

The Messengers of the King

Scripture: Matthew 10:1

Code: 2270

With great joy this morning we come to the 10th chapter of Matthew. In our ongoing study of this marvelous, thrilling account of our Lord's life and ministry, we find ourselves beginning a new section, a new dimension, as we enter the 10th chapter. This chapter is marked in the first verse by the calling and the commissioning of the disciples. And then in the second verse they are sent as apostles. It is a change in the pattern of ministry for our Lord, it is a critical part of the training of the twelve. It is a new phase in Matthew's presentation of the work of the King Himself. And I really believe as we go through this 10th chapter we're going to learn so much about discipleship, so much about what our Lord did, what He taught as He trained the men who would carry the baton after He gave it to them. And I believe that as you and I together go through this chapter our lives are going to be dramatically affected, as it touches us in regard to our service rendered to Jesus Christ.

Now remember from our last study together that our blessed Lord saw Israel, and surely the whole world as a vast field to be harvested. That's why in verse 37 He said, "The harvest is plenteous." Everybody is involved. He could see the multitude coming to Him and then as He looked at that multitude it stretched across the world and He could see all men as a field to be harvested. And as we shared with you the harvest is judgment. Jesus saw them in light of the inevitability of judgment, the inevitability of coming doom, the inevitability, the inexorable moving toward hell. They were grain, either to be burned or to be barned, to be gathered in or to be cast out. And they had been betrayed by their shepherds, who were false shepherds, who had mangled them and mauled them and mutilated them and left them for dead. And when Jesus saw people that way He was moved with compassion, it says in verse 36. Literally He felt their pain, He suffered, He hurt down deep as He Himself experienced their agony. And out of that He calls on His disciples, in verse 38 and asks them to pray, and He asks them to pray that God will send forth laborers. Because it is clear that He Himself can't do it, and so we enter a new dimension in the gospel of Matthew as the Lord begins to add to His own ministry these twelve men who can increase the potential for reaching the field that inevitability is to be harvested. So the Lord asks them to pray.

And then as we saw last time as we come to verse 1, He calls the very ones He asked to pray to do the ministry themselves. First in verse 38 it's pray, then in verse 6 of chapter 10 it's go, and then in verse 7 it's preach. The very ones who were the ones praying are the ones who become the ones going and preaching. You see when they had begun to see the world as Christ saw it, when they had looked with the eyes of Jesus, when they had felt with the heart of compassion that He had then they would begin to pray and as they began to pray they would begin also to see that they needed to go.

To warn men about the judgment, to invite them into the kingdom. Prayer is never enough you see, you can't content yourself with just praying, there has to be the willingness to go.

Martin Luther had a friend, a very dear friend who was a fellow monk. They were in the Catholic Church but Luther became convinced that justification was not by the flesh and the law, but that justification was by faith and he was convinced of that because that's what the Bible said. And he determined that he was going to reform the Catholic Church, and he was going to go into the dust and the heat of the battle head—on and be the confronter. His friend said to him, I want to assist you because I believe equally in what you're doing, and they made an agreement, Luther would go into the dust of the battle, he would go down into the world and fight, and his friend would retreat to a monastery, and in that monastery he would pray and seek God on the behalf of Luther's task. He would hold up his hands as it were through prayer, and that's how they began. And the struggle was fierce for Martin Luther, and he reported back to his friend and his friend intensified his prayer on his behalf. And then one night the biographer says his friend had a dream, and he dreamed that he saw the world as a field. And as he looked over this field that stretched over the entire world as he could perceive it in the dream, he saw one solitary man going through that field as big as the globe. And in the dream it was apparent that such was an impossible and heartbreaking task. He looked closer in his dream and he saw the face of that one man and it was the face of his dear friend Martin Luther. He woke up, and he went immediately to find Luther and he said to him this, "I must leave my prayers, for God has shown me that praying is not enough, I must give myself to the work." And so he set aside his pious solitude, went down into the dirt and the heat of the battle to labor beside his beloved friend.

I think that's where we are in Matthew 10. That one solitary person, Jesus Christ has moved through the field, alone, until now. And now He is going to call twelve others as ministers. He's going to commission them as His personal ambassadors and send them out. And chapter 10 is the record of their initial sending to assist in warning men of the inevitable harvest of judgment.

