LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 9 (Part 6) :35-38

The Workers Are Few

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

This passage here begins in verse 35 by giving us kind of an overview of the ministry that Jesus performed during his earthly ministry. And it tells us in essence that he did three things. He was teaching, he was preaching, and he was healing. Now we know that his healing ministry was essentially the calling card of his messianic appearance. The Old Testament prophets said that Messiah would come and he would heal the lame.

They would begin to walk. It said that he would touch those who were mute and were unable to speak and they would begin to speak. He would open the eyes of the blind and they would see. He would literally raise the dead. And that's what Jesus went around doing.

And in that earthly healing ministry that Jesus performed during that time, the people should have been able to point to that and say, see, he's doing everything the prophets said the Messiah would come and do. And he did them beautifully. And again, that was his calling card in essence. But he also did a couple other things that you need to take note of here. It says he was involved in teaching and preaching.

Specifically he taught in the synagogues, he preached the good news of the kingdom and so forth. Now, there are a great many believers in the body of Christ today who have absolutely no understanding of the difference between preaching and teaching. And if you were to ask them in the church you go to, does, do they, do they preach or teach? They'd say, what's the difference? Well, there is a difference actually.

And it's an important difference. To teach means to instruct. Okay. It actually comes from a Greek word that, uh, that, that says that very thing. That means that very thing to instruct, um, the, the, the vast majority of the times that the word teaching or teach occurs in the scripture.

It is a Greek word didasko that probably means nothing. Do you accept that it means instruction? And so always teaching is instructional in nature. So you're teaching someone about, uh, how to take care of their car. You know, you're looking under the hood and you say, that's the dipstick.

That's how you check the oil. That's the transmission dipstick. That's how you check the transmission fluid. That's where you put the oil in. Here's where the filter goes.

There's the air filter. Uh, you know, these are the spark plugs and something like that. It's teaching instruction. This is the way it is. You don't just say, you know, it's a motor and I don't know how it works.

Well sometimes you do, but, and some people do, but if you're going to set out to teach, you're going to give instruction about it. Preaching on the other hand is, is different and it is generally translated from two Greek words that mean to proclaim or to announce as if kind of to herald the message to, to remember that old picture of the Herald who goes through the streets, you know, whatever they're saying, you know, they may be giving the news, you know, like, you know, the British are coming. I don't know. Something like that. But you kind of have this idea of a Herald as someone who is speaking out, declaring, saying this is, this is true.

Now what's interesting in the Bible is that when the word for preaching is used, preaching, it almost always, not always, but almost always makes reference to the gospel. So declaring or, you know, heralding forth a message is almost always related in terms of the gospel. Teaching again, always relates to instruction. So if you were to go to a church, um, where the pastor got up to speak and he began by reading a couple of verses and then, and then never referred back to those verses, but spoke for like 45 minutes and you weren't even sure what he said connected to those verses exactly. Um, it's pretty good chance that you're in a preaching church where he's preaching.

He's really kind of using the word more or less as a springboard. He's not really, you know, going through the scripture and teaching it to you. If however, you go to a church where they read a passage and then explain what that passage says, refer back to it often and even bring up other passages which clarify and corroborate that original passage. Then you can imagine, you can bet you're in a teaching church or one where there's instructional teaching going on. Um, I'm hoping that no one is left to wonder what we do here at Calvary Chapel.

I hope that that's pretty obvious to you that, you know, we, we, we go through and pretty much teach these things, teach through the word of God. In fact, pretty much every time we open the Bible, we're just, we're teaching through the word. And, um, some of you might be thinking as you're listening to this, gee,

this is all rather mildly interesting pastor Paul, but what's your point? My point is, and there is one, um, while I would have to say that the vast majority of pastors preach probably on a Sunday morning, I think it's a fairly small number that actually teach through the word. You may find it interesting to know that preaching is not a requirement or a qualification for pastors.

