

The Students' First Assignment

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[0 : 00] My wife and I are planning a vacation later this summer, and one of our topics of conversation and maybe a little bit of conversation.

I'm doing the stereotypes here. The husband is like, I'm good, you know, the night before, morning of. I'll just throw a few things in a suitcase, and I'm ready to go. But ladies, and you can beat me up afterward if you feel like it, but ladies, it might take a little bit more thought and preparedness beforehand than just to do that.

You've got to plan it out. You've got to lay it out. You've got to shop. You've got to get everything ready to go. So it's interesting, all of these plans and preparations that we make for a trip.

And the story that we're going to be looking at today is Jesus preparing his disciples for a journey.

And the very unusual things that he tells them in terms of their preparedness.

If you thought packing the morning of and throwing a few things in a suitcase was like quick, wait till you see what Jesus tells them not to do when it comes to preparing for this journey.

[1 : 35] So in light of all of that, let's go ahead and get into the story a bit and read from it. And then we'll start going through the checklist for their journey, for their trip.

So Luke chapter 9 is where we're at today. Luke chapter 9 is the pivotal chapter in all of the gospel of Luke, especially later on when you get to verse 51.

If we're not going to get to verse 51 today, it's going to be a few weeks down the road yet. But when we get to verse 51, that is like the dividing point for all of the gospel of Luke.

Every commentary you look at, Luke 9 51 is it. And we're climbing that mountain to get to that point today and all the way through to that passage.

So let's join in the journey here. And he called the 12 together and he gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.

[2 : 34] And he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. Now, there's a couple of things. Matthew's gospel, Mark's gospel also fills in a couple of the blanks.

We've seen that before. Those three gospel writers, Matthew, Mark and Luke, all tell some of the same stories. Not all of them, but all three tell this particular story.

And in Matthew's gospel, we learn that Jesus gave them instructions only to go to fellow Jews. They were not to go outside of that.

They were not to go to any Gentiles or to any Gentile territory. They were not to go to any Samaritan towns. Samaritans were half Jewish, half Gentile. No, only go to the lost sheep of Israel.

Matthew tells us that. Mark tells us that he sent them out two by two. So that's interesting as well.

He doesn't send them out alone. He sends them out two by two.

[3 : 34] So six groups of two, I can do math, is how he sent them out. And he said to them, take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money, and do not have two tunics.

Tunic is just another word for our common day shirt. Theirs were longer than ours, but they didn't wear pants. So I'm glad their shirts were longer, their tunics were longer.

Interesting dilemma that you have in this passage. In Mark's gospel, it says here, take nothing for the journey except a staff.

So which one is it? In Luke, he says, don't take a staff. And in Mark's, accept a staff, make sure you take a staff. And so the question is here, is he talking about don't take an extra staff?

Because a staff would be a normal part of just them going on any kind of a walk, even. They would have a staff. It was what they would use for protection, or at least one of the things they would use for protection.

[4 : 37] But it's interesting. Don't pack anything. Don't bring any extra stuff. Don't bring any money. Don't, wow. And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart.

So don't change houses. And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town, shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.

Well, Jesus, that's not very nice. Actually, in the long-term view of things, it is nice.

It is a kind thing to do because we're talking about matters of eternity here. And so that's important to remember when we do this.

And they departed and went through the villages preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. So this is just a short little story that gets repeated again next chapter when he sends out the 72.

[5 : 43] But today he's just sending out the original 12, and he gathers them together. In other words, they weren't always together. They did have times where they would take breaks, and they would go to their homes and do whatever they needed to do.

And then Jesus would call them back together again, and this is what's happening here in this story. He calls them back together, and he's basically saying, Okay, guys, enough of all of the classroom lectures.

Now it's time to get out in the lab. Get out in the wild, and let's see what you've got. We're going to put you to work. We're going to send you into these towns and regions, and you're going to preach the gospel, and you're going to heal people, and you have the authority and the power to do such a thing.

So this is the assignment that they have been given. So today we're looking at this checklist for this, and I underlined the word this here, because these instructions that he gives his disciples are different than what he's going to give his disciples at the end of the gospel in terms of his instructions.

