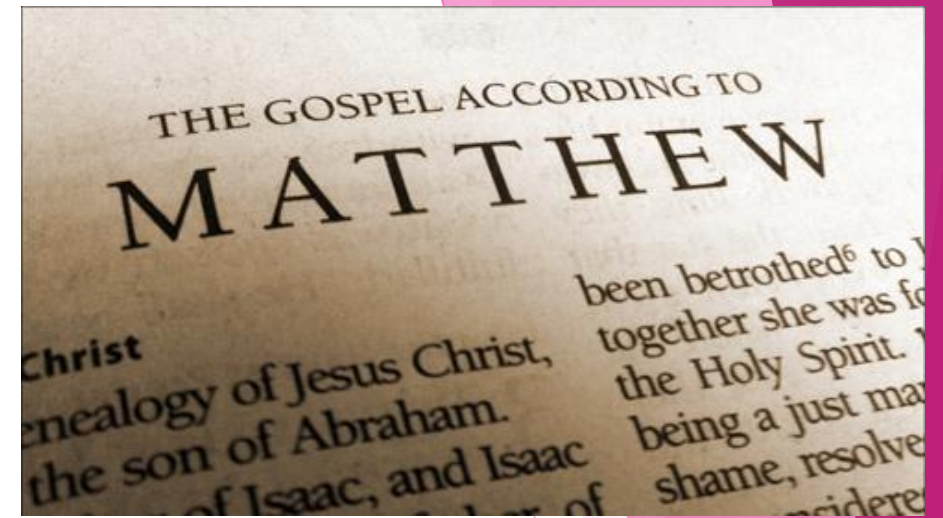




Matthew 10

The Missionary Discourse

The Gospel of Matthew



Matthew's Gospel includes **five distinct discourses.**

The First Discourse was one on discipleship;

In chapters 5-7 we read the **Sermon on the Mount.**

Chapter 10 is called the **“Missionary Discourse.”**

This chapter includes instructions to the Apostles as they take the message of Jesus out beyond their intimate community.

Other Discourses to come in Matthew

The Third Discourse is coming soon in chapter 13.

This is a **Collection of Parables**, many of which involve the Kingdom of God.

The Fourth Discourse includes “**Community Instructions**” in Chapters 14-17

The Fifth Discourse: is the “**Sermon on Eschatology**” or “**end times**” in Chapters 23-25

Introduction to the Missionary Discourse

- ▶ After we read about 10 acts of power, miracles and healings by Jesus in chapters 8 and 9 we read:

Matthew 9:35-38 Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness. 36

At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, *“The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; 38 so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.”*
(harvest is symbolic of judgment at end of time)

Israel as a flock of sheep



The metaphor of Israel as sheep is a common one in both Testaments. The pitfalls, trials and scattering of the flocks are also **common metaphors** used to describe the exiled Jews in Assyria and then in Babylon.

1 Kings 22:17 Then Micaiah answered, “I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the LORD said, ‘These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.’”

Numbers 27:15-17 Moses said to the LORD,

16 “May the LORD, the God who gives breath to all living things, appoint someone over this community **17** to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD’s people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.”³

Then He summoned the twelve...

