

He Sent Them Out

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[0 : 00] Last Sunday we heard about how Jesus performed two amazing miracles. One of the miracles was the healing of a woman who had suffered with bleeding for 12 years.

! That Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah.

Well at this point in the story Luke now zooms out a little bit to give us a wide angle view of some other things as we come to chapter 9. Let me read the first few verses here.

When Jesus had called the 12 together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases.

And he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Back in chapter 6, verse 12 to 16 is where Luke first introduced us to the 12 disciples.

[1 : 18] They were Peter and his brother Andrew, James and his brother John, all fishermen. And then there was Philip and Bartholomew, also known as Nathaniel.

Matthew, also known as Levi, the tax collector. Thomas, and then another James, another Simon, and two Judases.

One who is also known as Thaddeus. The other was the betrayer of Jesus. But let's remember what Luke said about these 12 men earlier, back in chapter 6, verse 13.

Luke said that Jesus called his disciples to him and chose 12 of them, whom he also designated apostles. And we talk briefly about that title, apostle.

The word apostle comes from the Greek word apostolos. And it means a person who is sent out. Like a messenger. Or an ambassador.

[2 : 21] Or a delegate. An envoy. And so these 12 men were designated apostles. And so these 12 men were designated apostles. But they continued to be with Jesus for a while until this moment in chapter 9, where Jesus first sends them out.

Luke tells us that he called the 12 together. He gave them power and authority. And he sent them out. To proclaim the kingdom of God.

And to heal the sick. That word sent them out. Is from the word apostello. And as I just mentioned, it's a specific kind of sending.

It's not just like on an errand. Like to go get groceries from the store. It's sending as a messenger.

As an ambassador. As a representative. And this is really important.

We need to know that the title of apostle carries within it this meaning of being sent by someone.

Jesus is the sender. And of course these 12 men are those being sent.

[3 : 26] Now let's bring in all these details that Luke gives us here about this moment of sending. Jesus calls them together. And it says that he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons.

And to cure diseases. Wow. This is massive. Think about this.

Up until now we have only seen Jesus casting out demons. And healing sicknesses. And illnesses. And Luke has been very careful to point out.

What. Jesus is doing. And what those things mean. It means that Jesus has authority. And power over demons. And sicknesses.

But now we see here. Almost another kind of great miracle. Jesus is able to give that power. And authority. That he has. To others.

[4 : 25] This is truly amazing. When you think about it. One moment. It's only Jesus. Who heals. And casts out demons. But now it's Jesus. And these 12 men.

That he has chosen. I mean think about this. From the perspective of Peter. One of Jesus' disciples. For the past while. You've simply been following Jesus around.

And watching him do all these. Amazing miracles. But now Jesus. Pulls you in. Along with the other 11. And says. Here.

I now give you. My power. And my authority. To do these things. That I've been doing. You're going to heal the sick.

You're going to cast out demons. To be able to just bestow this ability. On others. Is itself a miracle.

[5 : 23] And a great sign of who Jesus is. Not only are they sent to heal. But they are sent by Jesus. With a message. As messengers.

Says he sent them out. To proclaim. The kingdom. Of God. God. Now right at this spot. Luke doesn't. Explain. What all that message is.

But it's a very same thing. That Jesus has been proclaiming. All over the region of Galilee. As we heard back in chapter 4. Jesus said. I must proclaim the good news.

Of the kingdom of God. To the other towns also. Because that's why I was sent. That's in Luke 4.43. And so Jesus went from synagogue. To synagogue.

With that message. He proclaimed. That the kingdom of God. Was near. And that people should turn back to God. In repentance.

[6 : 20] Mark 1.15. He proclaimed. That the words of the prophets. Were right now. Being fulfilled. In the hearing of the people. As he read from the scroll of Isaiah.

Luke chapter 4. Verse 18 and 19. He proclaimed. The good news of the kingdom. In his sermon. In Luke chapter 6. Blessed are you who are poor.

For yours. Is the kingdom of God. And he taught the people. About the kingdom of God. And what it's like. Using parables. How it works.

