

# Instructions for Jesus' mission (part 1)

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Date: 14 June 2026

Preacher: James Ross

[0:00] Now we're going to read in our Bibles together a section of Matthew's Gospel, chapter 10, verses 5 to 15. And you'll want to have a Bible open so you can follow along.

We'll also refer back a little bit to Matthew chapter 9, so it'll be really helpful to have a Bible open. You can find it if you're using a church Bible on page 975. As we come to the instructions that Jesus gives His disciples as He sends them out on mission, we're going to look at verses 5 to 15 together. So again, let's hear the Word of God together. These twelve, Jesus sent out with the following instructions. Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans.

Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message. The kingdom of heaven has come near. Heal those who are ill. Raise the dead.

Cleanse those who have leprosy. Drive out demons. Freely you have received. Freely give. Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts.

[1:09] No bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff. For the worker is worth his keep. Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave.

As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it. If it is not, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet.

Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. Amen.

So I think I shared with some of you that on Wednesday morning I was a late invite to the National Prayer Breakfast for Scotland. So a gathering of 400 leaders from the world of politics and business and also the church.

And it was a wonderfully encouraging morning of having a wonderful breakfast. But also hearing from various groups, agencies, individuals working in mission in different places.

[2:15] So we heard, for example, from Transworld Radio broadcasting Bible teaching and prayer into places like Iran and Lebanon. In fact, we had a video from a guy who was broadcasting in Lebanon while bombs were falling about two kilometers from the radio station.

We also heard from the Vine Trust ship that serves the Amazon, those poorer communities up and down the vast Amazon River.

And we heard that over decades now, millions of free health checkups have been done, procedures have been carried out, and they've been sharing the good news as they've been going up and down the Amazon River, somewhat similar to the OM Logos ship that we heard about.

We also had a presentation from Glasgow City Mission, who are now celebrating 200 years of bringing the gospel from the pews to the streets and lanes of Glasgow.

And of course, that city mission movement has gone from Glasgow across the globe. And there were so many powerful, moving stories of work that was being done in Jesus' name by Jesus' people all around the world.

[3:27] Very different organizations. Very different ways of operating, but with certain shared values that became apparent over the morning. Teaching the gospel of Jesus, non-negotiable.

Showing social care and compassion. And looking to demonstrate something of Christ's power in changed lives. Story after story from mission organizations.

And it's interesting as we come to Matthew 10, that we see the same balance of priorities in here. In the very first mission of Jesus, we come across preaching and care for others and a demonstration of Christ's power.

So, as we get into these instructions that Jesus gives for mission, this is our first week. We'll look at it for another couple. We're going to discover the recipe for mission.

Thinking about the teaching, all about Jesus the King and working with His authority. And we'll look at that section that speaks about the resources for mission. Reminding us that mission work is complex and it's costly.

[4:37] And it requires a thoughtful response, both from those going on mission and those receiving mission. And we'll be exposed to the responses that we always see to mission. And that's helpful because it prepares us for the realities that we still face today as we look to witness for Jesus.

So, turn with me first of all to verses 5 to 7. Think about the recipe for mission. So, it's important to see, first of all, this is a unique mission.

It's for its moment. So, here are Jesus' 12 disciples. He's been training them now for a certain amount of time. And He's ready to send them out. But we need to recognize where this fits.

It comes before the resurrection. It comes before Jesus' Great Commission going to all the world. And it comes before Pentecost when the Spirit comes.

And so, the apostles are empowered to be witnesses to all nations. So, it's for its moment. But there are still relevant features for the mission of the church today.

[5:43] And so, look with me first of all at verse 5 where we discover these 12 Jesus sent out. Now, here's one thing we might easily overlook.

Jesus sends people to go as a team, to go as a group. In this case, it's not yet the two-by-two ministry. He sends all 12 together. Now, think about why that would matter.

This is their first time going on mission for Jesus. Think about the value of brotherhood. Think about the importance of fellowship along the way. Think about the significance of being able to encourage one another.

How each could help the other to persevere. How in the setting of 12 different people with different gifts at different times, they can lean on the gifts of one another. Think about what a difference it would make if you see 12 people whose lives have been shaped and changed by Jesus serving together.

It gives a picture into the transformed relationships and communities that Jesus came to bring. So, they're told to go as a team. They're also told, this is really basic, to go to lost sheep.

[6:52] So, verse 5, do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. So, we'll think why he says do not go in a moment.

But where do they go? They go where lost sheep are. We thought about this last week. Jesus uses that image of himself as a shepherd. And he sees people who are lost and harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

And so, now he sends the disciples to act as his under-shepherds. And to look to bring them into his kingdom. But let's ask ourselves the question, why does Jesus say don't go to the Gentiles or any Samaritan towns?