Now the major thrust of the passage begins in verse 5, and from there on to the end of the chapter you have the most marvelous instruction about discipleship, the most marvelous instruction about what happens when you go to minister for Christ, tremendous insight into what it is to preach and represent the Lord Jesus Christ. And it will instruct us, believe me, and change us I'm quite confident.

But before we get to verse 5 we have to really be fair about looking at the first four verses, they're very simple in terms of what they say, and yet hidden behind them is some tremendous richness that I want you to see. Now for this morning I, I just want to mention three features of the first four verses. Three elements of the commissioning of the twelve, first their initiation, and we'll talk a lot about that, then their impact, and we'll talk briefly about that, and then their identity, and we'll talk about that next time. But we see their initiation in verse 1, their impact in verse 1, and then their identity is given in verses 2 through 4 as He names all twelve of them.

Now as we look at this I want you to do some thinking with me if you will. I want to just explain to you some of the things behind His preparation and calling of these men, but I want you to see how they apply in your own life. I want you to make them directly applicable to you because I really believe that we're going to look at the way Jesus prepared and called these twelve, and it is a tremendous pattern for our own understanding of discipleship. I want you to learn how you should disciple someone else, and I want you to learn how God wants to disciple you. And I think you'll see it here. This is our Lord's discipling pattern, this is how He trained the twelve.

First let's look at the initiation, and we want to spend our time mostly on this, the initiation of the apostles, and we only have one statement, "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them authority." Or having called unto Him His twelve disciples He gave them authority. And as I was reading that, and having called unto Him His twelve disciples, I began to think, now how did He do that? How did He initiate this, how did He get them involved? How did He get them to the place where He called them and then sent them? Well first of all look at the phrase itself, the verb is *proskaleo*, and uhm, it's a simple term, *kaleo* means to call, *pros* means toward, it's an intense word it means to call some one toward you so that you're face to face with them. It has the idea of a face to face calling so that one can receive a commission from the other. This is an official commissioning. He called them before His face to give them commands, to give them a commission, to send them, to instruct them, it's the same word used in the 13th chapter of Acts, verse 2, where God was calling those leaders who were in the church at Antioch. An official, if you will, commission-ing. So it's time now for the commissioning of the disciples, and if you'll notice verse 2 He says they are the twelve apostles, they're the disciples in verse 1, they're the apostles in verse 2. They were disciples when they were learning, they were apostles when they were sent. Disciple means learner, *mathetes* means learner, apostle is *apostello* it means to be sent. First they were learners then they were sent. And so this is their transition from being learners in verse 1 to being sent in verse 2, they've been trained and now they're sent. Our Lord is calling them to work with Him, He's calling them to gather some of the lost and mauled and exhausted and prostrate shepherdless sheep before the reapers, who are the angels it tells us in Matthew 13, come to cut them down and take them and throw them in the fire of judgment. It's time to evangelize, it's time to preach the kingdom, it's time as verse 6 says to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and going to preach and tell them the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And so this is a critical point in the training of the twelve and I want us to focus on that for a moment.

There were basically four phases in Christ's training of the twelve, and I'm just going to give you these briefly. Number one, was their salvation or their conversion. And if you look sometime, not now but some other time at John 1:35 to 51, you find there an illustration of the initial calling to faith or calling to conversion or calling to salvation that our Lord used in the lives of these twelve. He called many, but there it pinpoints several of them in John 1, who are well known to us. And that is the initial calling, they were called to believe, they were called to Christ in a conversion sense. But then after

that they went back to their jobs, back to their secular employment, back to their homes. And there came a second phase, and that is recorded for us in Matthew chapter 4 verses 18 to 22, and this was phase two in the training of the twelve. "He saw two brethren, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, cast-ing a net into the sea; for they were fishers. He said unto them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Now, they had already been converted, I believe they had already been saved in the the sense that we believe in conversion or salvation, they had already believed in Christ, they had already affirmed that He was the Messiah as they did in John 1. But now He is calling them to leave the nets, and to leave the secular employment, and to leave their homes, and to follow Him exclusively and totally. This is their calling, if you will, into ministry. They'd been called to salvation, that's phase one, now they're called to attach themselves to Him permanently, that's phase two. And He's going to make them into fishers of men. If, if you'd like to see this in perspective this was their education, they were called out of their employment, they were called away from their livelihood, and they were grown men, they were called away from everything they ever knew about making a living and they were called to follow Jesus around for three years to be trained. This was their schooling. And by the way, their training encompassed a lot of people, for wherever Jesus went there was a large number of disciples. Some stuck around and according to John 6 some left and followed Him no more. But in the midst of this group were these special twelve, and they were being trained along with everybody else, and perhaps even more specifically because the Lord knew that the twelve were special.

