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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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The Mission of the Twelve

Matthew 10:5-15

I. Starting the Vast Missionary Endeavor

A. The Greatest Story Since Christ Ascended

1. "From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya"
2. Missionary Heroes

B. Irresistible Advance of the Missionary Endeavor... the Kingdom of Christ

1. For 2000 years the Kingdom of Heaven has been irresistibly advancing!
2. One generation of missionaries after another have crossed mountain ranges, rivers, swamps, seas and oceans... they have braved dangers on the road, in the city and in the country... they have entered unfamiliar cultures and learned strange languages

C. Basic Methods Set Out Here: Simple Proclamation by Simple Messengers

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!"

II. Scope of the Mission: Jews Only (vs. 5-6)

vs. 5-6 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel."

A. Initial Phase: "To the Jew First"

1. Christ's self-conscious mission

Matthew 15:22-24 *A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession." 23 Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." 24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."*

2. Paul acts on the principle... Pisidian Antioch

Acts 13:45-46 *When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying. Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles."*

When the Jews became openly abusive, Paul and Barnabas did the very thing Jesus commanded here in Matthew 10:

Acts 13:50-51 *But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. 51 So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.*

Throughout his mission to the Gentiles, Paul always followed the same principle:

3. Paul articulates the principle

Romans 1:16 *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*

B. However, Christ ALWAYS Had Samaritans in Mind

1. Christ's Ministry to the Samaritans a Precursor

- a. Samaritans a mixed-race of Jewish poor people left in the land during the exile and Gentiles who came to live there
- b. Samaritans also accepted Gentile worship practices... became syncretistic
- c. Jews HATED Samaritans and looked down on them
- d. BUT Jesus witnessed to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4, and the whole town believed in Him

2. Someday Christ would send out church to the world... including Samaria

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

3. Apostles NOT YET READY for Samaritans

Luke 9:52-56 And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; 53 but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. 54 When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" 55 But Jesus turned and rebuked them, 56 and they went to another village.

C. Christ Also Had Whole World in Mind

1. Prophesied in Old Testament

Isaiah 49:6 he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

2. Prophesied at Birth by Simeon

Luke 2:28-32 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: 29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. 30 For my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the sight of all people, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

3. Stated in These Very Instructions!!

vs. 18 On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles.

4. Prophesied by Christ

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

5. Commanded After Resurrection

Matthew 28:19-20 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey

everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Note: Some dispensationalists make too much of Jesus' instructions here and assume that Jesus never intended ultimately to go to the Gentiles... that is false

However, He desired to minister first to His own people... the "lost sheep of Israel"

Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

III. Strategy of the Mission: Preaching and Demonstrating the Kingdom (vs. 7-8)

vs. 7-8 As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.

A. Central to the Task: Preaching

1. Apostolic task... preaching the Kingdom
2. Apostolic Message: The Kingdom of heaven is near"
 - a. "kingdom" = spiritual realm where Christ is King and rules
 - b. "kingdom" advances by the preaching and the believing
 - c. "near" = within easy grasp, by simple faith
 - d. "near" = coming soon
3. After Pentecost... preaching the Cross & Empty Tomb of Christ

B. Apostolic Miracles

1. Special powers conferred

John 14:12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

2. "Mantle of Elijah" passed to Elishah

3. Designated Messengers of Christ
4. Display of Christ's Compassion
5. Gaining a Hearing for the Apostolic Message
 - Tongues at Pentecost gathered a huge crowd for Peter's message
 - Peter and John healed a lame man in the Temple... huge crowd gathered and Peter preached to them

Acts 5:15-16 As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. 16 Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.

Acts 8:6 When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said.

Acts 14:3 So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.

IV. Supplies for the Mission: Traveling Light, Depending on God (vs. 8-10)

vs. 8-10 Freely you have received, freely give. Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep.

A. Free from Greed

vs. 8 Freely you have received, freely give.

1. Healings done free of charge
2. Healing power a gift from Christ... to be used for His glory, not personal gain
3. Gospel itself given free of charge

B. Free from Material Anxieties

vs. 9 Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts

1. Jesus traveled this way... "The Son of Man has no place to lay His head"

2. Free from concern over highway robbery... they had nothing worth stealing

C. Traveling Light

vs. 10 take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep.

Illus. Packing for my mission trips

Missionaries in Africa, packed in their coffins

Modern missions equipment heavy... apostles sent out with almost no concern for material needs

D. Key Principle: Ministry Sustained by Those Who Benefit

vs. ... for the worker is worth his keep.

1. "Cup of cold water"
2. Christ supplied by private people

Luke 8:1-3 After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; 3 Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

3. Paul taught this principle

1 Corinthians 9:7-14 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? 8 Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned? 10 Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. 11 If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? 12 If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar

share in what is offered on the altar? 14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

This is the basic principle that Christ is establishing right from the beginning... those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel...