We'll see that later. So this is a unique time in history. This sending out of them to go out on this short term, several weeks, maybe five or six weeks, where they're going to be out going into the towns and preaching and so forth, is unique.

[7 : 10] And I hesitate to even call it a mission trip because they're not even going outside of their own nationality. They're staying to their own. Now, that's still missions in a sense, but we're going to call it a short term impact trip.

And the assignment here is going to be different than any assignment that they would have later on, and the assignment that you and I have today. So the idea of packing a bag before you go is a good thing now.

But for them at that point, it wasn't. And we'll talk about that in terms of why in just a moment. But let's take a look at these seven things on your checklist in terms of making preparations as you go. And this is what Jesus was doing. Remember, you are helpless on your own. We should never forget this, right? That we can't do any of this in our own strength.

We can't do any of this if we're trying to rely on our own ability or talent or whatever it is. We have to be completely dependent upon him. And so we get this again from verse 1.

[8 : 14] He called the 12 together and gave them power and authority. It's interesting that these are the two words that are used here because of what that means, the significance of this.

And so you have all of this now on your notes. Jesus provided them with his own, now get this, messianic credentials. Jesus announced in Luke chapter 4 what the Messiah was going to look like. And he quotes it from the book of Isaiah when he's in the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth. And he's proclaiming to them, this is what the Messiah looks like.

And oh, by the way, that's who's here in your presence now. And they get all mad at him and want to kill him. But what his ministry is marked by, the proclaiming of the gospel and the miracles that would go forth in serving the needs of the people, healing the sick, allowing the blind to see, casting out demons, all of that would accompany the ministry of the Messiah as a way to verify that what he was saying was true.

The Messiah is here and here is evidence of this. Here is how that works. And so it's interesting that Jesus now, in a sense, passes that on to his disciples.

[9 : 43] And in case people didn't trust their credentials, the authority, the messianic authority that he'd given them, he also gave them the power to expel demons and to heal the sick.

And so that's a part of Jesus's ministry. We've seen all of that up until now in chapter 9. And now the disciples, the 12 apostles, are going to display this same kind of power and authority in their ministry.

Now the second piece of list, the second thing on the list is this. Don't try to be original. Stick to the script.

Okay? Don't try to be original. Stick to the script. And so that was the charge that was given them again from verses 1 and 2. Actually, verse 2, he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God. And that was what the message was. That was the message that Jesus had been declaring up until this point. And that was going to continue to be the message that he would continue to proclaim until he was rejected and crucified.

[10:57] So the kingdom of God is at hand. And the kingdom of God is here as you go through the gospels, a greater sense of urgency right up until the end.

And so that's what they were told to do. And that's exactly what they did. Verse 6, they departed. They went through the villages preaching the gospel. That's what they did. And this is then their charge, their call.

In the gospels, proclaiming the kingdom of God was preaching the gospel. That was the gospel. Now, the word gospel just means, anybody know, gospel, good news. Yeah, so the good news was, hey, the kingdom of God is here. The kingdom of God is at hand.

And so that's what they were proclaiming. That fits because that's the same thing that Jesus had been proclaiming. And we see that in Mark chapter 1, very beginning.

[12:00] Mark doesn't have any of the birth information. Mark just jumps right in chapter 1 with John the Baptist in the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry. So Mark chapter 1, verses 14 and 15.

Now, after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God. And then Mark helps us to understand what that gospel of God, what that message was.

Okay? Don't automatically assume, well, they were preaching the gospel. I know what the gospel is. It's different than the gospel that we preach today.

And some people might hear that. And say, well, that just sounds wrong. Let me explain. So here is the contents of the gospel of God that Jesus was proclaiming.

The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand or is near. Repent and believe that good news, that gospel.

[13:01] That gospel message was the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent. So repent and believe that message. You need to do that. The time is fulfilled, Jesus said.

In other words, Old Testament scriptures have been pointing to the time that Jesus was coming. Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming. He's here. Right? So he's on the planet.

He is standing in front of them. And he is declaring the message. The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God that you have been looking for all of this time is now at hand.

