

The Disciples of the Kingdom
Matthew 10
Sunday January 31, 2016

At the end of chapter 9 Matthew tells us about the ministry that Jesus was doing, *“going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues...and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness”* (9:35). And in the following verse we read the impact this had on Jesus... *“Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.”* (9:36) This response moves Him to a call. *“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the harvest.’”* (9:37, 38)

Jesus chose and continues to choose to use His people as His primary means of advancing His kingdom on this earth. I don't get it...cause I know me, and some of you! Fortunately, for everyones sake, He doesn't just tell us “Go do it! BYE!” He gave the original 12 and us instruction, encouragement and cautions.

After His final charge at the end of chapter 9, He gives the disciples a little push. I wonder if they were standing, looking at each other and Jesus, maybe even shouting in agreement with Him...YA! Workers are needed to bring in the harvest! YA!...Wait...oh...you mean us.

I. GO!

Jesus is the one who sends His disciples out. Had he not told them and us to go, I'm not sure any of us would have come up with the idea on our own. So, He gives the command.

• Jesus summons them (us) - v 1

Much like a military commander would summon (“to call upon to do something specified”) his troops, Jesus calls together His disciples. He gives them (us) an order, to go, and then lays out the plan of attack. Jesus knows His people!!! He knew if He just said “GO” with no plan, we either wouldn't go at all, or we'd go and screw everything up!

The rest of the chapter is the battle plan, full of warnings and encouragements and instructions.

• Jesus empowers them (us) - v 1

Jesus was sending the original 12 out as an extension of His personal ministry. Because of that, they needed to be able to do what He was doing. He gave them supernatural powers to validate who they said they were and where they were coming from. Today, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

- **Jesus gives them (us) instruction - v 5**

Jesus wants His people to be prepared and ready. Ready for the good and the bad. That's why He gave instruction. And so, maybe to remove fear, to take away a chance for someone to opt out, to make sure that things are done the way He desires them to be done, He gives instruction.

II. Where Should We Go? Who Should We Go To?

If Jesus didn't give direction on this, I firmly believe that there would be people who would never hear the call of the gospel. There are people and places that we would avoid at all costs for what we would consider to be good, valid and justifiable reasons.

- **Go to the sick - v 8**

Jesus himself said in the previous chapter *"It is not those who are healthy that need a physician, but those who are sick."* (9:12) Jesus wants us to minister to both the spiritual needs of the lost but also to the physical needs. We need to tell people that Jesus loves them and we need to show people that Jesus loves them. In order to do this, we need to go to the people who have needs.

Also, the sick (along with the rest of the people that Jesus calls His disciples to go to) would have been avoided at all costs by those who considered themselves religious in His day. These people would have been considered unclean and the process one would have had to go through after being in contact with them would not be considered worth it. So, they avoid them.

- **Go to the dead - v 8**

Another group that would have been a big no no to go to. The dead were horribly unclean.

- **Go to the outcast - v 8**

The leper and the demon possessed wrap up Jesus' list of misfits and outcasts. It would have been unimaginable, laughable for someone to even think about going out and finding a leper to care for them.

• **Go to danger - V 16**

I wonder what the expressions on the disciples faces looked like when Jesus said “*I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves?*” (9:16) Did they think he was joking? Were they waiting for the punch line that never came? They understood the picture that was being painted here.

“We often think that if something is not safe, it must not be of God. If it’s dangerous, risky, or if it may cause us harm, we must not be in God’s will. But those are not the criteria by which we determine God’s desire for us. As we go like sheep among wolves, people may think we’re foolish or clueless, but we’re actually being obedient, which is most important.” D. Platt Christ Centered Exposition - Matthew

This is why we’re taking 27 people to Mexico over spring break. Let’s be real. There is an element of risk involved. It isn’t going to be as safe and comfortable as spending spring break skiing at Big Sky or sitting on the beach in Southern California or sleeping in till noon in Idaho Falls.

In his call to go to the not so safest of places, Jesus gives further instruction. He says to be “*shrewd as serpents.*” Be smart, on your game.

III. What Will Happen?

Jesus is a full discloser kind of guy. He doesn’t say that if we become His disciples and do as he commands us to do (go) it’s going to be easy and that everyone we talk to is going to repent and than thank us for what we are doing.

• **You will be betrayed - v 21**

• **You will be hated - v 22**

• **You will be persecuted - v 23-25**

Comforting! Probably not, but at least its honest. The message that we take, the people that we go to, the places we go to are living in direct opposition to the Gospel. When we share the Gospel, some will reject forcefully both the message and the messenger. Jesus is telling us this so we won’t be surprised and will keep on.

And again. like He has done the whole chapter, He doesn’t leave it there. He continues to give instruction as to how to get through this...

IV. What Do We Do?

Think for a second if this is where the chapter ended, where the thought stopped. “You’re going to be betrayed, hated and persecuted. Let’s close in prayer.” Thankfully that’s not what happened.

I again wonder how the disciples were taking this all in. Did they visibly express signs of concern, doubt, fear? Based on what Jesus is about to say, it would appear so. Jesus tries to again encourage them with some practical, hands on encouragement.

• Don’t be afraid - v 26-31

3 times in these 6 verses Jesus tells His disciples “do not fear.” He follows each command with a reason!!

1. Do not fear - everything is going to eventually be brought out into the open (v 26)
2. Do not fear - what’s the worst they can do...kill you? There is no finality to their harm. (v 28)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was one of the few German pastors to stand against Hitler and was ultimately executed for his position said the following in regards to fearing man. “Those who are still afraid of men have no fear of God, and those who have fear of God have ceased to be afraid of men.”

3. Do not fear - you are known by the Father. (v 28-30) He cares about the sparrows but he likes you more! He knows how many (or few) hairs are on your head!

• Love Him - v 37

Jesus is not calling us not love our families. That would go against other passages that call us to do just that. What He is saying is that we should love Him far above and beyond anyone on this earth.

• Make a decision - v 38

This is the moment of decision. Are we going to go to the outcast? Are we willing to go to the not so safe places? Pick up your cross! Jesus has laid everything out for us. He’s given us specific instruction, warning and encouragement.

Jesus has given us instruction, encouragement and caution. Will we use His words appropriately? Will we be like Jesus? Seeing the people, will we have compassion for them? Will that compassion cause movement? Action?