

The Mission of the Church

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Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0 : 0 0] Please open up your Bibles to Matthew chapter 9. We're at the end of chapter 9, starting in verse 35. Heavenly Father, we worship you because you are high and holy.

And yet, you also inhabit those who are lowly and humble in heart. You have shown us compassion and mercy in sending your only Son, Jesus Christ, as the good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep.

It's because of Him we have been made new, we have eternal life, and we have gathered here to worship you with joy and thanksgiving.

And now we ask you, Father, speak to us in the reading and preaching of your Word. Because we want to be governed and directed and transformed by your Word.

Encourage and build up your saints here this morning as witnesses of Jesus, as ambassadors of reconciliation, as those who go out and make disciples of all nations.

[2 : 0 4] in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If you are able, please stand and join me as I read God's Word.

Let's honor God by standing together. Starting in chapter 9, verse 35. And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction.

When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Then He said to His disciples, The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

And He called to Him, His twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal every disease and every affliction.

[3 : 1 5] The names of the twelve apostles are these. First, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew, the tax collector, James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thetius, Simon the zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him.

These twelve, Jesus sent out, instructing them, Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and proclaim as you go, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying, give without pay. Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey or two tunics or sandals or a staff.

For the laborer deserves his food. And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it.

And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet and when you leave that house or town.

[4 : 43] Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

Please be seated. One of Matthew's distinctives as a gospel is that it is structured around five major teaching discourses of Jesus.

We looked at the first one, which was a Sermon on the Mount in chapters five to seven, and we're now on the second of the five discourses. The first discourse focused on the topic of righteousness. This second topic focuses on mission, which is really a buzzword among many church circles.

When we began our planning process about 12 years ago to start this church, everyone told me that I should write a mission statement.

If you visit any local church's website nowadays, you will most likely find on some prominent page a mission statement and or a vision statement.

[5 : 49] The idea that an organization should have a clear purpose and a guiding principle is, of course, nothing new. It's been around for thousands of years.

However, the idea of having a formal, concise mission statement that's memorable for people is a more recent innovation from the corporate world. In the 1970s, influential business thinkers like Peter Drucker emphasized that businesses should articulate a purpose statement, a clear purpose statement.

And then in the 1980s, as strategic planning became popular, the idea of writing formal mission and vision statements became widespread throughout corporate America. This trend then spread to nonprofits, schools, and universities throughout the 80s and the 90s.

And then finally, in the 90s, it made its way into churches, heavily influenced by the church growth movement led by pastors like Pastor Rick Warren and Bill Hybels. And since then, much ink has been spilled debating what the mission of the church is.

And Christians have gathered around many conferences and many congresses to discuss what is the mission of the church and how best we accomplish that mission. But what does Jesus have to say about all of this?

[7 : 07] What is the mission of the church according to Jesus who started the church, who built the church, and who continues to build the church to this day?

That's what Matthew 9, 35 to 10, 15 teaches us. And here we see the principles that Jesus gives us but also the pattern that he sets for us. And he says that we are authorized by Jesus to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom and make disciples who will.

That's the main point of this passage. And I'm going to address this passage in three points. First, why the laborers are needed. And then second, who the laborers are. And third, what the laborers do.

Verse 35 summarizes what Jesus has been doing over the last several chapters. Jesus went throughout the cities and villages, the densely populated cities as well as the more sparsely populated villages, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and affliction, it says.

This is the good news. That's what the gospel means. The good news of the kingdom. The good news of the kingdom is that God's appointed king, the messianic king, the promised king has come.

[8 : 18] And because of that, regime change is afoot in the world. This king, Jesus, binds Satan who is elsewhere called in scripture as the ruler of this sinful world.

And Jesus redeems a people for himself, inaugurating his kingdom. And therefore, it calls, when Jesus proclaims the kingdom in Matthew 4, 17, he says, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Jesus is saying, now is the time of that regime change. And if you want to be on the right side of history, if you want to follow King Jesus, then now is the time to turn away from your former allegiances in following the prince, the ruler of this world, the devil, and pledging allegiance instead to Jesus.

And if Jesus is here as the king, of course, with any regime change, there are sweeping policy changes and the way he governs is different.