Or at least a little. Glimmer. One of those parables. Was the parable of the sower. That we looked at. In Luke chapter 8. And now. Jesus is saying.

To these 12 men. I want you. To go out now. And proclaim this same message. And to do these miracles.

[7 : 17] Of healing. The very same. Message. And the very same. Kinds of miracles. That Jesus has been doing. And those miracles.

Of course. Will now serve. To authenticate. The message. That these apostles bring. From town. To town. To town. This is the kind of moment.

That makes us all nervous. Where the mentor. Or the father. Or the mother. Or the instructor. Now. Hands over the reins. Or puts the tool.

In our hand. For the first time. Or the wheel. And says. Okay. Now you do it. We can only imagine. How excited.

And nervous. The 12 disciples. Must have been. In this moment. Perhaps even shocked. Like. What? I'm going to be healing people?

[8 : 12] I'm going to be. Casting out demons? You want me. To now preach? And Jesus lays out.

Some parameters. For this. First ministry trip. That they're about to. Go on. Verse 3. Jesus told them. Take nothing for the journey. No staff.

No bag. No bread. No money. No extra shirt. Whatever house you enter. Stay there.

Until you leave that town. Time. These parameters. For the trip. Really force the disciples. To rely on God. And to have faith in him.

They are to travel so light. That they're not even to take any food. Or not even any money. To buy food. Or to pay for lodging. In these towns that they go to.

[9 : 11] Which means that just as Jesus. Is teaching them. They must look to God. For their daily bread. For each day's provisions. And we might wonder about that.

Why did Jesus forbid them. From taking all this stuff along. And I think it was. So that they would learn. To depend on God. And not themselves. But it's possible.

There were some other reasons as well. There were actually at this time. Other traveling teachers. And preachers. And religious figures. Preachers. Who would go about.

From town to town. Though. They were probably more like. The prosperity. Preachers. In our day. They would sometimes. Roll into town. And then go from house.

To house. To house. To house. In town. Spreading their teachings. And their secret wisdom. And their religious services. In exchange. For whatever they could get. From the people.

[10 : 11] And then when they got. What they could from one house. Then they would go to the next. And the next. And the next. Until they got everything they could. From that town. And then.

They'd move on. Sometimes we get these people. That show up in Davidson. And we wonder. Where did they come from? And they're. Of course. Usually selling a subscription service. Or something. And. They're here for two or three days. And then they just disappear. It was kind of like that. So it's possible. That Jesus parameters here. Really serve. To set. His apostles apart. From those. Kinds of people. Those kinds of teachers. Jesus apostles. Are not. To be exchanging. Miracles. For money. Or the message of the kingdom. For personal gain. They were permitted. Simply to accept. The hospitality. Of one house. In each town. And then they were to leave. [11:07] For the next town. In this way. Nobody could charge them. With being motivated. By greed. Or with having. An ulterior motive. They wouldn't even have a bag.

To put gifts in. Or donations in. I mean. What would it say. About the kingdom of God. If the apostles. Rolled out of every town. They entered. With this massive cart. Full of stuff. That they had acquired. After preaching. And healing. And healing. I think Jesus wanted it to be clear. That citizenship in his kingdom. Is free for all. For the rich. For the poor. It comes as a gift. No strings attached. All we need to do is repent.

And believe. This good news. The basic hospitality. Of the home. That they entered. Would be. Enough. To sustain them. In their work. From place to place.

[12:02] But they would have to pray. And look to God. For each day's needs. To be met. Especially. If the town. That they entered.

Did not welcome them. Or receive. Jesus message. Verse five. If people do not welcome you. Leave their town. And shake the dust.

Off your feet. As a testimony. Against them. So some towns would. Some towns did. Reject. The apostles of Jesus.

Outright. And given that they were. Messengers. That they were ambassadors. Of Jesus. Rejecting them. Was the equivalent.

Of rejecting Jesus himself. Since Jesus. Was the one. Who sent them. It's kind of a sobering. Thought. Isn't it? Jesus knew.