Well, we know it's not because Jesus is against them. Rather, Jesus knows his place in redemption history.

He knows the times in which he's operating. Jesus was born as a Jew. And he was, to use the language of Galatians, he was born under the law. To redeem those under the law.

[8:00] Jesus comes and he lives in obedience to the law of Moses on behalf of his people. And Jesus will die under the law. He will die under the curse.

Not because he has done anything wrong, but because we have. But he lives and he dies under the law. So, he's come for those who also live under the law.

He is also their promised Savior. He is the one spoken of as the servant. So, in verse 7, when Jesus says, as you go proclaim this message, the kingdom of heaven has come near.

He's speaking to a group of people who have expectations of a coming Messiah Savior. And so, he goes first to those who have received the promise. Now, we know that Jesus will, at times, go into other territories.

Absolutely. Absolutely. And we know that he will give the Great Commission and he will send the apostles to all nations. But for now, he wants them to focus first on those who receive the promise.

[9:06] And he sends them to go to extend the saving reign of King Jesus. Now, we saw this last week, but just to remind ourselves.

So, they have a message. The kingdom of heaven has come near. And then verse 8, heal those who are ill, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. And so, their ministry, their mission is a demonstration in word and in deed that the kingdom of God is here in power.

And every miracle that they perform becomes a preview of God's future coming kingdom. And so, they are sent as representatives of the king, bringing both his message and his mercy with them. And both of those matter. Now, just to think about a few principles as we think about mission, not back then in the first century, but as we think about mission as it relates to us here, 21st century here as we sit in Edinburgh.

First of all, I think we can say that churches need to be strategic in mission. Just as Jesus told his disciples to be strategic. Jesus understood timing.

[10 : 22] Not yet a focus on Samaria and the Gentiles. But that would come when the Spirit was sent. We see something of Jesus' priorities.

Go to the lost sheep of Israel. And so, the twelve are sent with a focus and with a strategy. I imagine many of us are familiar with the saying, if you aim for nothing, you are sure to hit it. Now, that's true of any organization. But it can also be true of a local church in our mission. And so, for us, we need a mission strategy.

And that's what we've been thinking about for the last few months as church leaders. And that's going to include building links within our local community. Looking to engage with families and their children.

Continuing to serve the international community that calls this place home. To think about the tens of thousands of students that make their home in this part of the city year upon year.

[11 : 27] We can't do everything. And so, we need to be strategic for the sake of sharing Jesus and His love. And so, one of the things I think we can do together at this stage is to keep praying.

To pray for our planning. And to pray for our mission. Because it should be the beating heart of every Christian in every church that we want more people to be worshipping Jesus.

That we want to see more people brought into our church family. And to be growing in faith together. As we love and serve our community.

Here's another principle that we need to recognize. Is that churches, local churches, are God's number one missionary method. A group of people who are brought together in God's providence. Who say, Jesus is Lord. Who seek to serve together in His name. Who are transformed by the power of His love. Who shine as lights.

[12 : 33] And who act as salt in a community. That's God's number one method for reaching the world with the good news of Jesus. And that's really important for us to recognize.

Because it helps us to think about how do we relate to one another for the sake of putting the gospel on display. Something that I found helpful, hopefully you will too.

Sam Chan is an Australian evangelist who now spends a lot of his time working in America. He uses this as an illustration. He says, suppose you were to say to a friend tomorrow.

If they asked you what you were up to at the weekend. If you said, do you know what? Last night a UFO came down and landed in my back garden. And I got to meet with and speak to aliens.

You can imagine the reaction. They would think you were crazy. But then imagine if later that same person then met a small group of people. And he shared the story.

[13 : 31] There was this guy and he said that he met some people. And he said, oh yeah, that happened to us too. And then you come to this large crowd of people. And they say, I know. The same thing happened to us.

What's happening there? A message that seemed utterly unbelievable. Perhaps becomes a little bit more credible. Because you understand it not in isolation.

But there's a whole other group of people that have the same experience. And view of it. To a good number of people in Edinburgh today.

Belief in Jesus is the equivalent of the belief in that UFO and those aliens. But what if? What if? They could feel and hear and see and experience the reality that Jesus is alive.

And he does change lives because they encounter true Christian community. From groups of Christian friends and from a worshipping church.

[14 : 40] Here's one of the reasons why it's important that we practice friendship and hospitality with people who are not yet Christians. Here's why we want to make efforts to merge our universes.

