesus Christ Psalm 72 is all about Jesus as king it's all about the kingship of Jesus and the kingdom of Jesus but what I find fascinating about Solomon's prayer for the greater than Solomon is that

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Solomon says down in verse 15 he says may prayer be made for him continually and blessings invoked for him all the day Solomon says about the greater than Solomon pray for him pray for him but of course Solomon's invitation was not for us to pray for King Jesus Solomon's invitation was that we will pray for the kingdom of King Jesus and the king's blessing upon it pray for him we're to pray for the kingdom of the king that his kingdom would extend that his kingdom would be known that his reign would be established throughout the earth my friend we're to pray for him and that's what the greater than Solomon reminds us here in this passage Jesus Jesus says the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few therefore pray earnestly to the lord of the harvest that he would send out laborers into his harvest field we're to pray for the harvest praying to the lord of the harvest and you know this is non negotiable it's a divine imperative from King
Jesus we must pray we're commanded to pray we're being urged to pray we're to pray for him and we're to pray that the harvest field would flourish and that the lord would provide laborers for his harvest field and you know I love what J.C.
Ryle says about this in his commentary he says if we know anything of prayer let us make it a point of conscience never to forget the solemn charge of our lords money can pay agents universities can give learning bishops may ordain congregations may elect but the holy ghost alone can make ministers of the gospel never never may we forget says Ryle that if we would do good to the world our first duty is to pray and you know that's what Solomon was doing in Psalm 72 he was praying to the lord of the harvest about the harvest field and its need of laborers but when Solomon issued the plea pray for him Solomon also affirmed the promise that there will be an abundance of grain in the earth Solomon prays that through the king and his kingship the kingdom of the greater than
[26:00] Solomon will produce an abundant harvest you know what Solomon was praying for was that the church would be awakened to pray to pray for the work of its king and head and that Christ's kingdom would extend and his harvest field would flourish with the salvation of souls and that's what we're to do we're to pray for him because the promise is that when we pray for him there will be an abundance of grain in the earth and because of the promise of this abundant harvest the lord of the harvest he needs more laborers the lord of the harvest needs more men to preach about him he needs more men to pastor like him he needs more men to keep praying for him in the kingdom the lord needs more men to respond to his call and to work in the harvest field why because there are so many sheep without a shepherd so many sheep without a shepherd in our communities and villages and towns and cities there are so many vacancies not only in our presbytery and our denomination but across the world there are so many people who have never heard the gospel of the kingdom this glorious message and you know this is why

Solomon said pray for him because Solomon knew that when the greater than Solomon king Jesus the lord of the harvest Solomon knew that when he established his kingdom his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall and men shall be blessed in him and blessed and all nations shall him call and you know it's no wonder to us then that Solomon concluded his prayer to the greater than Solomon he concluded with this great doxology and blessed be his glorious name to all eternity the whole earth let his glory fill amen so let it be friends the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few but you know tonight we ought to be so thankful to the Lord that he's answering our poor prayer and he's providing men for this harvest field we ought to be thankful and rejoice in the Lord of the harvest that he hasn't left us yet because tonight we're being reminded that the Lord of the harvest he's still calling men to minister like the master he's still calling men to put their hand upon the plough and not to turn back the Lord is still calling men to labour in his harvest field so that they will preach about him that they will pastor like him and that they will pray for him may we give thanks to the
Lord for his goodness to us may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray O Lord our gracious God we thank thee and we praise thee for the call that thou dost put upon our lives the Lord one who not only effectually calls us from darkness unto thine own marvellous light but the Lord one who persuades and even enables thy servants to be called into the ministry to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Jesus to lift up a name that is so precious to us and Lord we thank thee that the psalmist reminds us that his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall that men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call O Lord give to us then the prayer the prayer of that psalm Lord bless and pity us shine on us with thy face that the earth thy way and nations all may know thy saving grace

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Lord do us good than we ask continue with us we pray for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake amen we can sing again before we move to the licensing part of the service we're going to sing again this time in Psalm 126 in the Scottish Psalter Psalm 126 it's in your order of service when Zion's bondage God turned back as men that dreamed were we then filled with laughter was our mouth our tongue with melody and we'll sing the whole psalm to God's praise song when Zion's bondage for turn but us in the dream were we land filled with laughter was our love our tongue with melody they monger even said the
Lord

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