

THE WORDS AND WORKS OF KING JESUS

PART 8: THE KING CALLS 12 DISCIPLES

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MATTHEW CHAPTER 10

Jesus calls twelve disciples and gives them authority to be apostles as his special representatives. They were instructed on how to proclaim the kingdom of heaven, alerting them to persecution and divisions between people that will result. Nevertheless, he told them not to be afraid but to know they will be rewarded for what they were about to do. This chapter is called "Discourse 2."

I. SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

A. THE KING CALLS HIS DISCIPLES (10:1-4)

"Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. ² These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

1. They were called to him (v. 1).

- Disciple: a "learner" or "follower."

- The Bible promises that their position and work will be remembered through eternity (Revelation 21:14).
2. They were given power and authority (v. 1).
 - To prove that Jesus was truly the Son of God, and Israel's King.
 3. There were twelve in number (v. 2).
 - Twelve was symbolizing that he was attempting to reach all of Israel.
 - The twelve would someday judge the 12 tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28; Lk. 22:29-30).
 - The twelve would be the patriarchs of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14).
 4. They were made apostles (v. 2).
 - The term "apostle" (Gr. apostolos) can be understood in two ways.
 - General: One who is sent with a message.
 - Office: one who has seen Christ, and was commissioned by him as an apostle.
 - Jesus' disciples were called apostles after his ascension.
 5. They included two sets of brothers (v. 2-4).
 - Simon Peter and Andrew
 - James and John (sons of Zebedee)

B. THE KING COMMISSIONS HIS DISCIPLES (10:5-15)

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. ⁹ "Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts-- ¹⁰ no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. ¹¹ Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. ¹² As you enter the home, give it your greeting. ¹³ If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

1. Jesus sent forth his disciples, instructing them (v. 5).
 - Do not go among the Gentiles (Gr. *ethne*, any non-Jew).
 - Do not enter a Samaritan town.
 - It is for the Jew first and also for the Greek (Romans 1:16).
 - Later, the gospel would go to both the Samaritans and the Gentiles, but it had to begin with the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
2. First, go the lost sheep of Israel (v. 6).

- To the Hebrews first (lost sheep of Israel).
 - Israel holds a very special place in God's plans.
 - God's method is always for a person to reach his own home and his own people first.
 - However, he did not thus limit his apostles, for after his resurrection he told them that they were to be his witnesses not only "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria" but also "to the most distant part of the earth"(Acts 1:8).
3. Second, preach the Kingdom of Heaven is near (v. 7).
- "Kingdom of heaven is near" = Israel's King has come.¹
4. Third, minister, sharing freely (v. 8).
- Heal the sick,
 - Raise the dead.
 - Cleanse lepers.
 - Drive out demons.
 - Same miracles Jesus did (Chapter 9).
 - These gave credibility to their message.
5. Fourth, use resources to further the ministry (vv. 9-10).
- They were to trust God for their needs, and by example, teach others to depend on God.
6. Fifth, seek a worthy host for lodging (v. 11).
- Worthy meaning having a good reputation concerning God, good morals, good hospitality.
7. Sixth, plan your ministry and visits (vv. 12-15).
- If accepted, share their peace (*shalom aleichem*).
 - If rejected, leave and say nothing (no salutation of peace).
 - The shaking off of dust from their feet is a common expression of disdain.

C. THE KING COUNSELS HIS DISCIPLES (10:16-23)

¹⁶ "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. ¹⁷ Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. ¹⁸ On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, ²⁰ for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ²¹ "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. ²² You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. ²³ When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell

¹ (MacArthur 1141)

you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

1. Counsel 1: you will be like sheep among wolves (v. 16).
 - Vulnerable to attacks.
 - Wolves (those who openly oppose them and their message).
2. Counsel 2: be wise and harmless (v. 16).
 - Wise as serpents...maneuver quickly with caution and intelligence.
3. Counsel 3: be on your guard (vv. 17-20).
 - Beware of those in high authority.
 - Believers will be dragged before civil authorities.
4. Counsel 4: know that families will be divided (v. 21).
 - A person's own family can become his own persecutor.
 - Family members may feel embarrassed about having a believer in their household.
5. Counsel 5: you will be hated (v. 22).
 - The world will oppose any lifestyle that demands total self-denial and complete submission to Jesus Christ.
6. Counsel 6: you will not finish before the Son of Man comes (v. 23).
 - (10:23) The phrase "before the Son of Man comes" is one of the hardest to understand statements of Jesus in Matthew.
 - Could Jesus mean that he would return to this earth before the disciples would make it through all the cities of Israel? This did not happen.
 - Most likely to see His "coming" in this passage as His coming in judgment upon Judea in A.D. 70 which did happen before the gospel came to every city in Israel.²

