

Called & Sent

Matthew 10:1-15

Intro

When I was playing High School football during my senior year, one of my main jobs during the game was to communicate the play to the QB...

- I was one of the players that the coach would **call** over — he would tell me the play — and he would **send** me onto the field to tell the QB...

Now, rarely did the play involve me getting the ball — and that made sense because I was not a very good athlete...

But I did learn some lessons from my time as a play-runner...

- ***I learned that it is more enjoyable to participate than to simply stand on the sidelines and watch...***
- ***I learned that I was not the authority — the coach was the authority and I was to share his will with the rest of the team...***
- ***And I learned that my opportunities for playing were fleeting — I still remember being on the field after that final game and being devastated that I would never play organized football again...***

Now, I believe that these lessons that I learned are transferrable to our lives as **disciples** of the Lord Jesus Christ...

Lesson #1 — Being an active disciple is much more enjoyable than standing on the sidelines and simply watching others do the work of ministry...

You see, unlike organized sports, the Lord Jesus *doesn't limit how many people can participate...*

- In fact, in our study last week we saw that the Lord Jesus called on the disciples *to pray for the Lord of the harvest to send workers into the harvest because the harvest is plentiful and the laborers are few...*

It seems clear that we should pray for as many laborers as possible — let's get everybody into the game!...

Lesson #2 — As disciples, we are not the authority — we are not calling the plays — the Lord Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth and He is the one directing our efforts...

As we walk as obedient disciples, our job is to simply ***go where He sends us*** and ***share what He has told us...***

Lesson #3 — As disciples, our opportunities are fleeting — “our life will soon be passed, only what is done for Christ will last”...

This life — the life of discipleship here on earth — is the only time that we can walk by faith and share the gospel and die to ourselves and turn the other cheek...

- Once we leave this life and enter into the glory of the Lord, our playing days will be over...

It is certain that heaven will be better by far — but at the same time, there are some opportunities that will no longer be available to us once we leave this world...

Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

*With these truths in mind, please follow along as I read the passage that we will be studying this morning in a message I have entitled **Called & Sent...***

Matthew 10:1-15 (NKJV)

1 And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

9 Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts,

10 nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.

11 "Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out.

12 And when you go into a household, greet it.

13 If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

15 Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

Let's move into our first section...

1) Called by Jesus (vs 1-4)

*Please notice the words **He**, **His** and **Him**...*

1 And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him,

- **He** — Jesus — called the twelve disciples — **He** is the initiator...
- **His** — the twelve disciples are Jesus' disciples — they are **His** followers...
- **Him** — Jesus called the twelve disciples to Himself — it is His mission and His agenda...

APPLICATION — It is vital to remind ourselves that we are Jesus' disciples, and He has called us to Himself for His purposes...

For a practical outworking of this truth, please turn to...

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (NKJV)

18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Please turn back to Matthew 10...

- Now, as we continue on in this passage, it is important that we determine if this section of scripture is ***narrative*** or ***normative*** / if it is ***descriptive*** or ***prescriptive***...

Or to put it another way, is this passage telling us ***something that happened*** or is it ***telling us to do things in a certain way?***...

- I believe that this section of scripture is a ***narrative*** — that it is ***descriptive*** — it is telling us what happened...

With that said, I do believe that there are ***many applications for discipleship*** to take from this passage but ***I do not believe*** that all the instructions that were given to the disciples in this passage are also given to us...

- I'll expand on this further as we make our way through this section...

So, picking up in vs 1 we read...

He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

First of all, please notice that it was ***the Lord Jesus who gave the disciples the power to do these things*** — it was nothing that they had within themselves...

- *This is a clear principle in the Christian life — **without the Lord Jesus empowering us — we cannot do the work of the ministry...***

John 15:5 (NKJV)

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

So, the disciples were empowered to cast out unclean spirits and heal all kinds of sicknesses and diseases...

- And I firmly believe that in our day God is still using believers to cast out unclean spirits and God is still healing people through the laying on of hands and through intercessory prayer...

If you are unsure that God is still working in this manner, I would suggest reading a book called ***Seeing the Supernatural*** by Lee Strobel or reading ***Miracles Today*** by Craig S. Keener...

- With that said, ***I do not believe*** that all disciples of the Lord Jesus are called to this sort of ministry today...

As far as I know, I have never cast out an unclean spirit and I have never healed anyone's sickness or disease...

- And this does not trouble me because I have never knowingly received a mandate from the Lord to go and do these things...

But there are plenty of things that the Lord *has* instructed me to do and I am to be faithful in those things...

- *And I am belaboring this point because people generally fall into two errors regarding these sort of passages...*

Error #1 — The miraculous doesn't really happen anymore — it was limited to the first century...[expand]

Error #2 — All disciples should be casting out unclean spirits and healing sickness and diseases...[expand]

So, what we see in Matthew 10 is the Lord Jesus sending out His 12 disciples on a special mission and they were to carry it out in obedience to Him...