[12:58] That this would happen. And so he gave them. Instructions. Of what to do. Leave that town. Shake the dust. Off your feet. As a testimony. Against them. This.

Shaking the dust. Off. Was a deeply. Symbolic gesture. Think about dust. For a moment. We often think of dust. As being. Inconsequential. It's.

It weighs nothing. On the scale. Who cares. If there's dust. On the bottom. Of your shoe. That's. Normal. So to actually. Pause. After leaving a town.

And. Shake the dust. Off. From that town. It's an act. Of. Completely. Dissociating. Ones. From the people. Of that town.

It's like saying. Then I will have. No part. Of you. Not even. A little bit. Now. This is not a thing. Done. Vindictively.

[13:55] Or a thing. Done in frustration. By the apostles. It's not a way. Of trying to have. The last word. On the way out of town. Or. As an insult. Jesus is the one.

Telling his messengers. To do this. When they are not. Welcomed. Remember. They represent. Jesus himself. They are sent. By Jesus. And therefore.

If Jesus commands them. To do this. It's really. Jesus saying. To the people. Of that town. Since you will not. Listen. To me. And repent. I cannot claim you.

As my own. And you cannot claim me. As yours. There is now. A complete. Separation. Between us. I withdraw. My messengers.

And I leave you. To face. God's judgment. Alone. Let me read you. The parallel passage. From Matthew. Chapter 10. Verses 14 and 15.

[14:51] Jesus. 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. In other words. This is the moment.

For the people. In these towns. To repent. To believe. To turn their hearts. Back to God. And admit their sins. And receive.

Jesus message. Of grace. And forgiveness. God desires. To have a restored. Relationship. With these people. He offers them. Citizenship.

In his kingdom. And this is the same message. Jesus has been proclaiming. Everywhere he goes. Now. He sends his apostles. To proclaim it. Authoritatively. With miracles.

[15 : 49] To back it up. And so. If people reject. Jesus messengers. They reject Jesus. And if they reject Jesus.

They will perish. And receive. What's just. From God. That's what this. Dust shaking represents. Back to Luke. Verse. Chapter 9. Verse 6. So they set out. And went from village to village.

Proclaiming the good news. And healing people. Everywhere.

Again. Picture this in your mind. Up till now. It's been. Just all these people. From everywhere.

Swarming to Jesus. Where he is. And miracles are happening.

People are being healed. Of all kinds of things. But now this is a massive change. Now the miracles are starting to happen. All over the place. Where Jesus is. And wherever these 12 guys go.

[16 : 48] From town to town. All over the region. God is in a sense. Multiplying. The miracles. He's. Increasing the reach. Of the message. We can only imagine.

Just how crazy a time. This would have been. Remember. They didn't have electronics. They didn't have television. Smartphones. They didn't even have dumb phones. To spread news by.

The news just traveled by foot. With the people themselves. And now you've got these towns. All over the place. That are. Sending word with travelers. Of what's going on in them.

And of these people arriving. And doing miracles. People that they've never met. And there's one big name. Attached to all of this. Jesus.

It's no wonder Herod the Tetrarch. The ruler of the region. Was confused. About what was going on. And the reports that were coming in. From all over his region.

[17 : 50] Verse 7. Now Herod the Tetrarch. Heard about all that was going on. And he was perplexed. Because some were saying. That John had been raised from the dead.

Others. That Elijah had appeared. And still others. That one of the prophets of long ago. Had come back to life. But Herod said.

I beheaded John. Who then is this I hear such things about? And Herod. Tried to see Jesus. This is all causing quite the commotion.

Isn't it? And it makes sense. Because now it's not just Jesus. Showing up here and there. But now. Jesus. And these 12 other guys.

Who many would not have known. The message is very similar. To that of John. The baptizer. The message of repentance. Was rolled right into. The preaching of Jesus.

[18 : 51] It was the same message. Plus more. And so. Maybe John's come back to life. Jesus is saying the same things John was. Some of them anyway.

And we've been hearing about people being raised from the dead. Maybe God has raised John. Back to life. We don't see it in this gospel.

