

Matthew 20-05-17a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 17th of May 2020. Continue our study in the Gospel of Matthew resuming in chapter 10.

Matthew chapter 10. This is the sending forth of the 12 disciples. Quite a lot of material here, but we're going to move through it and beyond it this morning and see some pertinence and applicability for ourselves, maybe not quite in the way you would expect.

Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our investigation of his word and then we'll begin. Father, we're grateful for your many blessings, your provisions, your watch care over us, the weaving together of circumstance and plan and purpose where we are concerned individually and collectively. We're thankful to live in this time and this age and to see the forward movement of world history as we draw ever closer to the time of the return of the Lord Jesus for us and the ultimate inception of your kingdom.

And we pray that as we look at these things together and think of them and seek their application in our lives that your Holy Spirit will guide us and impress the truths on our heart that will result in bearing fruit and laying hold of righteousness by faith and in preparing us for service both now and in the ages to come. We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen.

Matthew chapter 10. You will remember that this is the second in a instructional section or a second instructional section, the first one having been what we call the sermon on the mount or the teaching on the hill. And it bears some similarities to it if you think about it.

These 12 verse 5 of Matthew chapter 10, Jesus sent out and commanded them saying, do not go into the way of the Gentiles. Do not enter a city of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And as you go, preach saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons freely you have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs for a worker is worthy of his food.

Whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy. Stay there till you go out. When you go into a household, greet it.

If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. If it's not worthy, let your peace return to you. Whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. Now here's your pop quiz based on the last couple of weeks of investigation here in Matthew chapter 10. If I asked you to note on a piece of paper, something quite unusual about what we just read, something unexpected, could you discern anything in that? Does it seem at all unusual? And I'll give you a clue as to what I'm after here.

What is the instruction? What's the mission? What's the purpose? Jesus is sending them out. What's the purpose? If you were going to summarize it in one word, a verb, what is the verb? Preach, right? Preach. That's what he tells them in verse seven.

Preach. That's the mission. What is preaching? You deliver a message.

Somebody's already got that message. They say, well, you're preaching to the choir. We've already heard that message.

I already know that, but preaching is delivering a message. So here's the answer I'm looking for to my quiz question. If the mission is to preach, what would you expect the instructions to dwell on? Suppose we were sent, pick a nearby large town, nearest one to us here is Tulsa, could be Dallas, could be Fort Smith, could be St. Louis, could be Boston, could be Duluth, any large area with surrounding towns and villages.

And you're sent there and the Lord Jesus says, I want you to preach to them. What would you be looking for in the instructions? What do you want me to say? Wouldn't you think if the mission is to preach, well, what do I say? Moses was sent to deliver the children of Israel. And God said, I want you to go tell them that the great I am is about to deliver them and fulfill the promises to the forefathers.

And Moses says, well, I'm of slow speech and a slow tongue. What should I say? And he keeps demurring to the point that God finally says, look, I'll send your brother Aaron and he can be your mouth. If you're so worried about how you talk, this is the Moses who was a Prince in Egypt and led armies and managed governmental bodies and did all kinds of things, but he thought he couldn't talk.

And then God says, well, I'll send Aaron, but who does all the talking to Pharaoh? It's Moses. Moses finds the words. And you remember later on that in verse 19, when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak.

So why don't we just have verses five through seven and verse 19, go preach. The kingdom of heaven is in hand. Don't worry about what you'll say.

It will be given to you. What you should say. Mission is to preach.

Content will be given to you on the spot or none. What is all, what is the nature of all of the rest of these instructions? This is important. This is the key.

This is one of the main ideas in the passage. What are most of these instructions concerned with? He doesn't say, you know, warm them up with a humorous story. Be sure you have a prop so that you can make a point.

You know, go softly and, and present the benefits and then present the penalties and judgments. If they don't turn, there's no, no instruction about how to preach. They're told what to preach in one line kingdoms at hand and told not to worry about the words later on.

What is all of the rest of this in particular this morning? Look at verse nine and 10 provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffery workers worthy of his food. Is this normal in normal life? Do you, are you like Blanche in a streetcar named desire? You know, I've always depended on the hospitality of strangers. Is that normal? Well, it has become something that Christian ministry and ministers look to in saying, well, if you're in ministry, those that are minister to should provide support.