And that's what we see as the signs of the kingdom, that the kingdom has dawned upon this age. And that's why he heals, that's why he casts out demons. These are all signs of the kingdom that has come.

[9 : 25] That's why in Matthew 12, 28, Jesus says, if it is by the spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. The kingdom has come because the Christ, the king, has come.

And good news for us is that this king, this new king who rules, is merciful and compassionate. It says in verse 36, when he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

At first, it seems a little unnatural to go from talking about kingdom and kings to talk about sheep and shepherds. But these two ideas are actually intimately related in scripture.

In Matthew 2, verse 6, it cited Micah 5, verse 2, which prophesied that from the tribe of Judah would come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.

Rulers in scripture are often described as shepherds. When God appointed Joshua to succeed Moses, for example, in Numbers 27, he did so so that Joshua shall go out before them and come in before them who shall lead them out and bring them in that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep that have no shepherd.

[10 : 39] It is the responsibility of shepherds to go out and come in before the sheep to scout out the land to see where the green pastures are, where the still waters are, to look out for potential predators and threats to the sheep, to ward them off when they come for the sheep, to tend for the sick and the wounded sheep, to be always a step ahead of the sheep so that he can chart the course and show them the way to follow.

For these reasons, the image of a shepherd was a popular one in scripture for a leader or a king. Unfortunately, in the history of God's people that we see throughout the Old Testament, all human kings fell short of God's ideal and standard.

They did not fulfill the God-given responsibilities of shepherds and rulers. For example, in Ezekiel 34, God passionately denounces the shepherd kings of Israel for not feeding their flock and instead gorging themselves upon the fat sheep and clothing themselves with the wool of the sheep.

And then God says to them, the weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.

So they were scattered because there was no shepherd and they became food for all the wild beasts. That's God's assessment of the shepherd kings of Israel.

[12 : 13] And then God makes a shocking, a breathtaking promise. He says, Behold, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out as a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered.

So will I seek out my sheep and I will rescue them from all the places they have been scattered and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel by the ravines. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep and I myself will make them lie down.

I will seek the lost and I will bring back the strayed and I will bind up the injured and I will strengthen the weak. After seeing how the shepherd kings of Israel have failed, God looks and says, No more of this.

I myself will come to shepherd my people. And then, a few chapters later in Ezekiel 37 verse 24, God says that his rule, God himself, his rule as a shepherd over Israel will come in the form of a new David.

He says, My servant David shall be king over them and they shall all have one shepherd. But that raises some questions, right? How can God himself be the shepherd but also how can this shepherd be a David?

[13 : 34] Aren't those two things mutually exclusive? Well, that's those two options find their reconciliation and unity in Jesus Christ.

That's why Matthew has been taking pains to demonstrate to us that Jesus is a son of David from the lineage of the kings of David from the Davidic line.

And that's why he also told us specifically in Matthew 3.17 that Jesus is the son of God. Jesus is the son of God who has taken on human flesh.

The incarnate God. God in human flesh. Jesus has come as God himself to shepherd his people and as the new and better David to shepherd his people.

To take them to green pastures and to bind up the wounded. That's the good news of the kingdom of God. In the course of his ministry of course Jesus sees many people ministers to many crowds and his assessment after that period of ministry reflects God's heart from Ezekiel 34.

[14 : 42] When he saw the crowds he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Sheep are famously helpless without shepherds.

I'm sure very few of you if any have experienced shepherding sheep but I have read that sheep have such a bad sense of direction they're not like cats and dogs you know you leave them out they'll go out and wonder and find food and they'll come back to their home or they'll know where to go to get food.

Sheep are not like that. They don't have a good sense of direction and so they actually get lost and they often wonder and they don't know how to find their way back to the green pastures that they had fed on the day before and so that's why they need shepherds to guide them.

Not only that the sheep are also naturally defenseless like you've seen sheep right? They don't have sharp claws they don't have sharp teeth they're also not very fast right?

And so when predators come after them they kind of get eaten right? And they don't have a way to they can't camouflage they can't fly they don't have anything that really many of these other animals have.

