

Called 9-05-04

Matthew 10:1-16 (NIV)

¹ He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. ² These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. ⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. ⁹ Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; ¹⁰ take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep. ¹¹ "Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. ¹² As you enter the home, give it your greeting. ¹³ If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. ¹⁵ I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. ¹⁶ I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

As we ended chapter 9, we read of Jesus asking the disciples to pray for God to send workers out into the harvest field. Now, in the beginning of this chapter they are sent by Jesus.

¹ He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

When Jesus sends out workers, He gives them authority. Because the Holy Spirit had not yet come and filled them, they needed the authority from Him to do this ministry. Anyone can presume to be a worker, but when they go to confront the works of darkness, they must have authority if they are going to see results. (Acts 19:14-15) They needed a visible demonstration to verify that their message had God's authority.

Is it the same today? Today we have the gift of the Holy Spirit. He leads us in ministry and helps us discern the will and direction of God. He sends out workers and tells them their assignments. (Acts 13:2) There are many that claim to have these gifts of deliverance and healing today. I'm not one who believes that such miracles no longer take place, but I do believe we need to place the emphasis on the fruits of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:31)

When we act at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, we act with authority and power. The Holy Spirit does not lead us to do something He will not then back up with His own power. He doesn't ask us to do something and then not equip us. When we are led of the Spirit, we can count on being the instrument of Jesus. (1 Corinthians 1:30) When we abide in Him, we bear fruit! (John 15:5)

Commented [notes1]: ¹⁴ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵ [One day] the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

¹⁶ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.
Acts 19:14-16 (NIV)

Commented [notes2]: ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."
Acts 13:2 (NIV)

Commented [notes3]: ³¹ But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.
1 Corinthians 12:31 (NIV)

Commented [notes4]: ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.
1 Corinthians 1:30 (NIV)

Commented [notes5]: ⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.
John 15:5 (NIV)

Notice that Jesus called the Twelve. He didn't draft them or make them feel guilty or demand; He simply called. The same is true today. When there is a work to be done, and we'll see in a minute what their assignment was, then Jesus calls people to be a co-laborer with Him. (1 Corinthians 3:9) "Co-laborer" is derived from the word "worker" at the end of the last chapter. (Matthew 9:37) It is a worker that works with another. (*ergates – sunergos*) Jesus calls us to come work alongside Him, while His life works within us.

Commented [notes6]: ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.
1 Corinthians 3:9 (NIV)

Commented [notes7]: ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few."
Matthew 9:37 (NIV)

You've probably heard His call in different ways and at different times. It may be to share your testimony with a neighbor, to invite someone to church, to help in a ministry, to give, or even a long term call like leading in music or teaching. The call is an honor and a privilege. May God graciously help us to respond to His call.

Mark uses a little different wording. Mark 3:14 (NIV) *He appointed twelve--designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.* He appointed them to the work. It was an official office that they filled in His Kingdom. They could accept or reject the appointment. Then notice the phrase, "*that they might be with him.*" A worker must spend time with Jesus. It is in His presence that we get our instructions to work in the harvest. We cannot make our proclamation unless we spend time listening to what the King would have us proclaim. (see verse 27)

Commented [notes8]: ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.
Matthew 10:27 (NIV)

Matthew lists the names of all twelve apostles. If you are having trouble reconciling the names with another Gospel writer's list, note that Bartholomew is probably another name for Nathaniel, and Thaddaeus is another name for Judas son of James. They were from all walks of life. Simon the Zealot would have been an arch rival of Matthew. That kind of reminds us of Republicans and Democrats in the church, especially in this election year! Imagine how Simon must have sneered across the table at Matthew. Zealots lived to assassinate Matthew's former employers. Do you think that one of the reasons Jesus chose them may have been to show us that anyone can work together and love each other when we focus on Him and not our personal opinions? Jesus looks for a hungry heart. With that key ingredient, we can set aside all the other issues we get so adamant about and focus on the One that meets our hunger. This band of men could never have come together for any other reason but the one reason worth giving our lives to. God help us to always stay focused on Jesus. Amen? Anything else will divide us.

Commented [notes9]: ³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."
⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.
⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers.
John 4:39-41 (NIV)

Commented [notes10]: ³ You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant,
⁴ 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'" Selah
Psalms 89:3-4 (NIV)

Commented [notes11]: ⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."
Exodus 19:6 (NIV)

Jesus gave this instruction to them.

^{5b} "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel."

