

Teach -In No. 8 The Gospel of Matthew

In Matthew 9 we saw that Jesus confronted all unrighteousness. He knew exactly where the Scribes (Lawyers of the Mosaic laws) and the Pharisees (Religious leaders of the day) stood, mostly in judgement and being critical of the Kingdom teachings and acts that Jesus demonstrated. They were in the *shadow* of the truth, but never entered into the *substance* of the Kingdom of God. We saw that we too could live in the shadow of the Kingdom today rather than the substance.

We saw also that Jesus responded to three kinds of faith, strong, humble and active. He is still looking for us to respond in this fashion. He also wants us to learn about compassion, Jesus doesn't demand it, but He desires that we have it.

The other part of Matthew 9 that we saw as significant was the point that He made concerning putting a patch of new cloth on an old garment. New patches would only tear the old material just as the new wine (the Holy Spirit) needed to dwell in new vessels. The old, unregenerate man could not contain the new life in Christ Jesus.

All the previous chapters of Matthew appear to me to be part of the preparation time for the great commission that Jesus first gave to the twelve disciples. The laying of these earlier foundations was typical of the way in which God builds anything. He first declares His plan, looks for a response from those who are willing, and then lays His foundation and proceeds to build on that. The foundation is always built on Jesus Christ; there is no other that satisfies the Father. We can see clearly in the New Testament Gospels how to live out our salvation.

Matthew 10 v 1-4

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

Here we see that Jesus calls His disciples together and gives them delegated authority. They are to go in His name or in His place, using the right that He has given them. The same commission is given in Matthew 28

Matthew 28 v 18-20

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

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Taken together these two passages command that we do all that Jesus taught and did, whilst we are here on the earth. We have to come to Jesus before we can be commissioned to go out in His name.

Matthew 4 18-20

Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

He summoned His disciples and they came. Each time Jesus called them they dropped what they were doing and responded, firstly Peter and Andrew, then James. When we get to Chapter 10, Jesus has 12 disciples and multitudes of followers. The disciples are to get into the substance of the Lord's work, but the multitude only live in the shadow of the wonderful things that Jesus has prepared for those who love Him enough to believe Him and obey His many words of instruction. Let us not forget that He gave them all authority over unclean spirits and every kind of sickness. The other Gospels each give the same promise and authorise the believers to do the same things.

Mark 6 v 7

And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits;

Mark 16 v 15-18

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Luke 9 V 1

And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases.

Matthew 10 v 5-10

These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support.

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Jesus told them first where to go, then what they were to do. He tells them to go to the confused sheep of Israel; that is to say, His own people. He could have sent them to the Gentiles or to the Samaritans, but first of all He was concerned about the Jews, the chosen people. We also could begin to go to those who have, perhaps lost heart or fallen away. There are many Christians who have the seed of life in them, but through one reason or another have lost the desire to fellowship with other Christians.

Hebrews 10 v 24-25

...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Perhaps there are those that you know, who might appreciate a 'phone call or a visit, not just to pressure them into coming to meetings, but out of a heart of compassion that we might demonstrate His love through us to them. Of course you may not be received but you are only required to give your love and concern, your peace and your gifts as you also have been freely given. We often don't go because of the fear of being rejected, but Jesus covers this in the next part.

Matthew 10 v 11-15

And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city. As you enter the house, give it your greeting. If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace. Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

He tells us to go in peace but do not let your peace leave you. Then again you may think that you are not worthy to go, that it might be better if someone with more experience went along.

James 1 v 5.

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

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Matthew 10 v 16-19

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say.

Jesus sends them out as sheep, not shepherds; it is sheep that beget sheep. They are to be amongst wolves; therefore they are to be wise. To be shrewd we are to have the authority and wisdom and power of Jesus.

The chapter continues to speak of the road ahead being hard and exacting, but that we are not to be anxious about how or what we will say to those who we meet, it will be given to us as we speak! This is a wonderful promise that removes anxiety and leaves us free to move out in faith in all sorts of ways.

Matthew 10 v 20-23

For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. "But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.

The scripture speaks further of the difficulties that we shall find as we tell out God's word. There are going to be difficulties in our families (see also verses 35-39 following). The word of God disturbs the peace of man; it is like a two edged sword, cutting across all human reason and wisdom. The problem that I have found is that my natural tendencies are often, but not always, contrary to God's word.

Matthew 10 v 24

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.

This refers to Jesus as both teacher and master, although again He has called men and women into all kinds of ministry. The teacher should only convey what the Teacher taught, that is, the Gospel truth. The master, be it husband, father, manager or managing director, should only apply authority as the Master applied it. Jesus came to serve, not to be served and we are to imitate Him in every way. This truly is an exacting task!

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Matthew 10 v 25-33

It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household! "Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows. "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

We are to become like Jesus was, that is enough for anyone, what a goal we have been set. I am so glad the He gives me time, people may not, but He does. We will be accused and declared unworthy by members of our own household. No-one has the right or entitlement to be in God's favour outside of the grace of Christ. That means that imperfect as we are, God's word will still be relevant because of the gifting of God is irrevocable.

John 15 v 18-22

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

Matthew 10 v 34

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

What does Jesus mean by this statement? He has come to restore all things to Himself; the kingdom of this world shall become eventually the kingdom of our Lord Jesus.

Revelation 11 v 15

Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

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There are kingdoms or obstacles to His rule in all of us, Christians have confessed this truth and are to be restored to the image of Jesus. In our natural and spiritual lives there are the tares or weeds which have to be driven out. The peace of God will follow the cessation of hostilities both inside and outside of the Church.

Psalm 110 v 1

The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."

The psalmist prophecies that all His enemies will become subject to Him, in the meantime He loves us and shows great mercy towards each and every one of us in spite our sin.

Matthew 10 v 35-39

For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

There is a cross for us to carry, it takes different forms and we are called to overcome our difficulties with our whole lives, there is a debt to be paid. You may say *I thought that Jesus has already paid the price*, well, He has, but we share in the cost with Him.

Mark 8 v 35

For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

Luke 14 v 27

Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

We see here that each of the synoptic Gospels carry the same message, three witnesses of the same words of command given by the Lord for all of His disciples.

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Matthew 10 v 40-42

"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

Finally, Jesus speaks of receiving each other. Not just in terms of a natural friendliness but in His name. *I receive you in the name of the Lord* rather than *Oh no, not him again!* The Lord says we should receive a prophet in the name of a prophet; He is speaking of the office of a prophet rather than a person. The prophet can bring two edged sharp cutting words into areas of unrighteousness. Of Elijah it was said that he was the troubler of Israel and not many liked his company. They threw Jerimiah in jail, Ezekiel was exiled to Babylonia, Daniel was cast into the lion's den and Hosea suffered the humiliation of marrying a prostitute to demonstrate to him how God's heart felt about a rebellious nation.

Who would like to be God's mouthpiece today? Jesus was of course crucified because of His ministry as the Prophet; He was called as far back as Moses time.

Deuteronomy 18 v 15-19

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.' The Lord said to me, 'They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him."

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