

Matthew Chapter 10:5-10:42 – Jesus Sends His Apostles Part 1 – Matthew 10:5 – Distinctions

Review:

Jesus, as He was proclaiming the kingdom and displaying His identity and authority as the Messiah through His words and works, was also preparing His apostles. His purpose was to establish the apostles as the spiritual leadership in Israel because the current shepherds have oppressed and disheartened the people.

Jesus had hundreds of followers, and during the early stages of His ministry, not all were believers. Of those hundreds, Jesus chose 12 to be His direct representatives. Of those twelve, one was a devil and would eventually betray Him for money, handing Him over to be killed. After choosing the Twelve Apostles, He gives them instructions.

Overview of the Instruction

Location (5-6)

What to Proclaim (7)

What to Perform (8)

What Provisions to Take (9-15)

Difficulties They will Have (16-39)

Reward for Those Who Receive Them (40-42)

This Historical Misuse of Matthew 10

It is an unfortunate reality that this passage has been used by theologians and preachers to distort what it (a) means to be a Christian and (b) what it takes to be a good Christian.

For instance: “The first 15 verses of Matthew 10 were directed only to the original 12 apostles about to go on a preaching mission. Everything after verse 16 through the end of Matthew 10 applies to believers through the ages, including now.”

Have you heard these verses in the context of what it takes to be a Christian or a disciple?

“I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.”

“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. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”

“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.”

“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.”

“I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

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“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.”

Here is a popular commentary:

“**Take up your cross and follow Me**” means being willing to die in order to follow Jesus. This is called “dying to self.” It’s a call to absolute surrender. After each time Jesus commanded cross-bearing, He said, “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?” “Although the call is tough, the reward is matchless.”

If you wonder if you are ready to take up your cross, consider these questions:

- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing some of your closest friends?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means alienation from your family?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means the loss of your reputation?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing your job?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing your life?

Commitment to Christ means taking up your cross daily, giving up your hopes, dreams, possessions, and even your very life if need be for the cause of Christ. Only if you willingly take up your cross may you be called His disciple. The reward is worth the price. Jesus followed His call of death to self (“Take up your cross and follow Me”) with the gift of life in Christ: “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.”

Method of Biblical Study:

As we have discussed previously, we must disclose again. We study the Bible using the prescribed method of understanding that is found in the Bible.

Normative (Literal) – We read the text as it was written and not allegorize it to mean something that cannot be found by an examination of the text itself.

Grammatical – We examine the vocabulary, making sure of the exact meaning of a word and the grammar where it is used.

Historical (Cultural) – The books of the Bible are not written to us, but they are written for us. When a particular group is being addressed, we examine the text as it was intended for them. We must not take this text or any text in Matthew as a prescription for the church. This is instruction to the apostles and His disciples prior to Israel’s national rejection of Messiah.

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Go Only to the Lost Sheep of Israel:

Matthew 10:5-6 – The first instruction defines their targeted audience. The word *way* is “ὁδός hodos” and refers to a road that leads to Gentile cities or regions. They were to not go there or enter any city of the Samaritans. Gentiles were those whose father was not a lineal descendant of Jacob. And the Samaritans were Gentile(ish). This instruction was to keep the message and their ministry strictly to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

This is not the lost tribes; this is not the people of Israel who are lost.

Ezekiel 34:1-31

Summary –

1-10 – Woe to the shepherds (2-6). This is a proclamation about Israel not being led and the people needing to be gathered together and restored. Then God states that He will come and deliver them (10).

11-16 – God will restore and care for His people (16).

17-24 – God’s justice will be instituted (24).

25-31 – Covenant of peace with the sheep (25-31)

Matthew 9:36-38; 10:5-6

The statement about the lost sheep of the house of Israel is one of God’s judgment against the Pharisees and the scribes and a decree that God is sending out His workers into Israel to regather them and shepherd them. That is all. The reason that the Gentile cities and the Sarmatians are off-limits to them is that they are fulfilling God’s promise to Israel.

This is in conjunction with the message “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Proclaim “The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand”:

Matthew 10:7 – The message is not of the Messiah yet. They were to do the job of John the Baptizer and the job that Jesus took up when he was put into prison (Matthew 3:1-2, 4:12, 17, 23, 9:35, Acts 19:4).

The apostles were going to the lost sheep of Israel and shepherding them, having them change their minds about the nature of God, the Law, the coming Messiah, and returning to YHWH their God.

The Messianic Kingdom was/is available to Israel. It was necessary that Israel believes and calls upon the Lord. Israel must be reached first because it is dependent on them for the Messiah to come into His glory and restore Israel. When Israel believes and is restored, then all the world will be filled with the glory of the Messiah (Romans 11:11-15).

Do as Jesus did:

How can the people be sure that this message is truth and that they are from God? They are to do the works of the Prophet, demonstrating that their message is from God. The Pharisees and scribes had no authority or power, so the apostles’ message is proven genuine by their accompanying actions. However, they will meet resistance (Matthew 10:24-25).