It's near. Not yet. Mark chapter 1. He's not out there saying, I'm the Messiah. Not yet. He's not openly pushing that message yet.

But he's saying, it's coming. It's at hand. Be ready. Now what's interesting, well, this is the script. And starting in chapter 9, the script changes just a tiny bit.

[14:06] Because it goes from the kingdom of God is at hand to now the kingdom of God is standing right in front of you. He's here. And we're going to openly declare this. So the script is for them.

The king is here. Repent. Trust. Surrender to the authority of the king. That was the message that Jesus had been preaching. And now the disciples, as they're going on this trip, that they are proclaiming here in this.

Now, I said before, we're not preaching that today. Well, what do you mean by that? Well, you're not going to hear me say the kingdom of God is at hand today.

That is not the message that we are preaching. The apostle Paul tells us what we're preaching today. We see this in Acts chapter 20, verse 24, where it says there, But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I have received from the Lord Jesus.

And what was that ministry? It was to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. That is the gospel that we are preaching today. The gospel of the grace of God.

[15:18] Now, what is that message? Basically, that message can be boiled down to this phrase in Ephesians 2, 8, and 9. And maybe you're familiar with this. For by grace you've been saved through faith.

And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works so that no one may boast. That is the message that we're preaching today. Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Live your life for him. That's the gospel. That's what we're talking about. Because for us, the kingdom of God, in a sense, is not at hand.

Jesus is not standing right here waiting and us having the opportunity to respond. Now, understand that when Jesus was preaching this message, that the kingdom of God is here, the kingdom of God is standing right in front of you, that colors, that information helps you to understand all the rest of the gospel message.

And there is so much misunderstanding and misinterpretation of some of the things that Jesus is going to say going forward, particularly here in the gospel of Luke, that unless you understand this idea that the gospel that they were preaching is that Jesus is right here.

[16:43] He is at hand. And it's different, in a sense, for us. It's not the message that we are preaching today. What is interesting is that during the tribulation, this speaks into prophecy.

It speaks into different aspects of how we view the scriptures. It speaks into prophecy as well, because during the tribulation, the kingdom of God is what they will be preaching once again. Not the gospel of grace, but the gospel of the kingdom of God. This gospel of the kingdom, this is Matthew chapter 24, which is Jesus's Olivet Discourse.

It's his telling the disciples that are asking him this question, this is what it's going to look like as I make preparations for my return, for the setting up of the kingdom.

That was, in particular, what they were asking. When is this kingdom going to come? And Jesus said, here's what you're going to look for. Where this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

[17:48] Unfortunately, some people will look at a passage like this and say, this is what our job is during the church age. And it's not. Now, we are to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations.

We're going to see that here a little bit later. But we're not preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Not yet. But during the tribulation, we will, as they make preparations for the second coming of Jesus and his setting up of his rule on earth.

Now, what's interesting, and I don't know where my verse went there. Did I pass it? Man, it's...

I must have went through a whole bunch of stuff here. Oh, I'm going the wrong way, people. That's what the problem is.

Here we go. Okay, then the end will come. Now, what is interesting is, and I don't seem to have this in here, I added a couple of verses, but they're not there.

[19:04] Philippians chapter 4. In preparation, Paul is teaching us now how to prepare for, how to pray. That instead of worrying, instead of being anxious, be reasonable.

Because one of the things that we need to understand is, the Lord is at hand. The Lord is at hand. So for us today, in that sense, the Lord is at hand. But what does that mean for us living in the church age?

It basically means this. And actually, in Revelation chapter 1, verse 3, the Apostle John says the same thing at the beginning of that book. The Lord is at hand. What does that mean for us?

What that means for us is not that the Lord is near. A lot of translations say the Lord is near. It is near, but not in time. A lot of people will look at those two phrases and say, well, that means that Jesus is coming back at any moment.

And he is, but that's not a reference to time. It's a reference to proximity, where he is at. He is at the door.

[20:08] It's another way of saying he's at the door, ready to come back. And I've illustrated this one time before, but I'm going to do it again for you to illustrate what it means that the Lord is at hand.