[16 : 00] They're very defenseless naturally. Sheep also tend to get spooked very easily so they you can just startle them and then they'll just like dash off blindly and sometimes when they're spooked like that they'll run off cliffs.

So sheep are famously helpless without their shepherds and that's why that image is used again and again that God's people would not be like a sheep like sheep without a shepherd and isn't that a true assessment of what we all were like before Jesus found us?

We were all lost following the course of this world following the patterns of this broken and sinful world looking for some semblance of order and purpose and meaning and fulfillment and despairing.

Aren't we all running after the pleasures of sin in search of some fulfillment only to learn that sin is always a game of diminishing returns.

It always gives you less and less and less only to drive you further in deeper into sin and more sin and more sin until you are no longer enjoying any of the pleasures of your enslaved by it.

[17 : 22] When we all search for love but learn that there's no security in the fickle love of man we were worn down rejected hated we have all sought peace and freedom of conscience but we're constantly plagued by unresolved guilt shame and self loathing in this sin ravaged world rife with disasters diseases death infested with demons we were lost harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd that's what we all were like apart from Christ but thanks be to God that God sent a shepherd and our good shepherd is not indifferent to our plight he says Jesus has compassion for the sheep that's a lovely word it's a word that means to have pity to show sympathy feel sympathy for someone when you see the need or plight of someone else when you see someone in need their plight and then you feel that lump in your throat or when you feel that tears walling up in your eyes when you feel like your heart is lurching forward to do something to meet that need that's what we call compassion and that's what Jesus feels for those who are harassed and helpless and his compassion prompts

Jesus to turn to his disciples and say this in verses 37 to 38 the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few therefore pray earnestly!

to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest Jesus is switching metaphors once again now going to the metaphor of the harvest it's teaching us he's teaching us through this that we need to proclaim the gospel because there are many who need to hear the gospel and be saved in Jeremiah 2 verse 3 God describes his people Israel as the first fruit of his harvest the harvest represents those who belong to God those who will come to him and the fact that Israel is called the first fruit means that there's the rest of the fruit that is still to come and that's the fruit that Jesus is speaking of here this metaphor also conveys the urgency of our mission because farmers must reap the crops while they are ripe in a timely manner because there is a narrow window during which they can achieve peak yield and peak quality of the crops if you wait too long they'll be destroyed by pests or by cold weather or they will spoil and be less flavorful

Jesus is saying that the fields are white for harvest he says in John 4 35 to 36 that already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life he's saying the time is now there are people who are ready to hear the gospel and believe right now this verse single-handedly dispels an insidious lie that I believe the enemy has sown among many of God's people how many times have you thought to yourself nobody's interested in Christianity nowadays if I tell people about Jesus I'm only going to face rejection I've even heard pastors say here in New England that it feels like we are fishermen crowding over a small pond that only has a few fish left in it but Jesus does not say that the harvest is scanty while the laborers are many he says the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few the condo building that I live in has 55 units there are a few

Christians in the building I'm really grateful that I don't know if Seblee is here today Seblee has been living there as long as we have with her husband Teodoro and their faithful believers and I'm also really grateful that we recently had Gary and Natalie move into the building we almost got Tony but we didn't and I'm grateful for more Christians coming to the building because that's more laborers over the last several years and I'm kind of ashamed to admit this but I've only shared the gospel with a few of my neighbors in the building but if there were more of us sharing with a few more couldn't we reach more isn't there a harvest that is ready to be harvested to be reaped crops that are white for the harvest what we need more is not more harvest it's more labors that are needed why do we celebrate and rejoice and thank God when we grow as a church it's not because we like big churches in fact

[22 : 28] I think I've heard many of you say that you don't like big churches we rejoice because it means that we are adding more labors that will be trained and sent out for this ripe harvest Romans 10 13 to 14 says everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved how then will they call on him in whom they have not believed and how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard and how are they to hear without someone preaching and how are they to preach unless they are sent and how can more gospel laborers!

be sent Jesus! tells us here in Matthew 9:38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest because God is the one who ultimately raises up laborers so we must pray pray for more laborers send more laborers and laborers go and proclaim the gospel so that people might hear and those who hear might believe and those who believe will be saved the Lord is still whom shall I send who will go for us and which of us will say here I am send me that brings me to my second point who the laborers are the need for laborers highlighted earlier in chapter 9:35 to 38 leads directly to Jesus sending out his 12 disciples that he has already called to himself into the harvest field chapter 10 verse 1 summarizes the disciples mission and that closely echoes

