

JESUS SENDS OUT THE TWELVE

Matthew 10:1-16

Key Verse: 10:1

“He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.”

When Jesus saw the people of Israel, those chosen to be God’s servants, they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus’ heart was broken for them and he wanted to touch them one by one, to heal them and make them whole. Jesus could have done this with a mighty universal miracle, all at once. But he did not. Instead, he chose to raise his disciples and send them out as shepherds to do what he had been doing. In this passage, we learn how he equipped them for the task, what kind of people he called, and the specific mission and instructions that he gave them. The principles that Jesus used to train his disciples are timeless. As we study them, we can find out how to raise disciples of Jesus among young people in our time.

First of all, let’s think about the primary place of prayer in Jesus’ disciple raising ministry. In 9:37,38, Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” Jesus surveyed the suffering people of Israel and saw the potential for a great harvest. Jesus saw that a man who was mute because of demon-possession could be healed and become a concert soloist for the glory of God. Jesus saw that two blind men could be healed and become great explorers like Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal. All that was lacking was workers who could do what Jesus had been doing. However, only God can raise such workers. So Jesus told his

disciples to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send out workers into his harvest field.

Jesus is different than fallen men. When fallen men obtain a unique position, they want to hold on to it, enjoying their power and authority over others. Many senior employees never share their secret wisdom with junior people to safeguard their own place in the company. This may be a smart business decision. However, Jesus was eager to raise many workers like himself who would do what he had been doing. Jesus had a burning passion to advance the kingdom of heaven by raising up more workers for the harvest field. We must share Jesus' heart of compassion for the lost, instead of worrying about our position in God's work. Then we can pray for the expansion of the kingdom. We will see tremendous growth in the work of God.

Historically, all mission movements and spiritual revivals have been undergirded by fervent prayer. This month's issue of "Christianity Today" is titled "Missions Incredible." On the cover is a picture of a Korean missionary preaching the gospel in Ghana to African natives. The subtitle says, "South Korea is on its way to sending out more missionaries than any other country on earth." During the months of May and June, all Korean churches are joining to pray for and encourage the sending of missionaries to the world. Our UBF World Mission Report is part of this movement. The tremendous mission movement in South Korea originated in fervent prayer, especially early morning prayer.

UBF ministry has advanced through prayer. In 1971, Dr. Samuel Lee gave the prayer topic to UBF leaders in Korea to have a summer Bible conference in Niagara Falls by 1981. At the time it seemed impossible. But they prayed with this

prayer topic night and day. It happened. In 1985, Dr. Lee gave a prayer topic for the pioneering of Russia in ten years. UBF members around the world prayed fervently for this. By 1991, UBF missionaries were living in Moscow.

In 2002, Mother Barry gave the prayer topic to raise 100,000 missionaries to go to 233 nations by 2041. She especially emphasized prayer for Muslim countries, North Korea and China. We have seen God answer in many ways. In the Muslim country of Sudan, Andrew has been preaching the gospel for many years. God blessed his ministry, and by the help of Oyor Moses, a God-given Sudanese coworker, many brothers and sisters have been raised who believe in Jesus and pray for the evangelization of Sudan. This month, Oyor Moses left Sudan for Cairo, Egypt, to enter a Ph.D. program in a renowned university as a student missionary. He is now in the heart of a Muslim country with the opportunity to reach top class university students with Christ-centered Bible study. It is a great work of God. Yet, for Sudan UBF, it was very expensive to send him. They lost their ancestor of faith who had been a bridge between the missionaries and the native shepherds. So Andrew cried out to God for workers to join him in the harvest field. Then God raised Moses Marji's family from Triton College. When God called Moses through Isaiah 6, Moses answered, "Here am I, send me." He leaves Monday as a permanent missionary to Sudan. His wife Iris and son Nathaniel will join him as soon as possible.