That's, that's a lesson that is drawn here. And I'm going to tell you this morning. I think that's not what's in view.

That's not what's in view. Turn back, keep your finger here, but turn back a few pages to Matthew chapter five. Remember your be attitudes blessed to the poor in spirit.

There's is the kingdom of heaven. Those who mourn the meek, those who hunger and thirst shall be filled. The merciful shall obtain mercy.

The pure in heart will see God. The peacemakers will be called sons of God. Those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

You see echoes of that same message here. That is the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom is that God will provide, that God will reward faith, patience and obedience.

And that in the kingdom, those who labor, those who suffer, those who kind of have the short end of the stick in this life are going to be recompensed. The kingdom is a place of provision of blessing and of reward for those who were faithful and patient and obedient in this life. Right? So why does Jesus give all of these instructions about how to go deliver the message and how to act while delivering the message and says practically nothing about what the content of the message is.

A, they have heard Jesus going about preaching the gospel of the kingdom now for many, many months. They've already heard the teaching on the hill, the sermon on the mount. Right? So this should come back to their minds in a straightforward manner under the ministry of the Holy spirit.

You look at verse 20, it is not you who speak, but the spirit of your father who speaks in you, speaks in you. And this is the answer to my quiz question. And I can summarize it in a single statement.

The disciples who are commissioned to deliver this message are to live the message, right? They are going to be emblematic. They are going to be symbolic. They are going to represent reliance upon God, obedience to a call, unworried, take no thought for what you shall eat, what you shall drink, what you shall wear.

Your heavenly father knows you have need of these things. Remember in the sermon, your heavenly father knows your needs. He knows before you ask, he will provide.

So they are walking pictures, walking examples of the message. Now this gets tricky when you start talking about application. Should you and I take no thought for what we shall eat, what we should drink and what we should wear? How long would we last if we didn't make a grocery list, have some money to take to the store and spend so that we can obtain what we shall eat, what we shall drink and what we shall wear and the other members of our family? Is this practical application suggested to us that when Jesus says, take no thought, your heavenly father knows what you have need.

So sit still and wait for the ravens to drop it on you by the book. That would not be a valid application. So I asked myself, what is the application? Jesus is describing for Israel the nature of the earthly kingdom that God has promised them and is going to provide for them.

These men are sent with a message to proclaim that kingdom and that particular message which they are given to deliver. They are the angels, they are the messengers of that gospel. In fact, it's interesting that when Jesus says in verse five, these 12 Jesus sent out and commanded them, that word commanded is only used twice in the gospel of Matthew and once is here and it's parangelizo.

Uangelos is gospel and evangelize. U-E-U means good and angelos, A-G-G-E-L-O-S. The Uangelos is the gospel.

When he commanded them, this is parangelos, parangelizo, which para means alongside of. So these are the instructions. It's kind of a word play that as they are ungelizing, as they are angelizing, as they are messaging, what accompanies the message? These instructions are all what accompanies the message.

So our first point of observation, which goes pretty much directly to application here, is not that we should try to live our lives taking no thought for the morrow or not preparing extra things. Don't worry about silver or copper in your money belt, no bag for your journey, don't have an extra shirt, don't take an extra pair of shoes. The ascetic minimal lifestyle that's in my view not what we are to draw from this passage.

What we draw by way of observation, interpretation, and application from this section is if you have a message, live the message. Do we have a message today or do we have a communication function as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, as members of his body, as the church? Do we have a function? Do we have a messaging component to our existence? We do. We are here representing the Lord Jesus Christ in his absence, but the message he delivered in these early chapters of Matthew is the gospel of the kingdom to Israel.

You are sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Do not go in the way of the Gentiles and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. A specific target audience.

This is a limited time mission. It has a specific target and it has specific instructions. This message for this audience is to be lived.

Most of Jesus' instructions have nothing to do with what they should say, but the impression they make as they are living among the people to whom they communicate. Let me say that again. Jesus commissions his messengers not so much with what they should say, but how they should live among the people to whom they communicate.

Our lives lived on a daily basis are the message. This has been called lifestyle evangelism. There's been a huge emphasis in the modern day church on go forth, go tell.