But in the other gospels. We see that Herod actually buys into this idea a little bit. Pretty strongly actually. Thinking that John is somehow. Alive again.

Resurrected. But then others think that it must be Elijah. And that's natural. Because Elijah was one of the greatest miracle working prophets.

In the Old Testament times. Look at all these miracles. Maybe it's Elijah. Maybe God has brought him back. All of this caused quite a stir.

[19 : 50] It was a really exciting time. And we're going to pick up the story next week. But for this morning. I just want to take a couple minutes. To reflect on. Some of what we've read.

And how it applies to us today. First of all. This passage is a sober reminder. That God gives each of us a window of opportunity.

A chance to hear. His gracious news. And to respond. Have you welcomed the news of Jesus? Have you done what Jesus called everyone to do?

Have you repented of your sins? Have you admitted to him. Your wrongs. And asked for his forgiveness.

The sobering truth of this passage is. If we do not listen to Jesus. If we do not welcome him. There is nothing left for us.

[20 : 54] But judgment. Listen to these words of Jesus one more time. Truly I tell you.

It will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah. On the day of judgment. Than for that town. Have you repented?

Have you welcomed Jesus? It does require faith. It does require trust in God.

And in his message. His kingdom is not seen. By the world today. But one day it will be. When Jesus returns. There is another place.

Where this applies to us. That I would like to touch on here. Many Christians. Wrestle with what to do. With these first words. That we looked at. We are simply looking in faith.

[21 : 58] Trying to understand. What these words mean. And we are eager to follow Jesus. And so many simply take these words. And just apply them directly to us. Sort of assuming that God works today.

In the exact same way. Through all of his people. Many who meanwhile take this as a template. For how God does ministry. Through all his followers today.

Or at least as a prescription. For how we should do it. And this is perhaps. The most significant difference. Between what we believe. In our church. And what our brothers and sisters.

Down the road at New Life. Pentecostal believe. They would say. That we all have. This same power. And authority. From Christ. To drive out demons.

And to heal. Whether we realize it or not. We have it. And it's left to us. Simply to believe it. And to use it.

[22 : 59] Sometimes that belief. Is reflected in the way. That we hear our brothers and sisters pray. When they ask for healing. Rather than. You know. Lord would you heal. So and so. They might say.

Father in the name of Jesus. We break the power of this sickness. And so and so. And speak your healing. Into their body. That's not just a difference.

In personal style. Or vocabulary. There is in fact. A belief. By some. That all followers of Jesus. Are to do. What Jesus sent out. His.

These 12 men to do. But what many fail to recognize. Is that what Jesus did here. With the apostles. Was not intended. To set a pattern.

For all future followers of Jesus. There was to remain. A distinction. Between apostle. And disciple. There were many.

[23 : 54] Who followed Jesus. As. A disciple. But there were few. Chosen to be. Sent out. And given this authority. And power.

To preach. As Christ's representatives. In this way. This is one of the pitfalls. That we can sometimes fall into. As we attempt to apply the Bible. To our own lives today.

We can take a passage. That's descriptive. Of what happened. And we can make it. Prescriptive. Of what. Should happen. What has to happen.

All the time. Or what should be the normal. When God didn't intend it. It's not just with the power. And the authority to heal. That we make this mistake here.

We can also make this mistake. Even with what we read. In verses. Three and four. Some suggest. That the only acceptable way. To do gospel ministry. Or missionary work. Is by following these parameters.

[24 : 49] That Jesus gave. To. The twelve. Here in verse three. By that line of thinking. We should never raise support. We shouldn't even pack a bag.

Or take equipment. Or supplies with us. But this was not intended. To be a missionary framework. For all time. This was for this time.

And. Perhaps. For the second time. That we'll read about. In chapter ten. Jesus will even refer back. To this moment later. On the night before his death.

Luke 22. Verse 35. When I sent you out. Without purse. Bag or sandals. Did you lack anything? Nothing.

They answered. He said to them. But now. If you have a purse. Take it. And also. A bag. And if you don't have a sword. Sell your cloak. And buy one.

