**Sunday 18th June 2023: Matthew 9 35 – 10.8**

***9 35****Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and illness.****36****When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.****37****Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.****38****Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’****10****1Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and illness.*

***2****These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called 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;****4****Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.*

***5****These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ‘Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans.****6****Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.****7****As you go, proclaim this message: “The kingdom of heaven has come near.”****8****Heal those who are ill, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy,[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2010&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-23426a)*] drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.*

**Notes***“Freely you have received; freely give.” (10: 8)*

The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is something we are mandated to proclaim freely. It is often tempting to think that the community we serve should somehow contribute to the mission of the Church. The community would certainly be worse off if the Church were not here, being salt and light, and reflecting God’s glory. But that doesn’t mean we should expect the community to contribute to our costs. Jesus helpfully explains why not: We ourselves have received freely. Therefore, we give freely. And it is only when we genuinely understand deep in our hearts, that each of us are undeserved recipients of His free gift of salvation or faith that we feel liberated to give. If we fail to understand what we have received, then we may well struggle to find that cheerful heart as we give.

Notwithstanding this, sometimes those outside the church will insist on making a contribution. When that happens it is most welcome, and should be appreciated – though we should take care to ensure we neither expected it or demanded it. But when we see people, even if not quite ready to count themselves as a believer – responding in this way, we can also say “The kingdom of heaven has come near to you”, never losing sight of the fact our primary mission is to seek that opportunity to proclaim the gospel and introduce people to Jesus, not to simply take their money.

But there is of course a cost to our Parish Church being here, continuing its ministry, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and sharing and showing the compassion that Jesus refers to. So it’s down to us, those who have received, to freely give. Without compulsion or pressure. But with generosity and cheerfulness As a natural response to the fact we have freely received.

**End**