Now there is a third phase of their training, of their calling. First to conversion, then to ministry, thirdly, they are to be sent out, and that's were we come in verse 1 of chapter 10. This is not the final phase this is the third phase, and this is a sending out, and Mark tells us they were sent out two by two, they weren't ready to go alone yet, they had to have one another along for support. And may I also add that the Lord stuck with them very closely in phase three. He was like a sort of a mother eagle watching His eaglets as they begin to fly, He was always there and they're always checking back in all the time, and letting Him know how it was going. This was their internship, this was the time for them to go out on their first short term missions assignment, and get a feel for how it was out there, to do an internship. And then after a season of this personal labor they returned to the Lord and they remained again a long time with the Lord being taught and taught more and more. And by the way they learned better now because they had been out there and they knew where the trouble was, and they knew what they needed to know and there was a little more desperation when they came back scarred a little bit from this first shot at being on their own.

Then there was a fourth phase of the training of the twelve, and that was after the resurrection and after the ascension. When Christ went back into heaven He sent the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit came into them and they then scattered and went into all the world discipling the nations, and that was the final sending of the twelve.

So there was a conversion phase, there was a calling to Himself for training phase, there was a first experience phase and then there was a final sending. And as we come into chapter 10 we're in phase three. This is their first experience alone in the field, and He doesn't let them out very far, but just far enough to learn where the trouble is going to come from. Their initiation into ministry, so we call it the initiation. They were hand-picked by Jesus from all the other disciples who followed Him, He knew they were to be the ones, He even hand-picked Judas because that fit the prophetic plan as well. He chose these twelve men to be the ones who would go throughout the world to, to establish the church and verify His Messiahship and affirm His resurrection from the dead as well as His atoning death. He taught them and taught them and taught them and taught them, that they might be the representatives of the dynamic of the Gospel.

Now, in the process of training them, phase two and phase three, Jesus was basically overcoming five manifest problems that they had, and I want to talk about those. These five problems are very common in the process of discipling, I know the Lord is working with me, because in a small sense I am one sent. I'm not an official apostle, nobody is today, but I'm also sent, the, the word is still true of me, I've been sent to preach the Word, so have you. And as I look at how the Lord works in my life I can see parallels as to how He worked in their lives. And one thing really excites me and that is that He didn't have a lot to work with in their case, and He still doesn't in my case, and that's very gratifying. He really had a scruffy group of guys. In fact if, if some phony religionist had written this gospel, if Jesus was some fraud trying to convince everybody of His perfection and convince everybody that He was God He never would have picked twelve such crummy characters to hang around Him. Because by the time you get to the end of the story you wonder whether He could ever pull it off with them, and some people might question His ability on that basis alone. It's a marvelous insight into the honesty of God, as He sees Christ dealing with men who are weak. And we'll see that in a minute.

But as we move to that let me just tell you a little about the training process, and a little about their initiation and a couple of things in the background. First of all they were chosen sovereignly, that is apparent. They play a critical role in the history - of the world and in eternity as well, and God had it all laid out so that they were chosen sovereignly. It says in verse 1, "He called unto him his twelve disciples." In fact in Mark 3:13 is a wonderful statement, it says, "He called unto Himself whom he would." It was His choice, His will, His sovereign purpose. There was no executive search. It wasn't, now how many of you would like to be apostles? Put up your hand. It wasn't that. If you can't ah, succeed.. .if you're a lousy fisherman maybe you'd like to go into the ministry. It wasn't that. They were called by the sovereign will and purpose of God, He knew the men He wanted and they were not consulted and neither was anybody else consulted but God the Father, it was foreordained like Abraham, like Moses, like Jeremiah, it was foreordained like Isaiah, it was foreordained like John the Baptist, foreordained like the Apostle Paul who was called into the ministry. And so did Jesus say in John 15, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go forth and bring forth fruit." Sovereignly God chose these individuals, and that has always been God's

pattern, He chose Israel, He chose the apostles, and He chooses His church, and He chooses those who serve Him within His church. So that we who are representing Him are the called according to His purpose.