God hears and answers prayer for missions. Therefore, we must keep up our prayer for missions. We must not limit our prayer topics to success in school, getting a good job, or marrying with God's blessing. We must pray that the Lord of the harvest may send out workers into his harvest field. As we learned in the Lord's Prayer, we must pray first for God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.

Amen! Now, let's think about how Jesus called and raised and trained his disciples as harvest workers.

First, Jesus gave them spiritual authority (1).

After fervent prayer, Jesus called his disciples. Look at verse 1. "He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness." This calling originated in the heart of Jesus. It did not originate in the will of the disciples, or in their ambition, or in their own zeal. It originated in the heart of Jesus. It came from Jesus' compassion for the lost world. God alone calls people to be his harvest workers. To be called by Jesus is the one-sided grace of God.

Jesus called a specific number of disciples. It was twelve. Historically, twelve was a significant number for it represented the twelve tribes of Israel. As Jesus was beginning a new history of God, he chose twelve men to carry it out. Jesus wanted to reach the whole world (Mt 28). Yet Jesus did not raise an army, but only twelve men. We must acknowledge Jesus' wisdom in doing this. Sometimes we feel that one-to-one Bible study with students is insignificant in the era of Mega Churches. However, raising twelve disciples was very important to Jesus. Crowds come and go, but disciples of Jesus impact the world for generations to come. Taking care of one or two or several disciples with the mind of Jesus will produce lasting fruit in the long run.

They are called "his twelve disciples." These men belonged to Jesus. We know how Jesus called five of them—Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Matthew—from earlier accounts in this gospel (Mt 4:18-22; 9:9). Jesus said, "Follow me," and they

immediately left everything and followed him. Jesus sifted his disciples by teaching the cost of discipleship (Mt 8:18-22). Jesus wanted their commitment. They were really and truly committed to Jesus. When Jesus called them, they came. They were ready to follow Jesus anywhere. They had denied themselves to surrender their lives to Jesus. The privilege Jesus bestowed on them was given to loyal followers of proven commitment.

“Disciple” means learner. In those days disciples committed themselves to a teacher to follow him and learn from him. They were not together for just a few hours a day in a classroom, but they lived together and shared life together. The disciples learned of Jesus himself. They did not learn only subjects and techniques, but Jesus’ inner character. Jesus wanted to bring about a complete transformation in them. Jesus wanted them to think like him, share his heart’s desires, learn his holiness, and become like him. Through life together, all of their dirty sins were exposed and then cleansed by Jesus one by one. Jesus gave them new hearts that were like his own. Jesus healed their selfishness and planted the compassion of God in their hearts. Jesus rooted out their fatalism and helped them have great faith in the power and love of God. Jesus drove out their despair and gave them a new and living hope in the kingdom of God. Jesus changed them into godly, spiritual men who could love God and love people with the love of God. Jesus made each of them a shepherd like himself. Gradually they became full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and all the fruits of the Holy Spirit. They were not completely transformed until they went to heaven in glory. However, through their daily association with Jesus, they were on the way.

Life together with Jesus and his people challenges us to live by what we learn from Jesus. This makes a person different. There are many who hear a good message on

Sunday, say many “Amen,” and then drive off into a lifestyle that is no different than secular people. Disciples are different. They submit their personal life to Jesus and they allow Jesus to change their habits, thought patterns, and lifestyle.

Now we can understand what kind of relationship Jesus had with his twelve disciples. They were “his disciples.” He called them and trained them, and then gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal diseases. Jesus had demonstrated his authority through many events. Jesus cleansed a man with leprosy. Jesus healed a centurion’s servant. Jesus drove out demons with a word, “Go.” Jesus healed a paralytic, and a bleeding woman. Jesus raised a dead girl to life. Jesus healed two blind men. Jesus made a mute man speak. Jesus has authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. Jesus transferred this authority to his disciples.