If we didn't know better, we'd think that Jesus was opposed to the Gentiles. But Jesus has already witnessed to Samaritan woman at the well and that whole Samaritan city. (John 4:39-41) So why did Jesus give them this instruction? Jesus had come in fulfillment of the prophecies to Israel. He was the heir to David's throne. (Psalm 89:3-4) The Jews had to make a decision to accept or reject their Messiah. This was their last chance to live up to the calling of God to the Jewish nation. God had called them to be a nation of priests to present JHWH to the world, but through out their history they had failed. (Exodus 19:6) Now, Jesus was offering

to shepherd them as their Messiah. (Ezekiel 34:23) Once they had rejected Him, the Great Commission was given to go into all the world. (Matthew 28:19-20) The message had to go to the Jew first, to offer them their last chance to fulfill God's purposes for them as a nation. (Romans 1:16)

Just as the Twelve were called, Israel was called as well. The difference was that the Twelve accepted the call while Israel rejected theirs. Look at the difference in history! From the time the Jewish people rejected Jesus, their story was one of trouble. From the time the Twelve accepted their call, they also had trouble, but trouble with great fruit. You cannot escape trouble. The Scripture says that man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. (Job 5:7) There is a fire in the heart of man, and it will lead him to trouble as sure as the sparks of fire go up into the night. There is a fire that burns with passion for personal indulgence, but there is another fire, a fire that burns with passion for the One who loves us and gave His life for us. If you are burning for the world and its pleasure, you'll end up like Israel of old, in bondage. If you are burning like the disciples, with a love for Jesus Christ, you'll end up rejoicing before the throne of God and receive your eternal reward. I fear the flame of love for Christ is barely smoldering in many hearts, so there is little desire to answer the call. Will you fan that smoldering heart into a flame? Will you answer His call? It may be His last chance offer for you to say, "Yes, Lord. I will go."

Accepting our call does not mean getting out of difficulty or trouble, but it does mean a great difference in the end result. Nothing has changed the world for the better like the message of Jesus delivered through the Twelve. Whether you accept or reject the call of God upon your life will have everything to do with your future. (Hebrews 11:35)

⁷ As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.'⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

They were called to do the same thing that Jesus was doing. (Matthew 9:35) He presented the truth that God's rule and reign was near, if they would accept it. The miraculous signs verified that their message was true.

The message has not changed. The Jews were looking forward to the Kingdom of God, because they imagined that they would have a special place in it. But today we offer the same message to the world. Anyone can enter into the kingdom, and have the kingdom enter into them, if they will receive the King. (Luke 17:21) This is another way to present the understanding of the Gospel. If a person will receive Jesus' rule in their life (being their Lord), they have entered the Kingdom. A day will come when the kingdoms of this world will be taken over by the Kingdom of God, (Revelation 11:15) but for us who live under King Jesus today, that is only an outward difference. The most important inner-life is already in the Kingdom. We have received it without paying a price or earning it in any way, and we offer it to others just as freely. Many philosophies demand a great price for their secret instruction. (Acts 8:20) Their special world is only open to those who can afford it. But our Great God has come and paid the price for us so that we could enter the Kingdom of God and live under His glorious rule and reign.

Commented [notes12]: ²³ And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.
Ezekiel 34:23 (KJV)

Commented [notes13]: ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

Commented [notes14]: ¹⁶ I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.
Romans 1:16 (NIV)

Commented [notes15]: ⁷ Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward.
Job 5:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes16]: ³⁵ Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection.
Hebrews 11:35 (NIV)

Commented [notes17]: ³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.
Matthew 9:35 (NIV)

Commented [notes18]: ²¹ nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."
Luke 17:21 (NIV)

Commented [notes19]: ¹⁵ The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."
Revelation 11:15 (NIV)

Commented [notes20]: ²⁰ Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!
Acts 8:20 (NIV)

Is He your King? I didn't ask if you are saved, or if you understand the cross and grace. I asked if He is your King! Is He directing your life, reigning in your life, or are you still on the throne? If you refuse to answer His call, you very well may not be in His Kingdom. His subjects do His will. They bear fruit. (Matthew 7:20-21) They aren't perfect but they are growing in grace. Jesus is their LORD (master). Just as the Jews were thinking what they could personally get out of being in a dominant world empire, man can look at salvation as a means to obtain what he wants. Salvation is about entering a Kingdom where the King rules. It is God centered, not man centered. Is He your King, the center of your life?

⁹ Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; ¹⁰ take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep. ¹¹ "Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. ¹² As you enter the home, give it your greeting. ¹³ If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. The point of verses 9 and 10 is to not be encumbered with worldly goods when we go out in ministry. We should expect God to supply through those we minister to. When I was in India, I often thought, why did I bring all this stuff? We get so burdened down with what we think we need. We should go in faith that God would give people a chance to be blessed by sharing with us.