D. THE KING ENCOURAGES HIS DISCIPLES (10:24-33)

²⁴ *"The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household! ²⁶ "So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. ²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't*

² David Guzik, The Sending of the Twelve;
<https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/archives/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Mat/Mat_10.cfm>.
Accessed January 21, 2021.

be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. ³² "Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

1. The fact of persecution (vv. 24-25).

- "A disciple is not above his teacher," meaning the disciples should not expect to be treated any better than Jesus was treated.
- If they called Jesus Himself Beelzebul/Beelzebub-KJV (Satan)³ how much worse should the disciples of Jesus expect!
- Jesus was saying the disciples will be falsely accused of following Beelzebul (Satan) because that is what some say about Jesus.

2. Do not fear persecutors (vv. 26-27).

- Because someday they will be judged (GWTJ; Rev. 20:11).

3. Do not fear men who kill the body (v. 28).

- Men can kill only the body, but not the soul.
- God can kill both body and soul (in hell).

4. Do not fear, for God cares—supremely so (vv. 29-31).

- (10:26-31) Jesus' disciples didn't need to be afraid, because God did care for them, even down to the most minute detail.
- If God cares for the sparrows, and numbers the very hairs of our head, then He will also pay careful attention to our needs.
- A sparrow was considered to be the smallest of creatures and the penny as one of the least valuable Roman coins.
- The persecuted easily feel that God forgets them, but He has not.
- Even in persecution, Jesus' disciples should not fear, but be bold in their proclamation of the gospel.

5. The conclusion: Remain loyal to the King no matter what (vv. 32-33).

- We are sometimes to take a stand as Christians when facing ridicule, harassment, or rejection. See Romans 10:9.

E. THE COST OF BEING THE KING'S DISCIPLE (10:34-42)

³⁴ "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- ³⁶ a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' ³⁷ "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸ Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. ⁴⁰ "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and

³ Beelzebul (Beelzebub, KJV, NKJ) a Philistine deity meaning lord of flies and filth; in the NT it is a name for Satan as ruler over the demons (see Matt. 12:24).

anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹ Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. ⁴² And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.'" (Matt. 10:1-42 NIV)

1. The King brings a "sword" (v. 34).
 - "Sword" meaning the gospel will cause divisions among people—believers vs. non-believers.
2. The cost of family unity (vv. 35-37).
 - Some will rebel against acknowledging Jesus as their King.
 - Some expected the Messiah to be a conquering hero like Judas Maccabeus.
3. The cost of living for King Jesus (v. 38-39).
 - To take up a cross means dying to self, day by day.
 - A person's life is to be centered on Jesus, not self.
4. Those living for the King will be rewarded (vv. 40-42).
 - (vv. 40-42) He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward.
 - We can share in the reward of God's servants by supporting them in their work.
 - Even seemingly insignificant works of kindness (a cup of cold water) performed for God's people are meaningful in God's eyes.
 - What could seem more insignificant than giving a person a cup of cold water?
 - In a short time, they will be thirsty again. Yet even such a small gesture will always be remembered and rewarded by God.
 - "Little ones" (v. 42) may be:
 - Possibly the disciples.
 - Possibly some children standing nearby.
 - Possibly recent converts.

II. DISCUSSING THE TEXT

A. WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE JESUS CALLED THESE TWELVE MEN (VV. 2-4) TO BE HIS DISCIPLES INSTEAD OF CHOOSING SOME OF THE HEBREW RELIGIOUS ELITES?

- The Hebrew religious elite did not see their need for righteousness through Jesus.
- To them, they were righteous because of their acts of trying to keep the law.
- Jesus chose ordinary people who make mistakes (Peter) but he still loves them and works in them and through them.

B. WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE JESUS CALLED ONLY TWELVE MEN, INSTEAD OF THOUSANDS, TO CONTINUE HIS MINISTRY?

- His power is often seen by taking something small and making it great (Acts 1:8).

C. WHAT DO VERSES 29-31 TELL YOU ABOUT HOW IMPORTANT YOU ARE TO JESUS? HOW CAN THIS HELP YOU WHEN YOU FEEL THAT GOD DOESN'T ANSWER YOUR PRAYERS?

- He cares about us down to the smallest detail.
- He will answer our prayers according to the true needs we may not see.

D. AS A FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST, WHAT ENCOURAGEMENT DO YOU SEE IN THIS CHAPTER?

III. CHALLENGE FOR NEXT WEEK



Read Matthew Chapters 11-12. What is the "yoke" Jesus is referring to in 11:28-30?

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