Now may I add something to that? They were sovereignly chosen, but secondly they were chosen after a night of prayer. Yes, Christ chose whom He would but marvelously and wonderfully in His submission to the Father it occurred only after He sought the Father's will. This is such a wonderful thing in terms of discipling, as we select those that we'll pour our life into it should be only after great prayer, so that God can show us who it is that we are to give ourselves to. Listen to Luke 6:12, "And it came to pass in those days, that he (being Jesus) went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." He prayed all night. Then this, "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples; and of them" out of the whole group "he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." They were chosen sovereignly, they were chosen after a night of prayer as the submissive Son in His humility sought only the will of the Father. And in John 17 He affirms that indeed they were the ones the Father wanted, given by the Father to the Son, He says, "- I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them to me." John 17:6. He affirmed that they were the gift of God. And so these very special men, very special were chosen by God and affirmed by the Son after all night of prayer.

So they were chosen sovereignly, they were chosen through prayer, and thirdly, and this is what I want to focus on, they were chosen to be trained, to be trained. Training is an essential part, they weren't chosen just to be sent out, there has to be a training time. And for them it was a training of three years, walking with the Lord, they left their nets, they left their boats, they left their crops, they left their businesses, they left their tax collecting stands, they left everything and they wandered around behind Jesus. And some have criticized, one writer says, "They have no occupation, they've given up the pursuits in which they were engaged, their fishing, their tax gathering and their agriculture. They carry on no business, they simply walk around and behind their leader talking to each other or to Him, and when He speaks to the people who begin to gather, they listen just like everybody else. The only thing they do is go with Him from place to place, they are idle and it begins to be a question whether it's not doing harm and giving rise to reproach that twelve grown men are being kept idle for no apparent purpose and neglecting obvious duties in order to do so." End quote. Twelve grown men just roaming around like a bunch of freeloaders. I suppose you could look at it like that. But on the other hand there has to be training. There are a lot of people who are called to Christ and maybe called to the ministry and they're like the guy who jumped on his horse and rode off madly in all directions, they just want to go they don't know where or to do what. But Jesus knew they needed to be trained, to be taught, to become disciples, mathetes, learners, before they could be sent. Moses spent forty years being trained, Paul only three years, and these three. Moses must have been a very tough case. Some of us have spent three year, four or five years in seminary, others have spent years and years not in a formal education but learning the Word of God, maybe being taught by another Christian.

But there has to be a training time before one can be sent. And I can't imagine any greater thrill than to have been trained by the Lord Himself, can you? I mean when I think about that it's just mind boggling, to just walk around. And in - ah, Matthew 11:29 He said to, to the group which included them, "Learn of me." Oh, my, what a training. Listen, learning doesn't happen because you sit in a class and hear a lecture, learning really happens when you watch a holy man or a holy woman walk through life. That's when you learn. You learn from the pattern, and the consistency of life and that's what discipleship is, it isn't ten weeks in a class it's walking with a godly person and feeling their heartbeat, and hearing them speak and seeing them pray and spending time. Now I'll be frank with you, it wasn't any easy job to train this bunch, the best of them, their leader, Peter still didn't have a clue what he was doing even after the resurrection. Well they were really a defective bunch. And it's good to see their defects because it gives us hope that God can use us.

Now let me come to the five things I think Jesus had to work with, to overcome, and you're going to see them in your own life. They were chosen sovereignly, they were chosen also by prayer, and they were chosen to be trained. And in the training the Lord had to deal with five basic inadequacies, and it's the same with us and it's the same with the people we disciple.