Jesus mission in chapter 9 verse 35 like teacher like student all three of the synoptic gospels those are Matthew Mark and Luke they list the 12 disciples of Jesus and they are identical in verse 2 these are identified as 12 apostles the word apostle is simply a noun form of the Greek verb that means to send which is used in verse 5 when it says that these 12 apostles because they are the sent ones the term apostle has a range of meaning in scripture it can refer to the 12 apostles the 12 that are mentioned here and to carry special authority and on judgment day God says Jesus says in Matthew 19:28 that these 12 will sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel so that's a close number and the 12 is obviously significant because there's 12 tribes of Israel so they're the ones who are really the founding members who govern and will judge the people of

God under God's authority under Christ's authority so they're the 12 and the 12 is significant because that's why when Judas is scared he betrays Jesus and leaves the number of the 12 in Acts 1 they have to refill that number and they add Matthias that's a 15 verses 5-7 which specifically distinguishes the 12 from these apostles and these apostles are those who have seen the resurrected Jesus and was commissioned by him to bear witness to him to lay the foundation of the church these are the we might call capital A apostles we see in 1 Corinthians 9:1 that one of the criterion to be this kind of apostle to occupy this office of apostle Jesus and so we would put in this category James the brother of Jesus who was called an apostle in Acts 15 but also the apostle Paul who calls himself the one untimely born because he didn't see the resurrected

Jesus in the flesh but rather in the vision later on after his ascension so this office of apostleship no longer exists because that foundation was already laid Ephesians 2:20 says that these apostles are the foundation of the church and they are no longer any more eyewitnesses of the risen Jesus and so that's why the office of apostle no longer exists however there is still a third category of apostles in scripture that are mentioned and those who have the apostolic gift and function but not the title or the office because those no longer exist these are what we called church planting missionaries like Barnabas as well as pastors and teachers like Apollos who travel around as well as messengers!

[27 : 00] and envoys like Epaphroditus mentioned in Philippians 2:25 so various roles of different levels of intensity can be described classified under the term loosely apostle because they all have in common the fact that they were sent out by the local church to fulfill!

a specific ministerial task so all that aside this word we're talking about here is the twelve apostles the most exclusive category of apostles and even though they have much privilege and prestige as the twelve and you would think that they would be very impressive individuals that Jesus has chosen but it's actually quite far from that first it says Simon who is called Peter Peter is listed first in every list of the twelve apostles and Matthew specifically designates him the first because he is the first among equals he is the undisputed leader among the twelve this is why Jesus gives him the keys of the kingdom of heaven later in Matthew 16:19 not for him to possess the key all by himself but as a representative of the twelve who is then the representative of the church Jesus gives him later the name

Peter but Matthew already anticipates that here Peter is as probably many of you know is a lowly smelly fisherman as we saw earlier in chapter four him and his brother Andrew are both fishermen and James and John the two sons of Zebedee are also fishermen!

it's no wonder that later in Acts chapter four verse 13 the Jewish intellectual class the Jewish religious elites They observe Peter and John preaching the gospel boldly and then they marvel that they were uneducated common men this should be an encouragement to all of us most of us here if you're not a kid you're already more educated than these apostles if these if Peter Andrew James and John had to take a census survey they will probably mark their education attainment level as high school diploma or below why does God call why does Jesus call these uneducated common men it says in 2nd Corinthians 4 7 to show that surpassing power belongs to God and not to us so don't be discouraged that some others in the church seem to know more theology than you you don't need a seminary degree to share the gospel with your family and your friends and your neighbors though

I do hope some of you do train that way let's look at a few more names it's just a different way to say Judas in the same way we call Daniel Lee Dane because we have like five other Daniels remarkably all our Daniels are very wonderful people and love them all in verse 4 Simon is further identified as the zealot to distinguish him from Simon Peter this term means that Simon was full of zeal but also it could be a more technical meaning to say that he belonged to the revolutionary group that were called the zealots they were out to overthrow the Roman occupiers and if that's the case then it's remarkable that Jesus includes in his inner circle the twelve Matthew the tax collector on the one end who is aiding and abetting the Roman oppressors and

