

Sending Out The Twelve

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[0 : 00] Now verse seven summarizes the commission that they received. Verses eight through 11 deals with these specific instructions. And the instructions really boil down to two categories.

What they were to take, really what they were not to take, really more so. What they were to take and how they were to act. And we need to remember as we come to read these verses again, that we shouldn't apply these instructions so rigidly that we think that we must only take these items and must follow this same exact instruction.

That's not exactly Jesus's intention. The specific instructions were for these men, but the principles behind them endure for us as well. So let's look at verse eight. And he charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics.

And so Jesus calls these men together. At this point, they have observed. And now he says, fellas, it's time to go. I want you to go two by two.

And I'm going to send you to some specific villages. And here's what I want you to take. Nothing. Nothing is pretty much what he says. There's a tremendous restriction and limitation in what he allows these men to take on their journey.

[1 : 28] They weren't to take any food. They weren't to take any money. No extra clothing. Can you imagine? Jesus has said, I want you to travel.

And you can have nothing. You're going to go to places you don't know anybody. And you're going to preach that they need to turn away from all the things that they're doing and believe in me whom they have not seen and maybe in some cases have not even at this point heard of.

And in the process of that, somehow you're going to be given the provisions that you need. And this comes as kind of a shock to us. And we frame that in our own mindset of ministries, don't we?

We get this sense that God calls us to certain things in our life, certain things that are on the basis of his kingdom work and what he desires for us to do and what he desires for us to be, not only as individuals and families, but as a church group.

And sometimes in the process of that, we don't understand why he's asking us to do the things that he's asking us to do because we have no way to do it. But he just says, go.

[2 : 34] And here he sends these men once again. And he says, don't take anything with you. And what was the point of that? He didn't want them to take anything that wasn't absolutely essential to the task of preaching his words and performing his works.

And in this case, that included only a single set of clothes and a walking stick. Now, at this point, it's important for us to recognize again that this was not a permanent nor a universal instruction for ministry.

Jesus wasn't commanding an ascetic lifestyle that's not what he meant by this instruction. He wasn't commanded that ministry, should you be called to it vocationally perhaps, is meant to be accomplished in poverty.

That's not what he meant. And we know this because Jesus addresses it specifically later on. In fact, turn with me please to Luke chapter 22. Luke chapter 22.

And we'll look at verses 35 and 36. Now, what's happening here in Luke 22 is this is the night of Jesus's arrest.

[3 : 46] As you recall the gospel story, the crucifixion story, he has instituted communion in the Lord's Supper and he's given this great final lesson, sermon, teaching to his disciples.

And as a part of this, we find these two verses nestled into this discussion as one of the final things that Jesus is saying. And remember the context of this is, I'm leaving and I'm going to send a helper to you.

The Holy Spirit is going to come and help you, but I'm leaving. I won't be with you. The men are filled with fear. They are nervous about this. They don't know what's happening. And here's what he says, Luke 22 verse 35. And he said to them, when I sent you out with no money bag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?

And they said, what? Nothing, nothing. So he's telling them, I'm getting ready to leave. I know that makes you nervous. I'm going to send a helper to you.

But remember, I've sent you out without me before. And when you went without me and you had no bag and you had no money and you had no food and you had no provisions whatsoever, what did you lack?

[4 : 59] And they said, nothing. And he said, good. I'm glad you learned that lesson. And then look what he says in verse 36. But now let the one who has a money bag take it and likewise a knapsack and let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one.

What's the point in pointing that out? Well, what Jesus told these disciples in chapter six was meant for these men at this time. So don't come to this passage and think, okay, God wants me to sell everything that I have.

I can only have the clothes on my back. I can only have minimal provisions and that's the only way he's going to use me. No, that's not what he meant. The purpose was that he would teach them a lesson and the lesson was threefold.

This was not meant to be permanent, but it was threefold. Dependence, simplicity, urgency, a lesson on dependence, a lesson on simplicity, and a lesson on urgency.

And so first we see this instruction was a lesson on dependence. Dependence on who or what? On the provision of God to fulfill the needs of his people in the way that he is determined to do it.