APPLICATION — Let's carry out the specific mission that we have been called to...[expand]

As we move into verses 2-4, we see that Matthew lists the 12 **disciples** whom he now refers to as **apostles**...

disciple — one who learns from a master; one who is an apprentice — one who learns to do what the master does...

- [expand — **apprenticing** vs **auditing**...]

apostle — one who is sent out by another, usually with a message; inferior sent out by a superior...

- [ex. US ambassador to Italy — is to represent US interests to Italian government...]

As believers, we are called to be both **disciples** and **apostles**...

We are to put into practice the instructions of Jesus as we represent His interests in this world...

- [expand — difference between ***Apostles*** and ***apostles*** — ***special one-time group*** vs ***believers today...***]

Now, some may be lower-case apostles in a *special way* — going to a foreign land and planting churches...

APPLICATION — Seek to understand what God has called you to and do it — but seek for this understanding in relationship with others — invite others to help you understand your calling...[expand]

Moving on in Matthew 10 to vs...

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

Simon Peter — *the leader of the apostles...*

Andrew — *the brother of Peter who famously brought Peter to the Lord Jesus in the first place...*

James — *would become the first apostle to be martyred for his faith...*

John — *the brother of James; the beloved disciple who wrote the Gospel of John — 1,2,3 John — and the book of Revelation...*

These two sets of brothers were all fishermen and Peter, James & John were the 3 disciples who were the closest to Jesus (remedial group?)...

3 Philip and Bartholomew;

Philip was a citizen of Bethsaida and **Bartholomew** is likely ***Nathaniel*** from the gospel of John...

Thomas and Matthew the tax collector;

Doubting **Thomas** and **Matthew** who was formerly a **tax collector**...

James the son of Alphaeus,

We do not know much about this James, is sometimes referred to as James the Less (bit of a bummer) or James the Younger...

- Some believe that he was the brother of Matthew...

and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

This man is also known as Judas the son of James or Judas (not Iscariot) — also an unfortunate name...

4 Simon the Cananite,

This is Simon the Zealot — part of a movement to overthrow Rome — it seems certain that he would have had conflict with Matthew...

and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

After Peter, Judas Iscariot is arguably the most well-known of the apostles...[expand]

- Now, the fact that Judas was a part of this mission trip brings up the uncomfortable truth that Judas — an unbeliever — was empowered to cast out unclean spirits and heal diseases...

This may not fit into our theological mold but it seems to be what happened...

And I would argue that the Lord Jesus empowered Judas because Jesus wanted people to be ministered to...

- The Lord Jesus was willing to bless people though Judas even though Judas himself was not in right relationship with the Lord...

You see, I believe that Judas is the prototype for what Jesus said in...

Matthew 7:21-23 (NKJV) [please turn there]

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

WARNING — God is able to minister through flawed or even unbelieving people — so beware of following people simply because God ministered to you through them...

Let's turn back to Matthew 10 and move into our second section...

2) Sent by Jesus (vs 5-15)

5 These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them,

Please notice that the Lord Jesus is ***the clear authority*** — He is the One who ***sent them out*** — and He is the One who ***commanded them...***

APPLICATION — As disciples and lower-case apostles, it is vital that we recognize Lord Jesus as our authority...

- ***We must recognize that He has every right to send us where He wants us to go and to command us to do whatever He wants us to do...***

*Our job is to **go** and **obey** — trusting in His character — that whatever He commands is for **our good** and for **His glory**...*

Continuing on in vs 5-6 we read...

These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying:
"Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Here we are confronted with a clear indication that this passage is ***narrative*** and ***not normative*** — it is ***descriptive*** but ***not prescriptive***...

- Because if it was prescriptive then we would never be saved — because we are Gentiles...[expand]

*You see — in the perfect plan of God the gospel was to go to **the Jews first** and then to **the Gentiles**...*

Romans 1:16 (NKJV)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

REMINDER — God is orderly — He is not the author of confusion — He has a purpose and a plan...

And the wisest thing for us to do is to simply get on board with His way of doing things whether or not we *understand* or *agree*...

Continuing on in Matthew 10 to vs...

7 And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

preach — *proclaim as a herald...*

And the apostles were to proclaim the message that ***“The kingdom of heaven is at hand”***...

- *Now, we talked about what it means for the kingdom of heaven to be at hand in **Matthew 4** but that has been awhile so I want to remind you of a few things...*

First of all, I believe that ***the kingdom of heaven being at hand*** means that God's kingdom was now ***present and available in a way that it never had been before***...

And this new interaction with the kingdom of heaven was made available through the Lord Jesus Christ...