And I have to do that. I have to go back to these doors here because I have to go on the other side of those doors. And Tom is like freaking out right now because like, what is Rich doing? Okay. Can you still hear me? I am, in this sense, at hand. I am near. But I'm on this side of the door. Jesus is near, but he is in eternity. He is at the right hand of the Father. You all are in time and space. But Jesus is right at the door.

At any moment, he could step across that threshold and come again. And we don't know when that's going to happen. But his return is at hand.

[21 : 08] So in that sense, as the church, we must be ready, not for the second coming of Jesus, but for the rapture of the church. Because we will be taken out of the way while Jesus deals with the world and with Israel as a nation and the Jewish people and all of that.

So we have to understand the idea of what it means that the Lord is at hand. For them in their time, what that meant was the Lord is at hand.

He's standing right in front of you. Be ready. It's here. Make the decision today. So with that in mind, number three on your list, getting back to our list, is don't pack a bag or take any supplies.

So we have to be ready for that. And it's hard to understand why this is necessary. He said, take nothing for your journey.

No staff, no bag, no bread, no money. Do not take two tunics or two shirts. All of that. This ministry trip now was meant to serve as another lesson for them, for their training in faith.

[22 : 23] And we have seen this from chapter four all the way up until this point, that he's trying to teach the lesson of faith to his disciples. And they're slowly but surely picking this up.

But it's hard for them because you have some people, the centurion and the prostitute and different things like this, people that you wouldn't think, the man possessed by all the demons, legion of demons, people that you wouldn't expect to have this great faith and yet they do.

They express this great faith and there they are in the boat that's tossed by the storm and Jesus is asking, where is your faith? And they're slow to pick up on it.

So if you're slow to pick up on some of this stuff, it's fine. You're just like the rest of the disciples, okay? It's not a bad thing. But this trip was to serve as another lesson for them in faith, to learn to live on faith as opposed to packing what you have for this trip.

Now, don't misunderstand. Jesus wasn't suggesting this plan going forward for the apostles. This particular trip and the one in chapter 10 is a special circumstance because in chapter 22, he's going to come back.

[23 : 44] Now, this is the night that he's betrayed. So this is right when he's saying goodbye to his guys. And he's saying to them, when I sent you out with no money bag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?

It was a reminder of this trip that he's preparing them for now. Guys, remember that trip. Did you lack anything? No, they didn't lack anything. And he said to them, 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.

Now, I want you to be prepared for when I send you out. The calling that he was going to give them, he was going to prepare them for those journeys to go out and to do that.

Now, another thing on this list that's interesting is this. Don't become a guest snob. He tells them, don't become a guest snob in chapter 9, verse 4 here.

He says, in whatever house you enter, stay there and from there depart. Depart. Don't go into someone's house and they receive you, right?

[24 : 53] This is the instruction. If someone receives the gospel from you and invites you to stay in their home, accept that invitation and be gracious. Go in and accept whatever hospitality they want to give you.

But after you're there for a few days and you're continuing to preach and like the rich guy in town responds positively to your message and invites you to come to his house and don't you know you've been sleeping in on the floor because you're living with a poor person and eating meagerly and just resting wherever you can and this guy's got a guest house with a nice mattress, don't go there.

Or, you know, the best chef in town gets saved and it's like, oh man, I'm eagerly eating my meat and bread but this guy's, I mean, he's got like some filet mignon and all this other, ooh, I'm going over to this.

Don't do that. Don't be a guest snob. Stay put in that sense. From Matthew's gospel, chapter 10, verse 11, whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave.

Don't go. Remain at that house. Don't go from house to house. Don't just, and this is the instruction that he gives to the 72 later on in chapter 10 and so understand this is what he wants.

[26 : 27] Once someone there in that town receives you, go there, accept it, be gracious and stay there. Don't just look for a better opportunity, a more comfortable opportunity whenever the chance

arises.

They were cautioned not to treat their hosts like stepping stones to something more comfortable. Then number five on your list is don't expect a standing ovation when you're doing this work. Again, chapter 9, verse 5, and wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town, shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.