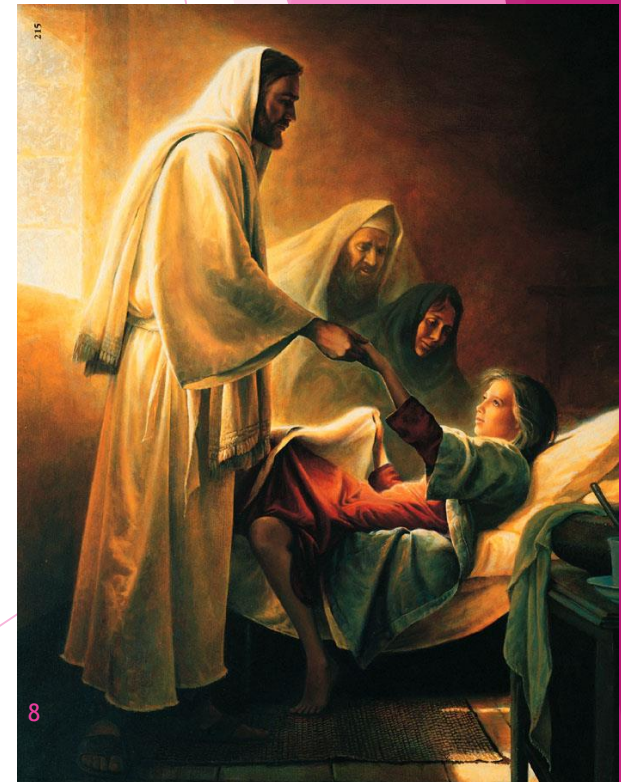
- ▶ Twelve is a symbolic number. It is considered a number of *perfect governance*.
- ▶ It also suggests the number of **tribes** that were formed from Jacob's (Israel's) progeny. The number would indicate to the first century Jews, that all of Israel was being represented!
- ▶ Matthew lists the names of the **Apostles in pairs**. They are given power to perform the **same acts of power and healing** that we saw Jesus carry out in the previous chapters.
- ▶ In the Gospel of Luke Jesus sends out the Twelve Apostles and later sends out 72 others **in pairs**. Traveling prophets or teachers usually did travel in pairs.
- ▶ In every list of the names of the Apostles, Peter's name always comes first.

Apostle or Disciple?

- ▶ Every Apostle is a disciple of Jesus, but not every disciple is an Apostle.
- ▶ A disciple is one who is learning or studying. John the Baptist had disciples and so did St. Paul. Preachers, teachers and philosophers had disciples.
- ▶ An Apostle is one **who is sent out to represent another**. The emphasis is on the person who is **sending**. The “apostle” of the emperor for instance is to be treated with the same respect as the emperor himself. He represents the emperor in his absence and has the same authority and power. The twelve Apostles of Jesus take on the powers of Jesus and the message or mission.

Their first instruction and initial task given to the Apostles includes a special gift..

- ▶ Then he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness. 10:1
- ▶ They are to mimic the actions of Jesus and all the works of power that we read about in chapters 8 and 9.



Do the Apostles actually perform miracles?

- ▶ Acts 3:6-7 Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.**” ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk.
- ▶ Luke 10:17 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”
- ▶ Acts 9:40 Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up.

Next, the Apostles called *to make a proclamation* about the Kingdom of God

- ▶ They are given instructions about how to begin their mission:

10:5-Jesus sent out these twelve after instructing them thus, “Do not go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ 8 Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons.



AND JESUS CALLED TO HIM THE TWELVE, AND BEGAN TO SEND THEM OUT TWO BY TWO, AND GAVE THEM AUTHORITY OVER THE UNCLEAN SPIRITS. (MARK 6:7)

The Mission begins

- ▶ Israel was about 1/3 the size of Florida today.
- ▶ At the beginning of the mission the Apostles are to ***avoid Samaria and pagan territories***. They are to begin with the “lost sheep of Israel.”
- ▶ The Samaritans and the Jews were constant adversaries. The Samaritans abandoned Jerusalem and established their own Temple and even a slightly different version of the Torah. They believe that only the Torah and ***not the works of the Prophets or Writings*** of the Hebrew Bible are authoritative. They did not believe in life after death or in a Messiah that would be a descendant of David. By the first century they were considered to be Gentiles and not truly Jews. Their ancestors were among those Jews defeated by the Assyrians (722 BC) and placed in exile in Samaria. They remained there and intermarried with the people of that region.

The Mission

- ▶ They are to *avoid Samaria*
- ▶ They are to proclaim the message of Jesus,
“The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
- ▶ This is the same message that John the Baptist proclaimed as well!
- ▶ They are called to cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons.



Poverty, humility, dependence on God, and non-violence.

- ▶ Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts;**10** no sack for the journey, or a second tunic, **or sandals**, or walking stick. The laborer deserves his keep.**11** Whatever town or village you enter, look for a worthy person in it, and stay there until you leave.**12** As you enter a house, wish it peace.**13** If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; if not, let your peace return to you.**14** Whoever will not receive you or listen to your words—go outside that house or town and shake the dust from your feet.

