

THE MESSIAH'S COMMISSION TO HIS DISCIPLES

MATHEW 10:05–15

Introduction

This is the commission of our Lord to His apostles. It was the very first expedition they had been sent out on all alone. Note how carefully Jesus instructed them and the clear implications for His followers in every generation.

- I. Jesus sent out His disciples: instructed them, “Go” (v. 5).
- II. First, go to Israel, to the lost of one’s own house (v. 6).
- III. Second, preach: the Kingdom of Heaven is near (v. 7).
- IV. Third, minister, sharing freely (v. 8).
- V. Fourth, receive compensation (vv. 9-10).
- VI. Fifth, seek a worthy host (v. 11).
- VII. Sixth, plan your ministry and your visits (vv. 12-15).

I. *Mathew 10:05 The Commission to “Go”*

Jesus sent out His disciples, instructing them. Note that Jesus did not send forth every disciple who was following Him. Only a few were chosen to serve as special messengers who were to devote *all their time* to preaching and ministering (See notes, Mt. 10:1-4). Most other disciples were to be witnessing for Christ in their work and in their other daily activities.

Thought 1. A person is sent forth by Jesus; he does not choose to go forth. If he does, he goes forth in his own strength and power. He cannot expect the power of Christ.

Thought 2. The ministry is not a profession; it is a commission. Christ calls and commissions. The man who chooses to be a minister without a true call and commissioning of the Lord experiences four things.

- (1) He finds himself ministering primarily in his own strength.
 - (2) He often finds his heart void and feels the constant pressure of having to come up with *human ideas* and *human programs*. He has difficulty maintaining a sense of meaning and purpose for both himself and his people.
 - (3) He senses a real void and shortcoming in proclaiming the gospel and in doing the work of the ministry.
 - (4) He often wonders what *good* is really being done. He just lacks the sense of a real call within; therefore, there is no *outside godly connection* to comfort and assure him that he is in God’s will. He is left to seek comfort and assurance only from himself or from some other human source. There is no supernatural Spirit or power to encourage him.
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II. *Mathew 10:06 Commission to Witness*

First, go to Israel; that is, do not go to the lost of the world, but to the lost of one's own house (See *Israel*, Mt. 10:6). The offer of salvation was to go to Israel first; now it is to be offered to the whole world (Rom. 9:30; see Rom. 10:13).

Thought 1. A man is to go to his own house first.

- (1) He is to demonstrate love for his own family and friends first. If he does not love those of his own household, how can he love those whom he does not know?
- (2) He is to learn how to bear witness with those who are more likely to respond instead of react. Such knowledge better prepares him to face the world and its negative responses.

MATHEW 10:06 ISRAEL

“Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.” Mathew 10:06

Jesus had several reasons for sending His messengers to Israel first. (1) Israel held a very special place in God's plans. The nation was to be given first opportunity to hear the Gospel (See *Israel, God's Special People*, Jn. 4:22). (2) The disciples needed to concentrate their efforts right where they were lest their efforts be scattered. (3) God's method is always for a person to reach his own home and his own people first. A person is to begin his witness and work immediately right where he lives.

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

1 Pet 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

A word needs to be said about Israel. Jesus was pointing out several things.

1. Israel has a very special place in God's heart (See *Israel, God's Special People*, Jn. 4:22). Therefore, the gospel was to be preached to Israel first.
2. Israel is as a lost sheep: “My people have been lost sheep” (Jer. 50:6). Note that the Gentiles are also called “lost sheep” (1 Pet. 2:25).
3. Israel's people were lost because their shepherds (teachers) let them scatter. Their teachers had not adhered to the truth (See note, Mt. 9:35-38).

Mat 9:36-38 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” □

III. *Mathew 10:07 Preaching the Kingdom of Heaven*

Second, preach — preach that the kingdom of heaven is near. Note the message is a *given* message, given by the Lord Himself. The disciples were not to proclaim their own ideas nor the ideas of others. They were to preach the message *given* by the Lord. No matter the generation, the message needs to be repeated and repeated.

=> It is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). It was the message of Christ (Mt. 4:17, 23).

=> It was the message of John (Mt. 3:2).

=> It was the message of the apostles and ministers of Christ.

Rom 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Thought 1. The Kingdom of Heaven necessitates repentance. The apostles preached repentance as they went out (Mk. 6:12). See *Kingdom of Heaven*, Mt. 19:23-24.

MATHEW 10:07–8 MINISTERS AND MINISTRY

“As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.” Mathew 10:07–8

The major areas of service for the apostles were twofold — the area of preaching the gospel and the area of ministering. Preaching is set off by itself as a major area (v. 7), and ministering is set off by itself as a major area (v. 8).