Number one, they lacked spiritual understanding. Now that's pretty tough to start with, right? You're going to work twelve guys into evangelizing the whole world, only they have one basic problem, they do not understand spiritual truth. Oh man! That's a tough way to begin but that's exactly what He had, they were blind, they were thick, they were dull, they were stupid. And they didn't understand the parables. You know I, I just can't help but chuckle every time the Lord says to them, do you understand this? You know what they always say? Yes Lord. Always say that. Yes Lord. Did they understand? No, they didn't understand. But they were so dull they did not know they did not understand. And so they always say, yes Lord, we understand. They didn't understand the parables, they didn't understand the precepts He taught, it was so hard to get through all of their prejudices and their preconceived attitudes. Peter said to Him in 15:15, "Explain unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are you also yet without understanding?" I mean don't you understand yet? A certain frustration there, isn't there? He rebuked them, haven't you got it yet?

The first class I took in seminary was a very difficult class, and I'll never forget that class, was going over my head I didn't even understand the vocabulary. And it was... I was taking Hebrew and Greek and everything else at the same time and I had eighteen units in my first semester, and I was under it. And I was trying to listen to all these voices all day long. And in one class one fella asked a question, the professor answered it. The professor was in a big hurry to cover a whole lot of stuff and nobody really knew what he was talking about. But he had to get it — across to us, and we weren't really listening or paying much attention to it. And another guy raised his hand and asked the very same question that he had just spent five minutes answering. Ohhh. He said to him, Sir, if you cannot ask a more intelligent question than that do not ask a question, I have answered that question. Well

everybody just sort of went sshhh, under the seat and nobody asked any questions after that and it was a great lesson about listening. It was a great lesson about taking note of what's going on, and our Lord is saying the same thing, I know now where that teacher got the model. You mean you still don't understand that? You learn to listen and per-ceive.

In Luke 18, just to show you how this goes on throughout the whole time, later on in their time together. "He took them aside," verse 31 of Luke 18, "he says, Behold, we're going to Jerusalem, and all 'things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished." Now that should have been a clue right there. All things written by the prophets concerning the Son of man will be accomplished, wow, we got that, we can figure that out, we know what the prophets taught. "He'll be delivered unto the Gentiles," He said, "mocked, spitefully treated, spit on; scourged, put to death. And the third day he'll rise again." All the stuff that had been presented in the Old Testament, some explicitly and some veiled, all that will be fulfilled, and verse 34, "And they understood none of these things." None of them. You know - if I were the Lord at that point I'd say, are You sure these are the right twelve? I mean We have been together a long.. . . I mean couldn't they have understood some of this? None of this? But all the while they were saying, yes Lord, we understand. Don't be fooled by those who think they understand what you say, be sure they do. They didn't grasp the parables, they didn't grasp the precepts and as I pointed out there they didn't even understand the suffering of Christ. In John 13, Jesus humbled Himself and washed their feet and Peter said, You'll never wash my feet, and Jesus says to him, Peter you don't understand what I'm doing, do you? You don't understand, but you'll understand in the future. In Matthew 16 Peter says, You're never going to go to the cross, and He says, "Oh, get thee behind me, Satan." You still don't understand. This is the way it always went. And after the resurrection and Peter had seen the risen Christ, Peter and all of his buddies went back to fishing, can you imagine? Went right back to where they started. And the Lord comes up there and of course He rerouted all the fish in the sea so none went near their boat, they were never going to be able to fish again. And then He gets them all into the shore and in effect He says, what is going on? Do you love Me, Peter? Then feed My sheep, that's what I called you to do. You see here he is clear in John 21 and he still doesn't understand his role. He didn't understand his role, he didn't understand the purpose of Christ's sufferings, they didn't understand the principles, they didn't understand the parables. Lack of understanding. And that's part of the discipleship process, you have to overcome that. How did Jesus deal with that? Simply by teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching. In fact when He came back after His resurrection, for forty days Acts 1 says He taught them the things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven. Just teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching. He dealt with their lack of understanding by instruction

Now they had a second problem, lack of humility. They were a proud, jealous, envious bunch. I can just see the Lord walking down the road and they're walking behind Him, elbowing each other and pushing and shoving and.. .You say, well what makes you think...those, those are the twelve apostles, you should talk about them like that. Well we'll let the Lord talk about them, Mark 9, verse 33, "And they came to Capernaum; and, being in the house, he asked them this, What was it that you

argued among yourselves about along the way?" What were you guys fighting about behind Me? See all the while He's going along He knows they're fighting back there. What was going on? "And they held their peace;" they just got real sheepish and clammed up, "because they'd been arguing among themselves," get this, "who would be the greatest." Nice guys, huh? Real selfless, humble souls. All the time our dear Lord is walking along they're back fighting about who is going to be the greatest. "And he sat them down," and He brought a little child, and He gave them a lesson on humility. Hoof, what a rebuke.