So Jesus, again, on your notes, Jesus prepared them ahead of time for unbelief and rejection. He knew that they would experience some of that. So He wants them to be prepared for when that happens. And when that happens, don't you water down the message so they invite you back. [27 : 48] Don't change the message. Stick to the script. Don't water it down. Don't change it so that you'll be more accepted by the people in town.

Now, we have seen an incident of something like this. Actually, we've seen multiple incidents of this last 10 or 15 years or maybe longer of pastors and churches willing to water down the message in order to be more acceptable to the culture that they live in.

And just this past week, there was a huge example of this in a couple that some of you may be familiar with. If you like to watch home decorating shows, if you're into that kind of thing, HGTV and remodeling and all of that kind of, how many of you have shiplap in your home now because of this couple, Chip and Joanna Gaines, Magnolia, I mean, they've got product in stores.

I forget which store it's in, but they had a show that was hugely popular. I forget the name of what it was, but they're based down in Texas. And it seems like they built this empire now and early on, they were challenged because, hey, how come you don't ever have any gay people or gay couples on your show?

And they pretty much stayed quiet and Chip Gaines would post a verse or something along the lines of about speaking truth and love or just loving your neighbor, those kinds of things, but never directly answered it, but seemingly was giving kind of a scriptural response to, hey, we love everyone, but we don't necessarily want to promote that.

[29 : 41] Well, now, they've been kind of out of the spotlight until recently. They are now producing and pushing out a new reality show. I think it's called Back to the Frontier, Back to the Frontier.

And in that, they're highlighting these couples who are getting rid of all their electronics and putting on garb that you would wear in the frontier and living a frontier life and they're filming that and et cetera, et cetera.

One of the couples is a gay couple, two men who have been quote unquote married and have adopted through surrogacy two boys.

So they're normalizing this kind of thing. That, and then there was another thing that came up. One of their chief photographers was married, wife and kids, and he ended up declaring that he was gay and invited his gay lover to move in.

And so now they have a, I'm going to say a word that I don't know if you know what it means, but it's a popular word today. They have become a throuple, which is a marriage of three people.

[31 : 05] So how the wife stays there in that setup and, and, and the, the gains has not only kept them employed, but like, oh yes, isn't this wonderful?

Isn't this lovely? Now the only good news in all of this is that the pastor of the church that they attend in Waco, Texas has recently come out and said, no, marriage is between a man and a woman. That's what we teach.

That's what God has proclaimed. So good for him for doing that. But in the sense of why is it that people keep trying to water down the message to be accepted by the world?

Now we are, we are to speak the truth in love. We don't just slam people because of their lifestyle choices. We don't do that.

But we do proclaim the truth. We tell them this is what God has ordained for a reason, for your good, for your benefit.

[32 : 10] And if you choose to continue to live a life that goes against what God has said, not only are you going to wreck eternity, if you're not a believer, you won't be.

If you choose to live in your sin, if you refuse to repent. And secondly, your earthly life is going to be a mess too.

Why would you do that? That's the message. We are to operate in grace and truth. Jesus, the gospel of John says that in the first chapter of John.

It talks about how Jesus was both grace and truth, not a 50-50 mix, but he was all truth and all grace. And that's how we must respond when the world approaches us and says that, oh, now this is normal.

And we have to say, no, wait a minute. This is sin that my Jesus died for. How can I marginalize that? How can I just turn a blind eye and say, oh, no, that's acceptable now?

[33 : 23] we can't. So, understand, we can't water down this message that we have been given. We must be faithful to the gospel, to the script, if you will.

Let's go ahead and read a little bit further, starting in verse 7, Luke chapter 9, verse 7. And now Herod the Tetrarch heard all about that was happening and he was perplexed because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead.

And it's talking about John the Baptist here. Herod had put John the Baptist to death. We're going to see that in just a moment. Now he sees Jesus coming along. Basically, he's got the same message and all these miraculous things are happening and John is like, who is this guy now?

And he's fascinated by it and he's terrified of it. So, maybe people around him are saying, maybe, you know, some people are saying that John the Baptist is raised from the dead.

