Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

A Profile of a Christian Messenger, Part 1
Scripture: Luke 9:1-2
Code: 42-113

Let me invite you to turn in the Bible to Luke chapter 9...Luke chapter 9. One of the really wonderful things about Bible exposition, going from passage to passage to passage is you're not really in control. The Lord is in control. The way He has chosen to write the Bible is the way it unfolds and the uniqueness of each passage, of course, then becomes the treasure that you possess each week. The variety is amazing. The richness, of course, is profound and exhilarating. You go from profound insights into theology into somewhat simple narratives of historical events. And in this case, just a very, very simple narrative of Jesus sending out the Twelve. At first reading, there's really little to confuse the reader about the passage. But the more you read it, the more you begin to wonder about this whole process of Jesus sending out the Twelve. It is a fascinating, fascinating subject. How Jesus dealt with those twelve men, how He prepared them, and sent them, and how they eventually turned the world upside down and, of course, are still having an impact in the world because of the influence that they had initially. In particular, God used them to write the New Testament. And so, the amazing way in which the Lord shaped and framed the Twelve is extremely instructive for us. And we're going to spend a little bit of time taking a look at that this morning.

It's always enriching for me, no matter what the text is, no matter what the theme of it, or the emphasis of it, no matter what's on display, but I am honestly particularly drawn to the Lord's way of working with people. As somebody who is responsible to do ministry through people, is what leadership is, getting things done through people, somebody who is responsible for that, who is surrounded by gifted and talented people, who has the responsibility to make sure that we get everything the Lord wants done through all of these people, it challenges me to see how the Lord multiplied Himself through people. He didn't have to do it that way. Obviously the God of creation who made the entire universe in six days could have done ministry any way He wanted. He could have done it all by Himself and been successful at it, but He chose to do his ministry through people. And certainly that is true in the case of Jesus as He dispersed, as it were, both the message and His power through the Twelve. We gain some wonderful insights into this process which are directly transferable to us as leaders and those of us who do ministry together. We're going to see that as this passage unfolds.

This is one of those transition passages in the life of Jesus. We have to get a little bit historical here so that you'll understand where we are in the flow. This is a transition passage and as such it bears some weight of importance as to the place that it fits in the account of Jesus in the history of His life and ministry. And we're going to see that. Let's begin by just reading the first six verses of chapter 9

and then we'll go from there to begin, at least, to look at them.

"And He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. And He sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to perform healing. And He said to them, 'Take nothing for your journey, neither a staff, or bag, nor bread, nor money, and do not even have two tunics apiece. And whatever house you enter, stay there and take your leave from there. And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.' And departing, they began going about among the villages preaching the gospel and healing everywhere." Jesus gave simple directives and they dutifully, obediently followed.

And so, we hear or see the first occasion in which Jesus actually sends out the Twelve to preach and do miracles. This is a significant transition. In fact, it is a singularly crucial moment in the ministry of Jesus. Let me give you a little bit of background.

Jesus lived for 30 years in the city of Nazareth in virtual obscurity. He had no ministry, at least that's recorded in Scripture. He didn't embark upon His ministry until He was 30 years of age. He lived those 30 years living a perfectly sinless life in order that that life might be accredited to the account of those who believe. He fulfilled all righteousness. At the 30 year point of His life, He embarked upon His ministry, being baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. John identified Him as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He was announced as the Messiah and He began that three-year ministry that ended at the cross, the resurrection and with His ascension into heaven.

When we come to this point in Luke 9, it's half way through the three years. We're 18 months now into the ministry of Jesus, only 18 months or so are left until the cross. Up to this point, and this is, I think, a very important thing to remember, up to this point Jesus did His ministry all by Himself. He did it all alone. All the miracles were miracles that He did. All the messages were messages that He preached. All the questions were questions that He answered. All of the conflict with leadership was conflict between Him directly and whoever it was that approached or attacked Him. Everything was done by Him. It was in every sense a one-man operation, or a one God/Man operation...all the preaching, all the teaching, all the healing, all the casting out of demons, all the resurrecting people from the dead, all of the miracles over nature, silencing, as it were, wind and waves, dealing with fish, dealing with pigs as He had done, showing His power over nature. All of those things were done by Him alone. And therefore His ministry was isolated to wherever He was. If you wanted to hear the gospel, there was only one preacher. If you wanted to be healed, there was only one healer. If you wanted to ask questions about the truth of the Kingdom of God, there was one answer man and that was all. And as a result of that, as His ministry developed in Galilee over 18 months, the crowds got bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger, which, in a way, moved the people further and further away from Him and began to be a hindrance to Him, as we saw in the last account. Jesus wanting to go to the house of Jairus found it extremely difficult to get there, just trying to work His way through the

massive multitudes that continued to accumulate as the word spread that He might be the Messiah, that He was preaching the Kingdom of God is here, and the power that He demonstrated over disease, death, and demons and nature grew this immense and increasingly large crowd. So He was feeling the pressure.