Here we learn the nature of the disciples’ work: It is to fight a spiritual battle with evil spirits. Most people of the world want to be nice and they want to do good things. But when men live without God, they disobey the word of God and become sinsick. Then evil spirits invade through the channel of sinful desires and gain control of their hearts and souls. Soon they become evil people who do what they do not want to do. In Dixon, Illinois this past week one teenage girl brutally killed another teenage girl because of jealousy over a boy. It was also the work of evil spirits who seized control and made her crazy to do evil. This can happen to anyone who lives without God.

When we look with human eyes, young college students in our country seem to be well-fed and sophisticated; they seem to lack nothing. They foster this illusion by pretending to be cool. But the truth is that many of our young people are very

sinsick, and many are terribly wounded in their souls. We are now living in the first generation of adults raised in an era of widespread divorce. Their hearts have been completely broken. When they study the parable of the prodigal son, they do not relate to the youngest son, but to the father waiting for his son to return. However, in their case, they are waiting for their parents to return. They are like orphans in their inner life. They need healing that only Jesus can give. Young Americans need shepherds who have spiritual authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal wounded hearts and souls. This need is urgent. To be good shepherds for them, we need Jesus' authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal diseases.

This spiritual authority is not magic. It comes from Jesus when we abide in him through prayer and obedience to the word of God. Therefore, we must develop a fervent prayer life. We must be diligent Bible students. We must meditate on the word of God until God's grace and power touch our souls. We must obey the word of God with an absolute attitude. Then Jesus will give us spiritual authority to shepherd young people. One intern shepherdess struggled hard to catch Bible students at UIC. But she had no power to lead them to Bible study. Then she began to pray early every morning and to honor the word of God through her Bible teachers. She caught several good Bible students in one day. This happens to anyone who has spiritual authority from Jesus. Last Friday, three young women shared heart-moving testimonies at our leaders' meeting. They all study the Bible with Maria Ahn. Of course, this is the grace of God. However, we should realize that Maria Ahn is most faithful in preparing Bible study material and praying for her Bible students. They grow, not because she is a special person, but because she honors the word of God and prays persistently.

Dr. Samuel Lee was well known as a man of great spiritual authority. It came from his deep Bible study and prayer. Many young Americans were cleansed of their sins, healed from their sicknesses, and trained in godliness through his ministry. I am one of them. And by God's grace, I came to share in his ministry as his assistant. He trained me for many years as a messenger and shepherd. When Dr. Lee went to heaven in God's time, I was suddenly appointed the director of Chicago UBF. By God's grace, and as a fruit of Dr. Lee's training I could prepare and deliver the Sunday message every week without fail. Through the prayers of God's servants, especially Mother Barry and the Elders, our merciful God provided sufficient spiritual power for this, and the Lord's work continued to prosper. In the last four years, ten new UBF USA chapters have been pioneered from Chicago, fifteen new house churches have been established, and many in the emerging generation have become Jesus' disciples. We thank God for this.

Now, under Dr. John Jun's leadership, we have a new challenge and prayer topic. It is to double the number of Sunday worshipers and one-to-one Bible studies by the year 2010. We must grow 20% per year. This can happen by the power of God's word and prayer. We must all make a new decision to study the Bible deeply and obey it from our hearts. We must pray fervently, especially in the early morning on all of our campuses. As we do so, surely our Lord Jesus will grant us spiritual authority to shepherd students.

Second, the twelve apostles (2-4).

Let's read verses 2-4. "These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector;

James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.” Here, the twelve are called “apostles.” This means “one who is sent.” When Jesus gave them spiritual authority to drive out demons and heal diseases they were promoted from disciples to apostles. They were now Jesus’ representatives, like ambassadors of the king. They were working in Jesus’ name and they carried Jesus’ authority. So they are called “apostles.” In one sense, the twelve apostles are unique in history. They were taught directly by Jesus and they were witnesses of his suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension. Their preaching and teaching had unique authority. From them we have received the New Testament, which is our only authoritative rule for faith and practice. In a broader sense, however, anyone whom Jesus calls and sends is an apostle, including missionaries. It is wise for us to have basic respect for missionaries, any missionaries, simply because they have received Jesus’ calling and have been sent out by him.