Teaching is. Preaching is not. You know why? Because we're all supposed to preach. We're all called to preach because preaching is declaring the gospel and every single one of us is called to preach the gospel, whether we're an evangelist or not, we, and I'm not talking when I say preach the gospel, don't get these ideas of sitting on a street corner somewhere in Seattle or having to go to Portland, you know, and waving your Bible in the air and drawing a crowd and having, you know, your hat down on the ground so people can put dollars in it, whatever to pay for your ministry or something.

That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about, again, preaching means to declare, to herald something, to say, this is true. And, and, and where you preach might be wherever your station of life is at the moment. If you have small children at home, you're preaching ministries probably right there. You're making sure they know the gospel and that they've accepted it, you know, and they understand what Jesus did on the cross.

Maybe you, you've got loved ones or people at work and, and your life should be preaching to them. And when you have an opportunity, you should declare the word of God, not, not in a C preaching has such a negative connotation in our culture because people will say, Oh, he's getting preachy again. Well, that's not what we're talking about. We're not talking about getting demanding or dogmatic or, or even, um, obnoxious preaching. Once again, it's just declaring truth to that's true.

This is true. You know, Jesus, Jesus died on the cross. That's true. Jesus died for you. That's a true thing.

I'm, I'm declaring it to you. Every time I say to you, Jesus died on the cross for you. I'm preaching, I'm declaring, okay. We're all called to do that. You see every single one of us.

And that is what is so damaging about calling a pastor, a preacher. Number one, it's not a biblical term for a leader in the church because it's something we're all supposed to do. But secondly, it gives the suggestion that only some people are called to preach when in fact we are all called to preach yourself included. Now I'm not, that doesn't mean I'm going to call you preacher because I don't, I don't think it's a title. I think, I think it's, it's, it's a verb.

I think it's, it's what we're called to do, you know, to preach, to give, to declare, you know? So teaching on the other hand is something that every pastor must do. And what's crazy about that is not that many do it. When Paul was writing to Timothy, let me put this on the screen for you. First Timothy chapter three, there's a statement Paul writes when he says to Timothy, here is a trustworthy saying.

If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, and by the way, overseer and elder and pastor are synonymous terms in the New Testament. So he says, if anybody sets his heart on being an overseer or if you will, a pastor, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, meaning he's not liable to blame. He must be the husband of but one wife, meaning he must be a one woman man. He must be temperate, and that means of course not given to emotional upheavals and so forth.

He must be self-controlled. He must be respectable. He must be submittable, hospitable, I'll get it. But look at the last one. He must be able to teach.

Do you know that it doesn't say he must be able to preach? Because this is talking about leadership. That one who gets up and speaks, that pastor, leader, elder, overseer, if you will, he must be able to teach. That's a qualification in the Bible and You know earlier in this in this book when Paul's writing to do you guys remember? What Paul would do when he would go out on his his missions is he would go to a city he would preach the gospel Where people would respond in faith They would begin to form as a body and then Paul Usually had to leave because either he was getting kicked out of town or he was just moving on to the next Locale he would leave guys like Timothy and Titus behind.

Do you know why they were there to raise up leaders? It's what their job was. That's why when Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus we actually call those letters the pastoral epistles That's what they're referred to as because Paul is giving advice for raising up pastors in the local churches Where these men were being left earlier in this book in first Timothy chapter 2 it says the things You have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses in trust to Reliable men who will be qualified To what teach others? That was the whole purpose of what Paul left Timothy in those various cities to do Okay, he says Tim The things you've heard me say the things you've heard me teach I want you to be raising up reliable men who are qualified To lead the church and you'll know this qualification. They can teach they can instruct Others and so forth.