Here's attract, here's the wordless book, here's the spiritual laws, here's a nice summary, here's the Roman road. This is what you say. This is the mantra.

This is the formula. Take them down the road. Get them to pray the sinner's prayer and it misses the point.

Jesus says, don't worry about what you're going to say. Disciples, as you deliver your specific message to your specific target, this is how you should live. All of these points of appearance and of action among the cities and villages where they go, the shaking off of the dust, finding out who is worthy, staying with them until it's time to leave and so on.

This is reflecting kingdom truth, kingdom of Israel truth to and for the people of Israel by men of Israel sent by the prospective Messiah. Live the message. Don't worry about what you're going to say.

Worry about your life reflecting your belief that you don't need preparation out of your own strength and out of your own resources. We've traveled and brought nothing because we are showing you what reliance on God looks like and we're relying on God. That should be the impression left by the life of a messenger when he's delivering his message.

That should be the impression of our lives. We've got wonderful hymns such as, be not dismayed, what error be tied. God will take care of you through every day, all along the

way.

God will take care of you. If you believe it, then your conversation and your priorities and your actions reflected. Now our message is not a kingdom of heaven for Israel message.

So the details of the way we live are going to be different. Pursue peace with all men. Oh no man, anything.

Work quietly with your own hands. Let not your good be spoken of as evil. Love one another.

Be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. Uh, look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others. Read the whole mind that was in Christ Jesus in Philippians chapter two.

That is the lifestyle we lead that reflects the message we are here to communicate. If you are a pastor or an elder in a church, you notice that Paul gives Timothy and Titus specific guidelines, specific criteria that an elder or a pastor should meet. Why? It doesn't say he should have a fulsome, sonorous voice.

He should be well organized. He should print outlines. He should have graphics.

He should present his message in a certain way. What are the qualifications for a leader in the church centered on? Lifestyle. Live your message.

What you do speaks far louder than what you say. How many times in public life have you seen where someone is trying to deliver a message, but then they are found to be a scurrilous rascal in their behavior and their message is negated? It's in the wind. It's over with.

They've betrayed it. How easy is it to listen to tapes from a pastor who ran off with his secretary or who did some other nefarious thing, betrayed trust or in some other way malfunctioned? You can have a lifetime's worth of work that disappears in terms of its usefulness in a moment because of lifestyle. It is an emphasis on living the message and to live it, you have to believe it and you have to know it.

These disciples had to go out on faith. I mentioned before when he says in verse eight, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. They've seen Jesus do this, but there's no record that any of them had done it.

What is the impression going to be when they go to small towns and villages and in the same way that the Lord Jesus heals blindness and deafness and leprosy, they are able to do the same thing. What does this communicate? The actions communicate the presence of God, the power of God, faith in the provision of God, and that's the real

message. He is sending out the 12 as human messages.

They themselves are the message. Who got this whole preach the kingdom thing started? Who was the forerunner? John the Baptist. When you think about John the Baptist, what's the first thing you think of? He's wearing a camel's hair robe.

He's eating crickets and honey and right. He's out in the wilderness preaching to the rocks. He doesn't go to the temple.

He preaches in the wilderness because the Bible says, prepare the way in the wilderness. He knows where to go and he knows what to do. He doesn't attract a crowd or luring them in or baiting and switching.

He does what the Bible says and it is his lifestyle that attracts the crowds who leave Jerusalem and leave the surrounding towns and villages and come out to the Jordan to see John. Remember what Jesus says, when you went out, what did you see? He doesn't say, what did you hear? What did you see? This, if you want to understand what's going on in Matthew chapter 10, I would suggest it is, you can label it at the top of the chapter, live the message. The Spirit will give you any words you may need on a given occasion.

To live the message, the message has to live in us. If we are going to live the message, the message has to live in us. We have to be the wise virgins we're going to see later on who've got oil in their lamps and when the time comes for the light to shine, they've got the fuel.

Not going to have to run around in a time of opportunity trying to find resources. They've already been gathered. They're already present.

As I mentioned last time, when you get to verse 16 and Jesus says, behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and guileless, harmless. I think a colloquial translation of this would be honest.