Also, the ministry in Galilee was nearly over. If you go over to verse 51 in chapter 9, "It came about when the days were approaching for His going up, He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem." He was going up to Jerusalem. We all know that Jerusalem was significantly up from the Jordan valley, the area of Galilee being lower geographically. When it came time to go, He set His face toward Jerusalem. So it's nearly time for Him to leave Galilee, to proceed south to complete His ministry and die, rise again and ascend into heaven in the area around Jerusalem. Time is then of the essence. The ministry in Galilee only has a few months and Jesus will be gone. It is then the pressure of time. It is the pressure of increasing crowds, following Him everywhere, getting so large as to hinder and impede His work, making it really very difficult, if not impossible, for Him to reach as many people as need to be reached. He has to then defuse Himself. He has to then spread Himself. He has to multiply Himself to take the gospel to all the towns and villages of Galilee, and maybe into some places for the first time, He can't do it alone so He needs to multiply Himself by twelve...which is what He determines to do.

It is time now to commission the Twelve and send them out for a flurry of gospel preaching in the region of Galilee. This will also provide a wonderful sort of interning opportunity for these men who up to now have been mathetes, disciples which means learners and need to transition to being preachers and proclaimers and messengers. They've had 18 months of just following Jesus without any real formal training, isolated to them. That began maybe a few months before this began to take some shape, but it's now time for a specific internship to prepare them for later full-fledged ministry on their own. And so, in this first sending chronicled here for us, Jesus turns the learners into preachers. This is their first real moment of ministry opportunity. It's as if they have graduated, in one sense, and are now embarking upon their internship.

Now just to give you a little bit of the historical sequence, I think it's important. Luke ends chapter 8 with the amazing story of the raising of the daughter of Jairus who had died. And you remember that in the middle of that account of raising Jairus' daughter from the dead, Jesus also healed a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years. It's the double miracle that's recorded by Matthew and Mark and Luke.

If you go to Mark, you get the sequence. Luke has the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter and the healing of the woman with the issue of blood in chapter 8, and then he jumps right to chapter 9 verse 1, "And He called the Twelve together." But they didn't really follow in sequence. There's something in the middle and Mark tells us what happened, and I think it's interesting. T he chronology of Mark says that after Jesus had come to Capernaum, having been over, you remember, in Gadara where

He delivered that maniac from several thousand demons, He came back, He lands on the shore by the town of Capernaum. He may well have visited the home of Peter when He was there, just in that brief period of time. He heals the woman with the issue of blood. He raises Jairus' daughter from the dead and Luke ends the chapter.

Mark then picks up the chronology. Mark says that Jesus then returned to Nazareth, that knowing the Galilean ministry was coming to an end very soon, Jesus wanted to make one more visit to His hometown. He wanted to go back to that place where He was a prophet without honor. He wanted to go back to that same place, His own hometown to the same synagogue where He had first gone to preach. And in response, you remember, the people tried to throw Him off a cliff and kill Him because they so hated His message. He wanted to go back to Nazareth. And by the way, that was the synagogue where He was raised, the synagogue attended by His family, the synagogue He attended by His relatives, by His friends, by His neighbors His whole life. He went back then one more time to Nazareth. And Mark chapter 6, the opening six verses, tell us He had the exact same reception this time that He had the first time. Mark 6:6 says, "They took offense at Him." Nobody ever denied His miracles. They didn't deny His power over demons, disease, death, His power over nature. Nobody ever denied that supernatural power. But what they hated about Him, in spite of the proof that He was Messiah, was His message about their spiritual condition. They hated the diagnosis that they were spiritually bankrupt, that they were spiritual prisoners, that they were spiritually under guilt and shame, oppressed by the weight and the burden of that guilt. They hated the message that they were blind to spiritual reality. They hated His diagnosis that they were sinful and separated from God and it was for that diagnosis, in spite of His miracles, in spite of the proof that He was Messiah, that they were offended at Him. And so He went back one more time, Mark says, and they treated Him exactly the same way.

So, Mark says in chapter 6 again, "He left Nazareth after being rejected and was going around the villages teaching by Himself." Rejected at Nazareth, He then begins to migrate like He has through all this time in the Galilean ministry of months and months, all by Himself going from village to village, giving the already hardened hearts of the people of Galilee one more opportunity to hear His message, to see His miracles and to believe. Then, Mark says, He summoned up the Twelve. He realized as He is going alone and time is running out, that He's got to have some help if He's going to take one more swipe, as it were, at exposing all of Galilee, hard-hearted Galilee, to the gospel. And so Mark says He summoned the Twelve, and that's where we pick up Luke's narrative, verse 1, "He called the Twelve together."