To have more events that can bring Christians and non-Christians together. Because we want to make the unbelievable seem more believable and harder to ignore.

Because we're not just on mission by ourselves as lone rangers. But we're in this together. By God's providence. And by His grace.

Here's a third principle. Church mission runs on Christ's compassion. Church mission runs on Christ's compassion. One of the highlights for me of the prayer breakfast was when a fifth year high school student led a time of prayer.

And one of the phrases that stood out as she prayed was this. I pray that Scotland's youth would know Christ's jealous love for them.

[15:46] And it was a beautiful phrase. And it was right from her heart. And you could tell. And isn't this what we want most of all? And isn't this what drives our mission?

We want people to encounter the Jesus we met in chapter 9 verse 36. Who when He saw the crowds. He had compassion on them. Because they were harassed and helpless.

And it's the compassionate heart of Christ as we saw last week. That's what drives the mission.

That's why He tells His disciples pray and ask that God would send more people out into the harvest field.

And that's why He tells them to go and to act with His authority and with His compassion. Who are we? And why are we here?

And what is our mission? And what is our calling? We are here, first of all, to know God. To know God's love as we find it in Jesus.

[16:46] To know the God who is love. And then to put His love on display. To be His hands and His feet. To be His mouthpiece. To be His heart.

As God's grace to us in Christ would capture our hearts. So that's something of the recipe for mission. But let's move on to think about the resources for mission.

This week I found Don Carson's little book, When Jesus Confronts the World, very helpful. Because He identifies in our text two little phrases that could seem initially contradictory.

Let me show you them. Verse 7. Rather, verse 8. End of verse 8. He says to His disciples, Freely you have received.

Freely give. And then the end of verse 10. There is a phrase, The worker is worth his keep. So let's just think about what Jesus is teaching the disciples.

[17:53] And by extension, teaching us. To slow down a little bit. To see the connection with the compassion of Jesus. And the mission of Jesus.

And how to consider money and resources within the category of mission. First of all, to think about it from the perspective of the workers.

So the disciples are the first workers on mission. And they are told, Freely you have received.

Freely give. What does that phrase mean? Well, it means you have received everything free of charge.

Your call to the kingdom of God. That comes freely. The gift of forgiveness. You didn't pay for that. The reality of eternal life.

Comes free. Being adopted into God's family. You didn't earn that. It's not merit or money. It's mercy from a compassionate God.

[18:53] Freely you have received. Therefore, freely give. He says to His disciples, Think of your mission as not-for-profit. As a not-for-profit agency.

You read the New Testament. And you find discussion on mission and resources. And the classic negative example on this is the chap we meet in the book of Acts.

Simon Magus. You know, He wants to buy what the apostles are doing. He wants to buy the privilege of laying His hands on people so that the Holy Spirit would come on them.

And He was rebuked and condemned because you cannot buy and sell the gift of God. Forgiveness can't be sold. There is no price tag to be placed on a prayer or a sermon.

And so, someone who is involved in mission or ministry has this mentality. Freely you have received. Freely give. When someone becomes a free church minister, they are asked, in fancier words than this, but they are asked, in effect, one of the last questions, Is one of your motives the fact that you are in it for the money?

[20:11] And for people in the know, that usually raises a chuckle. That seems a ridiculous kind of way to go. But it's a vital question because Jesus identifies it, that you never want to operate in

mission or ministry to make a profit.

We are to give freely. And even the way that the disciples go reminds those involved in mission that we go in dependence on God.

They don't bring the gold, the silver, the copper, the bag, the extra shirt, the staff. They have to rely on God providing it through others and everyday trust in God's grace.

So, for those who are involved in mission, they hear this message. Freely you've received, freely give. Now, the flip side, though, is to think about the people who are receiving the mission.

Verse 11 introduces us to the idea of arriving on mission. Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave.

[21:15] And an expectation is set in Jesus' mission that those who are benefiting from the mission of Christ will support those who are involved in that mission.

They will give generously. That's why the disciples don't need to bring gold or silver or the extra clothing, because they'll find a person who will care for them.

Someone who recognizes the worker is worth his keep. The compassion of Christ is the motive. The person who has received God's salvation free of charge, who has discovered the wonder of God's love, is then compelled to share that message and that love with others.

But the compassion of Christ is also operating on the person who is a receiver. However, having received the gift of salvation, having received this good news, one way to respond is to be generous to those who have labored to bring the good news.

[22:19] You can look at the little letter of 3 John. 3 John is an encouragement to a church to show hospitality and generous care to missionaries who come to town and are passing through.

And John says to that church, send them in a manner that honors the Lord. He says to them, we ought to show hospitality so we may work together for the truth.