In verse 2 Matthew inserts the word “first” before Simon Peter. This tells us that there was spiritual order among the twelve, and Simon was the leader. Furthermore, they are listed in pairs. Matthew does not say this explicitly, like Mark does, but he implies it by his grouping. Jesus sends people out two by two. One young man went fishing by himself many times and did not have much success. But last week he went with a coworker. When they worked two by two, each of them met several new Bible students.

We cannot think exhaustively about all of the apostles, but let’s consider several of them. Simon (who is called Peter) was an ordinary man. But he had a remarkable quality: he was willing to learn anything from Jesus (Lk 5:5). Peter’s willingness to learn endeared him to Jesus as top among the twelve disciples. Jesus gave him the

name Peter, which means, “Rock.” Jesus had hope to make him the foundation for the early church. Peter made many mistakes. But Jesus bore with him until he was changed into a fearless man of God who was willing to participate in the sufferings of Christ (1Pe 4:13). Jesus can take an ordinary man with a learning mind and make him great.

Matthew refers to himself as “Matthew the tax collector.” He had been a great sinner in his selfishness. But Jesus saw him with compassion and cleansed his sins with the love of God. Jesus healed his terrible selfishness. Matthew became a true worshiper of Jesus, and most excellent in ethical and moral conduct. Through his personal testimony, Matthew teaches us that Jesus calls disciples by his grace alone. In Jesus there is hope for anyone, no matter how deep his sin.

Simon the Zealot belonged to a strong nationalist party of Jews that were dedicated to the overthrow of Roman rule and the restoration of God’s rule in Israel. They would use any means available, including sabotage and assassination. Simon could have turned out like Avner in the movie “Munich.” In response to the terrorist attack that killed Israeli athletes at the 1972 Summer Olympics, Avner was recruited by the Israeli government to assassinate the terrorists. In the beginning Avner thought he was right to kill the enemies of his country. But in the end, he found himself to be no different than the terrorists. When he hated and killed others, he became just like them. Simon the Zealot seemed to be a born enemy of Matthew the tax collector. They were diametrically opposed to each other in politics, ethics and life purpose. There may have been moments in which Simon wanted to put a knife in Matthew. Yet Jesus called both of them, deliberately. In Jesus they could both find the forgiveness of sins. They could learn to forgive one another. In Jesus they found a common purpose to share God’s love with a lost

world. In Jesus they became real coworkers for the gospel. Anyone who thinks they have a coworking problem should remember that in Jesus even Simon the Zealot and Matthew became united in love.

Look again at the list of disciples. They all had different personalities. They were from different backgrounds and occupations. They represent a cross-section of humanity. As Jesus shepherded each of them, they experienced his love and grace personally. They learned from Jesus how to shepherd many kinds of people. They could grow to be shepherds for all peoples with the love of Jesus.

Third, Jesus' instructions for disciples (5-16).

Look at verse 5a. "These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions...." These instructions are Jesus' divine wisdom that must guide his disciples. To disregard them is foolishness. To carefully consider them and practice them is the secret to success as Jesus' disciple. Let's consider them.

Instruction one: "Go to the lost sheep of Israel." Look at verses 5b-6. "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel." This instruction has sparked controversy among people who do not understand it. Some people want to charge Jesus with prejudice. But let's put it into context. This instruction was temporary. Later in chapter 28, Jesus sends them out to make disciples of all nations. Obviously they went among the Gentiles with the message of salvation. In Acts 1:8, Jesus sends them as his witnesses to Jerusalem, all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Jesus himself had a very fruitful ministry among the Samaritans. So let's discard any notion that Jesus did not love the Gentiles or the people of Samaria. Jesus loves all people of all

nations and does not want anyone to perish, but everyone to have eternal life through the gospel.