To use the common vernacular, up to this point they didn't hang out together. Peter and John and James and Andrew kind of knew each other well. They had grown up together, been in the same business, James and John were brothers, Peter and Andrew were brothers. The four of them were probably together. They probably stayed pretty tight. But the rest of the disciples sort of went their own way. They had their own associations, their own groups. They were just sort of mingled into this

large group of hundreds and thousands of followers and disciples. It's time now to pull them together and to commission them and to send them out on their internship.

Time is short. Towns and villages are many. Somebody's got to go. Jesus can't cover all the ground. He's got to come up with a new strategy. It's the strategy of multiplication. It's an age-old strategy, give them the same message, give them the same credentials, and you multiply yourself twelve times. Now Mark 6:7 says they actually went two-by-two, so there were six teams of two. But there's no reason to assume that they weren't sometimes preaching at the same time in two different locations. Jesus had already told them who they were. Back in chapter 6 He had separated them from the crowd. They weren't pals all of them, they weren't guys that sort of knew each other. They were just scattered among the disciples and Jesus called all of His disciples, that is however many hundreds there were who were loyal followers of His, and out of them He chose twelve...Simon, He also named Peter, Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon called the Zealot, Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor. He pulls them all out there in chapter 6 and He says, "You're My apostles." Out of all this group, I want you to be My official messengers. Apostle means a sent one, a messenger.

So they had already been selected, let's say it that way. They had already been selected. Now they were to be called together for the first time to be sent. They had been told, some of them anyway, that the Lord was going to make them fishers of men. They were going to be the evangels for the gospel, to take the message of God's Kingdom, the life-changing transforming message of God's Kingdom, to people. So they knew what it meant to be an apostle, they just had not yet been sent out.

In fact, if I can sum it up for you, there were actually four phases to their calling. The first phase was when they were called to faith in Christ. That is, when they came and believed in Jesus. For example, in the case of James and John and Peter and Andrew, that is described in John's gospel chapter 1 verses 35 to 51, there's a whole story of how Peter and Andrew and James and John came to Christ and believed. That would be true in the other eight as well. You remember the story of Matthew, how Jesus came along and picked up Matthew from his tax table. Each of them had a step one when they came to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, as the one sent from God to bring about the Kingdom. This is when they were called to believe and they followed, but they followed temporarily. After that initial belief, you remember, the four in John 1 went back to their fishing business, back to their hometown of Capernaum, back to their...back to their nets. It was a call to faith. The second time was a call to permanent discipleship. This is phase two in their training. This we read in Matthew 4:18 to 22, we find Jesus saying to them, "Okay, drop everything, guys, that part of your life is over, drop your career, leave your...your families, whatever, you're now My permanent disciples. You will now no longer fish for fish, you will fish for men," Luke 5:10 and 11. So they're called to believe and then they're called to permanent discipleship.

The third call is their call to apostleship and that's what happened back in chapter 6, I just read you. It's also recorded in Matthew chapter 10 verses 1 to 4. He identifies them by name, says you're no longer permanent followers, you're now training to be preachers, training to be messengers. You go from being a student to being a preacher, from being a learner to being a messenger.

And now stage four is their internship. They're sent out on their first short-term mission assignment. This is their first opportunity to go out, represent the Messiah, represent the Lord Jesus Christ, preach the gospel of the Kingdom, work miracles verifying that the message was truly from God, and then come back and report their experience to Jesus, which is exactly what they did. Drop down to verse 10. "When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done and taking them with Him..." We can stop at that point.

So what happened was He sent them out for their internship. They went out two-by-two to preach the gospel, to do these miracles, to attest to the validity of their message.Short-term, they came back, they reported, Jesus gathered them around and used their experience to further instruct them, to further teach them, as He worked through their intern experiences to continue the equipping process. Finally they would do some of these short-term missions but finally, the final stage, would be their final sending at the time of the Great Commission before Jesus ascended into heaven, when He sent them into all the world to preach the gospel. And they were obedient and the book of Acts says they turned the world upside down, and you and I are all fruit of their ministry. Not only were they the first wave of preachers who preached the gospel and therefore they generated the second wave and every wave after that, but the apostles and their close associates were responsible for writing the New Testament to which, of course, all who believe are in debt.

Now where are we in chapter 9? We're at stage four. They've already come to believe. They've already been identified as permanent followers of Jesus. They've already been called to apostleship to be messengers, here's their first foray into being a messenger. This is their internship, their send-out. You know, this model is such a healthy way to deal with people. Whenever you look for people who are going to extend your ministry and expand your ministry and multiply your ministry, you start with those who come to faith, you start with those who have been faithful followers. You start with those who have been called to be preachers. And then you put them through a process of training and then you send them out on short-term internships and you do instruction as they come back off those experiences. And finally, you can loose them and let them go. That's pretty much a model that can follow in any realm of human endeavor.