[6 : 11] That was the purpose of Jesus' statement in Luke 22. When you went, did you lack anything? No. Why didn't you lack anything?

Because I provided you everything that you needed along the way. And mind you that all of the provisions of these different men would have been different. Think about this. They're going two by two, not 12 by 12.

These two are going to this place and these two are going to this place. This person may have been staying in a bit of a shack somewhere in this little town or this person may have been in grand luxurious accommodations in another place.

The provisions were different for all of them. Each of them had different amounts. That didn't matter. What mattered is that God provided the things that they needed so long as they were surrendered to obedience and to do the work that God had called them to do.

And so he provided. That was the point. Not to depend on yourself. Not depend on the world's goods. Not to be anxious over the things that you have or don't have.

[7 : 10] But to be dependent on the provision of your heavenly Father. And as you know, this provision sometimes comes in utterly unexpected ways.

Think about what's going through these men's mind. They've just gone to Nazareth where you would think that the people that would make provision for Jesus actually rejected him.

And now they're thinking we got to go out by ourselves. And we're taking nothing. How is this supposed to work? And in this command, there's a bit of an encouragement that yes, people will reject you.

But how do you suppose it was that God would mostly fulfill the needs of these men through people that would not reject them? And he doesn't explain how he's going to do it.

He never does. He doesn't provide all the things that we like to plan out and all the things that we like to prepare ahead of time before accomplishing a task. He just says go and he provides this promise that I will care for you.

[8 : 19] And we think back to this same promise in the Great Commission as we dealt with it a couple of weeks ago. All authority is given unto me, Jesus says. So go and make disciples of every nation, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.

And then it comes with this promise. And I will go with you even to the end of the age, he says. He sends them. They probably have lots of questions, but their questions aren't met with explanation.

It's met with promise. And the point is that God knows our need and he will faithfully supply. And he will not only do it for these men, but he'll do it for you.

He will supply. He knows your need. James Edwards said, true service of Jesus is characterized by a dependence on Jesus.

And dependence on Jesus is signified by going where Jesus sins despite material shortfalls and unanswered questions.

[9 : 26] That's a great statement. Dependence on Jesus is signified by going where Jesus sins despite material shortfalls and unanswered questions.

And so it was a lesson on dependence. And then it was a lesson on simplicity. Simplicity. Taking along a bunch of clutter on this journey would only prevent the disciples from faithfully fulfilling their given task.

If they had all this stuff to carry around with them, it was just going to hinder the work. You say, how does that relate to me? Well, it's... Who of us doesn't have a life full of clutter?

We get so busy. Our lives get so cluttered that any service for Jesus really in any substantial way really just seems like an impossible burden.

How could I possibly do that? I've got all of these other things going on in my life. Yes. You've got all these other things going on in your life. How could you serve Jesus with all of these other things in your life?

[10 : 38] It's clutter. In the midst of our busyness, the work of the ministry, the work of discipleship, the work of God is all but forgotten.

We don't have time to be discipled. We don't have time to disciple others. We get so distracted by all the other things. The thought of actually sharing the gospel with someone in our life doesn't really even cross our minds.

When's the last time that that friend or that co-worker or that neighbor, you actually even thought about sharing the gospel or in any substantial way ministering to them in the way that God has called us to minister?

It's not because we always have a lack of desire. Sometimes, we just haven't learned the lesson of simplicity. And this doesn't just apply to our personal lives. It applies to our church.

Even in our ministry work, if we're not careful, we can allow things to get so cluttered, so busy with this thing and that thing and this program and this event and all of these things that we end up losing sight of the whole purpose.

[11 : 40] And what was the purpose? Preach His words and perform His works. Preach His words, perform His works. Simplicity. Sometimes the clutter is not bad in and of itself, but it just prevents us from doing what God has called us to do.

And in that case, it becomes an idol. You say, well, I can't give up some of these other things. My family would just be so mad at me. Well, I guess that's the idol that's going to keep you from doing what God has called you to do. Then it's a lesson on urgency.

It's a lesson on urgency. These men were to be free from encumbrances that would prevent them from quickly moving from place to place. That was the point. Sinclair Ferguson said this, the message was an urgent one.