The apostles were to minister and to share freely. Christ gave them His authority and power freely; therefore, they were to minister freely, not charging *special fees for special ministries* (note this is not referring to *compensation* for special ministries, but to *special fees* for special ministries, v. 10). Their ministry and sharing were in four primary areas.

1. They were to heal the sick. Many had physical needs; they were ill, hurting and suffering. Some did not have enough to eat or wear and did not even have a place to live. Some were weak and had lost the will to fight. They were hopeless and helpless, discouraged and depressed. They needed the message of the gospel.
2. They were to cleanse the lepers. Leprosy was considered a form of pollution; therefore, it was a symbol of sin. The apostles were to cleanse the lepers. They were to cleanse those who had the actual disease, and they were to preach the power of Christ to cleanse a life polluted with sin.

3. They were to raise the dead. There is no record of the apostles' raising the dead before the resurrection of Christ, but the apostles were used by God to raise many to spiritual life. The Bible says men are *dead in transgressions and sins* (Eph. 2:1; See *Death*, Heb. 9:27). Therefore, the disciples were to preach the power of Christ to raise men to life eternal.
4. They were to cast out demons. Demon-possession means that a person is gripped by evil forces. When a man is gripped by an evil spirit, he is no longer in control of his life; he is controlled by the forces of evil. The disciples were to preach the power of Christ to deliver men from the spirits of evil. □

IV. *Mathew 10:08 Minister Freely to the Needs of the People*

Third, minister — sharing freely (See *Ministers and Ministry*, Mt. 10:7-8). Two things always need to be remembered about the apostle's unusual power.

1. Their power was a given power. It came from the Lord Himself. God gives His servant the gifts and power to preach and minister as He has called him (1 Cor. 12:28f; Eph. 4:11-13). The gifts and power are of God, not of the man himself. The gifts and the power of a man come freely from God; therefore, he is freely to give all he has. All the energy and all the toil necessary are to be poured into preaching the gospel and into ministering to people.
2. Their power was to confirm that God does love and care for the world and that the message being preached was actually from God (Note, Mt. 10:1).

Thought 1. Ministering to the needs of people shows two things.

- (1) God loves and cares for people.
- (2) The minister is a minister of love and care.

Mat 20:28 *Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*”

John 20:21 *Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”*

Acts 10:38 *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.*

Acts 20:35 *In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”*

Rom 15:1 *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.*

Gal 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

V. Mathew 10:09–10 Receive Compensation for Ministry

Fourth, receive compensation. In financial matters, Christ expected two things from His apostles and His people. First, His apostles and servants were not to spend their own money on the ministry; and second, His people were to adequately support His apostles and servants.

1 Cor 9:14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

Gal 6:6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

Phil 4:14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

1 Tim 5:17-18 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."

Thought 1. The apostles, God's servants, were forbidden to accumulate estates *through the ministry*. But they were not to spend their own money on the ministry. There were several reasons for this.

- (1) Their minds and hearts were to be centred on preaching the gospel and ministering to people, not on buying and selling and accumulating.
- (2) They were to trust God for their needs and by such example to teach dependence upon God (Mt. 6:24-34).
- (3) They were to teach and depend upon God's people to provide for them (see 1 Cor. 9:13-14).
- (4) They were to allow God's people the privilege of sharing in the ministry through their giving. God's people were to learn more and more trust by depending upon God to help them raise whatever funds they needed to support the ministers.

Thought 2. God's servant or labourer is worthy of being financially supported. In fact, Paul taught that God's servant is "worthy of double honour" (salary, compensation, financial support). (Notes, I Tim. 5:17-18; pt 2, 1 Cor. 16:5-9; see Lk. 10:7; Phil. 4:11-14.)

Thought 3. God's people were to support the Lord's apostles. The people were to allow the apostles to give their full time to the ministry and not be forced to labour in a secular job.

VI. *Mathew 10:11 Receiving Hospitality*

Fifth, seek a worthy host. In every city and place, there are some who have good reputations and some who have bad reputations. Several factors determine a worthy host.

1. A worthy host was a person with a good reputation concerning morals. Living with a person of evil and unjust morals would cause the apostles' own morals to be questioned. They were to reach out to the immoral, even as Christ did, but not to fellowship and live with them. They were to be careful in choosing their close friends.
2. A worthy host was a person with a good reputation concerning God. Some would have a spiritual interest and some would not.
3. A worthy host was a person with a good reputation concerning hospitality. Some would willingly care for strangers; others would not.