So here we find them at the point of their initial internship, their first field experience. This will be their first try at sermons and signs. Now remember this, and this is what I think is so wonderful, I'm in the process of doing the final editing on the new book on the apostles called Twelve Ordinary Men which will come out in October, so if I'm a little loaded on the subject, you'll pardon me. They were the

commonest of men. And that's what's so important and remarkable to me. They were just so common. They're just like us. And when the Lord goes out to find somebody to multiply His ministry through, it is absolutely true, Paul was right when he said, "There are not many noble, and there are not many mighty, they are the common and the base." They're just plain, ordinary people. In fact, in some ways you might think them sub-ordinary and yet chosen by their Creator who knows them perfectly. And they are exactly the kind of people He chooses to use. It is already half way through His ministry before they're even sent out, before their formal training even begins. They've just been listening. They've just been hearing the explanation of parables. They've been getting their theological training and their biblical training. They've been listening to Him exposit Old Testament passages and give the meaning. They've been listening to Him compare the truth of God with the apostasy of Judaism. They've been sorting out their theology, but now it's time for formal training to be messengers. And there's only 18 months left before Jesus will be gone and they will be on their own. That's a short amount of time. That's half a seminary education.

And if you wonder whether that alone was adequate, just remind yourself that when Jesus was taken prisoner to be crucified, all of them forsook Him and fled. And you might have concluded by that that the whole 18 months was a waste of time. But, you can only conclude that apart from the Holy Spirit because when the Holy Spirit came, everything changed. In fact, when they saw the resurrected Christ, everything changed and they were regathered and empowered by the Holy Spirit. There's only 18 months to go, it's time for them to really begin their training. The first half of Jesus whole ministry, ministered all by Himself. He did all the miracles. Cast out all the demons, healed all the sick, raised all the dead, was the only preacher of the Kingdom in Israel. John's ministry had faded away. John becomes a prisoner, out of the picture, gets his head chopped off, there's only one preacher in the whole of Israel. It's critical now to multiply.

So these Twelve, mundane backgrounds, worked with their hands, not with their brains, earthly vocations. And yet they're given the most important task in the history of the world. There is no second string. There are no backup players. There is no Plan B. And that would be a problem for men, that would be a problem on a human level. It's not a problem on a divine level because God always accomplishes what He sets out to do. Twelve ordinary men with the most extraordinary responsibility.

By the way, graciously, mercifully to the Galilee area the Lord later...look at chapter 10 verse 1...sent 70 others of His disciples two by two ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself is going to come because, He said, the harvest is plentiful, the laborers are few. In one final flurry of expansion of ministry, the Lord picked 70 and sent them two by two so you had 35 teams going out to preach the gospel one last time. They are not called apostles, they weren't apostles. They are not the foundation stones of the church. They...they...they had a temporary ministry. It was powerful, verse 9, Jesus told the 70, "Heal those that are sick." Down in verse 17, when they came back after this wonderful sort of ministry that they had been given for this temporary time, after they came back,

they said with joy, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." So they went out and they preached the same gospel of the Kingdom, the gospel of salvation, forgiveness of sin, the gospel of repentance. They preached it and they showed the same power over Satan and the same power over disease that Jesus had shown and that the Twelve had. But they aren't called apostles, it was just a very special time, a one-time operation of grace to hard-hearted people. One more opportunity to see the miracles. One more opportunity to hear the message. God's kingdom is available if you repent and if you cry out for mercy and forgiveness and trust in the messenger that God has sent, Jesus Christ. Even though the cross and resurrection hadn't happened so they couldn't believe in that, they needed to come to a true understanding of their wretched sinfulness that they were outside the Kingdom, but they could enter because the Kingdom was open to those who repent and those who called to God for forgiveness. Jesus sent that message. It wasn't even the offense of the cross to stumble over, but they so much hated the diagnosis that they were sinful and needed to repent that they rejected it.

But the 70 are not the Twelve, the Twelve are absolutely unique. Later Matthias replaced Judas who was a traitor. And later on another man is called an apostle, he doesn't belong in the Twelve, another one, his name is Paul. He was a unique messenger coming after the Twelve. These twelve were unique. They took positions of authority in the early church. They and their associates wrote the New Testament. Their teaching became the rule in the church. In Acts when the church was born in Acts 2:42 it says they met together and they studied the Apostles' doctrine. They were used by God to reveal the doctrine. God revealed sound doctrine through them and eventually that doctrine was written down.

One other important note, and I think this is fascinating. When the Lord chose them, He chose twelve of them. And I'm inquisitive and so I asked the question...why? Why not 24, 18, six, seven, three? Why twelve?