Look at Matthew 20. Now the argument got really hot about who'd be the greatest, and James and John had enough gall to get their mother into the deal. And so in Matthew 20 verse 20, Then came to Him Mrs. Zebedee, and she's got her sons, and of course they worshiped Him first because you always do that when you want something. "And he said unto her, What do you want? She said unto him, Grant that these, my two sons, may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." Well I'll tell you folks that is really brash. I mean they wanted it so bad that they didn't have the courage to ask and they got their mother to do it, and they stood there stand-ing beside their mother while she asked that ridiculously selfish thing. "Jesus answered and said, Do you know not what you ask." But that was typical, they didn't know what they heard, so why would they know what they asked. It says, "Are you able to drink the cup that I shall drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I'm baptized with? And they said unto him, (what?) We are able." Of course, of course we can handle anything. Of course we can. "And he said unto them, all right then you'll drink the cup that I'll drink, and you'll be baptized with the baptism that I'm baptized with, but you'll never sit on my right hand, or my left," and what He was talking about was martyrdom, persecution, in the case of James martyrdom, in the case of John persecution and exile. You're going to go through the pain and the suffering and the anguish you're just not going to get the right and left seats, "because they're not mine to give." And then verse 24, "When the other ten heard about this, they were furious." Why? Because they wouldn't stand for such pride? No. Because they went in front of the other ten. They were mad that James and John were going to get those places, and not them. Their indignation wasn't righteous it was selfish. And He says to them, boy you guys are all fouled up about what it means to be a leader. Verse 27, "Whoever would be chief among you, let him be your (what? your) servant." You got it all wrong, and so He had to teach them. And then He used Him-self as an example, "Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many."

Now, He had to deal with their lack of humility, how did He deal with it? I believe He dealt with it by giving them a demonstration of His own humility. He likened Himself to a little child, in Mark 9. He likened Himself here to a servant. In John 13 He washed their feet and then He said you should do in your love to one another as I have done to you. Right? A new commandment, love one another as I have loved you. In other words He overcame their lack of understand-ing by instruction, He overcame their lack of humility by example, He used an example of His own life as a teaching tool.

They had a third problem. They had a lack of faith. Which is fairly severe if you're going to be in the ministry, if you don't believe God. They had a lack of faith. Over and over and over again, in fact probably the most common phrase He ever said to them was this, "O ye of (what?) little faith." He would do so many things and still they didn't see. In fact in Mark 4:40 He says to them, "How is it that you have no faith?" How can it be that after all of this you still don't believe? How can it be? How can it be? At the end of Mark's gospel in chapter 16 and the 14th verse it says, He rebuked them, because of "their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not those who had seen him after he had risen." They didn't even believe reports of the resurrection. Now what a bunch to work with, and how do you ever transform them into those who can change the world? Boy. How did He deal with their unbelief? By miracles, by - mighty deeds, showing them His power over and over. In fact the miracles... I'll be very honest with you, I believe in my heart that He did the miracles primarily for the disciples, not for the crowds, they were secondary. The disciples needed to be sure and absolute and confi-dent, they needed to know the resurrection really happened, He appeared to them and He appeared to them again and He let them touch Him and feel Him and see Him, they had to know, and "He showed him-self" Acts 1, "by many infallible proofs." So He overcame their lack of understanding with teaching, He overcame their lack of humility with example, He overcame their lack of faith by miracles and mighty deeds. All of this was part of the teaching process.