“The worker is worth his keep”

E. Depending on God

Apostles to put into living practice the faith of the Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 6:31-33 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Having said that, Christ now gets very practical and detailed about their procedure

V. Support for the Mission: Hospitality from the Worthy (vs. 11-15)

vs. 11-15 "Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his 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, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. 15 I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

A. The Problem of Lodging

1. No hotel chains
2. Sometimes private residences would be open for guests (“No room at the inn” for Joseph and Mary)
3. Apostles needed to be under shelter for evening... someone would have to provide for them

B. Hospitality in the Bible

1. Abraham offered a meal and rest to angels who came to tell him within one year Isaac would be born
2. Sodom and Gomorrah: Lot offered hospitality to the two angels sent to destroy their city

Hebrews 13:2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

3. New Testament Commands

1 Peter 4:9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

3 John 5-8 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. 7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. 8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.

C. The Standards and the Search

vs. 11 "Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave.

1. "Worthy" = righteous, a fearer of God... not living in rebellion to God's commands
2. The search... it is not easy to find such a person or home
3. Trust God to link you up with someone
4. NOTE: shows how vital it is that the Apostles have a place of refuge and rest to go to after a day of preaching and ministry... staying in the home of an unworthy person would be a huge drain on their spirits... evening should be a time of refreshment
5. NOTE ALSO: once you find a worthy place, your search is ended... don't waste time looking for better accommodations

Luke 10:7-8 Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you.

Be content with whatever they provide for you... don't complain about the provisions, but be glad your physical life is being sustained

1 Timothy 6:6-8 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

Illus. Queen Mary turned into a troop ship (John Piper)... wartime mentality shows in the quick abandonment of luxuries

D. The Greeting and the Blessing

vs. 12-13 *As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it*

1. Jewish Ritual: A Word of Peace on All Who Dwell There
2. Deeper Matter: Partakers in the Gospel Ministry With You
3. They Share in Your Ministry, They Share in Your Peace
4. Blessings Like Joseph

a. at Potiphar's house

Genesis 39:5 *From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field.*

b. at the jail

Genesis 39:23 *The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.*

c. in service to Pharaoh

God blessed all of Egypt, enabling them to survive the famine as a result of Joseph's ministry

5. Blessings like the widow at Zarephath

1 Kings 17:15-16 *She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah.*

Basic principle... the family that supplies your physical needs will be blessed with your peace... and ultimately with your rewards

vs. 40-42 *He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. 41 Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And if anyone gives even a*

cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."

"Cup of cold water" is not to random needy people in the world. This passage has to do with supporting the apostles as they are sent out on Kingdom business

People who would help support the apostles as they went out to do their ministry would receive the same rewards the apostles did

Early version of the "spiritual gifts" and "body of Christ" analogy... support ministries just as vital as the public ministries are

E. Freedom for the Rejected

vs. 13-14 ... if it is not, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town.

1. Don't torment yourself if they reject you
2. However much it may hurt you to be rejected, it'll be far worse for them
3. Walk away in freedom... you have done what you could
4. "Shake the dust..." a form of protest for their poor treatment

Illus. Christy Wilson... expelled by the communists in Kabul Afghanistan right before Russian invasion

5. BUT: Privilege earned only by faithful attempts to witness

Illus. Persistent Irish missionary outside gate of Celtic King

Paul's "innocence" was earned by faithful witness

Acts 20:26-27 Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

YET... perhaps the Twelve were to keep moving and not waste time on unopen people

F. Judgment for the Rejectors

vs. 15 I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

1. Dreadful word of curse!!

It is no small thing to reject messengers of the King

2 Samuel 10:1-5 *In the course of time, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him as king. 2 David thought, "I will show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me." So David sent a delegation to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father. When David's men came to the land of the Ammonites, 3 the Ammonite nobles said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think David is honoring your father by sending men to you to express sympathy? Hasn't David sent them to you to explore the city and spy it out and overthrow it?" 4 So Hanun seized David's men, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their garments in the middle at the buttocks, and sent them away. 5 When David was told about this, he sent messengers to meet the men, for they were greatly humiliated. The king said, "Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, and then come back."*

Illus. Story of persecution...("By their Blood")

2. Sodom and Gomorrah paradigms of wicked pagan cities
3. "Better on Judgment Day..."... varying levels of judgment compared to levels of ministry

Terrifying for Americans who reject the gospel... they have had numerous opportunities to respond and have spurned the message and the messengers

The messengers shake the dust off and leave...Judgment Day is the Lord's!!

Romans 12:19 *Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*

VI. Application

The Greatest Story Since Christ Ascended: The Peaceful Advance of His Kingdom

A. Missionary Zeal: What Do You Live For?

Are you delighting in the spread of God's glory through the advance of Christ's Kingdom?

B. Missionary Methods: Still the Same... Preaching and Demonstrating the Kingdom

1. Displaying Christ's compassion

2. Preaching Christ's Kingdom [no one gets saved if we don't open our mouths!!]

C. Materialistic Hindrances: Are You Traveling Light? Are You Giving Freely?

D. Missionary Supply: How Have You Refreshed God's Workers?