What does this mean? No Sandals? No Provisions for the trip?

- ▶ Hillel the Elder (110 BC- 10 AD) “One who makes worldly use of the “crown” of the Torah, shall waste away.”

It was forbidden to make a profit.. The gifts to heal and preach were free gifts from Jesus.

Wandering prophets and preachers would wear their garments until they wore out. For the Apostles, it was an act of humility and greater dependence on God. “God will provide.” In Matthew they are also to be barefoot! (In Mark they are to wear sandals.)

Staying in one place required patience and acceptance. You were not to leave a place merely because the surroundings were sparse or the food was bad.

Shalom - They enter the house of the worthy by offering peace and well being to the residents.

- ▶ How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!” (Isaiah 52:7)



- ▶ The Twelve are bringing the Messianic peace, the peace that restores the relationship with God.

Do not stay where you are not wanted..



- ▶ The Apostles are **not to argue** with those who reject the coming of the Kingdom of God.
- ▶ A common gesture of disapproval is to “shake off the dust from your feet”.
- ▶ Those who reject the message of God’s Kingdom are liable to the judgment of God alone.
- ▶ Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire **because they were uncharitable and abusive to strangers**, the poor, sick, and disadvantaged, and for rejecting God’s messengers.

Jesus Warns them about the difficult life to come-

- ▶ “Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves.
- ▶ The Apostles are identified as a part of the “sheep” who have been scattered without a leader. The leaders are in fact wolves in sheep’s clothing who will take notice of the Apostles as possible threats to the present order..

Like the prophets of the previous ages, the Apostles will also be persecuted, run out of town and ultimately will share the same fate that Jesus suffered.



Nature of the persecutions

- ▶ The persecutions noted in Matthew 10 are **Jew against Jew**. The persecutions come from within ones own family and from outside as well.
- ▶ **Paul spoke of his persecutions in 2 Cor 11:23-27**. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

Amidst all the warnings the Apostles are also called prophets



- ▶ When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say. ***You will be given at that moment what you are to say.*** 20 For it will not be you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. 21
- ▶ A true prophet is one who speaks the word of God. It is one who is inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak or act in a certain way. The words are not their own, they are God's words placed in their mouth.

What to do? What to expect?

- ▶ **As wonderful and healing the sick, driving out demons and proclaiming the word of God is, it is a very difficult path to take...**
- ▶ **When they persecute you in one town, flee to another. Amen, I say to you, you will not finish the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. 24 No disciple is above his teacher, no slave above his master. 25 It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, for the slave that he become like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household!**

Is the end near?

- ▶ The Apostles are urged to **flee persecution, not fight**, so they can preach to as many towns as possible while they can. There seems to be some urgency here. It could be the expectation that the “end times” are near.
- ▶ The “Son of Man” is ultimately to be the judge at the end of days. He is Jesus. 1st century Jews understood the “Son of Man” to be a Messianic figure. It can also suggest that the inauguration of the Kingdom of God will commence with the appearance of the Messiah.
- ▶ To become like Jesus, also means that the Apostles share his fate. They die brutal deaths and rise again.
- ▶ And so it was that all the Apostles except John died as martyrs for their faith.

If they have *called the master* of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household! 10:25

- ▶ Origin of name Beelzebul- “Baal-zebub” is a name used in 2 Kings 1:2-6 for the Philistine God of Ekron. It is a pun that means “Lord of the flies”. The root “Baal” means Lord, or God. “Zebul” means prince, but can also mean dung, or “enmity”. In the NT Beelzebul, is synonymous with Satan.
- ▶ So if they are calling your master the Satan, what do they believe about those in the household or family? Being an Apostle can mean being called an agent of the devil.

Flashback..... Matthew 12:24

- ▶ But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."
- ▶ Jesus was accused of being In league with the devil.



More Instructions 10:26-42

- ▶ Be not afraid
- ▶ What I say in the darkness, you tell it in the light.
- ▶ What you hear in the ear, proclaim on the housetops.