And the answer is, in the choosing of twelve there was a link to the twelve tribes of Israel. Israel is constituted of twelve tribes...twelve tribes. And when the Lord picked twelve apostles, this is amazing, this was essentially a judgment on Israel, solidifying hardening unbelief and rejection of their Messiah. These twelve, in a sense, constituted the new spiritual heads of the tribes of Israel. They were symbolic heads of the tribes of Israel. That's why you don't find one rabbi among the twelve, you don't find one scribe. You don't fine a priest. You don't find a Pharisee. You don't find a Sadducee, you just find these hoi-polloi, these ordinary guys. It is a judgment on the apostasy of Israel that the Lord couldn't find one person in the religious establishment to pick as an apostle. The choosing of the twelve ordinary men then becomes a judgment on apostate Israel, it is an open renunciation of all the religious men and the structures in which they existed, which was utterly corrupt. The religious leaders of Judaism constituted the core of those who were apostate. They were the core of those who hated Jesus, who hated the gospel, who hated to be indicted for their sin and who sought and achieved His death.

In the book this is what it says, the book on Twelve Ordinary Men, this is a little excerpt. "Nearly a year and a half before this in one of the first official acts of Jesus' ministry, He had challenged Israel's religious establishment on their own turf in Jerusalem during the Passover, the one time of the year when the city was most populated with pilgrims coming to offer sacrifices." And by the way, the one time of the year when the religious elite were most elevated...Passover, Jesus comes, He went to the temple mount, made a whip of small cords, He walks right in the temple mount, which is literally the territory, the domain of the religious establishment. He walks into the temple mount, poured out the money, overturned the tables, drove out the thieves, chased their animals away. That's all recorded in the second chapter of John, that's how He began His ministry before He went up to Galilee. And in doing that, He literally launched His ministry by striking a devastating blow and institutionalized Judaism. He unmasked the religious nobility as thieves and hypocrites. He condemned their spiritual bankruptcy.

What He was saying was the greatest single event in the religious calendar of Israel is a sham, it is an hypocrisy, it is a deception. It is full of thieves and robbers, corrupt at the top. He condemned their spiritual bankruptcy. He exposed their apostasy. He publicly rebuked their sin. He indicted them for gross corruption. He denounced their deception. That's how He began His ministry. An all out assault on the Jewish establishment. And here we are 18 months later at the height of His Galilean ministry, far removed from Jerusalem, but the resentment has mounted and mounted and mounted among the religious establishment and among the people as well who follow their lead. The religious leaders are now blood-thirsty, they want Him dead. The rejection of Him is complete. They hate the gospel He preaches, they despise the doctrines of repentance and grace and forgiveness that He espouses. They spurn everything He says. They look on Him with utter disdain. They repudiate the faith He epitomized. And even though miracle after miracle after miracle by the hundreds, if not the thousands, prove His messianic credentials, He heals every conceivable disease, He casts out demons at will, He delivers people from death to life, they still will not acknowledge that He is God in human flesh. They hate Him, they hate His message because He's a threat to their sin which they love. He's a threat to their power. They want Him dead.

So Jesus picks twelve new leaders for Israel. Forget the religious establishment. And with the number twelve, symbolically pronounces a judgment on the apostasy of that nation. These twelve apostles literally became the twelve true spiritual leaders of Israel. They were the true heads of the twelve tribes. They were the Israel of God. They are the true penitent believing Israelites. They also, by the way, became the foundation stones of the church, didn't they? Ephesians 2:20, the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles, Jesus Christ the chief cornerstone. So why twelve, why not eight, why not 24? Well that's because there were twelve tribes in Israel. Israel was apostate. The Judaism of Jesus time represented a terrible corruption of Old Testament truth. Israel had abandoned divine grace in favor of works religion. Their religion was legalistic, shot through with hypocrisy, self-righteous works, manmade regulations, meaningless ceremonies. It was heretical. It

was based on physical descent from Abraham rather than the faith like the faith of Abraham.

And so what Jesus is doing in picking twelve leaders, twelve preachers, is saying essentially, "There is a New Covenant in force and here are the twelve leaders of that New Covenant. They represent new leaders for the true Israel, the Israel of God, those who will believe the gospel, follow the faith of Abraham. In case you question the connection, listen to Jesus own words. In Luke 22:29 to 30 this is what He said to the apostles, and I quote, "I bestow upon you a kingdom just as My Father bestowed one upon Me that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Even in the glorious Kingdom, these twelve will render judgment over the twelve tribes of Israel. Revelation 21:14, by the way, says also their names are eternally emblazoned upon the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem, the capital of eternity. So, sending them out is an effort at evangelism but it's also a statement of judgment.