That is why when Paul Writes to the church in Ephesus and lays out those giftings that it will make up the leadership of the church He says this it was he Who gave some and that he is Jesus it was he who gave some to be and then he lists them Apostles some to be prophets some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers Why the function is the same for basically all ultimately they had to prepare God's

people for works of service So that the body of Christ might be built up edified. That's the that's the role of these leadership gifts now You know, it's interesting a lot of people refer to this passage as Describing what they call the fivefold ministry Because there are five ministry giftings that they see there in that passage So they they call it the fivefold ministry and they'll even I've had people come up to me and say pastor Paul Do you believe in the fivefold ministry? You got to put a little bit of a southern drawl on there kind of sounds a little bit Do you believe in the fivefold ministry pastor Paul, you know sort of a thing and and they say that again Because that's what they see there. But you know, it's what's interesting is in the Greek Those last two pastor and teacher they go together in other words, they're inseparable It's really if you're going to use a term like fivefold ministry. It's really a fourfold ministry It's Apostle prophet evangelist pastor teacher Because a pastor as Paul already said to us in that letter to Timothy Must be able to teach So a pastor teacher goes goes together.

Okay now by the way The word that is used here in Ephesians chapter 4 for pastor is The exact same word in the Greek that is translated shepherd So if in the New Testament, it would say David was a shepherd It would use the exact same word that Paul uses here when he translates that he gave some to be pastors and teachers shepherds and Teachers. Well, what does the shepherd do? We might say well, I don't know what a pastor does Well, you know what a shepherd does don't you takes care of the flock he protects and he feeds Right. Can you imagine a shepherd that didn't know how to feed his flock? He'd have a dead flock Eventually or at least a malnourished flock so he must be able to feed he must be able To teach the people and so forth so what happens when you have a pastor who's getting up Sunday after Sunday and He is preaching but he rarely spends any time teaching what happens.

What is basically the end result? Well Remember preaching is declarative. It is it is Exhortational if I were to say to you, you know, Jesus is Lord accept him as your Savior I'm exhorting you To to to do that. That's that's preaching. Okay to exhort to encourage And and that sort of thing now, so I posed the question what happens if you have a pastor who basically exhorts all the time But never Gets around to Teaching.

Well, I think of it in kind of sporting terms Some of you guys played in sports in school Some of you are still playing in sports and there's this very common thing in sports called the locker room talk You guys know what that's all about It's either in before the game and sometimes at halftime and then and then afterwards the the coach will talk to the team in the locker room, you know and They exhort that's the time when you exhort the team you get him in there and you say, alright guys, we're going It's gonna be a tough game today, but such-and-such and this and that and they'll talk a lot, you know little things You know, we're gonna go out there today. We're gonna rip their heads off or something like that If it's football or

we're gonna do this, we're gonna do that Come on guys, and he's kind of getting them all pumped up and motivated and and and so forth That's that's the kind of the typical locker room talk. It's exhortational. It's encouragement. It's Motivational it's preaching The coach is kind of preaching, you know Now imagine if you had a coach Who only exhorted and was constantly saying to his team hey go you guys are gonna win I know we're gonna win this one this time you guys here we go.

We're gonna win this game I really want you guys to get fired up, but he never stopped long enough to teach them how to play the game You see there there are rules to the contest that they're going into they got to know those rules They got to know how to handle the ball whether it's football or basketball You know learning how to dribble the fundamentals of shooting I was actually a state certified basketball referee for a few years and I Found out in reffing basketball that a lot of kids didn't know the rules Didn't know the basic rules of basketball. And so we'd call them on it and they go What's that for you know, it's like dude it's the rules of the game you're supposed to know these things You know your coach obviously didn't tell you that once you get the ball at the free-throw line You only have 10 seconds to shoot it and I'm counting So if I blow my whistle and I give the ball to the other team, you know what happened now Do you know how many kids don't know that rule in basketball? It's really interesting So what about believers now who've been exhorted? Who've been encouraged who even been motivated but they haven't been taught Well, the result is That they really have no foundation of understanding on which to base their life in Christ and What happens is is that when they begin to face challenges and hardships? They've been hearing about trusting in the Lord.