[31 : 05] Simon the zealot who is trying to overthrow the Romans shows that Jesus is capable of leading and bringing people together from across the political divide which he has done in our church also as long as we continue to humble ourselves and submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of his word I also find it deeply moving that Matthew who is the author of this gospel he could have described any of the apostles in any way he wanted to and when he mentioned himself Matthew he could have conveniently omitted the fact that he was a tax collector which is an embarrassing personal detail but Matthew includes that he didn't need the extra identifier because there's no other disciple named Matthew you could just say Matthew and we know who you are but he says Matthew the tax collector it's as if Matthew is still marveling himself Jesus called me the tax collector wonder the disbelief the gratitude because tax collectors were despised by all the

Jewish compatriots because of their participation cooperation with the Romans and because they often overtaxed their fellow Jews to enrich themselves so the word tax collector became a byword among the Jews it means sinner that's why Pharisees say in chapter 9 verse 11 they complain about Jesus saying why do your teacher why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners to which Jesus replies those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick for I came not to call the righteous but sinners note that Jesus admits here that tax collectors are sinners he doesn't say oh no these tax collectors are not as bad as you think no he says yeah yeah they are they're bad yeah they're sinners and that's exactly why I came are you a sinner have you sinned grievously do you feel at times spiritually sick and weak do you deserve the judgment and punishment of the holy god yes yes yes

I can check all of those boxes and yet Jesus came to save us has Jesus secured for us forgiveness and healing through his death on the cross does Jesus justify the unrighteous and does Jesus now call us to be his disciples and to proclaim the good news of his kingdom to the ends of the earth that too is yes yes yes this is why Jesus calls Judas Iscariot to be one of his disciples even though we find out in chapter 26 verse 25 Jesus already knew that Judas would betray him and yet Jesus chose him and included him and went around with him all throughout his ministry because Jesus knew that it was his heavenly father's purpose that he would be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and die a sinner's death on the cross and to be raised from the dead so that we who trust in him might receive forgiveness of sin and eternal life so we are the laborers having addressed why the laborers are needed and who the laborers are let's not turn to what the laborers actually do

Jesus as he sends them out instructs them in verses 5-7 go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and proclaim as you go saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand again the message is identical to this message that Jesus has been proclaiming all along since chapter 4 verse 17 Jesus the messianic king has come the kingdom is breaking in so repent turn from your sinful ways and pledge allegiance to this new king and then Jesus continues in verse 8 amen you guys can take some notes from Theo over there says in verse 8 heal the sick raise the dead cleanse lepers cast out demons again signs of the in breaking of the kingdom of God these examples are carefully chosen because these are the exact things that Jesus just did in the last two chapters

Jesus is again sending out his disciples to do exactly what he has been doing and authorizing them giving them the authority to be able to do what Jesus has been doing and we see this throughout the gospels but especially in the book of Acts after the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost we see the disciples of Christ doing all of these things healing the sick casting out demons even raising the dead in Acts 9 and Acts 20 these miracles continue to happen to this day throughout the world especially in frontier mission settings where the good news of Jesus Christ is going forth in the power of Holy Spirit for the first time it does happen still in a more limited way in our world in our part of the world there can be many reasons why we don't see as many miracles like this in the western world first reason is our pervasive materialism and a consequent lack of faith that God can move in these ways as I talked about last week faith is a prerequisite for

[37 : 07] Jesus miraculous healing! It says in Matthew 13 53 to 58 that Jesus did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief I think that's often the case here second reason is that God often uses natural means to heal where they are available also for example in 1st Timothy 5 23 Paul tells Timothy stop drinking just water drink some wine why does he tell him to do that because he has frequent!

stomach drinking unclean water drink some wine he prescribes a natural remedy he doesn't just tell him hey pray for healing and just wait for it in Joshua 5 verses 10 to 12 after the Israelites finally cross the wilderness and enter into the promised land they celebrate the Passover there and then it says the day after the Passover on the very day they ate of the produce of the land unleavened manna seized the day after they ate of the produce of the land and there was no longer manna for the people of Israel but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year why is that this is because God can provide supernaturally by raining bread from heaven like he did in the wilderness and sending manna but he can also provide for his people by leading them natural means for healing and more of it available