Well, all that's the introduction, just a few comments and we'll let you go. What is the profile then of these messengers? Two things I want to mention to you. There are a lot more but I'll save them for next time. But for today, two. In their commission we see the profile of a messenger of Jesus Christ. One, he proclaims salvation. One, he proclaimed salvation. Let's go to verses 1 and 2, "He called the twelve together, gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases and sent them...here's the purpose...sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God and perform healing." First, foremost, He sent them to preach the Kingdom of God, kerusso, herald, like a town crier, one who walks into the city, to kerusso is to herald a message. You walk into the open plaza, the city square, you stand there, "Hear ye, Hear ye," and you give the message that is to be spread from the monarch, from the king, from the authority, from whoever's in charge. You are their heralds, you are the public preachers. You go into town after town after town and you declare that the Kingdom of God is here. That is, the Savior is here. "This is the acceptable year of the Lord," to borrow the words of Isaiah that Jesus used in the synagogue in Nazareth. The Messiah has come to the poor prisoners, blind and oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, the favorable year of the Lord. The King is here, the Kingdom is present. You go out and you preach this, you preach that there is a Kingdom of God as well as a kingdom of Satan. There is a Kingdom of light as well as a kingdom of darkness. You preach that the Kingdom of God is now present. You can enter the Kingdom of God if you will repent of your sin and if you will call for God's grace and believe in His Messiah. They were then launched as preachers of salvation, preachers of the Kingdom.

When we say we're preaching the Kingdom, all we're saying is we're preaching the message that God has a Kingdom and you can enter His Kingdom. And in His Kingdom is eternal blessing that you can come into His Kingdom, even though you're a sinner, if you repent of your sin, if you cry out for God's mercy and forgiveness and if you acknowledge Jesus Christ as His Son and Savior. Preach the Kingdom. That's what we do. That's what any faithful messenger does, preach salvation, preach salvation, and with that you have to preach against sin, you have to preach repentance. In fact, Mark 6:12 says that the Twelve went out and preached that men should repent. You have to confront sin.

You have to preach repentance. You have to preach that men are poor prisoners, blind, and oppressed, in danger of eternal judgment until they cry out for the mercy of God based upon the wonderful work of Jesus Christ. They were to do just what Jesus did. That's what Jesus did. That's exactly what Jesus did.

Back in chapter 4 verse 43, Jesus said, "I must preach the Kingdom of God. I must preach the Kingdom of God." Here I am in the kingdom of men and all of them are captive to the kingdom of Satan and I must preach the Kingdom of God, that God is the great and eternal King, that He has a glorious Kingdom of blessing and peace and joy and you can come into that Kingdom through the forgiveness of sin if you will repent and cry out for His grace and accept Me as Savior and Messiah. Jesus preached the Kingdom of God, that's what chapter 4 verse 43 says.

Same thing in chapter 7 verse 22, Jesus said, "Go tell John that I'm the Messiah." How do you know? "The poor have the gospel preached to them." Chapter 8 verse 1, "He began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the Kingdom of God." And at that time the Twelve were with Him, they weren't doing it, they were just following along trying to learn how He preached. They were then in training. But here He says, "You go and you've heard Me now for months, and months preach the Kingdom, you heard Me preach it to you when you believed 18 months ago. You've been hearing Me preach it from town to town to town to town to town, now just go preach that same message. Don't embellish it, don't alter it, don't edit it, don't amend it, preach it. Preach it."

You know, I was telling the seminary students this week, it's amazing to me that we're still trying to get evangelical Christians to preach THE true message of salvation. I...I told them, you know, when I came out of seminary I knew there would be battles that I would fight on a lot of fronts. I figured when I came out of seminary, you know, we'd have to fight against the liberals who attacked the authority of Scripture and we'd have to battle away with paradigms of sanctification that are unbiblical that the Charismatics introduced, or second work of grace kind of things, perfectionism, those issues would always be there to bring the Word of God to bear. There would be some battles that we'd fight in ecclesiology, trying to define what the church should be. There would always be debates about eschatology, the doctrine of last things because there are a lot of opinions. And, you know, you sort of figure, "Well, when I go into my ministry, these will be where the battles are." But I tell you one I never expected, I never expected to spend my whole life trying to protect the gospel from evangelicals corrupting it. But that's been the primary work of my life outside my normal pastoral ministry.

Jesus took these men and for 18 months they listened to Him preach the gospel. And then He said, "Just go do it." And they went out, and you know what they did? They went out and preached that men should repent. And there are all kinds of people today who don't think that's really an appropriate part of the gospel at all. You never...I never ever seem to be able to get to the end of the

dilemmas that keep being raised about the gospel. You turn around, look another direction, turn back and there's a new spin on the gospel. Now there's a big wave, the New Paradigm of Paul, it's called, which wants to say he never did teach imputation and substitutionary atonement and undo that. Just never ends. These men had listened for 18 months, now they were ready to speak what they had heard. They preached what Jesus preached. They went out and they preached about sin and about repentance and about grace and mercy from God, and the forgiveness of sin that God would give the broken hearted penitent sinner. And they preached that Jesus was the promised Messiah. And it wouldn't be long before He would give His life for their sins and He would therefore ratify the covenant that provides salvation.

