

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 9TH-10TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

THE TWELVE (MATTHEW 10:1-4)

In Matthew 5-9, Jesus demonstrated His authority- first through His teaching (ch. 5-7), then through His miracles (ch. 8-9).

- Now Jesus delegates authority to do exactly the same kinds of ministry He'd been doing to small group of His followers (vs. 1).
- Matthew has already recorded how five men were specifically called to be a part of this group (4:18-22, 9:9), and now we're given the rest of their names.

These men are called "disciples" (which means learner or pupil) in vs. 1.

- Matthew also uses the word "disciple" to describe others who weren't in this inner circle of 12 (8:21).
- These men were chosen for a unique and specific role in the mission of Jesus, and Matthew tells us in vs. 2 that it was to be an "apostle".
- This word comes from the Greek word, apostello, which means "to send forth with a commission".

In other words, these men were authoritative representatives to speak the message of the One who them.

- Their mission will be to spread the message of Jesus throughout Israel and establish the Church (through evangelism, miracles, teaching, and writing scripture) to continue the mission of Jesus.
- These men had a special office in the ministry of the early Church with certain qualifications.

But before they were the heroes we know them to be as the foundations of the church (Eph. 2:20), they were twelve, ordinary young men.

- Some of them could've been as young as 13, but most likely they were in their late teens/early 20s (Peter was probably the oldest).
- What Jesus was looking for when He selected these young men was not their ability, but rather their availability.

The number of these apostles is significant- 12 reflects the connection of Jesus' ministry to the history & fate of Israel.

- Jesus will promise the disciples that they'll sit on 12 thrones, judging the tribes of Israel.
- Matthew lists these men as- Simon Peter (the first to be called, the head of every list & eventual leader of the church) and Andrew his brother.

James & John (sons of Zebedee, "Sons of Thunder"), Philip & Bartholomew.

- Thomas ("Didymus" the twin, & the "doubter") and Matthew (the tax collector).
- James, son of Alphaeus (maybe Matthew's bro?, Mk. 2:14) Thaddeus (or Judas, Lk. 6:16).
- Simon the zealot (political activism) & Judas Iscariot ("from the village of Kerioth" or, sicarius, "knife man").

SENT OUT (MATTHEW 10:5-14)

Jesus gathers the 12 together to send them out to proclaim the news of the Kingdom (vs. 5).

- He tells them to whom they'll go (vs. 5-6), what they'll be doing (vs. 7-8), and how they're to do it (vs. 9-15).
- Jesus also gives us exceptional clarity in His Word on how we're to continue to spread of His Kingdom now.

TO WHOM THEY'LL GO (VS. 5-6)

- The target audience of the ministry for these 12 was Israel alone (vs. 6).
- It's not that Jesus didn't care about the rest of the world (28:19-20), it's just that Jesus was first offering the long-promised Kingdom to His own people Israel.
- They are to announce that the long awaited Messiah has come.

WHAT THEY'LL BE DOING (VS. 7-8)

- First, they'll be proclaiming ("preaching") that the Kingdom is at hand (vs. 7).
- Before they heal or perform any "mercy ministries", Jesus wants them to speak truth and address humanity's greatest need.
- Then as a demonstration of Jesus' power, authority, and heart of compassion and love, they're given instructions on how to meet the other needs of people.

Jesus tells them to go to the diseased, the dying, the despised, and the dirty (vs. 8).

- He commissions them to go to the people that the world ignored and oppressed- to the lowest of the low.
- They are to minister, love, and display the power of God "without pay", because they received those things without paying (vs. 8).

HOW THEY'RE TO DO IT (VS. 9-15)

- Next, Jesus commands them to travel without provisions (vs. 11) and to be totally dependent on Jewish hospitality (vs. 12-13).
- They weren't going alone- Matthew lists them in pairs (Mark 6:7, Luke 10:1).
- In each town they visit, they're to search someone who will welcome and assist them. They're to stay in that house until they leave and not go from door to door like beggars.
- They're to pronounce peace on the house (vs. 13), and if they or their message is not received they're to simply leave (vs. 14).
- They're only retaliation is to simply "shake the dust off their feet" and leave that place to the judgment of God (vs. 15).

PERSECUTION WILL COME (MATTHEW 10:15-23)

These 12 were being sent out in obedience with the message of love, truth & compassion (like "sheep") to an audience who may violently oppose them and their Master (like "wolves", vs. 16).

- So Jesus tells them to be "wise as serpents"- snakes are able to hide out of self-preservation.
- "Innocent as doves"- there's to be no ulterior motives or hidden agendas, only purity.

They're to be on their guard against men, who will deliver them over to courts and flog them in their synagogues (vs. 17).

- It might even earn them persecution from higher levels of authority (vs. 18).
- Every detail of this warning was eventually experienced by His followers- not just these 12, but through the ages of Church history, even today.

"When this happens", Jesus says, "don't worry about what to say or how to speak (vs. 19)- the Spirit of God will speak through you".

- This isn't a substitute for careful study and knowledge of God's Word.
- These are profoundly encouraging words to these 12 young men who were most likely feeling fear, insecurity, and inadequacy at the magnitude of this charge.

Jesus also predicts the dissolution of families because of Him- brothers, children, and parents will betray one another (vs. 21).

- In fact, all manner of people will hate these 12 because of their allegiance to Him (vs. 22a).
- But the disciple that continues to have obedient faith in Jesus until the end, even in the face of persecution, will be saved (vs. 22b).

Jesus tells them that when the persecution happens, they're to flee to the next town (vs. 23a).

- This isn't telling us that Christians aren't to speak the Gospel in difficult areas- it's a specific instruction to them to be careful because their ministry to spread the news of the Kingdom to these towns of Israel was vitally important.
- Jesus also tells them that they won't complete their mission before "the son of man comes" (vs. 23b).

Scholars agree that this is one of the more difficult verses in Matthew to interpret.

- Some believe Jesus was referring to the transfiguration in chapter 17, others believe that this is a reference to the coming of the "son of man's" judgment on Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
- Others believe that this is Jesus simply saying that even after He's resurrected and ascended into heaven, the job won't be finished.

Whatever is meant by this cryptic statement, the message from Jesus to these men is still clear- "we've got a lot of work to do, it's going to be difficult, but I'll be with you and it's going to be worth it."

- When we go into the world doing good deeds and helping people with their needs without saying anything about Jesus, the world is fine with that.
- But when we speak truth things get difficult.

When we go into the world and speak the truth that Jesus is the only way to be saved from sin, death, and hell- people respond much differently.

- Everyone who wants a safe, carefree life free from any danger, hardship, or criticism should just stay away from Jesus.
- To truly follow Him means joining Him in His work- and that means not everyone will like us and some may even hate us.

"SKANDALIZO" (MATT. 11:5-6)

WHAT IF...

- We stopped trying to change Jesus' message?
- We got obedient and actually made disciples?
- We followed Him even when we didn't feel like it?
- We leaned in to His Word and made His priorities ours?