They've been hearing about All these things that they're supposed to do but they have a hard time hanging on Because they haven't been taught the scriptures and They also will I've and I've seen this happen Christians who have not been taught and they've just been exhorted. They know exhortations, but they don't know the word and They will begin to Believe things that aren't biblically true. I mean, I almost regret the creating a Facebook account Because on Facebook I sit and I watch born-again believers Typing things in their profile that aren't biblical all the time I mean if I had a dollar for every time somebody posted on their profile, you know something something something We're going through a hard time, but I know God will never give me more that I can bear It's not in the Bible and yet about 95% of the body of Christ believes it You know, where did they get that? Well, actually, it's a misunderstanding of other scripture The Bible says God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear Doesn't say that he won't let events in your life build up to a point beyond what you can bear didn't say that at all and Yet People believe it why? Because they haven't been properly taught And and it goes on from there everything from from people posting about how their Loved ones are now beautiful angels in heaven.

I get that one a lot. It just breaks my heart I mean what a slap in the face to what Jesus did on the cross Jesus didn't die for angels. He died for the sons of Adam That they might know life and have it to the full And and and it's just a it's a misappropriation of information from the Bible people don't become angels when they die You know, it's just it's crazy and and and we get people in the body of Christ doing that Dumb things. I mean we got people living together out of wedlock because you know another thing I see all the time is Christians don't understand what the Bible says about marriage divorce and remarriage. They just they don't know and Sometimes people will come to me who've been married repeatedly and they'll say pastor Paul Would you do my wedding and I ask him?

Well, are you eligible to be remarried and they look at me like I just What We talking about Well, the Bible talks about your eligibility based on you know, what happened, you know, whether you were a believer What happened in your previous marriage? Do you know what that has to say? I I've never heard that before been a Christian for 15 years never knew never knew that there was I just thought I could kind of marry and divorce at will and Believe me some people are doing it So what's going on? We haven't been taught We have not received instruction in the word And and and and one of the really serious things too is we can't defend our faith When somebody comes along or some JWs come to the to the door That's Jehovah's Witnesses, by the way, and they come to your door and they start challenging you on the deity of Jesus Christ and you're and you're shaken by What they said and They're telling you because they got their argument down or the Mormons come along and they start telling you this or that and the other Thing and you walk away going. Well, wow, I don't know.

I never really kind of understood Maybe I I don't know and and there's this there's people get rattled all the time when folks come to their door because they don't have a foundation of Understanding that is that is predicated on the teaching of God's Word and and it and as you can tell it's something I'm very passionate about But it's all too common and Let me let me say one other thing about teaching It is not at all uncommon for people to come to me and Say, you know pastor Paul I get so much out of When you teach through the Bible or when I'm listening to a teacher So can you recommend? Some some Bible study helps and they want to know what commentaries I read and they want to know What's the best Bible translation and can you recommend a study Bible and what about this and you know? I never mind those questions. Let me just say that those are those are good questions It blesses my heart that somebody wants to dig into the word, but you got to understand what you're saying to me what you're essentially saying is I My Time in the word alone is not as fruitful as when I'm sitting under teaching So can you help me to make my own personal Bible study time fruitful minus the teacher? That's kind of what you're asking.

I want to be fruitful in the word minus the teacher Well when you figure that one out you let me know because I haven't figured it out When I Can I admit something to you? My time my personal study time is not as fruitful as when I'm being taught I Need teachers I benefit from people teaching the word just like you do and I've got I've got men that I love and respect And I listen to and I sit down and I and I sit at their feet and I'm taught by them and you know what? It's always better than when I'm just studying the Bible by myself. Not that you shouldn't study the Bible by yourself I'm not suggesting you shouldn't I'm just saying there's a reason Jesus put teachers in the body of Christ He knew it would be effective. He knew it would be an effective way of conveying information That's why Ephesians 4 tells us it was he who gave some to be Apostles prophets evangelists and then the pastor teacher he put that there for a reason because we all need it You know, I need it just as much as you do Okay, so that's that's an important thing to to keep in mind now just so there's no misunderstanding about what I've said here Can I tell you a couple of things that I'm not saying?