There's a partnership connected to how we think about and how we use resources. Don Carson presents this as an ideal. It's an ideal when a church is generous in supplying gospel mission.

And when a missionary or a church worker is not worried about having to pay the bills and constantly living in fear of poverty, but that worker is not selfish or greedy.

So there's generosity, there's dependence on God's grace, and there's to be no greed. And just to say a little bit about how we here in Buclew resource mission, I think sometimes it's kind of background, and it's good sometimes to foreground it.

[23:33] So we have a mission support fund, which enables us to give locally. So we support Bethany Christian Trust and their work with the homeless community and those struggling with addictions.

We also give to support Hope Church Leith, the church plant down in Leith. We give to gospel work nationally. We're a mother church to Gala Shields Free Church.

And we give globally as well to support Manuel and Patty Reanio in their ministry in Colombia, but to wider Latin America. And there's ways that each one of us who are members here, we can be involved in that.

And so let me encourage each of us to think in response to God's Word, how can we be praying for our mission partners, and are there ways that we can give generously for the sake of mission, to be partners together to honor those who are laboring for God and His kingdom?

And if you want to know more, you can check one of those notice boards out there, check the website and you can find out. But also, I guess, we always need the regular sacrificial giving of our church members to support ongoing mission here in Beklue.

[24:45] It takes money for salary and for heating and for lighting and for resourcing ongoing mission. As a church, we love the idea of training and sending gospel workers.

We love the idea of having a greater reach into our local community. We love the idea of being able to serve families and students, but all of that costs. And it requires us to be sacrificial and generous for the sake of the mission of Jesus and for the glory of God.

And so like these first disciples, we need for the kindness and compassion of Jesus to so shape and mold us that we understand that nothing is more important than people discovering Jesus for themselves and that we would want to be active any way we can to support mission.

So we've seen the recipe, we've seen the resources. Now let's think thirdly about the responses to mission. That's there in verse 11 to 15. Just to help us to kind of get a picture in our minds, you may have noticed that Stephen Burroughs is back from Australia.

He had a wedding over in Belfast yesterday and he was talking about the restrictions that are still in place in Belfast on the streets because of the violence that we've seen on our television screens in the last number of days.

[26:12] And it seems to be, doesn't it, a sad reality, an increasingly normal thing in our times that some major flashpoint happens, some tragedy happens, and all of a sudden people are very quick to jump to a response and to take to the streets.

And so sometimes you have the situation where people from the right and people from the left, it's the same sort of trigger and they're both marching but with very different responses to that same one event.

That captures, in a sense, something of the reality of Jesus' mission that he's speaking about.

Jesus is saying, as people go and share Jesus, as the church looks to establish churches and missions, we can expect some people to be positive and some people to be negative.

That we just need to look at the pattern of Jesus' life and to recognize that's the pattern for his followers to see this. A very superficial reading of the Gospels, a quick skim will show us that some people loved Jesus and he was the answer to all of their longings and others hated him passionately.

Some people rejected Jesus as a blasphemer and some accepted him as the Son of God. Some would cry out in worship while many others would cry out, crucify him, we have no king but Caesar.

[27:52] Same person, same message, radically different responses. At the prayer breakfast, we heard a prayer from the head of the Christian Police Association, which was really insightful.

A reminder that our police often find themselves on the front lines. And they're on the front lines trying to stem the tide of hate and violence, and they're trying to bring peace, to push back the darkness to make room for the light.

In a sense, the same is true for the church in spiritual terms. That we are engaged in spiritual battle, and there are forces of darkness that are opposed to us, even as we seek to bring the peace of God.

And of course, as we thought about the realities of the persecuted church, for so many, they experienced the physical hatred and violence also. And we always need to remember them in our prayers.

But just recognize, look with me at verse 11, recognize that the different responses to mission, we can see them from day one. Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person.

[29:15] So there has to be a search. And that says to us, not everybody is interested. Not everybody wants to know when the message of Jesus comes to town. So they have to search for some worthy person.

And when we hear worthy, we might think, well, here's somebody who's made it. This might be about social status, but it's not. And it's not about intelligence either. And it's not about charisma. The worthy person is simply someone who is interested.

Someone who is willing to listen to the message that the apostles bring, that Jesus has come as God promised to be their King and Savior. And for those who are worthy, who are willing to listen and to receive, they get a welcome.

They get the promise of peace. Verse 12 into 13, As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace, let your shalom rest on it.

So that was a very traditional Jewish greeting. As you arrived at someone's house, you extended the greeting of peace, of shalom. Well, this is much more profound as these disciples are going on the mission of Jesus.