The kingdom of God was near in Jesus. Men should therefore turn away from sin, live in obedience to God. Everything about their bearing should indicate that their visit would be brief, which meant the villagers must respond now.

And the essential provisions that God had sent them with or that Jesus had sent them with was a reminder of the urgency with which they were to hasten from place to place. Why? Because the message is an urgent one.

[12 : 52] The ministry is an urgent one. It's not one to take casually. Your work for the kingdom of God is not a casual work. It's an urgent work. And we must go with that urgency.

And we must preach with that urgency. And serve and minister with that urgency in mind. And so he gives them those instructions. Well, let's look at verses 10 and 11.

The instructions given in verses 8 and 9 relate to what the disciples were to take on their journey or maybe more appropriately what they were not to take on their journey. The instructions in verses 10 and 11, however, relate to how they were to behave.

So what they were to take and how they were to behave. Now remember, these men were going on behalf of and in the power of Jesus.

They were representatives of Christ. And there was a particular way in which they were to interact with the people to whom they would serve and minister. Think about that.

[13 : 53] They weren't going on their own mission. This was Christ's mission. They weren't representing their own kingdom. They were representing the kingdom of God. They were ambassadors for Christ.

Therefore, they were going in the way that he had determined for them to go. They were to behave in the way that Jesus had commanded them to behave. And they were to do the things that Jesus had commanded them to do.

Why? Because this was his mission. It's his kingdom. It's his work. And it's his power. Now think about this. Just think for a moment. Who is it that you represent in this world?

You represent Christ. And the way that you live and the way that you behave and the things that you do and the way that you interact with the people in your life should be representative of your love for and your faithfulness to the lordship of Jesus Christ in your life.

He gave them instructions on how to show gratitude to those who received them. And then he gave them instructions on how to pronounce judgment on those who rejected them.

[15 : 05] And both of these instructions are vital to faithful proclamation of the gospel. Look at verse 10. And he said to them, whenever you enter into a house, stay there until you depart from that place.

From what I understand, local inns were often dirty and dangerous places to stay. It wasn't unusual for travelers to seek lodging in people's homes in this day and age.

There was a culture of hospitality that is very different from what we're accustomed to here in our modern American context. Like, can you imagine that? You've decided to go on vacation this week and you're going to head down maybe to Myrtle Beach and you don't make a reservation at a hotel.

Instead, you're just going to wait until you get there, see who you meet in the market, and see if they'll let you stay at their place. That's basically what was happening here. The inns were dangerous places.

They were immoral places in a lot of instances as well. And so as these disciples were going from town to town, they had no money to pay for a room anyways. What were they to do? They were to be amongst the people and see how God would provide.

[16 : 14] Who would receive them into their home? So that's what's happening here. When Jesus says, whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart, that's what's happening. No doubt as they proclaimed the good news of Jesus and displayed His mighty works, some people would believe and extend this courtesy to them.

There were probably many nights that they slept on the ground as well. But the instruction was, whenever you are invited to stay, stay. And so whenever someone welcomed them into their home, they were to be there for the duration of their time in that town.

Now, there's probably many reasons that Jesus gave this, but really I think that the essence of the command has to do with showing gratitude to the people who willingly received them.

For instance, if they went into town and they found that that the Blankenship house was sufficient enough and we were willing to keep them and they stayed there for a day or two and then realized that the Dupree house was a little bit nicer and they had a better community pool and maybe even a hot tub in the backyard, you know what?

We think that we're going to stay over with the Duprees. They very kindly offered and we appreciate the time that you've given us, but we're going to go stay over there because it will just be a better place, right? This is why Jesus is saying, don't do that.

[17 : 30] Don't do that. Wherever you stay, stay. They weren't to use their ministry for personal gain, as many of the false teachers were guilty of doing. Neither were they to overstay their welcome.

Neither were they to use people as a stepping stone to bigger and better things. This wasn't about them. The bottom line is that the way we treat people has a direct impact on our gospel witness.

The way you treat the people in your life has a direct impact on your gospel witness. Think about it for a moment.