If you are harmless, if you're undeceptive, what you see is what you get. You're not putting on a show and this is not something that you can model. You can't model discipleship for someone, put on an act in front of someone.

The message has to be living in us for us to live the message. So you have to be guileless. Jesus says in another place, the light of the body is the eye.

And if your whole body is light, you are consistent. If you're acting one way and thinking and believing another, that's the very definition of hypocrisy. And human beings have, we all have a hypocrite detector turned up to 10 on high sensitivity.

People know when you are putting on, we can tell when someone is putting on an act and you become an enemy of the cross. You become a liability instead of an asset. If

you're not prepared, if you're not first tending to your own beams before you start trying to go out and talk about moat removal.

So we have to tend to our spiritual life and our spiritual priorities intensively, reflection and meditation and prayerful consideration of what we've learned from the word of God, prayerful consideration of our own life and our own behavior, acknowledging our shortcomings, our sins so that we can be cleansed and can walk in the light. We can't share the light if we're not walking in the light. These are simple truths, but they're so easily lost in the confusion of our concern.

Do you think the disciples cared about the rest of Israel the way the Lord Jesus did? Compassion, sheep without a shepherd. And Jesus says, I'm sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. And he says, don't take anything.

You know, a staff was good for defense. It was kind of like a big billy club. And he says, don't take staffs.

You can take one to walk with, but don't take them like they're going to be defensive weapons. I'm sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. And I'm sending you just as you are, no preparation, no defenses, no provisions.

And I'm sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Now, what happens if you send sheep out in the midst of wolves? Think wolf pack, call of the wild, throw a bunch of sheep out there. What would normally happen? Banquet for the wolves, right? How, how encouraging, uplifting and comforting is this comment? Disciples, don't take anything extra with you.

I'm sending you out like sheep in the midst of wolves. Goodbye. It was nice knowing you.

I'll read about your martyrdom later on. Why would he say, I'm sending you out like sheep in the midst of wolves? Why wouldn't he say, I'm sending you out like shepherds in the midst of sheep, like wolves in the midst of you'll go and bring them in, bring them in, you know, bringing in the sheaves. I'm sending you out like a reapers in the midst of the harvest, swing the shining sickle, cut the ripened grain, gather in the corn ears gleaming everywhere.

That was a song I learned in grade school. Thanksgiving day is here. Why does he say I'm sending you out like helpless victims in the midst of predators? How many of them did not return? How many of the, I was, I was researching the martyrdom of the disciples.

That's an interesting topic I won't go into, but he says, I'm sending you out of sheep in the midst of wolves. So how many did he lose in this effort? Nariah one. Now, why was that? They had no staffs.

They had no swords. They had no protection detail. They were sheep sent out in the midst of wolves, kind of like Hananiah and Mishael and Azariah in the midst of the fiery furnace.

If God before us, who can be against us? I can send you like sheep in the midst of wolves. No worries. You are protected.

You are held in the powerful hands of God. And you can be a sheep walking around. You can be Daniel in the lion's den, sheep in the midst of wolves.

Not a problem. Every single disciple, I have it on good biblical authority that every single one of the disciples survived this mission, even though they were sheep in the midst of wolves. Why? Because they all took martial arts training.

They were all concealed carry permit owners. If you live the message, if the message lives in you, there is no fear. It doesn't matter if you're a sheep in the midst of wolves, you cannot be touched.

You cannot be harmed. Not a single one of the hairs of any of the heads of these disciples fell to the ground during this mission. Metaphorically speaking, they all came back safe and sound.

Jesus is going to say, I saw Satan fall from heaven, like lightning. Wolves are powerless against the sheep when they are in the will of God, doing what God has instructed them to do. So it's a great encouragement, isn't it? So he does say in verse 16, be wise.

And he does say in verse 17, beware. If I was still printing bulletins and making sermon titles, I would title this, be wise and beware. You're living your message, be wise and beware.

This isn't throw caution to the wind, walk in the middle of a busy highway, assuming God will take care of you. Be wise and beware, but be the message. Let's pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to see some interesting things by way of parallel. When we look at the similar instructions that are given in Mark and Luke, the account of this mission and the other places where these same details are given. We'll do that after the break.