They had a fourth problem, lack of commitment, lack of commitment. They would say, we will never forsake You. Why everyone may forsake You, says Peter, I'll never forsake You. I would never deny You. Oh they really talked it up, but when it came down to the crisis of that terrible hour they were gone. And Peter was denying and Judas was betraying and the other ten just split, got out of there. They couldn't handle it, they were gone. They talked a good game. In Luke 5:11 you know what it says? When He called His disciples, "they forsook all." Isn't that interesting? When He called them they forsook all. In Mark 14:50 it says, "they all forsook." They took off. They deserted Christ when they saw the swords and the staves and the lanterns and the Romans. When they started to smell death they got out. Oh yeah, they thought they'd be okay but they weren't. How did Jesus deal with that? How did He deal with that? Luke 22:31 I just love this. Peter is the issue in his denial, "The Lord says, Simon, Simon," He calls him by his old name because he was acting like his old self, "Simon, Simon," listen to this, "behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you like wheat." He wants to test you Peter, and you're going to flee and you're going to deny Me, but here's the remedy, "I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not." You can stop right there. How did Jesus deal with their lack of commitment? He dealt with it through prayer. I've tried to disciple men in my life, men with a lack of understanding and tried to work with that by teaching them. Men with a lack of humility, and tried to work with that by trying to demonstrate the right spirit. Men with a lack of faith, and tried to overcome that by showing them dramatically the power of God. And men with a lack of commitment, and tried to deal with that through praying for them.

Fifth problem they had was a lack of power. They were impotent, they had a lack of power. They were weak and helpless. For an illustration of that and there are many but for one would be Matthew 17, "And they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man kneeling down, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son; he's epileptic, and greatly vexed; and he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not cure him." Now they've been out trying to do their thing and they're, they're doing all the motions but nothing happens. "Jesus said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you?" Who do you think He was talking to? Well some people think He was talking to the whole crowd, some people think He was talking to the twelve. Oh, you guys, how long do I have to put up with this? "Bring him here. Jesus rebuked the demon, and departed out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. And then came the disciples to Jesus privately, and said, Why couldn't we do that? And Jesus said, Because of your (what?) unbelief; If you had faith of a mustard seed, you could move a mountain. And you ought to know that things like this only happen through prayer and fasting." Great faith, intense prayer. They were impotent, they didn't have power. How did He deal with that? I believe He dealt with that in one marvelous way. In John 20, "He says he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." And in Acts 1:8 it says, "And when the Holy Spirit is come, you shall receive power."

Listen, it's very simple. The disciples were chosen sovereignly by God to be the associates of Christ to found the church. They were chosen through prayer, they were chosen to be trained, and in their training they had to overcome a lack of spiritual understanding through instruction, a lack of humility through example, a lack of faith through wondrous miracles, a lack of commitment through prayer, and a lack of power through the agency of the Spirit of God in their lives. And the lesson for us is the same, when you disciple somebody you're going to have the same problems with the same remedies. What a bunch. But as one writer says, "In them He saw hidden weakness and incipient strength. There was an abundance of chaff with the scanty grains of wheat which would need much winnowing but He was equal to the task. The germs of promise were there and in time would yield the perfect fruit. He believed in the men He had chosen and what was more, He had absolute confidence in His own power to make them what He wanted them to be." There's hope for us.

Boy I identify with those twelve, don't you? I'm so glad God could use me, I'm so glad that I can find others and invest my life in them. And they accomplished the task, yeah, He, He transformed them, He really did. And you know when they looked at them in Acts 4:13, all of the hotshots in Jerusalem looked at them and said, "These are ignorant and unlearned men." How is it that they have accomplished this? They're the.. they have literally filled Jerusalem with their doctrine, and they're uneducated in fact they're ignoramuses and they're unskilled. But it says this, "They took note of them," I love this, "that they had been with Jesus." Isn't that good? How did they know that? How did they know that they'd been with Jesus? I'll tell you how they knew. They did the same things Jesus did. They said the same thing Jesus said, they loved the same way Jesus loved. Finally, the job was done, and they went out as living mirrors to reflect Christ. And that's why they finally wound up calling

them Christians, which means what? Little Christs. And it's all bound up in Luke 6:40 listen to it, "A pupil is not above his teacher, but every one after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher." Isn't that great? Jesus trained them in three years, and when they went out they were like their teacher. And they graduated. I think graduation day is in John 15, when Jesus said, "I will no longer call you servants," that's down here, "I will now call you (what?) friends." That was graduation day. They had graduated. That night in the upper room before His death He gave them their certificates. They had graduated. Think of it, think of it, what they learned in being with Christ, literally transformed their life and as a result transformed the world.