However, in God's wisdom there was a plan of salvation that had to be worked out step by step. According to God's promise to Abraham, all peoples of all nations would be blessed through his descendants, that is the nation Israel. Jesus was crystal clear about this point, telling the Samaritan woman that salvation is from the Jews, and telling the Syrophenician woman that the children's bread must be given to the children of Israel, and not Gentile dogs. Paul, who knew the world salvation plan of God better than anyone, often used the phrase, "first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." It was precisely God's plan to send the disciples to the people of Israel first. The principle behind Jesus' first instruction is that God has his own plan for world salvation. Fruitful ministry can be done when we listen to God's plan and obey his calling. God has called UBF to serve campus mission. For this reason, we focus our prayer and labor on college students and teenagers. In the context of UBF mission, this instruction would read: "Go to the lost sheep on university campuses."

Instruction two: "preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.'" Look at verse 7. "As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.'" The disciples' main activity is preaching the message, "The kingdom of heaven is near." Preaching is a great art that requires a lifetime of study to learn, and endless hours of practice to perfect. At the same time, preaching is a very simple matter of proclaiming the message that Jesus gave, "The kingdom of heaven is near." This means that Jesus is near. It is an invitation to repent of our sins and accept Jesus as our King and Savior. Those who do so are set free from the power of sin, death and the devil. They are released from bitterness, hatred, anger, jealousy, pride, envy,

depression, guilt, shame, lust, greed, and so on. Jesus brings the grace of forgiveness of sins, peace, joy and the overflowing love of God. Jesus gives the Holy Spirit with his power and wisdom to strengthen our hearts and to guide our way. Anyone who accepts Jesus' message of the kingdom has paradise in their hearts right now, and assurance of eternal life in the world to come.

Many people associate preaching with delivering the Sunday message or a conference message. To be sure, that is preaching. But Jesus said, "As you go, preach this message...." This preaching is not only done in a formal worship service, but "as you go." It is sharing the message of the kingdom with a fellow passenger on an airplane or while riding the CTA bus. It is sharing the message with fellow students between classes or with fellow workers during lunch break. We UBF people like to do it on a one-to-one basis through Bible study. What makes it preaching is not the style of delivery or the setting, but the conviction in our hearts that this message is true and that whoever accepts it will have eternal life in the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, we must ask God for faith and heavenly conviction. That is why we pray before each Bible study or message for the work of the Holy Spirit.

Here we must also consider the contents of our preaching or Bible teaching. There are many books of the Bible and many things to learn from the Bible. Some people have done fascinating and very useful studies on the dietary laws and developed diets and exercise plans for proper body maintenance for a long life of useful service to God. While this may give tremendous benefit for a fellow believer in Christ, it is not what an unbeliever needs to hear. The most urgent need for anyone who does not know Christ is to hear the message of the kingdom and believe. We

must have a sense of urgency about this and we must focus our messages, Bible studies and conversations with unbelievers on the kingdom of heaven.

Instruction three: “Heal the sick.” Look at verse 8a. “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.” Jesus’ primary reference is to healing the sick. Jesus carried out physical healing to reveal God’s compassion on people. Jesus is concerned about each person while they live in this world. Jesus wants to touch people with his love in ways that relieve their suffering and bring solutions to their life problems. We must be concerned about the colds and flus, headaches and weight problems of college students. We must also be concerned about other practical problems. We must help them to succeed in school study, overcoming their fatalism about homework. We must help them negotiate their way through a morally corrupted moral environment and to live a pure life for the glory of God until they can marry a godly person by faith. We must also help those who have stumbled morally to accept the grace of forgiveness of sins and to find new hope to live a glorious life by Jesus’ grace. Healing the sick also includes healing the spiritual sicknesses in young people. This all requires spiritual strength and the compassionate heart of our Lord Jesus.

