



DEXTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

7643 Huron River Drive

Dexter, MI 48130

734-426-8480

“The Wrecking of Jesus”

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Dr. Matthew J. Hook

Matthew 9:36 – 10:1

Yesterday I accompanied a few kids for Solo & Ensemble, and they all did great. But a funny thing happened when LIBBY GUISE answered her Solo & Ensemble judge “I’m just a freshman.” She did really well. But it brought up a really good point.

At our church, we’re learning to say “I may be just a Christian, but I think there’s something more to serving God. I’m in.” Listen: If you are “just” a Christian, “just” a Christ follower, “just” a church volunteer, then *you* are who God is choosing to work through for such a time as this. BUT...for us to do what I *think* God wants us to do, we need more workers. We need a team around us made of people who “get it.” THE STAKES ARE HIGH.

When the church gets it right, everybody wins. FOREVER. There are no higher stakes. With many things, it’s a matter of life & death. But that’s compared to eternal life & death. There are no higher stakes on planet Earth. There’s work to be done. We need *more* people in ministry. We need more ministers. We need a movement!

What precedes a movement? Vision. But what precedes vision? What gives birth to vision? If we could capture that and share it, we could change the world. It happens numerous times in Scripture:

- Moses watched his own people in hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. (When was the last time you saw a beating?) It’s sickening. It started something in him, and then, in the Burning Bush, he met God: “I’ve seen my people suffering. I am now freeing them.” What you’ve been seeing, I’ve been seeing. And I’m mad. Moses: “I see what it does for you. I’m going to use it for good.” And so began his ministry—leading God’s people.
- David—hears Goliath trash-talking God. Can you see his raw passion running at Goliath?
- Nehemiah—hears the walls of Jerusalem are down, and foreigners are mocking God, and he has his Popeye moment. You know, **Popeye**. In every cartoon he would get to a point and he’s say “That’s all I can stand—I can’t stand no more!!!”

There’s something you’ve seen, and you can’t stand no more. What is it you can’t stand? That is your holy discontent. Listen to this moment of Jesus:

Matthew 9:36 When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

- He saw the people mobbing him whenever he stood up to preach, and mostly he saw that people were totally lost and clueless. Whatever leaders and teachers there were, the people weren’t getting it. Haven’t you wondered that these days? When you see a crowd, and watch how people act, that many people are clueless, and tasteless and careless? Jesus saw this too...
- And it says “*He had compassion on them,*” But the compared to the Greek word Matthew uses, that’s *way* too mild. The Greek word for *esplagchni*. It’s so powerful, there’s not another Greek word just like it. It’s literally “moved in his inward parts.” It’s Jesus’ Popeye moment.
- Why did he have it? Because the multitudes were distressed and downcast. Other translations say Harassed and dejected. Weary and scattered. Troubled and abandoned. Faint and cast aside. In Greek, it’s

literally “Thrown down.” Have you seen someone get thrown down? If my kids want to get to me, all it takes is me seeing one of them getting thrown down. That “moves my inward parts.”

- But here’s the deal. Jesus doesn’t just see the mob as a category. He sees them as people. And it did something to Jesus. It wrecked Him. He was wrecked. He couldn’t handle it any longer. Jesus made His move!

37 *Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.*

- There is so much work to do. The harvest is huge, and that means it’s going to take men and women who LABOR. Who’ll have to put aside their dignity and take it seriously and work like they mean it. Look what Jesus tells them to do:

38 *Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.*

- Another problem: The Greek word for “Send out” means “to eject or expel with force!” He’s saying ask God to drive or cast or push them out there!” Even throw ‘em with great power—like those old cassette players that ejected tapes halfway across your car. But God *does* that, when he’s about to do something great. He wrecks people. He puts chutzpah in you for some cause, or some problem. Look at Julie Huddleston and how she was launched into leading the Race for Life for all of Dexter for over \$120,000 last year!
- And one more thing in this verse: where those workers are sent out: into God’s harvest. I like that. The harvest isn’t ours. If *we* lose this harvest, it’s not just ourselves we let down, but God Himself. It’s *His* harvest that perishes. God—who gave us life and breath and who loves us so much that he’s sent his own Son. The one who gave all He could give so that He will never leave you nor forsake you.

When was the last time you prayed for kids in our *church* to be “wrecked?” Or your own kids, or grandkids—that God would get such a hold of them, that they would see people the way Christ sees them here?

- Who else is going to change the way of the world in 2010 and beyond?
- Don’t you see? Our Savior tells us—*laborers* are wanted! This is God’s will—that many laborers will be required to gather in a plentiful harvest.
- Jesus didn’t say “there’s a huge harvest and not many workers, so help God bless those few goin’ out there! He didn’t say “the laborers are few, so pray that God does a lot of work Himself.” Then get this: Jesus gets them to answer their own prayer!

Look at *10:1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness."*

- I love it. Jesus has his disciples pray for that God would send laborers to the harvest field. And the very next thing is he sends them out. They answer their own prayer!

What’s the harvest? Around here, it’s for *more* people to be connected and growing in their faith, and serving others. Not just getting through their own lives, but making a difference in the lives of others. I think of Tom Snyder, and how without his Popeye moment, we’d be just like everybody else concerned about Haiti Tom was kicked out to go to Haiti and take many folks from this church there @20 different times over the last 20 years; and Pastor Luc there, who got wrecked seeing young boys in the streets, enough to give his life for them and start this orphanage.