[25 : 46] So Jesus point there. Is that God is. Is the one. Who looks after us. All the time. And we can trust him. To do that. But. Now. For this. New moment.

In Luke 22. A different moment. In the story. Requires a different way. Of walking. It will be the time. For prudence. It will be the time. For preparation.

Because of what's about to happen. Similarly. Many Christians have looked at. Words in verse 5. The statement about. Shaking the dust off our feet.

And. And just almost taking it. As a command. Given to us today. That that's how we should do ministry too. That's how we should share the gospel too. If people don't respond. Shake the dust off your feet.

Don't worry about. Trying to share with them some more. Just go on to the next. Christ. The trouble with that. Is knowing when we're to shake the dust off. And. What's the modern day equivalent of that?

[26 : 46] I would. Suggest that there is no modern day equivalent to this. Because we are not the apostles. Jesus has not given it to us. To go through every town in Galilee.

In a relatively short period of time. Healing and preaching the kingdom. It is not given to us. To let someone know. That their time to receive the messenger.

Is over. And that they're now left. To judgment. Think about how things go with us. We quite often. Live among the same people for years.

And maybe we end up sharing the good news. With some people. Many times. Before they either accept it. Or make their rejection of it. Firm. But how are we to know.

If the last time that we shared with them. Was the last opportunity. God will give them. We don't. We run into all sorts of problems.

[27 : 44] When we don't recognize. That this passage. Describes. What Jesus did. With and through the apostles. And instead. Try and turn this into. Kind of a template.

For normal Christian experience. Think back to the miracles. For just a second. Paul. In a later letter. To the Corinthian church. Makes it. Very clear for us.

First Corinthians chapter 12. Verse 27. He says. Now you are the body of Christ. And each one of you. Is a part of it. And God has placed in the church.

First of all. Apostles. Second. Prophets. Third. Teachers. Then miracles. Then gifts of healing. Of helping.

Of guidance. And of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles. Are all prophets. Are all teachers.

[28 : 39] Do all work miracles. Do all have gifts of healing. And he goes on from there. Or. The rhetorical answer. To all of these questions. Is definitively.

No. No. Not all our apostles. Not all our workers of miracles. Not all our teachers. His point is that. As different parts.

Of the body of Christ. We each play our own role. We each have. Our own unique things. That God has given us. To contribute. It's the same.

With what we read this morning. The apostles had their unique role. And part to play. In God's great story. And we need to kind of. Figure out. Our place in the story.

In some ways. It's different. Than what was given to the apostles. By Jesus. That's okay. That's a good thing. Greatness.

[29 : 38] In God's kingdom. Is not measured. By whether we work miracles. Or cast out demons. Or by how many people. Come to know Jesus. Through us. As Jesus.

Says a little later. Here in chapter nine. For it is the one. Who is least. Among you. All. Who is the greatest. And we'll get to this.

In chapter 10. A little bit later. But Jesus. Will also say this. Do not rejoice. That the spirits. Submit to you. But rejoice. That your names.

Are written in heaven. Far more important. Than what we do. For the Lord. Is where we stand. With the Lord. We should serve him.

With humility. And passion. Yes. But if we don't. Get to heal. Or cast out demons. Or write books. Of the Bible. That's okay.

[30 : 32] God has a unique. And special role. For each one of us. In his body. In his plan. In his great story. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus. We thank you. For just the chance. To see. What took place. When your son. Walked the earth. And we marvel at it. The thought.

Of all the miracles. That you did. And of how your truth. Rang out. Into all the. Surrounding. Places. It's amazing.

And we believe. That Jesus. Your son. Is. Our Messiah. God. But we also think about our place in your story, Lord, as your followers.

And we ask that you would show us how we are to serve you. What is our part to play? How are we to relate with the people around us, Lord?

[31 : 42] In some cases, we ask for great patience. To bear with those who we've maybe talked to about you many times, but they just haven't responded. Help us not to grow weary of doing what is good.

We thank you for your love, and we thank you that you are always with us by your Holy Spirit.
Amen.