Instruction four: “freely give and depend on God for everything.” Look at verses 8b-9. “Freely you have received, freely give. Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep.” Jesus’ disciples received his calling and his empowerment for service by the one-sided grace of Jesus. Remembering Jesus’ grace, they must also give freely as they serve others in Christ. They must not try to make a business out of healing the sick. Once a man called Simon the sorcerer saw that the Holy Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands. He tried

to buy the gift of God with money, and Peter rebuked him sternly. This was Balaam's error. He tried to make money from the exercise of spiritual gifts. He became so foolish that he was rebuked by his donkey. Jesus' people must be very prayerful about receiving favor in return for their spiritual blessing. If they do so, they cease to work for God and begin to work for money. Disaster will follow. On the other hand, when we remember Jesus' marvelous grace and freely serve others with the exercise of our spiritual gifts, we please God. We bless others and reveal God's glory. The joy he gives us is overflowing and abundant, beyond compare with any kind of worldly reward.

Though they were to serve others freely, Jesus told them not to take any gold or silver or other extra material things with them on the journey. They were to go just as they were. This instruction has been misunderstood, just like the first one was. This instruction was temporary in nature. Later Jesus rescinded this instruction (Lk 22:35,36). At the time, however, he wanted his disciples to practice it. The simple principle behind it is that they should depend on God for their material needs. They should be free to give their full attention to spiritual work. Jesus concluded, "the worker is worth his keep." God is pleased to provide all necessary things for his servants who devote themselves to preaching and healing. Those who work wholeheartedly for Jesus can receive God's provision with a clear conscience and deep gratitude. Moreover, when we depend on God, we can live before God alone, and be free from undue influence caused by material dependency.

Instruction five: "search for some worthy person." Look at verses 11-13.

"Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to

you.” Although the disciples preach the message of the kingdom freely to anyone and everyone, when they had to decide where to stay they needed to exercise great wisdom. Jesus told them to search for some worthy person. We remember Abraham’s servant when he was searching for a wife for Abraham’s son Isaac. He was very prayerful and had definite criteria in mind when he prayed for God to lead him to the right person. Through his prayerful and wise search he found just the right person for Isaac. Jesus’ disciples must make the same kind of prayerful search for a worthy person in whatever town they entered. Obviously, there is usually someone in each town whom God particularly wants to bless through his servants. God prepares some people in advance for the gospel message and sends his servants to them according to his will, as he sent Peter to Cornelius’ house. The gospel is the most precious treasure . Jesus’ disciples must find a worthy person with whom to entrust it. When they find him they must stay with him. They must not move around according to convenience, but stay with the person God leads them to and commit themselves to serving him with the gospel. When they did so, the peace of God would rest on that home and the abundant blessing of God would overflow on that house.

Instruction six: “shake the dust off your feet.” Look at verses 14-15. “If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.” When the disciples were rejected they should not take it personally. It was Jesus and his kingdom which were being rejected. Those who reject Jesus make a reservation for the fiery lake of burning sulfur without exception. The disciples should dissociate themselves from such people and go on to preach the good news to those who will listen.

Instruction seven: “be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” Look at verse 16. “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” Though the disciples had great spiritual authority from Jesus, their situation in the world was precarious. They were like sheep among wolves. There were vicious and dangerous people in the world who would try to deceive them and make use of them causing great damage to them if they could. They needed godly wisdom to recognize the evils of the world and to avoid dangerous people and the devil’s schemes. They needed to be shrewd in understanding rather than naive. At the same time they needed to maintain their absolute purity and innocence in doing God’s work. Jesus’ heart was full of God’s compassion toward his disciples as he gave them these instructions. He knew that they were facing danger and that their lives would be at risk. Jesus loved them dearly. But Jesus sent them as God the Father sent him into a dangerous world to plant the compassion of God and to bring the message of the kingdom of heaven.

In this passage we learned that Jesus gave his twelve disciples authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. This is essential for shepherds. It comes from prayer and the word of God. Let’s renew our decisions to pray and obey the word of God.