Can you imagine walking everyday with Jesus? Can you imagine hearing His matchless wisdom, everything He ever said was perfectly wise and absolutely true. Can you imagine being with some one who never lost His temper, never got angry, but was only righteously indignant over things that took glory from God? Can you imagine being with some one who cared absolutely nothing for Himself but always gave Himself to everybody else? Being with some one who was totally consumed with literally wearing Himself out with fatigue to do the will and the work of another person? Can you imagine being with some one who could love anybody and everybody? Some one who could raise the dead and heal the sick and give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf?

Well it had an affect on them, and you don't get that kind of training by sitting in a classroom, you get it by walking around with a godly man. That's the process of discipleship, they were with Him, they were with Him it says. The twelve were ordained according to Mark 3:14, "that they should be with him." That's the process, they were with Him, and they became like Him. That's how discipleship works. And it worked in their case and they changed the world.

May I add a final point? They were chosen sovereignly, they were chosen after a night of prayer, they were chosen to be trained, and finally they were chosen to be sent. And that's why you have in verse 1 of chapter 10, disciples being trained and in verse 2 apostles, the names of the twelve apostles. They were chosen to be sent. Apostello, stello means to dispatch, apo, away from, to dispatch away from. In classical Greek the word is used almost entirely of a naval expedition sent to a foreign city or a foreign country. In other words somebody sent the foreign service. All right you have been trained now you're going to be sent. They became sent ones that's what apostolos means, a sent one.

Beloved it's not enough to be saved, it's not enough to be called to serve Christ, it's not enough to be trained, it's only enough when all of that's done to go. And that is exactly why in Matthew it tells us that we are to go into all the world and make disciples. We have been made disciples in order to make disciples. The Lord made twelve marvelous individuals with one exception, filled in the ranks later and in Matthew 19:28 He says there's twelve thrones for those, they're going to be elevated throughout all eternity. The process was completed in their lives, and we're to be in that same process. Are you being discipled, are you learning with a view to going? Are you discipling, are you training some one with a view to sending them to reach others, whether here or around the world?

You see, training and sending are two sides of the same coin. Discipleship and apostleship go together. Phase one, follow Me, phase two, leave, and carry the message.

So as we come to chapter 10 they begin with their first short term mission assignment, learning by doing. They're going to go out and they're going to run into all kinds of problems, they're going to come back and when they come back they're going to spend many more months with Jesus and He's going to teach them off of that experience. And finally phase four, the final phase will come when the Spirit enters them and fills them and they go to baptize and to teach all nations. What a marvelous pattern. That's their initiation.

The second thing, and I'm just going to mention it is their impact. When they went they had an impact. It says in verse 1, "They had authority (or exousia which means the right) to have power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." Why? Because that would demonstrate they were from Christ, because they were doing the very same things He did. And you can follow them all the way through the Book of Acts, and what are they doing? Casting out demons and healing the sick. They had an impact. They did the same thing Jesus did, Jesus cast out demons, Jesus healed the sick. They manifested the same kingdom kind of, of power that Jesus manifested. And so they were inseparably linked with Christ and they had a tremendous impact, they turned Jerusalem upside down, and then they turned the world upside down, and every-where they went there was a riot. People were converted because of their impact.

Then He talks about their identity in verse 2. Who were they? That's for next time. And next Lord's Day I'm going to tell you a little bit about every one of them, so you get to know them personally. Let's pray.

Father thank You this morning for our time, thank You for showing us how Jesus disciplined men, things He was able to overcome in His power and how He did it. May we learn from this. May we see our-selves in the process of being learners, mathetes, yet to become apostles, apostolos. Being trained to go, to be sent. Oh not in some official way, not in some manner as those special twelve for whom are reserved the twelve thrones, but nonetheless to be sent. Train us Lord and help us to train others, send us and help us to send others that the work may go on which You began. May we disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Lord Jesus and teach-ing them to observe all things whatsoever He commanded them. Bringing them to maturity and then sending them.

We pray Father for those in our midst who perhaps have been converted, they've been called to Christ, they've come to the second point of being called to serve. Perhaps they're resisting the train-ing or perhaps having been trained they're resisting the final send-ing. Lord speak to each of us wherever we are, may be some Lord who have not yet even come the first time to follow Jesus in faith. Wherever we are Lord draw us to Yourself, do Your perfect work in each heart. In Christ's name. Amen.

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