

Sermons on Matthew

Gathering the Sheep

Matthew 10:1-10

With Study Questions

*Pastor Paul Viggiano
Branch of Hope Church
2370 W. Carson Street, #100
Torrance, CA 90501
(310) 212-6999
pastorpaul@integrity.com
www.branchofhope.org
5/29/2005*

Gathering the Sheep

Matthew 10:1-10

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 (Matthew 10:1-10).

Introduction

Responding to the need we read of in chapter nine that the multitudes were “like sheep having no shepherd” Jesus now remedies the problem. The twelve who Jesus had previously called to follow Him, He now sends out. The shepherding of God’s people will fall squarely on the shoulders of these twelve.

Although we often think of shepherding as being supportive or encouraging, shepherding in the strictest sense involves instruction. Shepherding means to tell the truth and expose the lies. Elders are considered shepherds (1 Peter 5:1, 2). The primary role of a good shepherd is that of instructor.

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine (1 Timothy 5:17).

It is the duty of all Christians to come along side and love and support one another; the shepherds are to seek to tell the truth. Hence the pastor's *office* has been known as the *study*. Your shepherds should know and proclaim the word of God – doctrine.

I. A Unique Office

There is a major difference between the shepherd referred to here as an *apostle* and the shepherd we know today as an *elder*. The office of apostle was a very unique office and not one we should view as the norm for history.

And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power (Matthew 10:1).

According to Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown this signified,

...both "power," and "authority" or "right." Even if it were not evident that here both ideas are included, we find both words expressly used in the parallel passage of Luke (Lu 9:1) – "He gave them power and authority" – in other words, He both *qualified* and *authorized* them.¹

We have discussed elsewhere that the ability to perform signs and wonders had, as its design, the confirming of the message of the one performing the sign (Matthew 9:6; Acts 14:3).

Here, as we shall soon see, there is a specific mission to Israel. Later Jesus will expand the mission, not just to Israel, but to every

¹Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 10:1). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

creature. Notice below the reason for the ability to perform signs and wonders.

Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. ¹⁵ And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ *And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” ¹⁹ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ *And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen (Mark 16:14-20, Italics mine).**

Although the word *apostle* simply means ‘one sent forth’ (your pizza delivery guy is an apostle from Dominos), we should be cautious of anyone using that word to describe their office. Today’s shepherds are to study what the apostles taught and lead their people accordingly, i.e. through the Scriptures. The foundation has been laid and we do not add to it but rather build on it.

Nothing Inherently Special

There was nothing special about these men that qualified them to be apostles. If one canvases the gospels they may wonder why in the world Jesus chose them. But God is not looking for qualified people but rather to qualify people. And although the apostles were given historically unique qualities (healing power and the ability to speak the infallible word of God), it is not as if they were mere parrots used by Jesus with no consideration of their own personalities and personal spiritual growth and welfare.

They had not received official theological training (Acts 4:13), but it would be foolish to consider three years with Jesus as anything less than what we might call a Masters Degree.

Of course Jesus' picking of these apostles went far beyond picking qualified men; God's decrees and deep and mysterious. Jesus, after all, picked Judas. And it wasn't after if Judas' betrayal was going to take Jesus by surprise (Matthew 26:21). Any number of nonsensical and unbiblical responses has been given to explain away this decision of Jesus but the fact is Jesus picked His betrayer both in history and eternity past. Yet at the same time Judas did what Judas desired to do and was culpable for his actions.

A Unique Mission

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 (Matthew 10:5, 6).

It important to recognize the uniqueness of this mission. Jesus will eventually sent His followers out into the entire world, but first Israel. This is not, as the dispensationalist will assert, because Jesus was offering them the millennial kingdom which would have started had they accepted Him as king.

It is quite the contrary. It had been prophesied that Israel's (for the most part²) rejection of Jesus is what would justify the judgment of Israel and the removal of Israel as the Kingdom of God. This will become quite clear later.

_Therefore I say to you, __the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. ⁻⁴⁴⁻ And __whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, _it will grind him to powder. _” ⁻⁴⁵⁻ Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they _perceived that He was speaking of them (Matthew 21:43-45).

² Although most of the original Christians were Jews.

The kingdom of God would be presented to the Jew first then the Greek (Romans 1:16). The Jews and gentiles who believe in Jesus would form one body and the promises and blessings of God would in no way recognize a blood line (Ephesians 2:11-22; Galatians 3).

A Universal Kingdom

**__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 (Matthew 10:7-10).**

Unlike the marching order of Jesus when He sent His followers on an international mission (Luke 22:35-37), Jesus instructs His apostles to bring no provisions. The worker is worthy of his wage. Israel, as God's people, were obliged to support the work of God. There should have been no need for them to bring provisions.

The message of God is precious and is to be highly valued. No one wants a part-time lawyer or heart surgeon. I don't want the man who is operating on my brain to have brain-surgery as a second job to his real occupation of motor-cycle repair. Nor should God's ministers be occupied with worldly affairs as such. Christians need to support ministers who will study vigorously shepherd accurately.

Yet at the same time the apostles are told to freely give because they have freely received. They shouldn't have the attitude of Simon who wanted to purchase the power with money (or anything you might think worthy of exchange – your own righteous deeds for example).

The ministry should never be thought of as a money making enterprise. Finances are a necessary part of ministry and should be handled prudently and openly. The last few decades have seen numerous financial debacles among various ministries.

In the final analysis the message is the same. Early in this gospel John the Baptist is preaching the kingdom. Jesus then comes preaching the kingdom. Jesus tells His apostles to preach the

kingdom and the message is for the kingdom to continue to be preached until the end of history.

It is a kingdom which has Christ as King. It is a kingdom that will never end. It is a kingdom outwardly manifested in the church yet residing in the hearts of men. It is a kingdom of sinners who have come to trust in the priestly office of their King to present them holy and blameless before God. It is a kingdom entered by faith to the benefit of man and the glory of its King.

Questions for Study

1. What is unique about the apostolic office (pages 2, 3)?

2. Should we expect to see apostles today? Why? Why not? (pages 3, 4)?
3. Why did Jesus pick those specific men to be apostles (pages 4, 5)?
4. Why did Jesus sent His apostles (at this point) only to Israel (pages 5, 6)?
5. Should pastors be full-time? Why? Why not (page 6)?
6. What preaching message do we see repeated through Matthew (page 7)?