Wait a minute, I saw his head come off. I don't think that's happening. And by some that Elijah had appeared and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen and Herod said, John I beheaded but who is this about whom I hear such things?

[34 : 39] And he sought to see him. So, Herod is now, he's like sending out messages to people who are around Jesus. Hey, I want to see Jesus.

Can Jesus come see me? Can some of his guys come too? Come on, I'm going to give him an audience and I want to see if he can do some things in my presence. I want to see this for myself. He's looking for a show.

He's looking for something, right? He's not looking to repent of his sins and trust the gospel. That's not what he's about. He's looking for a show. He's looking for, hey, what can I gain out of this?

That's what he's after. So we just have that little blurb here in Luke and Matthew and Mark delve into that a little bit more, particularly Mark. On their return, the apostles told him all that they had done.

So now Jesus had sent them out. They've gone out. They've come back and now they're kind of reporting back what they had done and he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida and that's what we're going to stop for today.

[35 : 44] But we do have a couple of more checklist points that we need to go over and that is this, don't be distracted by success and don't misunderstand. They had success.

Some of that success was attention not only by Herod but a number of others but Herod is like, hey, I want to see these guys.

This is cool. I'm terrified of it but hey, come, I want to see. I want to see. And some people that are going after Jesus are going for the show.

That's kind of what the motive is in their hearts. Some are genuinely coming and seeking Jesus.

Some are coming because of the excitement because, you know, they don't have a regular sports schedule to watch or movies or whatever.

They're looking for something to grab their attention. that's what they're coming for. So they went but so they're having some success along with this.

[36 : 46] Yes, there were people who rejected them but they were able to do what they were called to do. Healing everywhere.

Wow. they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them. So they're enjoying some of the success too.

It's like, wow, things are really happening. They're happening for us. Now, I don't know if these guys are like terrified. They're going into their first village and they're two by two. and they're confronted with their first demon-possessed person or their first blind person or their first sick person in some way.

And it's like, all right, I'm going to lay hands on this person and I'm going to pray. And I'm like, is this really going to happen? I don't know. And I can imagine, you know, they're like looking with one eye, you know, one eye closed, one eye open, and they're praying and they're like, is this person going to run away?

What's going on? And then, boom, it happens. Because understand, they were expressing faith, but it was not the amount of faith, it was who their faith was in, that's what mattered.

[38 : 04] And so, even if your faith is accompanied by doubt, that's okay. Because they're still praying in the name of Jesus, in the authority and the power of Jesus.

And that's what mattered. Understand, faith in God is not confidence in God. That gets confused a lot. A lot of times, preachers are like, well, if you just have enough faith, and really what they're saying is, you just have to have confidence.

But confidence is not faith, because it doesn't matter if you're struggling with doubt or fear. What matters is who is your faith in.

That's the key attribute. That's what the Lord is looking for in us. That our faith would be in him.

Whether your faith is the size of a mustard seed, or whether it's grown into a large tree, whatever it is, faith is not confidence.

And so they've had some success here with this. Now imagine, put yourself in their shoes, imagine what it would be like if every demonized person is set free. Right?

[39 : 14] If every person with cancer was healed, if every blind person you came across and touched, they were able to see. What would that be like? What would that be like for you? I mean, would your head start to swell a little bit?

I'd like to not think so. I'd like to think, okay, this is Jesus doing this. But there's got to be something in us that say, well, I still mean, I must be something. I mean, Jesus chose me to do this, right?

So I must be something special more than these other people over here that aren't praying and people are getting healed and blind seeing, right?

I think we would struggle with that. I would struggle with that. And Jesus says, don't, don't go there.

Remember, this is the same group of guys that in a few months are going to be arguing about who's the greatest in the kingdom.

Have they got it figured out yet? Absolutely not. And yet here they are out here healing people and blind people seeing and demons being cast out. Yeah, I'm greater than you are.

[40 : 26] I know I'm better than you are. No, I'm greater than you. I'm going to be first in the kingdom. No, you won't be. I'm going to be first. Jesus. That was happening.

Just a short time later. And even in their immature faith, in their lack of understanding, Jesus would begin now to start telling them, hey, I'm going to be crucified.