Rom 12:13 *Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

1 Tim 5:10 *And is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.*

Titus 1:8 *Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.*

Heb 13:2 *Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.*

1 Pet 4:9 *Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.*

Thought 1. Note several lessons.

- (1) The apostles were to seek out the worthy host. They were not to seek out the wealthy and leading citizens of a community, nor were they to seek out the best accommodations.
- (2) Paul sought out God's people when he went into a new and strange place (Acts 28:14).
- (3) The good people of a place are usually known. All the factors that make up the quality of a person are usually known: honesty, decency, kindness.
- (4) Note the lesson about the believer's close friends. His close friends are to be God's people — people counted worthy by God.

Thought 2. God's messenger was to stay with the same host throughout his stay in a place. He was not to seek more comfort and luxury as he came to know a place. There are several reasons for this.

- (1) Such action might indicate favouritism and cause jealousy.

- (2) Such action might indicate a materialistic and selfish and soft mind, leading to the questioning of a person's commitment.
- (3) Such action distracts from a person's purpose and ministry.
- (4) Such action hurts and often alienates the first host.

VII. *Mathew 10:12–15 Plan Your Ministry*

Sixth, plan your ministry, your visits. The Lord sent His messengers forth, that is, out visiting in the houses of the city. They did not sit back waiting on the people to come. They went out carrying the gospel to the people.

Note the Lord told the apostles how to visit. Precise plans were laid.

1. The apostles were to approach a house cordially (v. 13). Saluting, that is, approaching cordially, does several things.
 - a. It communicates a friendliness and kindness which encourages an open reception.
 - b. It opens the door to more conversation which the messenger can turn into a presentation of the gospel.
 - c. It tells immediately whether a person is receptive or not.

Col 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Col 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

1 Pet 3:8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

Thought 1. The messenger is to salute and be courteous to people, not forceful, demanding, forward or ugly.

2. If the people accepted the apostles, the apostles were to share peace (v. 13). The greeting of *peace* was to be given to every home and place they approached. If the people were worthy, the messengers were to continue their message of peace. If the people were unworthy, they were to let the salutation lie alone. They were to say nothing else. They were not to continue the message of peace. They were to take the message of peace and leave without sharing it.

Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Col 1:20 And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Thought 1. The witnesses of the Lord must discern and make a judgment about the people to whom they are witnessing.

- (1) Are they kind and gracious or cold and hard?
- (2) Are they just shy and bashful or really disinterested?
- (3) Are they truly receptive or just kind and gracious to everyone?
- (4) Are they spiritually sensitive or just interested in religious questions?

Thought 2. The Lord's witness must not waste time. He must discern as quickly as possible who is worthy and receptive.

Thought 3. The greeting of the day was "Peace to you." The apostles were to use the greeting as the basis of their message. They were to expand it. Their message was to be peace — *peace with God and the peace of God* (See Note, Jn. 14:27).

Thought 4. Note this: when a true messenger visits a family and does not share the message of peace, it is a warning to them. Their behaviour, unkindness or disinterest stopped the sharing.

3. If the people rejected the apostles, the apostles were to leave. The Lord's messenger and witness could expect to be rejected by some. When rejected, the messenger was to do two things.
 - a. He was to leave the house or city.
 - b. He was to shake the dust off his feet. This was to be a symbol that...
 - they had lost their opportunity.
 - their wickedness was so detestable that it polluted the very ground upon which their house or city sat.
 - God would reject them even as they had rejected Him.

Thought 1. Note that some *do* reject. They reject two things.

- (1) The messenger himself.
- (2) The messenger's words.

Thought 2. Note that whole cities reject the gospel, not just some households.

Thought 3. When rejected, the messenger is not to argue or force the gospel upon the person. Christ expects His messenger to leave. Note the words: "When you leave."

- c. Rejecters were to be judged (See *Sodom and Gomorrah*, Mt. 10:15). Rejection of God's messenger and of the gospel condemns a person to a terrible fate. The person's judgment is to be more severe than even the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. Why? Because the person rejects God's very own Son. Sodom and Gomorrah never had the opportunity to hear God's Son. Our responsibility is much greater because our privilege to hear God's Son is much greater.

Heb 9:27 *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.*

2 Pet 3:7 *By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*

Jude 1:14-15 *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones To judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."*

MATHEW 10:15 SODOM AND GOMORRAH

These two cities and their citizens are used as examples of the worst sinners (Deu. 32:32; Is. 1:10; Eze. 16:46; Mt. 11:23-24; Lk. 10:12-13; 17:29; Rom. 9:29; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7; Rev. 11:8). The cities were destroyed by fire (Gen. 19:24-25) and are said to be "an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7). □