

Lesson #11- Matthew Chapter 10 Questions for Discussion (With Help for Teachers):

1. Chapter 10 begins with Jesus calling His twelve disciples together. In verse 2 through 4 they are identified as the apostles and named specifically. Jesus is about to send them out on a mission, for the first time, without His physical presence.
 - a. What power does Jesus give the apostles so that they can accomplish the mission?

Like the apostles, we are sent out on a mission.

- b. Where do we find our instructions for the assignment?
- c. What power has Jesus given us so that we can be successful?

Help for Teachers:

- a) Jesus equipped the apostles to present the gospel authoritatively by enabling them to do the very same works He had been doing, “he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.” Coupled with the message they delivered, the people to whom they were sent were “without excuse”, as Paul would have said (Romans 1:15-20). They both heard the preached word and were presented with irrefutable evidence that they spoke with divine authority.
- b) Among other places, Jesus presented our standing orders in the final chapter of this book, chapter 28. We, like the apostles, have been commissioned to bless all nations with the good news of Jesus and His kingdom. We are to “teach all nations” about salvation in Jesus Christ. We are to “baptize them that believe”, and following the example we see in Acts, bring them into the church where we can teach them “all things, whatsoever I have commanded you”, helping them grow as they follow Jesus so that they can join us in this kingdom work.
- c) The apostles were given miraculous powers as they were sent out by Jesus so that when they preached the gospel it was evident that they carried the message of God. Matthew 28:18 begins what we refer to as the great commission. Jesus very first statement is “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” As the apostles were sent out with miraculous power from Jesus, so are we. We have power from Jesus in two forms, Holy Spirit, and the Word. Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit, as applied to authentication that we carry God’s message, to convict and convince the hearers (John 16:7-14). We also have the New Testament, completing the Word of God. In the gospel of John, we read that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). We read that the Word of God is “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb 4:12). We can be sure that the words of Jesus are enduring (Matt. 24:35).

2. As God had ordained, the gospel came to and through the Jewish people first, but in rapid progression went out to all people of the world.
 - a. As the apostles went out on this first assignment to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel”, what was their message to be and what did it mean?
 - b. What message are we to deliver on our assignment?

Help for Teachers:

- a) Verse 7, “And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” The Jews were looking for the coming of Messiah (probably in the same way most that claim Christianity today are looking for Him to come again, more in concept than in actual expectation). The kingdom of heaven was at hand because the High King of heaven had taken on flesh and was walking in their midst (Phil 2:5-11). Their message was the same preaching that Jesus was preaching, repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15).
- b) Our message is the same gospel that was preached to Abraham (Galatians 3:8). The apostles were sent out to declare that the King is here and that all that repent and turn to Him in faith would be saved and be children of His kingdom. We are sent out to declare that the King has come and is returning, that all that turn to Him in repentance, believing the gospel, will be saved and be children of His kingdom (Rom 10:8-13, Eph 2:8-10).

3. Jesus told the apostles in verse 8, “...freely ye have received, freely give.” Discuss what this meant to the apostles and if it applies to us. If so, in what ways?

Help for Teachers:

In verses 7 and 8 Jesus tells the apostles to preach that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” and then to “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.” So, “freely you have received, freely give” is immediately following the command to preach the kingdom and heal sick people, cleanse lepers, and cast out devils.

These gifts the apostles were given to do good to hurting people were to be exercised liberally and without any cost to the recipients, in the same way Jesus had imparted these miraculous abilities to the apostles, liberally and without any cost to them. The most important of these gifts was the sharing of the gospel. Each of the apostles had themselves been wandering around lost in their sins when Jesus had sought them out and called them out of darkness into His glorious light (1 Peter 2:9). Jesus freely gave them life and purpose and abilities. He paid everything for them, as He has for us.

Our salvation is completely free to us from God, we played no role in it, it's by His grace. Every ability we have, and all our possessions are freely and liberally given to us by God (James 1:17), we could do nothing outside of Him (even unbelievers are blessed immeasurably beyond what they deserve by God's grace).

In the same way the apostles were told to freely give from the gifts they were freely given in the transmission of the gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, we are to use every ability God has given to us (and that's everything we have) to tell the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. Freely means without cost to the ones receiving, and without holding back. It changes the way we view "freely" when Jesus says to give "as" you have received. What do we have that wasn't first given to us (Col 1:16-17)?

Jesus entered the temple and turned over tables and drove out the sellers with a whip. He said they had made His Father's house a den of thieves. Today industries revolve around marketing Christian music and selling merchandise from literature to jewelry to all sorts of other items. Concerts at Disney World sell out. For thought: would Jesus turn over our sales racks? Where is the line between financing ministry and "den of thieves"? who should shoulder the cost of evangelism?

4. Verses 9 and 10 find Jesus telling the disciples to keep their focus on the mission, that He would handle the logistics. In 11 through 15 Jesus says to expect two powerful responses to the message the apostles were bringing.
 - a. How should we apply what Jesus tells the apostles in verses 9 and 10 to our evangelism?
 - b. What should we expect from people when we present Jesus and how should we respond to their responses?