Norvel Geldenheis(???) the commentator says, "They must summon the lost to a realization that God is indeed King, that He rules over all, that He's going to establish His Kingship in the world through His power in the Messiah and will one day at the consummation of the age destroy all opposition and bring the Kingdom in full power and glory. In addition, they will have to summon the people to true repentance so that they will have a full share of the dominion of God and be safeguarded against the judgment to be brought upon the wicked," end quote. He's saying just what we learned from John the Baptist. John preached, "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." It's the message of repentance, repentance, repentance. So the profile of the Christian messenger is, the Christian messenger preaches the gospel of salvation which encompasses the matter of sin and repentance and a crying out for grace, mercy and forgiveness which God provides to those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord.

In Matthew 10 there's one qualifier, this would be the same occasion. Matthew says, "Jesus also said, 'Don't go in the way of the Gentiles, don't go the city of the Samaritans, just go the lost sheep of the house of Israel and as you go preach and say the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" Don't go to the Gentiles, don't go to the half-breed, half Gentile, half Jew, Samaritans, go to Israel. Why? Grace, one more opportunity, to the people who were given the covenant, the promises, everything, the Law of God, the scriptures, one more opportunity, one more opportunity for them to believe and then they could go to the Gentiles. They could then go to the Samaritans. That was the plan, you know. The whole message of salvation wasn't supposed to end in Israel, they weren't a bucket. They weren't a cul de sac, they weren't a dead-end. They were a thoroughfare, they were a channel, they were a funnel, they were to believe and then through them the gospel would go to the world. They were chosen to be a witness nation and they didn't believe and so they were set aside. And the Lord carved out a new people, the church, made up of every nation. And we now are the people who proclaim the gospel. Some day, because God keeps His covenant, Israel will be saved, returned to the place of a witness nation. The Lord will pick 144 thousand of them, 12 thousand from every tribe, Revelation 7 says, they'll evangelize the world during the time of the Tribulation, just prior to the Kingdom. But for now, they're set aside in unbelief.

Paul when he went to a Gentile town went first to the Jewish synagogue, because if they would believe the gospel, then he would have some people help him evangelize the Gentiles. That's a little microcosm of the plan, God comes to Israel and says, "You're My people, here's My Kingdom, here's the message of salvation, believe it and take it to the world." They say, "We don't want to believe it." And so in 70 A.D. God comes in judgment. The Romans come, wipe out Jerusalem, wipe out the nation. And the church is born to be that new people. But God, as I said, in His grace will restore Israel in the future. We then have the responsibility today...we're sort of the, I guess in some ways, we're the progeny of the Apostles. It's up to us. The baton has been given to us. It's up to us to preach the message of salvation. Preach it the way Jesus preached it. That's why I wrote a book many years ago called The Gospel According to Jesus. It hasn't changed. It's just that same one.

A second point, and I'll just introduce it cause our time is gone and I'll develop it next week, the first thing that marked this messenger was the preaching of salvation, the second thing, the manifestation of compassion...the manifestation of compassion. You'll notice in verse 1 and verse 2 references to healing and casting out of demons. Verse 1, "When He called them together, He gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases." And the end of verse 2 says, "That's what they did, they were performing healings."

Now obviously this is power. This is...this is power the likes of which we cannot understand, the likes of which no one has ever possessed except Jesus and the Twelve and for one brief period the 70. But the point is this, Jesus couldn't send them out with the right message unless there was a way to attest to its validity because there wasn't a New Testament against which you could measure the preacher. Today if a man stands up and preaches, I don't need him to do any kind of miracles to validate himself. I can tell you whether he's true or not by simply measuring what he says against the New Testament, right? Because the New Testament is the revealed final standard. But in those days there wasn't any Scripture of the New Testament, there wasn't any...any standard that people could go to against which to test a man. And so in order to provide validation beyond question, they were given this amazing replete power. In fact, it's so magnanimous that it says He gave them power and authority over all the demons. There wasn't a demon they would ever encounter who could deal with them. They had complete dominance over the supernatural realm of spiritual beings. This is the very same power and authority that Jesus Himself possessed. This is the very same thing. He just delegated it to them.