- ▶ Don't keep your light under a basket? Mat 5:5



Surely God will care for his messengers, and martyrs when he cares so well for the birds..



- ▶ And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, **be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.** ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge.³⁰ Even all the hairs of your head are counted.³¹ So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. (10:28-31)
- ▶ Recall Matthew 6:26
- ▶ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Sparrows



- ▶ These small birds were eaten by the poor. They were the cheapest that could be bought at the market.

Peace or sword?

- ▶ Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father.³³ But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father. “Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth. I have come to bring not peace but the sword.” (10:32-33)
- ▶ Of course the Prince of Peace **does** bring peace to those who enter into a restored relationship with God. But there is no peace for those who reject his invitation. He will in the end divide the good from the evil..



Jesus' message brings both salvation and judgment. It is a two-edged sword.

Rev 1:16

In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.



Discipleship and the Apostolic mission

Discipleship is a total commitment. It is not an easy path. One must take up his/her cross and follow Jesus. One must depend on God and not material goods.

There will be social disruption.

The Divine word causes division in families.

One who follows Jesus must be prepared to suffer and must persevere to the end.



Look at the “Big Picture”

- ▶ “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
- ▶ **The relationship between Jesus and his followers is a loving relationship. But when it comes to the mission of the Church or the “Big Picture” of things, the relationship with Jesus, and the ultimate goal of salvation must be a priority for the Apostles, the Apostolic mission of the Church.**

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

- ▶ The first idea of finding or saving your life is a reference to life in the material world. You may lose eternal life if you cling to the people and things of this world.
- ▶ If you cling to life in this world and ignore your spiritual life or relationship with God you lose everything.
- ▶ However, you follow Jesus and find your relationship with God takes priority over all else, you will indeed find eternal life.

There are rewards to those who accept God's messengers

- ▶ An Apostle is one who is sent out to represent another- we cannot all be apostles. So what are we as members of the Church community to do?
- ▶ “Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹ Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward.
- ▶ We are to accept the Apostles as we would Jesus.

The Missionary Discourse in review

The initial mission is to the children of Israel who are in covenant with Yahweh and to whom the kingdom of the Messiah has been promised.

▶ Jesus gave power and authority to the Apostles on their first mission to do the following:

Proclaim the coming of the Kingdom

To cast out unclean spirits (demons)

To cure every disease and illness

To raise the dead

To cleanse the impure

Rules of conduct on this first mission to Israel's lost sheep

They cannot go into pagan territory or Samaria.

They cannot charge for their acts of mercy

They are not to take any supplies for the journey, no money and **no sandals or a staff for protection**. They will **rely on God** to provide for them.

They can accept food and lodging from those who offer it and give those who are generous a blessing when they leave.

Where they are ill-treated, they must regard those Jews like Gentiles and shake the dust of that house off their feet

The authority to teach and to forgive sins will be given to them only **after Jesus' Resurrection** when they have been fully instructed by Him

What will happen to those who reject the Apostles?

The Judgement on them will be worse than it was for Sodom and Gomorrah.