I have seen God touch the hearts of His people to supply the needs of those who minister the word. It is a way for them to share in the ministry. I met a man that was a missionary in Japan, a place with a high cost of living, but he lived this kind of a lifestyle. He trusted God for his every need. Whenever he had extra, he gave it to those who were even more needy. The young students in the IEM Bible College are going back to their hometowns with this same kind of faith in God to meet their needs. They go to risk their lives for the sake of the Gospel without assurance of support from anyone but God. And we have trouble having faith for God to do the little things in our daily life. God allows predicaments to come into our lives to teach us that our provision is from Him.

In verse 10, Jesus called the Twelve workers, the same word He used as the object of prayer in the end of the last chapter. They are fulltime ministers and should expect God to touch the hearts of those to whom they minister to meet their needs. Supporting them is one way in which we can join in their labor. Some are opposed to fulltime workers being given support. Jesus said they should expect it. Paul the Apostle said they were worthy of it. (1 Timothy 5:17-18) That is why we have an opportunity for you to give each week to missions. You can just mark your giving envelope as to what portion you want to go to missions. If you are not sent to be that kind of worker, you may be called to help support those who are called to be fulltime workers in the field. We rarely receive half of what we give out for missions. Would you pray and ask God to what extent you are called to support missions? (Luke 8:3)

¹⁴ If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. ¹⁵ I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

Commented [notes21]: ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.
²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.
Matthew 7:20-21 (NIV)

Commented [notes22]: ¹⁷ The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.
¹⁸ For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."
1 Timothy 5:17-18 (NIV)

Commented [notes23]: ³ And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.
Luke 8:3 (KJV)

The Jews had a way of expressing their disgust for the ungodliness of Gentiles. When they would pass through a Gentile region, as they stepped onto Jewish soil, they would shake off the dust on their clothes. The idea was that God was going to judge the wicked and they wanted no part in their judgment. Jesus turned it around and applied it within Israel. In telling them to do this to the people who rejected them, He was telling them to give the severe warning of shaking off the dust. In other words, the very wrath of God that they thought would fall on the Gentiles for their wickedness, was going to fall on them for rejecting the Kingdom of God that had come near to them. God had come to man, and man should respond.

He clarified it by saying that they would be worse off than Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah were burned to the ground by burning sulfur from heaven. (Genesis 19:24-25) Sodom and Gomorrah didn't have the Gospel preached followed by miraculous signs. (Matthew 11:23) The more we see and hear, the more we are accountable. (John 15:22) Jesus was dealing with the smugness of the Jews who thought that because they were descended from Abraham, they were in for blessing not wrath. (John 8:39) To have dust shaken off toward them would make them think. It should make us think. Today we do not speak much of hell and judgment. Jesus believed in it. He told His disciples to warn them of the impending consequences of rejecting Him as Messiah, as King.

16 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

As we go out, we will be confronted and attacked. The religious establishment and Roman Empire both came at the Christians like wolves tearing apart sheep. Sheep are gentle creatures and don't even know how to defend themselves. Wolves are cunning. We must be as shrewd as they are cunning and yet remain innocent. They are cunning to do evil. We must be shrewd to avoid evil. There is innocence in our shrewdness, for we do not seek to do harm, but good. We need wisdom to know when it is important to stand and fight and when it is more prudent to run away to fight another day. We need to know which fights will bring fruit for the kingdom of God. We need discernment. We trust God, but sometimes we trust Him to lead us to avoid a trap. (Matthew 6:13)

Jesus called these men to do what He was doing. He calls us to do the same. (John 20:21) Do you know what your call is? We all have the call to let the love and light of Jesus shine through us, but we each have a specific calling in the Kingdom of God. We each have an assigned task for which God has called us and will equip us. Are you willing to serve in the way God is calling you? Is He your King? Every time we gather together to worship, the Kingdom comes near to us. Every time we open God's word, the call goes out to us. It is a gracious call. It is a call to come out of the world and into the service of our great King. It is a call from selfishness to selflessness through the power of the risen Christ who indwells us. Have you answered His call? Is He your King? Have you welcomed the Holy Spirit to live in you and direct your life? Many are called, but few are chosen, because so few choose to be chosen. (Matthew 22:14) Our reasonable response is to accept Jesus as King of our heart and mind. Have you heard and responded to His call?

Commented [notes24]: ²⁴ Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens.

²⁵ Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land.
Genesis 19:24-25 (NIV)

Commented [notes25]: ²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.
Matthew 11:23 (NIV)

Commented [notes26]: ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin.
John 15:22 (NIV)

Commented [notes27]: ³⁹ "Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did."
John 8:39 (NIV)

Commented [notes28]: ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
Matthew 6:13 (NIV)

Commented [notes29]: ²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."
John 20:21 (NIV)

Commented [notes30]: ¹⁴ "For many are invited, but few are chosen."
Matthew 22:14 (NIV)