To bounce from house to house would have made it appear like the disciples were only in it for themselves. The gospel message was only a means of benefiting them personally, which we see over and over in the New Testament letters.

This condemnation of false teachers that were in it for themselves. They were in it for the money. They would deceive people in order to get something from the people and then they would move on to another place and they would repeat it all over again.

[18 : 34] They used the gospel for personal gain and Jesus was instructing these men, don't do that. It would have suggested that the gospel of Jesus was exclusive to those who could provide them with better things and more comfortable accommodations.

What would that have said? To the first family with which they stayed, if they were a poor family, but they were willing to provide for them as they were in their town and then they decided that as we're preaching the gospel, we appreciate what you've provided but there's a better place over here and we're going to go stay there.

Now, what would that have said about the gospel to these people? That just like everything else in this society is rejecting me, I guess the gospel rejects me as well because they're more willing to go there than they are willing to come here.

Jesus says, don't do that. Wherever you go, stay there. Why? Because you're to live with gratitude. You're to be focused on the gospel, treat people with respect and be content with whatever provisions God makes.

It's a lesson that we all must learn as we serve the Lord. And so let's look at verse 11. If any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you.

[19 : 49] When you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them. Jews, when they had traveled outside of Israel, when they came back in from Gentile places, they went through this custom upon crossing the border where they would shake out the dirt from their garments and off of their shoes and off their feet.

It was a pronouncement of judgment against the Gentile nations and it was a statement that signified they were unwilling to bring any kind of pollutant from the Gentile nations into their holy nation and into their promised land.

That's what the action signified. Now this is what Jesus is telling these men to do as they preach the gospel to Jewish people in Jewish towns. When you go there and they reject you, he says, do this thing that says that they are no different than the Gentile nations that they hate and that they think are without God.

This was a powerful sign of judgment. Kent Hughes said it was prophetic actually. It was a merciful prophetic act designed to make the people think deeply about their spiritual condition.

It signified that the unbelieving Jews were no different than the heathen Gentiles. And in fact, because they rejected Christ and his works, they would suffer a more significant judgment perhaps than even Sodom and Gomorrah.

[21 : 21] Now, Jesus doesn't demand that every time your co-worker or friend or neighbor rejects the gospel that you shake the dirt off your clothes and kick the dust off your feet towards them.

that's not what he means. But he does desire that we faithfully pronounce the judgment that will come on all people who will not receive him in faith and repentance.

Some of us don't struggle so much with pronouncing the judgment. Sometimes we get the spirit of it a bit wrong. In fact, very wrong. We get so offended sometimes if you spend much time on social media or around people that maybe are antagonistic, not just in rejecting the gospel but antagonistic against it.

There's sometimes a difference in the way that those people behave. And we can get so offended sometimes not because Christ is offended but because we are. We feel like we have been offended.

And we don't mind to express the proclamation of judgment on them but what's behind that in our minds and in our spirit is almost a delight in the fact that they will have you almost throw it in their face like this is you're going to be judged for this.

[22 : 40] So wicked. And what's behind it is anger or frustration or offense. And that's not the disposition that Jesus was encouraging here.

When we explain the judgment of God on the unsaved it's not to be with a furrowed brow but with eyes that are full of tears. God doesn't delight in the destruction of the wicked and neither should we.

Nothing about the way we preach the gospel should indicate otherwise. The proclamation of judgment is not one that's to be done out of hate or out of anger it's to be done out of love and out of warning because it's true.

Like I said God doesn't delight in their destruction. Why should we? But the fact remains true that all who reject Jesus as Lord and Savior will face eternal judgment.

Therefore we need to proclaim the message and we need to do it out of obedience and with a heart of compassion. in hopes that the Lord will use that message to draw people to himself.

[23 : 59] So that was a lot of time on the instructions. Let's quickly finish with the pattern that they were to follow. Okay? Pattern of ministry to follow. Look at verses 12 and 13. So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent.

They cast out many demons and anointed with oil those who were sick and healed them. And so in verse 7 Mark summarizes Jesus' commission to these 12 and then here in verses 12 and 13 he closes with another summary of how they actually fulfilled that commission.