Back in chapter 4 verse 36 it said of Jesus, "With authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out." Jesus did that. Verse 40, "While the sun was setting, all who had sick...who had any sick with various diseases, brought them to Him, laying His hands on every one of them He was healing them and demons also were coming out," and so forth. They...they did exactly what Jesus did, they had His power delegated to them to authenticate the message. He was able, chapter 6 verse 18 says, to heal diseases and deliver people with unclean spirits. This was His ministry and He gave it to them. He gave it to them. They had His authority, His exousia and His

power, dunamis. Someone might have a position of authority, but if you don't have the power, the authority isn't going to do you much good. They had both the authority, that is they had the official right, but they also had the power, they could accomplish what they had been given the right to do. They had the right to exercise power over disease and over demons and they had the power to pull it off.

By the way, Matthew 10:8 says they also had the power to raise the dead. So they did what Jesus did. Power over demons, power over disease, power over death...all the demons, all the diseases were subject to them, even death itself was subject to them. And again, these are the credentials of the authoritative agents and representatives of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is what proved that they were preaching a divine message because they had this divine power that obviously was visible to everyone who saw them. In fact, just a few verses to kind of affirm this, the first one is in 2 Corinthians 12:12, this is a very important text, 2 Corinthians 12:12, "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance by signs and wonders and miracles." Paul says, myself as a true apostle, I was attested as a true apostle by signs and wonders and mighty deeds. The purpose then was to authenticate the apostle as a true preacher. I mean, if a preacher comes to town, he says here's the message from God, here's the message from God, you have five guys all saying I have a message from God, and who do you believe? You believe the guy who raises dead people. In Acts chapter 2 verse 22, "Men of Israel, listen to these words, Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him." And you know it...he says. God attested to Jesus as His Son, as the Messiah, by His miracles, wonders and signs. God then attested the apostles as the true representatives of Jesus by the same signs, the same miraculous power. In the fifteenth chapter of Romans, Paul said that he came preaching in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit. Hebrews chapter 2 verses 3 and 4, "How shall we escape if we neglect to great a salvation which at the first was spoken through our Lord, then confirmed by those who heard...that would be the apostles, then this...God bearing witness with them by signs and wonders and various miracles."

So mark it. The apostles were given the ability to do these miracles. Literally the power of Jesus flowed through them. They preached the same message. They did the same miracles. Once the apostles' doctrine was written down, and the New Testament was finished, all those miracles go away. They go away when the apostles go away. Even when you come to the end of the book of Acts, miracles have diminished to the point where they're almost non-existent.

But I want you to understand this. Not just the power, but the compassion is the issue here. As I've been saying to you through Luke, there were many ways the Lord could have shown His power. I mean, so many ways. He could have done anything to demonstrate supernatural power. Why does it all work in the realm of people's pain? Why does it all work in the realm of people's sorrow, suffering, anxiety, fear, death? Because God is demonstrating compassion...compassion. There were witnesses....there were a thousand ways God could have done miracles that wouldn't have had

any impact on somebody in terms of their suffering. Like Satan wanted Him to do, dive off a tower, remember that? What does that do for anybody? Nothing. But if Jesus decided to dive off a 400 foot parapet and come to a soft landing, that would have been a pretty dramatic miracle. But all of the miracles He does are miracles demonstrating compassion. Even the miracle of the fish compassionately aided the fishermen. The miracle of the pigs compassionately aided the demonic. The miracle of the storm compassionately aided the disciples who thought they were going to drown. The miracles of disease and demons and raising people from the dead are all finding people and delivering them in the throes of the worst of human experience. All that to say, when the Lord picks His messengers, He wants somebody who preaches salvation, and somebody who manifests compassion. That's why we speak the truth in love. So the transferable idea here is compassion. It's the kind of messenger the Lord wants. If I want to bring around me as a leader people who work with me, I want people who are true to the gospel and people who have compassion for those who need to hear the gospel. You're not going to take the gospel to people with passion in your heart unless you have compassion for their suffering.

Well, I'll pick it up there because I want to talk about the compassion of God next time and how He wants us to demonstrate that same compassion.

Father, we are again given this wonderful look at these twelve very ordinary guys who...who must have been stunned when they came back to report all that You had done through them, who must have been shocked when demons fled, shocked when disease vanished, shocked when dead people came to life, who must have been exhilarated beyond imagination, exhilarated beyond comprehension at such power coming through them. And who at the same time must have been shocked equally by how the people they preached the gospel to could in the face of such attestation reject it. And that's the way it seems to have always been. But You're still looking for the same kind of people, those who will faithfully proclaim the gospel. And that's all of us. We've all been given the Great Commission and at the same time will have hearts of compassion toward the people who suffer all of the sorrows of life that come from sin. Would You give us Your own heart of compassion as we take the truth to them? Teach us more next week as we come back to this wonderful moment with the Lord and His twelve. In the meantime, shape us into faithful messengers who can rightly stand in the shadow of these very ordinary men. We'll thank You in Christ's name. Amen.

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