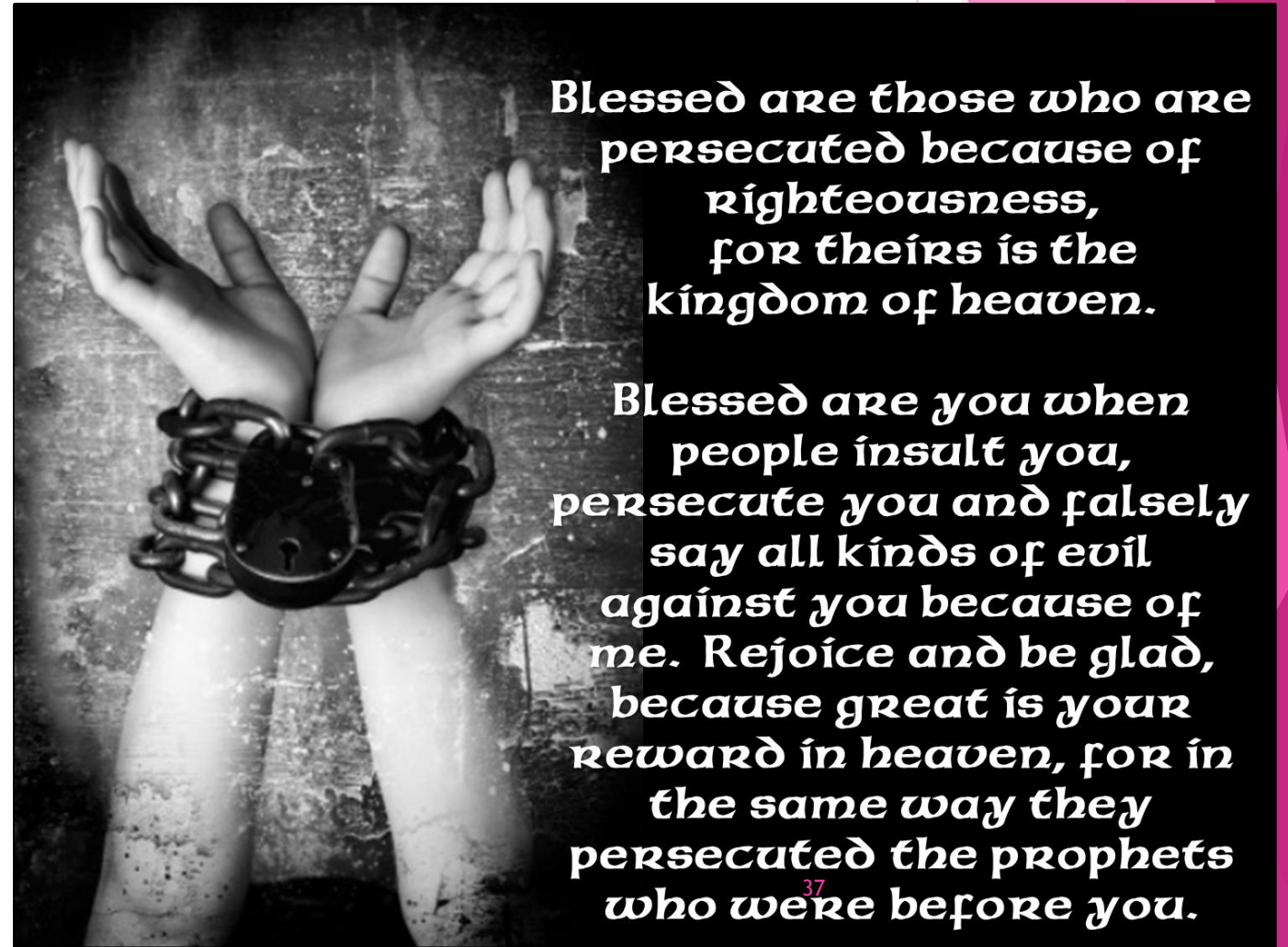


What can the Apostles expect the journey will be like?

- ▶ The journey is difficult
- ▶ They must pick up their cross and follow Jesus
- ▶ They will be persecuted by courts
- ▶ They will be rejected by family members
- ▶ They may have to choose between love of God and love of family.
- ▶ They will be called agents of Satan

What is the reward for accepting this path?

- ▶ Anyone who is willing to lose his earthly life for Jesus' sake is promised the reward of everlasting life in the Kingdom of heaven.
- ▶ Matt 5:10 →



What else are *we* called to do?

- ▶ And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”
- ▶ ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ Matthew 25:40
- ▶ Corporal and Spiritual Works of mercy!



Let us Pray

- ▶ Merciful Heavenly Father,
You sent Your Son to cure the sick, to offer forgiveness to sinners, and to comfort the afflicted. His mission of mercy did not end with His earthly ministry. He continues to call the faithful to receive healing for their infirmities, both spiritual and corporal. We come, therefore, Lord, with complete confidence to call upon Him when the struggles of this earthly exile become difficult to bear, and we are ever mindful of His compassion and love for us in our time of need. Please send us Your Most Holy Spirit to guide us, Lord, in our continuing study of the mission of the Messiah among His people in the Gospel of Matthew. We pray in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.