[30:26] Because what they are inviting people into is peace from Jesus. We thought about it this morning. Peace with God. Peace in our hearts.

This is the invitation to find a welcome from Jesus himself. To find peace with God through coming to know Jesus as King and Savior.

And so Jesus tells them, listen, some people, they will welcome this. Some people will receive you. And some people will enjoy this peace and this blessing. And this is part of the mission of the church.

And this is the joyful part, isn't it? We're inviting people into life with God through faith in Jesus. We're inviting people who are looking to find peace, to recognize peace is found from God and in

Jesus.

And some people do respond. And if we're Christians, we have responded. But there's another response too, isn't there? Verse 14, if anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet.

[31 : 31] Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. There is also the reality of rejection. A people who say of Jesus, not my king.

Amen. We've heard about the traditional greeting, shalom. There's another traditional gesture here. This shaking off the dust. And the shaking off the dust, off your sandals, off your clothing was a way of saying, I do not associate with this place or with this person.

And part of the shock of Jesus' mission given to the disciples is that the king comes to bring people into life with God, to experience the love of God.

But if they say no, it's as if they'll be shaken off by God. And we're warned of a solemn and severe judgment.

Truly I tell you, it would be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. Sodom and Gomorrah, a proverb for wicked, godless, evil places. And so we are reminded that the greater opportunity that we have brings the greater responsibility and rejection brings the greater judgment.

[32 : 49] And so Jesus reminds the disciples and reminds us to share Jesus with others, to share Jesus within our community is not the guarantee of being well received.

Jesus promises some will welcome, but some will reject to their own eternal loss. Now I wonder, we've spent a couple of weeks largely thinking about the compassion and the love of Jesus.

I wonder if we're surprised that here's another example where the love of God and the judgment of God are running side by side. I hope we can see how important these are for our mission.

Because people need to know that God is holy and He has a holy hatred of our sin. That His wrath and His judgment is real and it is a holy response to human rebellion and sin.

We also need to understand that Jesus has come to meet our needs. And those needs are determined not by ourselves, but first of all by our God. And the mission of Jesus and the cross of Jesus, well that shows us what people's great need is.

[34 : 00] Our great need is a sacrifice that will turn God's wrath away from us, that will reconcile us and forgive us. And the message of the gospel tells us that we cannot do it by ourselves and so we need a Savior.

Another thing we see as we look at the cross of Jesus is the outcome of turning our back on God's salvation.

So as Jesus becomes the sin bearer of the world, what does Jesus cry out? That's a solemn message that people need to hear, that we need to hear.

But the cross also, as well as showing us the justice of God, it shows us the love of God, the compassion of God. How? Because the one who goes to the cross is none other than the Son of God and Jesus came to bear our sin.

Jesus willingly and in love to fulfill God's plan went under God's wrath. Jesus was the one shaken out for us to forgive our sin.

[35 : 10] Jesus suffers the deepest pain to bring us the deepest peace. And so our mission, like the disciples, it has a message that speaks both the horror of God's holy anger against sin and the wonder of God's love that provides mercy at the cost of His own Son.

And so we need both of these in our mission and in our message so we never get complacent about God's grace. And so we always keep the cross at the heart of our mission.

That we understand why we go on with the Great Commission. Because people need to know the compassionate heart of the Lord Jesus. Those first disciples, they needed to be on Jesus' mission and He sent them and they went.

Here as God's people in Beclough, we must also be about God's mission so that people can hear about Jesus. So they can see in us the difference that He makes to lives and communities.

We must be thinking, how can we give generously and sacrificially either as those who are going to go and proclaim and to serve or those who are going to resource and pray.

[36 : 30] Because that's what God has done for us. He's been generous and sacrificial. And because we want people to discover the beauty and the truth of Jesus for themselves. And so we are called to go dependent on God's power and grace.

Understanding that while some will say no, others will welcome our message. And they will receive a welcome from Christ Jesus the King.

Amen. Let's pray together. Lord our God, we thank You for the teaching that Jesus provides for us. It was relevant to the disciples then but is still so relevant to us today.

Give us that sense of Your compassionate heart. Your desire to see Your church engaged in mission locally and to the ends of the earth.

Lord, we pray that You would make us wise in how we participate in that mission. That we would respond to Jesus with faith and repentance.

[ 37 : 33 ] And that we would then go about the rest of our days looking to make Jesus known.

Looking to encourage and resource those who are laboring for Jesus.

And that You would help us to persevere despite setbacks and discouragements. For the glory and honour of serving our great God and King. And we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.