Help for Teachers:

- a) Taking the gospel into the world requires resources. Often, we may be guilty of not moving ahead because we look only at what is visible, for instance in the bank account, and decide that the resources aren't there (maybe the finances are in our personal bank account instead of in the offering plate where they should be because we don't have the faith to believe God will take care of us if we trust Him with our money). If God puts an opportunity before us, we can be sure that He has the resources and will supply what is needed. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that without faith it is impossible to please Him. None of the heroes of faith listed in this chapter, Hebrews 11, could "see" how the mission would be accomplished, but they moved forward in faith. Jesus bluntly told the apostles, do not take provisions with you. The apostles were to trust that Jesus would provide as they went.

- b) Jesus told His apostles that there would be two distinct responses to the preaching of the gospel. First, there would be those that would be “worthy”. No one is worthy because of their own goodness; worthiness comes when the call of Jesus is received by faith and the righteousness of Christ is imputed. Jesus makes us worthy and said that the workman, those laboring in the gospel, is worthy of his meat. The second response is from those who in unbelief reject the message of the gospel. Having refused the priceless gift of the saving blood of Jesus Christ, these now face an impending judgement more severe than the fire and brimstone God poured out on the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus prepared His apostles for these responses and told them that when the message was received, they were to abide there until they move on (the workman is worthy of his meat, in verses 40-42 Jesus also says that those who have done even small things to aid those that are working for the kingdom will be rewarded). In contrast, when the gospel message is rejected, we are not to become discouraged. Instead, the apostles were to “shake off the dust of your feet”, don’t let it get you dirty and down. We are successful when we are obedient to share the gospel, the accepting part is between God and the hearer. We can be encouraged that God has an elect that will respond to His call with faith (John 10:24-30). When the message we bring is rejected, it is God that is being rejected by those that are not His sheep.
5. The rest of the chapter is Jesus preparing His disciples for more of what to expect and what they need to know to be effective and encouraged in the work.
- “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” What does this mean?
 - Jesus says that this message of hope will bring great division, even among families. He says that this message of love will bring a response of hatred. Jesus says that if we don’t love Him more than our own family, we are not worthy of Him, that to die is the only way to find life. Why does Jesus have to be so extreme?
 - Discuss the encouraging promise of reward found in the last three verses of chapter 10.

Help for Teachers:

- Jesus was sending His apostles, as He is us, into a hostile world that with the same solidarity as a pack of hunting wolves going after a sheep, is intent on killing our witness for Christ, and our physical life if necessary. He instructs the apostles to be wise as serpents. To the ancient eastern mind, serpents were icons of wisdom and intelligence. In the creation story we find that the serpent was originally created as

- the most “subtil” (subtile: elusive, cunning, crafty) of all the beasts of the field (Gen 3:1). In the same way, we are to be aware of the intent of our enemies as we go out into the world. We are to maintain, if you will, situational awareness (Rom 16:17, 2 Cor. 11:32-33, Acts 8:1, Acts 23:6-11). With few exceptions, a snake, capable of inflicting a lethal bite, will silently glide away from a threat whenever possible. When the gospel we bring is rejected and malice is intended toward us, we are not to be silenced, but wise to not foolishly be a target. Unlike the snake however, we are to be “harmless as doves”, not retaliating with venom, even if we can. We are to be reflections of God’s love. Throughout scripture, doves are often emblems of love and hope (Gen. 8:8-12, Matt 3:16).
- b) In verse 17 Jesus continues preparing the apostles for what to expect as they go on their assignment, both their immediate mission and prophetically of future missions. The reactions to this message of hope and love will be severe. Civil authorities will arrest them, and they will be placed on trial, but they will have no lawyer to defend them, God will speak through them to their accusers. Households and blood relatives will become enemies over this message, to the degree that they will kill each other. Those that carry Jesus’ message will be at the top of the list of hated people, but Jesus will see them through to the end. The extreme reaction against the messengers (disciples and servants) is because Jesus (Master and Lord) is the One hated by the world and when we identify with Him and carry out His commands, we are hated as representatives of Him (see parable Matt. 21:33-43). But think of the extreme lengths to which God went to redeem a people unto Himself. No human mind could ever conceive of such a plan, that the King of all that ever was or ever will be would set aside His rightful throne in the heavens and descend to the estate of a created being, and a servant of created beings at that. How extreme that this King would voluntarily become the substitute for criminals condemned to death (all humankind is under this condemnation), and be judged, sentenced, and punished in the place of those He died for. Among human kings this has never even been considered; servants give their life in service of the king, never in the reverse. Could anything less than extreme responses from mortals be expected in view of such extreme actions of Deity? When we begin to realize what Jesus has done for us, it makes perfect sense in this upside-down kingdom that we must love Him more than anything, even if our own family rejects us for following Jesus. We get it that when we surrender our life to His Lordship, we gain real and eternal and abundant life. We see that those who love this world and its temporary sinful pleasures more than God and cling to this life will lose it and perish eternally.
- c) In Jesus kingdom, little things are big. He uses what the world sees as foolishness and weakness and unimportance to bring Him great glory (1 Cor 1:26-29, Mark 12:41-44). Even when we think our role is so small, God takes notice and is pleased. It’s like parents with a child see the tiny steps as a big deal, because it’s their kid!