

Matthew ch 10 vs. 5-15

Let's turn in our bibles to Matt ch 10, as we continue on in our studies in the book of Matt. I took the time last week to go over some of the various characteristics of the 12 disciples whom Jesus called to be apostles. Because I felt it necessary to spend some time expounding on the fact that God chooses to use everyday ordinary fallible people. God employees' imperfect people to accomplish His perfect will. Remember Jesus chose a guy that had a tendency to speak 1st and think later, He chose guys' of seeming insignificance, He chose guys with a hot headed temper, He chose a skeptic, a doubter, a tax collector (who would've been considered a sell out to his people). and Then He chose a political rebel (some William Wallace kind of a guy who hated foreign rule) and would've killed a gut like Matt under any other circumstance, and finally a traitor was chose by Jesus. And the Lord would radically transform all of these guys (minus Judas) and use them in an awesome way.

God isn't limited to seminary graduates through which He accomplishes His work. As a matter of fact you will find that most of the time they are probably the exception rather than the norm. Now man will employ the graduate students, the ones with the degrees. And don't get me wrong, there's absolutely nothing-wrong with obtaining a degree, but don't think that that qualifies you as a vessel of honor to be radically used by God. Why? Because if God only used people of great accomplishment as far as the world is concerned, then we would place emphasis on the works of the flesh rather than giving God all the honor and glory that only He deserves.

“Well I studied hard and earned *my* degree and so when God saw all that *I* had done that's when all this great stuff started happening.” So who then gets the glory? The bible says 1Cor 1:27-29 “*God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29that no flesh should glory in His presence*”

In other words God's not necessarily scouting college campuses for the spiritually elite. Will God use college grads? Absolutely, is God limited to college grads? Absolutely not. If you're a common ordinary person with faults, you qualify; there's only one requirement. Before you're sent out by God, you have to get to know God. And we pointed out the difference last week between a disciple and an apostle. A disciple being one who is a learner and an adherent, one who imitates his or her teacher.

The word apostle means one sent forth, but as we noticed the transition in the text last week they were disciples before they were apostles. These common everyday guys got to know Jesus in a personal way and as a result Jesus placed a call on their lives, gave them power to fulfill that to which He had called them, and then as we'll see this morning He sent them out. The apostles went forth "apostling." Now the question comes up periodically; are there apostles today?

The answer to that question lies of course in what do you mean when you say apostle? Do you want the answer based on Webster's definition of the word, or do you want your answer based upon the biblical definition of the word? Webster's defines apostle as person sent out on a mission; to accomplish something. If you put it like that then sure God has thousands of apostles today in the form of pastors and missionaries and things of that nature.

But if you want to stick to the biblical perspective then the answer is no. Because according to the biblical qualifications of what it took to be acknowledged as an apostle was 1st of all you had to have seen the risen Christ. (1st Cor 9:1) #2 you had to have spent time in fellowship with Christ (acts 1:21,22). And of course you have to be chosen by the Lord for that office (Eph. 4:11). No one deems themselves as an apostle of Christ, the Lord Himself ordains and appoints men for that office.

since no one has seen the risen Lord today or spent a lot of time in fellowship with Him then the results are simply that according to biblical standards there are no apostles today. Now if you remember right, before Jesus called these guys he told them to pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into His harvest. Why, because the harvest is ripe and in need of reaping, (speaking of course of the multitudes of people in need of salvation.) So now that Jesus has called them and equipped them, we read in vs. 5-15

Vs. 5-6

Now we're beginning to see this unfold as 1st Jesus told them to pray that the Lord of harvest would *send* laborers into His harvest, and having told them to pray that the Lord would send laborers into His harvest, the next thing He does is send *them* out.

You'll notice that what seems to happen so many times is that as we begin to pray about something the Lord will begin to speak to our own hearts. You know maybe we'll see a need, or a need is revealed to us and we think *man, that's a real need* and at 1st we think *boy that's something that the church should really look into meeting.* and We begin to become all concerned and burdened with this area of need.

So the Lord says well why don't you pray that God would raise up someone to meet that need. And as we begin to pray about it we realize that God has called us to be the one to take care of it. Many times that's why God makes us aware of a need in the 1st place and so He shows us a need so that as we catch the burden we might plug our selves into the filling of that need. Many the times the fact that God has made you aware of a particular need is the beginning of the call of God upon your own life for that particular field of service.

Someone saw the fact of how easily these grounds can get out of control and a need to keep them mowed back so that you and your kids might take them for granted. So God put it on their hearts and there's a couple of guys that invest literally hours of their lives out here every week keeping the grass mowed down and the trash picked up instead of spending that time with their wives or doing something else like relaxing at home with a glass of ice tea after a hard days work.