Colossians 1:13 (NKJV)

[God the Father] has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love...

So, the kingdom of heaven is at hand — it is present — it has come near — through the agency of the Lord Jesus Christ...

And the apostles were to deliver the invitation — anyone could enter into the kingdom of heaven — right there and then — through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ...

- So, it is vital that we understand that every kingdom has a king — and the Lord Jesus is the ***King of the Kingdom of Heaven*** — and He brought His kingdom near — and all who trust in Him will enter into His kingdom...

Now here's the application...

If you are a believer then you have entered the kingdom of heaven — you are a kingdom citizen with all the rights and privileges that grants you...

But as citizens of the kingdom, we must choose how we will live in the kingdom...

- ***Will we submit to the true King and live our lives for His glory, empowered by the resources that He provides?...***

- ***Or will we seek to establish our own kingdoms for our own glory...***

I believe that these are the fundamental questions that explain the weak state of professing Christianity...

- *Somewhere along the way, Christians have lost sight of the fundamental realities of the kingdom of heaven — so here are five realities of the kingdom that I hope we will take to heart...*

1) The kingdom of heaven is available — right here and right now to anyone who will submit to Christ as King...

2) Christ is the undisputed King of all — it is rebellion to serve any other king...

3) The Triune God has provided all the resources needed for us to live as faithful kingdom citizens right here and right now...

4) Though the kingdom of heaven is present here and now — the kingdom has not come in its fullness — we await the return of Christ the King for the fullness of the kingdom...

5) We are to live as kingdom citizens in the midst of the evil kingdoms of this world — realizing that our stay here is short — and that we will receive an eternal reward for our faithful service...

Now, as we turn our attention back to Matthew 10, we see in vs 8 that the apostles were to display the reality of the kingdom through the good works that they were empowered to perform...

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

This is radical — through the delegated power of God, the apostles were to heal people of sickness, cleanse people of leprosy, raise people from the dead and cast out demons...

And they were to do all of this without charging people for it...

- *They were not to heal people and then say, “the screen’s going to ask you a question”...*

The apostles had freely received this power and they were to freely distribute the benefits of this power to others...

Moving on to vs 9-10...

9 Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts,

10 nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.

On this mission trip, as a demonstration of faith, the apostles were to go out without extra supplies and to trust that God would provide for them through the hospitality of those they ministered to...

11 "Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out.

- [expand — not shopping around for a more comfortable place to stay...]

12 And when you go into a household, greet it.

13 If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it.

- [expand — Greeting of peace — “shalom”...]

This reminds me of the priestly benediction of...

Numbers 6:24-26 (NKJV)

24 "The LORD bless you and keep you;

25 The LORD make His face shine upon you,

And be gracious to you;

26 The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,

And give you peace."

Unfortunately, at the end of vs 13 the Lord Jesus warns that not every household would be worthy of receiving this blessing...

But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

The disciples are not to issue a greeting of peace to the households who refuse the proclamation of the kingdom...

- Because this would give those people a false sense of security — they would think that **everything is ok** when **everything is not ok...**

- [ex. scene from 90's comedy, *"Give it to me straight, am I gonna make it?"*...(expand)]...

This reminds me of what God speaks to the Prophet Jeremiah in...

Jeremiah 6:13-14 (NKJV)

**13 "...from the least of them even to the greatest of them,
Everyone is given to covetousness;
And from the prophet even to the priest,
Everyone deals falsely.**

**14 They have also healed the hurt of My people
[superficially],
Saying, 'Peace, peace!'
When there is no peace.**

- [expand — incredible danger of giving people a false sense of security / danger of practicing false praise...]

Continuing on in Matthew 10 to vs 14...

**14 And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words,
when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust
from your feet.**

- [expand on imagery — taking nothing from that city — no association with it — a picture of complete separation...]

15 Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

Amazingly, in the final judgment the cities who rejected the witness of the apostles will suffer more than the people of Sodom and Gomorrah...

- And this is because the cities that rejected the apostles had much greater light than did the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah...

The Lord Jesus speaks of this principle in...

Luke 12:47-48 (NKJV)

47 “And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”

In Spiderman, Uncle Ben famously said to Peter Parker: “***With great power comes great responsibility***”...

And that is absolutely true...

- But it is also true that “***with great exposure to the kingdom of heaven comes eternal responsibility***”...

Conclusion

With this in mind, we will stop here for today and Lord-willing pick up in vs 16 next week...

And the question I want to leave you with is simply this: Are you a disciple of the Lord Jesus?...

- If so, then please understand that you are a disciple because you have been ***called*** by Jesus...

And, if you have been called by Jesus then you have also been ***sent*** by Jesus...

- So, walk in that calling and be willing to go wherever He has sent you...

Let's pray...