I think there's less of this kind of miraculous healing that God sometimes does he uses both means that's a digression if you have questions about that I'd be happy to talk about that further but let's return to the text Jesus continues his instruction in verse 8 you receive without paying give without pay none of us should ever proclaim the gospel for hold up first pay up what you surprised you thought something amazing like this would be free pay up and then I'll tell you the good news of Jesus Christ that's an obscene thing to do Romans 6 23 says the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord it's free for us not because it's worthless but because the heavy cost was borne not by us but by

God himself in sending his only son Jesus Christ to die on the cross it's the blood of his only son the death of his only son that has secured our atonement our salvation our eternal life Jesus has traded places with us sinners getting the death wrath and punishment that we can receive in his place the glory and eternal life that only he deserved if God has paid such a high cost to offer this gift of salvation free of charge then who are we to say pay me and I'll tell you the gospel you received without paying give without pay Jesus also says in verses 9 to 10 acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts no bag for your journey or two tunics or sandals or a staff for the laborer deserves his food Jesus is explicitly!

telling his disciples to carry no extra provisions for their missionary journey the sandals on their feet and the tunics on their back are sufficient don't take a second one an extra one is what Jesus is saying that's why he says don't take two tunics or sandals what's the reason for this command Jesus tells us for the laborer deserves his food Jesus expects his disciples to receive food and lodging from the people that they share the gospel with because the worker is worthy of his keep note that it says that the laborer deserves his food that's referring to the necessary provisions not lavish salary bonuses what they need to live on should be enough they are not to acquire any more than that they are not to charge for their gospel ministry it is wrong therefore for vocational pastors and missionaries who make their living from preaching the gospel to enrich themselves from the gospel they should consider the cost of living in their area the median income and receive a reasonable amount to support themselves and their respective families and not see their ministry as a job only or merely a career from which to advance themselves and enrich themselves

[42 : 11] Jesus intentionally sends out the twelve with a calculated! deficit as one Bible commentator puts it so that they learn to depend on God's provision daily I know nowadays we don't pay with food anymore if you look at historical records of old Puritan ministers in the US like Jonathan Edwards he kind of kept the diary of I got paid today in this in some grain I got paid this time in sheep or people really paid them like that I mean! you guys could pay me like that if you want to give me food none of you guys have that kind of practical jobs which is why as a church we pay a salary to our ministers but we calculate it based on what is needed to live here notice the repetition of the word worthy in the following verses there's a play on this word worthy when it says in verse 10 that the laborer!

deserves! his food is used in verse 11 and verse 13 the laborer!

it is not worthy let your peace return to you who is a worthy host who is what is a worthy house it's those who receive the gospel labor who is worthy of his food the idea of letting your peace come upon a household is not a mere formality it's not just referring to greeting in this culture but it's a real effective blessing from God God bestows this blessing of peace upon people who receive his messengers his representatives and who hear and receive the gospel of Jesus Christ but if people reject his messengers and refuse them hospitality the peace of God that they hold out and offer these disciples of Jesus will return to them like an unopened mail return to sender and we can see how seriously God takes the treatment of his labors in verses 14 to 15 and if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that town or house truly

I say to you it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town I mean shaking off the dust is a fairly self explanatory image it's saying basically it's a sign of judgment saying I don't have anything more to do with this town you're cutting ties and moving on that's what that represents and Jesus says that when towns reject his messengers!