Someone saw all the kids running around in the parking lot with nothing to keep them out of harms way as the cars drove back and forth acrossed the parking lot and so they were burdened with the need to minister to those kids, thus a playground has come to fruition. Same thing with the children's ministry and the coffee house and the radio station, and the list goes on and on, that's how sheet rock got put on these walls and this old restaurant was gutted and made into a sanctuary. It starts with people seeing a need, being burdened for that area of need, praying about it and responding accordingly.

And that's basically what's happening here, the Lord told them to pray about the need for laborers and then He told them to go. And praying so often has the tendency to prepare our own hearts for the call that God desires to place on our lives. You might say praying prepares us for proceeding, or for going.

You've maybe heard the old adage "prayer changes things" that's true, mainly us. Our prayers don't change God, nor are we to seek to manipulate God in and thru our prayers, even if you do your wasting your breath. We pray, not to try and convince God of our will and our ways, but rather so that we might get in line with *His* will and *His* ways. Because it's at those times that God has got our undivided atten. and The Spirit can begin to convict our hearts and mold us and shape us into His image, and that which He desires me to be, that I might be sensitive to the call and desire of God for my own life. And then so often as we're in the Lords presence it happens as it did with Isaiah in the 6th ch of the book of Isaiah when in Isa 6:8-9 he heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "*Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?*" Then he said, "*Here am I! Send me.*" And He said, "Go" That's basically what's happening here in the 10th ch of Matt, the Lord revealed to them a need told them to pray and then said, "go". But we notice here in vs. 5-6 that Jesus restricted their area of ministry He said (read).

Now this commission was specifically for this mission, this isn't something for us today. And later on Jesus would tell them just prior to His ascension in Matt 28:19-20 *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* We read in acts when He was speaking to them in regards to the coming of the H.S. and He said to them *"you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

But here He's restricting the parameters of their ministry and no doubt for a few reasons. #1 If they were to go to the gentiles 1st, it would've had devastatingly bad ramifications as far as the effectiveness of their ministry to the Jews would've went because the Jews considered the gentiles unclean, so if they were to go to the gentiles 1st they'd of been totally rejected by the Jews. #2 Jesus was setting their priorities straight, in that He's sending them to their own homes, their own people, and their nation 1st before He sends them to the uttermost parts of the earth. In essence saying *learn to cross the street before you worry about crossing the ocean*. Keep your priorities in their proper perspective. and 3rdly He was sending them as forerunners (basically) before Him to prepare the people for His coming into those cities.

And since God had ordained from before the foundations of the earth that the Messiah would come through the nation of Israel, He sent to them 1st the message of the kingdom and the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. As Paul the apostle would later write in Rom 1:16 *"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."* Jesus continued on in vs. 7 and said (read)

Now this particular message was also specifically for His disciples at this time. Our message that we're to proclaim today is salvation by faith in the person of Jesus Christ and that the atonement for our souls lies in the shedding of His blood on our behalf upon the altar of the cross. Paul in writing to the Corinthians said *"And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."*

But here they were to preach saying (repeat) and that word preach in the Greek means to herald or to proclaim or even publish. And this was the same message that John the Baptist heralded and even Jesus Himself in Matt 4:17. So His disciples were imitating their teacher, teaching and preaching what *they* had been taught and told to preach. And how was the kingdom of heaven at hand? In the person of the King Himself, that of course being Jesus Christ

Vs 8

So again Jesus gives to them divine authority over all the various sicknesses and diseases and unclean spirits in order to authenticate and confirm the validity of their message. That they were in fact sent from God, but the emphasis laid in the 1st instruction that Jesus gave them, that being “preach the word.” The signs were to accompany, or again confirm the word. They were to preach and teach, and then heal and cleanse, and so on just as the pattern Jesus had laid out for them previously and we seen Matt even record Jesus’ actions in that order in vs.35 of ch 9.

That’s the basic pattern we see laid out through out the scripts, signs and wonders were never the emphasis, the word of God is that which is to be emphasized and the healings and so forth followed the word. In acts 14 we see Paul speaking and then his eyes lock on this man and it says, *“This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, 10said with a loud voice, “Stand up straight on your feet!” And he leaped and walked.”* The sign followed the word, and notice it wasn’t some weird circus side show, Paul wasn’t running around slaying people in the spirit or blowing on people so that they might receive the H.S. He didn’t have the whole assembly worked up in a frenzy, he was simply teaching the word noticed this mans faith, acknowledged it and the guy was healed. Which no doubt authenticated Paul’s message in those peoples eyes. As a matter of fact it gave him a little bit to much credibility in that case,

They tried to make him a god and ultimately when he refused their worship, they stoned him to death and dragged him outside the city and then the disciples gathered around him and prayed for him and he stood up, went back into the city and continued to preach the gospel. But the authority Jesus gave them acted as their credentials to confirm their words. And they weren’t to charge people for what they were given freely; Jesus said (repeat).

