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Sermon Notes

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Messengers for the Master, Part 1

Matthew 10:1-4

I. Heralds on King's Business

A. Heralds in Medieval Times & in Colonial America

1. Town crier: first employed in England in 1066 to spread word of King William of Normandy's successful invasion... England's first and only invasion... heralds (town criers) were sent by King William all over England to announce his victory

Low literacy rates made the town crier an invaluable source of information well into the 19th century... an audio newspaper

2. Medieval messengers of jousting tournaments
3. Colonial America: "Hear ye, hear ye..."

B. Heralds in the Bible

1. Official representative of the Emperor

Daniel 3:1-6 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. 2 He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. ...4 Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language: 5 As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. 6 Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

Herald's word meant life or death for those assembled... he spoke with the authority of King Nebuchadnezzar!

2. Sent with an urgent message... need for speed!!

Esther 8:10-14 Mordecai wrote in the name of King Xerxes, sealed the dispatches with the king's signet ring, and sent them by mounted couriers, who rode fast horses especially bred for the king. 11 The king's edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves; to destroy, kill and annihilate any armed force of any nationality or province that might attack them and their women and children; and to plunder the property of their enemies. 12 The day appointed for the Jews to do this in all the provinces of King Xerxes was the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. 13 A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. 14 The couriers, riding the royal horses, raced out, spurred on by the king's command. And the edict was also issued in the citadel of Susa.

Word for "courier" literally "runner"... someone who took the King's message out with speed and urgency

Reason: immense distance to be traveled in Persian empire, and King's word united the empire and made it one

Illus. Pony Express in Wild West

Modern telecommunication makes the word travel instantly to any place on the globe... but back then, they needed a fast herald to take it

C. Christ's Heralds: The Twelve Apostles

1. From Disciple to Apostle

vs. 1-2 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. 2 These are the names of the twelve apostles...

disciple = "learner"... huge crowd that followed Christ constantly to learn from Him

"apostle" = "sent one" a herald, sent out with authority fro the King to proclaim a message

2. Christ the Original "Apostle"... Sent from Heaven on King's Business

Hebrews 3:1 Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.

3. Now, the Twelve Shaped for the Same Ministry

Mark 3:13-14 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve-- designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach

Key word is "preach"... Greek root is that of "herald" or "proclaim with authority"

The *kerux* was a man officially commissioned by the King or ruler to go out and spread a message with a loud clear voice to people who had not yet heard it... the content of the message was set by the King and the herald had no right to change it... it could be anything from a mere report of some government business to an authoritative command on the townspeople calling them to act a certain way... to come for battle, to pay additional taxes, to set aside a day of celebration; the word of the herald was equal to the word of the King himself

II. The Strategy of Christ

A. The Centrality of Proclamation

1. Christ began His ministry by preaching

Christ went from town to town in Israel, proclaiming the same message again and again

Matthew 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Matthew 4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

2. The proclaimed message was the basis of salvation

Romans 10:13-15 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

At the center of God's plan of redemption was the proclamation of a simple message... "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" People who repented would demonstrate that repentance and faith by "calling on the name of the Lord!" Thus they would enter the Kingdom of Heaven

But no one could call on the name of the Lord if they'd never heard of Him... so the message had to be broadcast far and wide... this was the job of the Apostles

B. Delegating the Ministry of Reconciliation

1. Christ willed that repentant sinners should have a part in the advance of His Kingdom
2. He chose to use us to gather the lost into His Realm by simple proclamation of the Gospel
3. He has “committed to us the ministry of reconciliation”
4. The call of the Twelve Apostles was the start of it all

2 Corinthians 5:18-21 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

C. Shaping the Ministers

1. Those who received the ministry of reconciliation had to be shaped
2. God wanted real live people living real lives to go physically and proclaim this message
3. Those messengers had to be shaped like a potter shapes clay

Illus. Jamestown... watching the potter shape clay

4. Christ willed to put these men through an intensive training program to shape their souls

D. Spiritual Multiplication

1. Christ also willed that the Twelve Apostles should make disciples and teach everything to them
2. Thus spiritual multiplication was His plan for the advance of the Kingdom of Heaven
3. Just as the birds, fish, beast and man multiplied physically to fill the earth with their species, so the Apostles would make disciples and train them to carry on the work of ministry long after the Apostles themselves had died
4. This was Christ's lasting strategy to the end of time

2 Timothy 2:1-2 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

NOTE: Four generations: Paul, Timothy, reliable men, others also

Only spiritual multiplication has any hope for keeping pace with the population explosion in the world

If an evangelist like Billy Graham began a crusade today and preached to 50,000 new people every day, it would take him 120,000 years to reach 6 billion people in the world today... of course, in the 120,000 years, the world's population would have grown so much that that number would be dwarfed by the population as yet unreached!

However, if each one of you led two people to Christ this year (and you never led another person to Christ the rest of your life), and each one of those people led two people to Christ the following year, and never led another person to Christ... and that went on for 25 years, there would be 13 billion Christians as a direct result!! That would be more than the world's population at the present growth rate!!

Coleman, Master Plan of Evangelism... sought to determine Christ's strategy for reaching the world with the Gospel... it was simply this: to select a small number of key men, pour His life into them, train and prepare them, and send them out to do the same thing

- Men were His method
- He required obedience
- He showed them how to live
- He expected results

First Baptist Church members: who are you discipling? Who are you pouring your life into? Who are you shaping and training to be a worldchanger?