Maybe this will save some of you from sending me an email later on I am NOT saying that you shouldn't study through the word on Your own or even to learn a system of study For example, you know, we've taught in the past and and ongoingly about the inductive Bible study method. Maybe you've heard of it The inductive Bible study method is a great system of getting into the word and getting a lot out of the word when you Study the Bible all the precepts studies are based on the inductive Bible study method and it's a great study I'm and and I strongly encourage people to do it. So please understand. I am NOT Discouraging you from personal study number two. I am NOT saying and this is important I am NOT saying that teachers know more than you do about the word.

I'm not saying that either Teachers just have a spiritual gift to break it down and explain it. That's all But even teachers and I know this because I am one need to be taught I need to sit down and sit under other teachers and that's what really causes me to grow I mean, I love my own time in the word and I read through the Bible in my own quiet time But when I really want to get into the word, I mean really study it I mean, I I do it obviously to teach you guys and that blesses me, too Frankly, I think that's one of the reasons God called me to be a teacher I'd probably be a big lazy dork and wouldn't get into the word otherwise But you know if I really want to dig in I I I go and sample some other teachers too and I I let them break it up for me and Explain it to me and and it benefits me in my walk with the Lord So but but I I know enough to know that these guys don't know more than me. They just have a gift They have a spiritual gift of being able to process the word and so forth All right, so, you know what the bottom line is before I move on the bottom line is the Holy Spirit is the capital T teacher and Please understand that whether it's preaching or teaching The Holy Spirit is absolutely utterly Essential for us to understand and

to lay hold of the word I could gather around me any number of teachers gifted teachers But if the Holy Spirit isn't working in my life That word is going to go in one ear and out the other Okay, so we all need to rely on the Holy Spirit and And what he is teaching us because he's the teacher verse 36 If you look in your Bible goes on to say that when he saw the crowds He had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep. Look at this without a shepherd We've already noted that pastor is the same Greek word for shepherd. And what does a shepherd do?

He cares for the flock. He protects the flock. He feeds the flock So it says here Jesus looked at the people and he saw that they were like sheep without a shepherd They weren't being cared for that's how Jesus saw them. They weren't being fed. They were literally starving to death and Wolves were just attacking these sheep at will just at will and and there was no one to fight him off There was nobody to take care of the sheep and there was nobody to get him to a safe Pasture where they could sit and eat and enjoy and grow and get healthy.

That's the way Jesus saw the people and out of that expression Jesus is going to speak to us, but I want you to notice what his expression is. It says he had compassion He had compassion on the people your Bible may say he was moved with compassion Do you know that those words if that if your Bible does say moved with compassion or had compassion That's one single Greek word and you know, it's interesting about that word It's very very hard to pronounce other than that and so I'm not gonna even try Other than that, I found out about that word that it is the strongest Greek word for pity that you can find in the Greek language and it speaks of a pity a compassion that literally shakes you to the depths of your soul and When the gospel writers wanted to describe how Jesus saw These people who are without a shepherd they use the strongest Greek word They could find to show that he was moved to the depth of his soul for these people And you know, what's humbling about that? Is that I rarely get moved to the depth of my soul I Even though I know what John 3 16 says that God so Loved the world we tend to still think of the world as kind of this big fat enemy, don't we? We treat the world kind of like it's a we they sort of a thing where you know, and you know to be sure we got to be careful not to to to Allow the ways of the world to seep into our heart, but by the same token the world is Where Jesus wants us to go with the hope that is in him and he wants us to be moved and motivated by a compassion that says these people are lost and they are being shaken and they are being tossed and turned and and and Who's gonna care about these people? If you don't and That's why Jesus goes on to say in verse 37 The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few and then in verse 38 He says so do this if there's nothing else that you feel like you can do pray ask the Lord of the harvest he says To send out more workers into his harvest field When's the last time you shared Jesus with somebody It's kind of humbling isn't it I mean maybe you kind of hear the question and

You know Some of us feel really ill-equipped to share our faith with others, but let me ask you this can you pray?