Don’t miss what Jesus is telling *His* disciples, *no charge* for the proclamation that accompanies the healings. You say, “Well what do these so called modern day *faith healers* do with this statement Jesus made?” I have no idea. They come into town, put on their circus act, take your money and then stroll out of town. And even if the gift they have is legitimate (which ½ the time I question anyway) if God gave it to them for free, why do they charge people for the use of it? Why aren’t they going to the hospitals sharing Jesus Christ and saving people a fortune in medical bills, while simultaneously saving souls? Paul the apostle in writing to the Cor. said *“For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”*

He told Timothy, *“If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself. Now godliness with contentment is great gain.”* If freely you have received, which is anything that you have of benefit, gifts, talents, James said “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights,” then freely give. God has entrusted you with certain things, what ever it may be and He’s given them to you freely by His grace.

Now let it flow freely through you to help, and bless others around you, don’t prostitute your God given gifts for your own personal gain. Paul told the Galatians *“let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”* Now, yes the laborer is worthy of his wages and God’s going to take care of you but not by you manipulating the people of God for your own personal gain. He didn’t say, “Freely you’ve received now go and fleece the flock” He said freely you’ve received now freely give. The Lord would later tell Paul *‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’* (Acts 20:35)

Vs 9-10

So not only were they to freely give they weren’t to take anything more than the cloths on their backs with them on their journey. Why? We see in vs. 10, *“for a worker is worthy of his food.”* In other words where God guides, God provides. Paul wrote and said that the Lord commanded that, *“those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.”* In other words it’s not wrong to receive a wage from the church if your shepherding the flock, but if God’s doing a work He’s going to naturally stir the peoples hearts to get behind what He’s doing in and through the ministry, and that’s why we never beg for peoples money.

#1 God’s not broke, #2 it’s offensive. Now tithes and offerings are a biblical aspect of a believers worship; so we give people that opportunity. But if we can’t get behind what God’s doing here simply because we love the Lord and He has stirred our hearts to give then I prefer if people don’t even give and when our bills are no longer able to be paid then we’ll just close the doors because we’re not going to go on a begathon and propagate that if you don’t give God’s work can’t go on. Because that’s a bunch of hog wash and quite frankly it churns my stomach that someone would make the God of all creation who is high, and holy and lifted up, out to be some poor beggarly type of a person who needs our filthy lucre to accomplish His purposes.

The asphalt in heaven is pure gold but God needs your money, give me a break. If God's not providing then maybe He's not guiding and if there's no provision then apparently it's not God's vision. And if it's not God's vision then you would do well to let it die and see what it is that God wants to do instead of investing time and energy into something that's not of value to the kingdom, why set there and spin your wheels when you could be moving effectively forward.

Now so far God has seen to it that our needs here are met and we praise Him for it, but should the time come that we're no longer able to pay the bills, we'll just praise God for all the lives He's reached in and through this ministry and close the doors. Why? Because this is His work, not mine, and if He's ever through with it why fight against God. It's better just to move on with what He wants to do instead of hang on to what you want to do, because of your fighting with God it's a losing battle, you can't win so it's best just to give up and find out what God is doing and move forward with that. Jesus is emphasizing to them that as long as they're doing what God would have them do He's going to meet their needs, and give them each day their daily provisions.

Vs.11

Obviously the one's who were worthy would be the ones who received the message, and they weren't to seek to move up the social ladder while they were in town. When they went into someone's house they were stay there until they left.

Vs.12-13

In other words if they're truly receptive enjoy each other's fellowship, if they're not, what fellowship has light with darkness don't abide with them just take off.

Vs 14

When a Jew would travel into gentile country when they would get back on Jewish soil, they'd shake the dust off of their feet because they considered it unclean. And what's basically being said here is that even as they have rejected the gospel, so the gospel has rejected them. And you'll find as you go through the scriptures that God basically responds to you as you respond to Him, He will initiate a relationship with you and how you ultimately respond to that will determine how God responds to you. If you confess Christ as your Lord and savior from the heart, He'll confess you before the Father, if you deny Him, He'll deny you, if you draw near to Him, the bible says that He'll draw near to you, but if you reject Him, He'll reject you. Notice what Jesus says concerning those who reject the gospel, those who reject Him as the only means to everlasting life, and refuse to open up the door of their hearts and let Him in.

Vs 15

As you may or may not know Sodom and Gomorrah were the cities that God rained down fire and brimstone upon in judgment because of the wickedness of the cities and their refusal to repent. So to deliberately reject the message of Jesus Christ and the shedding of His blood for the remission or forgiveness of sin is no small offense in the sight of God.

So I encourage you to day, if God is tugging on your heart, don't harden it against the message.

God loves you so much more than you could ever know, and Jesus Christ bore the penalty of your sin so that you wouldn't have to, He took your pain and your emptiness, and your hurts and frustrations upon Himself. And in return He wants to give you hope and peace and satisfaction, and fulfillment. But the choice is up to you whether or not you accept it, or reject it.