And what's abundantly clear is that they followed the pattern that was modeled by Jesus. They didn't come up with a new and better way to do ministry.

Of course God doesn't condemn innovation. That's not what I mean. It's just they stuck to the essentials of what Jesus commanded them to do and what he modeled.

And that consisted of two things that we've said over and over. Preaching the gospel and performing his works. That's what they did. They followed his pattern and they trusted his power.

[25 : 15] And that's our mission as well. It's that simple. Preach his words and do his works. Preach his word and do his works.

We know that Jesus' primary objective everywhere he traveled was to proclaim the gospel message. Sometimes we get that backwards and we think because his miracles are so fantastic we think that that was really his goal and that wasn't his primary objective.

There were places that Jesus went where he did no miraculous works. But there was never a place Jesus went that he did not preach the truth of the gospel. That was his purpose.

That's what he did. In fact, if you'll think back to Mark chapter 1 and verse 38, he said to them after the masses had come to be healed and the disciples were excited, what was it Jesus said?

Let us go to other towns that I may preach there also for that is why I came. That's his objective. What's our first objective? Preach the gospel.

[26 : 18] And when I say preach, I don't mean finding a platform somewhere. I mean share the gospel. Talk about Jesus. Share with people that Jesus will save them if they will turn and believe. And notice the emphasis that Mark places on this message.

Look again at verse 12. And they went out and preached that men should what? Repent. Repent. Plenty of people today want to preach the message of acceptance.

And yes, God is accepting of all who will come to him. Jesus said it, we quote it all the time. Whoever comes to me, I will never cast away. And it's true. There doesn't seem to be many that want to preach the message of repentance.

But if you notice in Mark's gospel, that's the message that recurs over and over and over and over beginning with John the Baptist, repent, and then going on to Jesus himself, repent and believe the good news.

And now on to his disciples, they preach that all men should repent. And if we're faithful to the gospel message, we must also call people to repent.

[27 : 30] Because without repentance, there is no salvation. Repentance of our sin, a turning away of our sin, a turning away of everything else that we have pursued in life in order to live and believe wholly in Christ as Lord and Savior.

And then they performed his works. They went and they anointed some with oil and they healed them and they cast out demons and it's important for us to realize here that this was not a universal thing that was given to these men.

It's not like they all of a sudden had this magical experience where no matter where they went, they would be able to do these things. No, this was a particular empowerment for these men at this time.

There's even other times in the Gospels where they could not do these things. So it's not that this was a universal thing and we should not come to this expecting that God has given us power over demons and that he has given us power to anoint people with oil and heal the sick.

That's not the point. The point here is that they are to do the works of Christ in opposing evil and doing good. Opposing evil and doing good and that's what they did.

[28 : 42] They went from place to place and they followed the pattern that Jesus had given and it's a pattern we need to follow. James tells us in James chapter 1 religion that is pure and undefiled before God the father is this to visit the orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

What is that all about? Opposing evil and doing good. To earn our salvation? Of course not. You can't do enough good and oppose enough evil to be saved.

Doesn't work like that. But for those who have Christ he gives the power as he sends us to preach the gospel and to do his works and through those works we show his love and his faithfulness.

Which is what John was getting on about in chapter 3 of his first letter. By this we know love. How? That he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

But if anyone has the world's good and sees his brother in need yet closes his heart against them how does God's love abide in him? Little children let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

[30 : 01] What's that all about? Opposing evil and doing good. He said I don't really know what all this has to do with me. It has everything to do with you if you're a believer.

Because you have the same commission to fulfill. To be with Christ and to go for Christ. And you have instructions to obey.

To depend on him wholly for your provision. to treat people the way that Christ treated people and to proclaim the message the way he proclaimed the message.

And then he's also given us a great model and pattern to follow. In fact it's not really an option. If we're going to be obedient to Christ, if we're going to be obedient to this commission, we're going to have to fulfill it in the way that he designed for us to fulfill it.

Which is simple. Preach his words and do his works. And so the questions are these. Are we fulfilling our mission?

[31 : 08] Are we following the instructions? And are we committed to his pattern?