What’s the harvest? It’s more Sunday school teachers and helpers. Parents sharing faith with their own kids. What about a family mission trip combined in your vacation, rather than just being “well-entertained?” The harvest looks like more parents not putting ministry to their kids on the back burner. We fight and scrap to get ‘em to practices and games and rehearsals all over the place, but the first place we let go is the youth group. What’s with *that*? Kick a ball, dance, or learn to love the Lord your God with all your heart? How many hours are going into learning *that*? Talk about handing them a great life! Those things aren’t bad, but we get out of whack. We’re SO like those crowds of Jesus—harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd! I get geeked when I think of how low our expectations are for ourselves and our kids.

A lot of people have come to Christ in the last 10 years. They’re getting their lives back together. Go do something great for God!

- We need more help in Children’s Ministry.
- We need more workers in Stephen Ministry. Just to name a few.

That’s why I love this verse. Jesus gets wrecked. He’s moved. That's all I can stand and I can't stand no more! And this is it for Jesus. And He multiplies the movement by equipping His followers and sending them out.

What can’t you stand? What aspect of this broken world really frustrates you? What is your “holy discontent?” What does your heart break for, and how are YOU going to allow Jesus to chuck you into it?

The next step in the Christian life is: once you come to Christ, he heals you, puts your life back together and enables you to go and serve others. The Lord wants us to go find the lost sheep. And he enables us to do that through his HS living in us. Ephesians 2:10. *“For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”* (Aug. 27th) He not only saves us, he heals us and equips us to repeat the process. Life’s most exciting dramas are that process of serving other people.

It’s not just parents and kids either. Some folks retire and travel around to play golf. Roger and Jane Boyce travel around and do missions work. Last year, Kenya. This year, India. They leave in just a couple weeks. I’m praying the Lord of the Harvest multiplies the workers. Some folks say “I had my turn.” Others say “I’d love to teach Sunday School.” Or “I’d love to take a meal to that sick person.” Or, “I’d love to invite you to this Bible Study.”

I feel like Jesus is saying “Give up your small ambitions and come preach the Gospel with me.” Have an eternal impact. The Lord has great and exciting stuff to do. There is no greater joy than to be working with God and seeing Him do stuff. To see a spiritual break through is the greatest thing there is. And it’s not just reserved for pastors!

What can’t you stand? There’s a reason why you have this burden. It’s also wrecking the heart of a holy God. Don’t medicate it—feed it! Use the energy it gives you for your next hill. Imagine what it could be like.

ARE YOU RISKING ENOUGH FOR IT? Church, I pray we answer that prayer, with a resounding yes, Lord!

Study Guide for Matthew 6 – 10

Monday: Read Matthew 11. John the Baptist’s Confusion. (1-24): Jesus had proven his power. But he doesn’t set up a national kingdom! He uses his power to heal hurts. He doesn’t go ‘royal,’ he goes ‘humble servant.’ The signs are all there, but people are confused what the Messiah should be like, and Israel remains unresponsive. Rest for the Weary (25-30): Jesus praises God and promises rest. Are you more like the “wise and learned” or like “little children?” How does taking up his way lead to rest?

Tuesday: Read Matthew 12. Attacked. Lawbreaker (1-21). The Pharisees see Jesus breaking the extra laws they put in place. Jesus reminds them “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” (7, originally Hosea 6:6). When have you fallen into the trap of “offering sacrifice,” but “neglecting mercy?” Jesus & Satan? (22-37). The much-debated “unforgivable sin” (31-32) may have been the Pharisees committing themselves to oppose God, labeling the Spirit’s works the work of Satan. Their decision to reject Christ is what is unforgivable. What real difference does Jesus’ power make in your daily struggles against evil? Your freedom? Your honesty? Daily speech? No More Proofs (38-50). Jesus refuses more proof.

Wednesday: Read Matthew 13. The Parables. The Sower (1-23). The Weeds (24-30, 36-43). Mustard Seed & Yeast (31-35). Hidden Treasure & Pearl (44-46). Net (47-52). Why do so many people misunderstand the Gospel? What small thing have you seen making a big impact in your life? Which parable is still unclear? Which is all too clear? How much do you assume you already know? A Prophet without Honor (53-58). When was the last time the gospel message offended you?

Thursday: Read Matthew 14. John the Baptist Beheaded (1-12). What is one area of your life still governed by fear? Jesus Feeds the 5,000 (13-21). How have you seen Jesus stretch your resources beyond what you could imagine? Stop and think and thank God for that in prayer! Walks on Water (22-36). Most people give Peter a hard time here; but the fact is, he walked on water! (At least a little ways). How do you need to “get out of the boat” in order to follow Christ today?

Friday: Read Matthew 15. Jesus continues to heal and feed the crowds, but people still hesitate to commit themselves. The Religious Law (1-20). What “traditions” in church or in your life distort God’s law? Faith of the Canaanite Woman (21-28). Feeding 4,000 (29-39). As you look over this past week, what role does faith play? What does faith gain in your life? What does lack of faith cause you to lose? What’s your next step?

Tips for Bible Study

1. *Don't look for hidden meanings.* God’s Word is meant to unveil truth. Treat it as normal communication.
2. *Don't read verse by verse.* Read it in paragraphs. Most parts of the Bible are written in units of thought, not random verses. Go for the larger units to understand the bigger meaning.
3. *Don't jump to conclusions.* Read the Bible intelligently and think about what the passage is actually saying.
4. *Read God's Word expectantly,* not as a duty. God has given us the Bible, and God meets us in the pages. Expect God to touch your heart and mind.
5. *Find a way to respond.* React to what you’ve read. It’s not simply philosophy. Christian faith is a lived out faith. Hear it and do it.

Remember the Qs of Discipleship: How’s your life?
How’s your walk with Christ? How’s your ministry?