Can you pray on a daily basis can you say Lord send out more people Raise up more workers send them into the harvest fields of your kingdom I think we can all do that that didn't take me what 10 seconds. Maybe to even say that Lord send out more workers He wants us to have that kind of compassion that it moves us to pray so he says pray Ask God to send out more workers But instead of praying and having compassion you know what I'm doing you most of the time. I'm getting distracted I'm getting distracted by the things of the world or just that I kind of have this myopic view of my own little life And it's all just kind of right here, and and I can't see you know there's people dying all around me You know and I can't but I'm not looking Because I'm just focused on my life And what's going on in my life and so forth and you and so because of that I'm not praying like I should well Then what happens? What does God what does it got God allow in our lives at that point usually allows some really Rotten thing and not saying he brings those things I think the world's just full of enough of it, but he allows it He allows us to go through something, and it just shakes us You know some difficult season or or whatever and then what do we do then we cry out to God? Oh God?

Oh? God save me from this and God doesn't stand back and say well. Yeah, where were you? When I was wanting you to reach out to other people I'm just gonna kind of hang back for he doesn't do that does he he reaches down throws his arms around us and gives us a big fat hug and he pours out his compassion and Suddenly we are reunited with what it means To have compassion shown in our lives, and then what happens we are now sensitized To the needs around us and the compassion of those people who are lost and dying and that is exactly what Paul said when he wrote to the Corinthians in 2nd Corinthians and He said to them praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father look at this of compassion and The God of all comfort who comforts us in all of our troubles notice. It doesn't end there Why does he comfort us well one of the reasons is so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we?

Ourselves have received from God. Why is God comforting you so that you can reach out and comfort others? Why is God showing you compassion so you will have compassion for others? And so that you and I will be reminded that Jesus saw the people of this world with Compassion with a compassion that shook him to his soul That moved him to give himself when he was exhausted when he probably felt like there was nothing left to give and the people kept coming and he just Stood his ground and ministered and blessed and healed and about the time you and I kind of look at the people like they're a big fat inconvenience in our lives Jesus reminds us that his heart is one of compassion and giving and Staying until everyone's need is met and so forth Well, I don't know about you, but that humbles me That humbles

me because you see I forget just like you do I forget how incredibly moved with compassion my God becomes at the at the thought of a Lost people And how as crazy as it sounds He has partnered with you and I to reach those people that blows me away It's like God couldn't you come up with a better plan than that? We're so undependable We're so unfaithful We're such wishy-washy You know weenies, you know, and and and we want comfort in our lives, but we're willing to forsake everybody else and yet Lord You look to us you call us To be your arms and your legs and your your mouth And your heart You know what, you know what I have to do.

I have to go to God and say you know what? If you don't fill me with this it ain't gonna happen Because in and of myself, I don't have the goods To carry on that kind of a ministry. I just don't possess it But I know this I know he has given me his spirit and along with his spirit comes that passion for the lost But I know too that I can resist the Holy Spirit and I can become passionate about the things I want to be passionate about and I can squeeze him out of the whole situation So when I come to passages like this here in Matthew chapter 9, I'm reminded of my responsibility To come before the Lord and say father God. Oh, I fail so often at this and I need you. I Need you to fill me with who you are for the lost I'm just so focused on my little life and everything going on in my little sphere of existence, and I'm sorry I have been so selfish so self-centered forgive me Lord for not caring about other people like I should and Move me with compassion You