And they're like, no, no way. It's not going to happen. They don't get it yet. And yet they still experience this kind of success in the ministry that Jesus was calling them to.

And it's because of who, whose power it was, it wasn't theirs, whose authority it wasn't theirs. And that's what made the difference.

And finally, last one, don't forget to discuss with Jesus afterward, right? After you go out into the field, that's exactly what happens here.

[41 : 39] on their return, the apostles told him all that they had done. And it's not that Jesus didn't know. I think Jesus already knew. He just wanted the opportunity to let them kind of vent and steam and, hey, we did this.

I had ten lepers in one town that got healed. Well, yeah, I had ten lepers in one day that got healed. you know, I can't, you know, what kind of the conversations would that be like?

And he took them and withdrew apart. That withdrew apart there means that they went somewhere private. They went somewhere private so that they can kind of decompress and share their experiences.

Jesus graciously took them away for some rest and to discuss their experiences. We see this in Mark chapter 6 verse 31.

He said, have they come away with me by yourselves to a desolate place and rest for a while? That was the whole purpose. For many were coming and going and they had no leisure even to eat. The crowds are still pressing in on them so hard they don't even have time or opportunity or leisure to eat.

[42 : 58] Right? This was their life at this point. The crowds are so thick. So many people pressing in relentlessly and so Jesus says, okay guys, we got to go and get away.

We're going to see next week he wasn't successful. They wanted to go and get away. Crowds followed him. Okay? But that was the intent. This gave Jesus time to counsel them, correct them, affirm them, encourage them, teach them, prepare them for their future calling.

Remember what their future calling was going to be. Acts chapter one. You will receive what? Power. Wait a minute.

He just gave them power. Right? To do all that. Well, we have that same power available to us. Because this assignment that he gives to them in Acts chapter one, we have this same assignment. Right? You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. And then in Matthew 28, the other half of this, right?

[44 : 04] He gives them power and all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. And by implication, he's saying, you have that same authority. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

this is the calling that we have. Only we get to pack a bag. It's kind of nice, right? They didn't this first time, this second time, Luke chapter 10, the second time, he sends the 72 out to do the same thing.

And the circumstances are different. The message is a little different. We're preaching the gospel of grace. They were like, hey, Messiah is here.

He is at hand. He is right in front of you. You need to trust him. You need to accept him. And Israel, remember, they were going to just Israel.

Israel is going to do what with Jesus? They're going to reject him. It's all part of the plan. Jesus didn't come and it's like, oh, really?

[45 : 14] You guys don't want me? He wasn't surprised by that. He knew what was going to happen. And he called it. God's grace. So we need to understand what our responsibility is, and that is to preach the gospel of God's grace, God's goodness, his love, his mercy to us, so that people can hear that message and respond to that message.

And if they don't, we've done our, we've completed our calling. We're not called to win people. We're not called to convert people.

It's one of the things that is, it's kind of bothersome to me. Sometimes people will say, well, Pastor Rich saved me. No, I did no such thing.

I may have shared the message of the gospel with you and then Jesus saved you, but please understand it is Jesus who saves us. We get the opportunity, the privilege, to share that message with those who need to hear it.

Lord, thank you for giving us this word and helping us to have the understanding that we need to understand the gospel, to understand this message, to understand what it is that you're calling us to do and how that might be different from what the calling of the disciples had here during the gospels.

[46 : 49] But Lord, help us to continue to rely on you. As we said early on, that we can't do this in our own strength. There's no talent, there's no nothing from us.

But may we be just willing to allow you to use us as a tool, as a vessel of your grace and your goodness, of this message that you have come and you've paid this penalty of sin, this penalty that we so deserve because of our sin, and you took it upon yourself, and you died and you rose again. Lord, and you took our place, you became our substitute, and by faith we trust you, and that's all you require, that by faith we respond and say, yes, Lord, I trust you with my life, it's yours.

There is no other way, there is no other name, it is only through Jesus that we are saved. May we be faithful in declaring that message to the world around us.

We love you, and we praise you, and we ask it all now in Jesus' name, amen.