[45 : 11] that's pretty severe because if you remember from the Bible story Sodom is like the Bible sin city it's the last Vegas of the ancient Near East I'm sorry if any of you guys are from there yeah the it's the God literally destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone that's where we get that phrase and God says those who reject my followers when they proclaim the gospel Jesus has come and now they have received an even greater and fuller revelation of God in Jesus Christ and because of that they are more accountable than the preceding generations this is a tremendously empowering reality we too like the twelve are authorized by Jesus to go and proclaim the gospel of the kingdom and make disciples who will do the same and those who reject us in our message will be rejected by

God himself now as I apply this passage to ourselves in this manner I do want to add a few caveats because the mission of the twelve in this passage is not exactly the same as our mission first in verses five to six Jesus specifically instructed the twelve to go nowhere among the Gentiles or among the Samaritans but to go only to the fellow Jews why because this is the order of God's redemptive historical work Jesus says in John 4 22 that salvation is from the Jews and Jesus was a Jewish Messiah who fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies to his Jewish people and was said at his birth in Matthew 1 21 that he will save his people from their sins it's not until after his death and resurrection after Jesus has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles by fulfilling the law of Moses on the cross as it says in Ephesians 2 14 15 that his people comes to include not only the

Jews but also the Samaritans and Gentiles that's why it's only after Jesus death and his resurrection that he gives the great commission Matthew 28 19 go therefore and make disciples of all nations and in Acts 1 8 you will receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you and you will be my witnesses!

in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria the Samaritans and to the ends of the earth to the Gentiles so our mission is more expansive than that of the 12 here in chapter 10 of Matthew Jesus there's another second caveat Jesus also allows us to take more provisions into the mission field than the 12 I'm not making that up just because we're less hardcore than the disciples because it's after giving the 12 the same instructions as here in Matthew 10 in Luke chapter 10 Jesus modifies his instructions to his apostles in Luke 22 25 to 37 just before his arrest and crucifixion and this is what he says to them there when I sent you out with no money bag or knapsack or sandals did you lack anything they said nothing he said to them but now let the one who has a money bag take it and likewise a knapsack and let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one for

I tell you that this scripture must be fulfilled in me and he was numbered with the transgressors for what is written about me has its fulfillment so Jesus explicitly modifies this instruction and tells them to take some provisions with them because Jesus has been treated as a sinner he is betrayed!

[48 : 54] and crucified and killed and now the sinful world will treat them the same way and they can no longer expect the kind of going among the lost people of Israel among the fellow Jews so they must take provisions with them so this is why missions organizations that try to practice this literally and then will just like helicopter drop to missionaries with nothing and expect them to get hospitality from the people around them is actually misguided they're not getting this right but apart from these differences I do believe that we are called to the same mission and proclaim the same gospel of the kingdom as the twelve apostles and I believe that Jesus has also given us the same authority because he says in the great commission in Matthew 28 verse 18 all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me therefore go and make disciples of all nations the apostles have laid the foundation as it says in Ephesians 2 20 and we now build upon that foundation by proclaiming the same gospel and

I believe that we are also to do the same works that they do with the signs of the kingdom that's why we believe that the gifts of the spirit and these works still happen to this day it says in Acts 8 that the Christians in Jerusalem when they were scattered by the persecution of Saul and the Jews that all the Christians there except for the apostles scattered away from Jerusalem and it says that as they were scattered it says in Acts 8 verse 4 they went about preaching the word and these are not apostles who are doing this and as they're doing this Philip was one of those who went there who were scattered and he says that his ministry was so effective that unclean spirits crying out with the later generations are likewise authorized by Jesus to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom and make disciples who will and this is an amazing thing to me again and again we have seen in the gospel of

Matthew that when he is surrounded by the crowds and being pressed in by the crowds Jesus turns his attention to his disciples he focuses on instructing the twelve he never once tries to mobilize an army to get all these people together and to storm the capital he does not ever occupy any political office and yet how did Jesus transform this world how did Jesus overturn really turn the Roman empire upside down how did Jesus do that without any earthly power or authority he did that by making twelve disciples it's what Robert E.

Coleman writes in his book the master plan of evangelism his concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes but with men whom the multitudes would follow people were to be his method of winning the world to God God includes us his sons and daughters in that amazing grand plan and so what we're doing here making a few disciples is not a small thing it's what changed the world and it's what will continue to by God's grace change the world so let's pray together and ask God to help us with that father how can it be that

Matthew the tax collector Sean the sinner that you would call us to be among your disciples that you would entrust to us your authority your mission Lord help us to steward it well help us be bold witnesses!

[53 : 25] of the gospel of Jesus Christ wherever we are not for our glory but for the glory of your name in Jesus name we pray amen