Lesson 261
Jesus Sends the Twelve Disciples

Story Elements



- **Text***:* Matthew 9:35-11:1
- **Setting***:* circa 28 AD in Galilee
- **Characters***:* God, Jesus, and the twelve disciples
- **Plot**: Jesus sends the twelve disciples throughout Galilee to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom.
- **Key word(s):** *"_____"* (9:38; 10:5, 16, 34, 40) – Jesus sends disciples out because Jesus was also sent. It is the language of a mission conducted under authority.
- **Climax**: ***"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."*** (Matt. 39) Christ words to his disciples extend beyond their immediate mission and carry meaning to Christ's disciples throughout the ages. We are all sent – often this means we will suffer. But the sent ones find true happiness in serving the Savior, not seeking the world.

Workers Needed

1) (9:35) Jesus continued his preaching tour of Galilee, in *all the cities and villages*, with a twofold purpose:
   a) *teaching in their synagogues, and* _____ *the gospel of the kingdom* – Jesus was an itinerant preacher. Whenever possible he was teaching in their synagogues, and of the synagogues were closed to him, he was preaching in the open air.
   b) *and* _____ *every sickness and every disease among the people* – "His was a Medical Mission as well as an evangelistic tour. Happy people who have Jesus among them."[1]

2) (9:36-37) While itinerating, Jesus was moved with compassion as he saw the multitudes of spiritually starving people. Jesus described the needy multitudes in two ways:
   a) **Sheep that need _____** – sheep with no shepherd are helpless and hapless. They are destined to either starve or become the target of predators. Matthew Henry adds, "Sinful souls *are as lost sheep;* they need the care of shepherds to bring them back."[2]
   b) **Harvest that needs _____** – the work awaited workers. "People desired good preaching, but there were few good preachers."[3]

3) (9:38) The answer for the spiritual needs of the multitudes was prayer: *pray ye therefore*…Before workers are sent, they are prayed for. All endeavors for God should begin with prayer.

APPLICATION➔ J.C. Ryle reminds us that, "Personal working for souls is good. Giving money is good. But praying is best of all. By prayer we reach Him without whom work and money are alike in vain…Never, never may we forget that if we would do good to the world, our first duty is to pray!"[4]

APPLICATION➔ We are told to pray that God would send laborers *into **his** harvest*. Barnes explains, "*God* is the proprietor of the great harvest of the world, and he only can send men to gather it in."[5]

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[1] Charles Spurgeon, *An Exposition of Matthew, the Gospel of the Kingdom* (Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 2015) 65.
[2] Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1658.
[3] Ibid.
[4] J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel, Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books; 2007) 95.
[5] Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: Matthew & Mark*, ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 106.

Workers Chosen

4) (10:1) Jesus had previously chosen twelve men to be his close disciples (cf. Mark 3:13-15). Matthew lists their names in verses 2-4. Jesus gives them power…
   a) *to cast out unclean spirits* - Christ has authority over devils and he gives that authority to his disciples.
   b) *to heal all manner of sickness and diseases* – Not only over the spiritual, but also over the physical does Christ have power. And he has the authority to share that authority with his disciples.

APPLICATION➔ An example of Christ's great power and authority is that he had authority to share his _____. Matthew Henry explains, "It is an undeniable proof of the fulness of power which Christ used as Mediator, that he could impart his power to those he employed, and enable them to work the same miracles that he wrought in his name."[6]

Workers Instructed

5) (Matt. 10:5-6) Before sending the twelve, Jesus told them:
   a) **Where they should go** – they forbidden from going to Gentile places, including Samaria. Rather, they were to *go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. Though Jesus had previously preached in Gentile places (including Samaria) this new tactic of sending out disciples must first be done for *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. The Gospel is *to the Jew first and also to the Greek*. (Rom. 1:16) "The Gentiles must not have the gospel brought them, till the Jews have first _____ it."[7]
   b) (10:7) **What they should preach** – Nothing less than the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven. *And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand*. The spiritually starving masses needed the milk of the Word.
   c) (10:8) **What they should do** - *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils*. The miracles were proofs of their divine commission. They were not aberrant heresy spreaders, but _____ ministers of Christ whose power of diseases and devils was shared with his sent ones. The power they received from Christ was freely given to them, and they were to use this power freely for those who needed it.
   d) (10:9, 10) **What they should not take** – they were forbidden from taking money or possessions. Although Jesus' methods would later change because persecution would increase (cf. Luke 22:35), yet now the people of Israel were to be given the chance to bless those temporally who bless them _____.

1 Corinthians 9:11 *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?*

TO BE CONTINUED…

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Answer Key: key word(s) "send/sent" • 1. a) preaching; b) healing • 2. a) leading; b) reaping • 4. ➔ power • 5. a) refused; c) authorized; d) spiritually

[6] Henry, 1659.
[7] Ibid., 1660.