E. Unique Role of the Apostles

1. Eyewitnesses

Mark 3:13-14 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve-- designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach

"That they might BE WITH HIM..." Observing Him, learning from Him, following His pattern, YES!

But also, that they might fulfill an utterly unique role themselves in world redemptive history: eyewitnesses

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-- this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

These eyewitnesses were the Apostles... who were with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry and who could testify to the world for all time concerning what He said and did

This eyewitness testimony would be the basis of the salvation of the rest of the world... without it, no one would have known anything about Jesus, and so no one could have "called on the name of the Lord"!

Thus, when the church needed to replace Judas the traitor, they had a clear requirement:

Acts 1:21-22 Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

Thus, the office of "apostle" is closed forever, since no one can make this claim of being an eyewitness of Christ's life on earth

2. "Camcorders"... Gospel writers

Luke 1:1-4 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. 3 Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

The apostles testimony was the basis of the Gospel record of Jesus' life... Luke listened to those eyewitnesses and wrote down his Gospel record

Thus the apostles were like living "camcorders", storing up in their memories the events of Jesus' life... usually they did not understand what He was doing (e.g. like the footwashing) but later the Spirit would cause them to recall and they would understand and write it all down

3. "Foundation" [Matthew 16, Ephesians 2]

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

***Ephesians 2:19-20* Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.**

4. Miracles

As open demonstrations of their role as Christ's unique successors, the apostles were given special powers to work signs and wonders... these miracles were the marks of being an apostle

***vs. 1* He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.**

***Acts 2:43* Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.**

***2 Corinthians 12:12* The things that mark an apostle-- signs, wonders and miracles-- were done among you with great perseverance.**

5. Authority

The signs and wonders helped underscore the apostles authority... the role they had to lead the church

***Acts 16:4* As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey.**

authoritative role in life of Church...also note gender and authority

III. The Selections of Christ

A. All Night in Prayer

1. Jesus did nothing on His own

***John 8:28* ... I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.**

2. Luke tells us of Christ's all-night prayer

***Luke 6:12-16* One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. 13 When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: 14 Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, 15 Matthew, Thomas,**

James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, 16 Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

B. Did Not Consult Men!! Chosen by God's Sovereign Will

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last.

1. No advice sought from human sources
2. No P.R. firm or consultant called in
3. Only wanted to know one thing... "Father, who shall I choose?"

C. Who Were the Master's Men? Some General Observations

1. Paired up to witness (Mark 6:7)

Mark 6:7 Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.

So also in Matthew's list, Twelve "paired up"

vs. 2-4 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.

Peter and Andrew... James and John... Philip and Bartholomew... Thomas and Matthew... James and Thaddeus... Simon and Judas

Very important principle: as they go out into the world to travel on long dusty roads, and to suffer, be rejected, and even arrested, they were not alone!! They would always have companionship and encouragement

Also, witnesses must come in at least two's:

Deuteronomy 19:15 A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

2. "Inner circle"
 - a. the Twelve constituted Christ's "inner circle"... he spent time with them and trained them in ways no one else was

Mark 6:30-32 *The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. 31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." 32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.*

Mark 4:10-12 *When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. 11 He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables*

b. Inner, inner circle: Peter, James, John

alone with Christ when he raised Jairus's daughter from the dead

Mark 5:37 *He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James.*

alone with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration

Matthew 17:1-2 *After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.*

alone with Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane

Mark 14:32-34 *They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."*

Thus Christ poured Himself in an utterly unique way into the Twelve, and even more into the Three: Peter, James, John

All part of His strategy to shape the world by intensive discipleship through quality concentrated time

Next time, we'll get into specifics about each of these twelve ordinary men who changed the world

IV. Application

A. Prayer Not Enough to Reach the World... God Demands Action

B. Christ's Master Plan of Evangelism: Intensive Disciple-making

C. Are You Part of the Plan?

Being disciplined for future service

Disciplining someone

D. Marvel at Christ's Sovereignty

Not only does He conquer the world from Satan's powerful kingdom of death

He uses weak, sinful people to do it

E. All His Eggs in One Basket... Are You Doing Your Part?

S.D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Service*: [imaginary account of Christ returning to heaven after His ascension] Angel Gabriel greets Him and says, "Master, you died for sinners all over the world didn't you?" to which the Lord replies "Yes." "You must have suffered much," the angel says; and again Christ answered "Yes." Gabriel continues, "Do they all know that you died for them?" The Lord answered, "No, only a handful in Palestine know about it so far." Gabriel asks, "What is your plan for telling the rest of the world that you shed your blood for them?" Jesus responds, "Well, I asked Peter and James and John and Andrew and a few others if they would make it the business of their lives to tell others. And then the ones that they tell could tell others, and they in turn could tell still others, and finally it would reach the far corners of the earth and all would know the power of the gospel." Gabriel asked, "But suppose Peter fails? And suppose after a while John doesn't tell anyone? And what if James or Andrew are ashamed or afraid? Then what?" Jesus answered, "I have no other plans... I am counting on them to succeed."

Christ has no other plans for the evangelization of the world... yet those plans will most certainly succeed... the indwelling Holy Spirit is powerful enough to move weak sinners like us to advance the Kingdom... the question is, are you doing your part?