

THE TWELVE APOSTLES SENT

BIBLE TEXT : Matthew 10:1-42

LESSON 81 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "For my yoke is *easy*, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Matthew 10:1-42 (KJV)

¹ And when he had called unto *him* his twelve disciples, he gave them power *against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

² Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother;

³ Philip, and Bartholomew;

Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

⁴ Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

⁶ But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

⁷ And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

⁹ Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,

¹⁰ Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

¹¹ And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

¹² And when ye come into an house, salute it.

¹³ And if the house be worthy, let

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

From Disciples into Apostles

At the beginning of Jesus' ministry He had chosen twelve men to be His disciples or followers. They had left their homes and their work to follow Jesus. They had been with Him when He taught the Sermon on the Mount. They were with Him on the Sea of Galilee when the tempest was stilled by the word of Jesus. They had seen Him perform many miracles — the demoniac healed, the woman who touched the hem of His garment made whole, Jairus' daughter raised from the dead, and many other miracles.

These men had come from different walks of life — fishermen, tax- gatherers, followers of John the Baptist — but they had the same schooling in Jesus. They were now to be Apostles, which means "sent out." They were sent out as real witnesses to preach and to teach Jesus Christ. A witness is one who tells what he has seen and known by personal experience, not what he has been told by others. Even later, when they were choosing an Apostle to take Judas' place, they wanted someone who had "compained with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us" (Acts 1:21, 22).

Jesus sent the men who were qualified to be His Apostles. He sent those who had had the privilege of being with Him who had learned of Him, and who had real experiences with Him. Today God does not send out just anyone to spread the Gospel; He wants those who have experienced His power to tell about it.

It was more than just watching Christ perform miracles, for He gave them, too, the right and the power to cast out unclean spirits as well as heal all manner of sickness and disease. It is one thing to watch the change in the life of a person who becomes a Christian, hear him testify, and see him work for the Lord, but it is quite another thing to have the experience and power of God in us.

These men had started out to be followers of Jesus, and then He called them to be preachers. We do not know, when we begin our Christian walk, what God has in store for us, or what position He will call us to fill. We can only obey, so we will have a testimony like Paul — "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

Instructions

As Jesus sent these Apostles to spread the Gospel, He gave them definite instructions as to where and what and how to preach. Along with these orders He gave promises, warnings, and encouragement.

At this time they were to preach only to the Jews, whom He likens to lost sheep, subject to starvation and death; for Israel was without a shepherd. Later on, the Apostles were told to preach to the Gentiles. Jesus said that after the Day of Pentecost they were to preach in Samaria and in the uttermost part of the earth.

Their message was to be: "The kingdom of heaven is at

your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

¹⁴ And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

¹⁵ Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

¹⁶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

¹⁷ But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

¹⁸ And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

¹⁹ But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

²⁰ For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

²¹ And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death.

²² And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

²³ But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

²⁴ The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord.

²⁵ It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the

hand." That is the same message preached by John the Baptist, and it is the same message our ministers preach today.

They were to preach and heal without charge just as Christ did. He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). The Lord told his Apostles to take with them no money nor even a change of clothes. for He knew that those temporal things would be a burden or a hindrance. Today some people become so concerned about their money and possessions that Jesus and His work come second in their lives instead of having first place.

Jesus told the disciples to stay at the homes of those who received them. If they were not received they were to go where they were wanted. What a serious thing to reject the Gospel and to hinder its spread! Perhaps these people who did not receive them never had another chance. The Apostles were told to shake the very dust off their feet when they were rejected in a house or city. They were not to reprove them, nor beg them, nor argue with them. A Christian does not have a "pay back" or "get even" spirit. In Romans 12:19 we read, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

Persecutions

When Jesus sent them forth He told them that it would not be without opposition. As Jesus was persecuted so His disciples would also be — as sheep in the midst of wolves. Wolves are enemies of sheep. If they have a chance, they will kill and devour the sheep. God's people have always had, and still have, enemies who would completely destroy them, if they had a chance. God has warned His people so they will be on the alert and not give the enemy a chance to injure them.

For 'that reason the Apostles were told to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" In the Garden of Eden Satan chose to work through the serpent because it was more subtle, or cunning and clever. The dove is often pictured to represent peace, purity, love, or simplicity. The dove never harms anyone or anything, not even to protect itself. In other instances, too, a Christian is likened to a dove. As a dove brought good tidings of dry land to Noah so a Christian bears good tidings of the Gospel. The Song of Solomon uses the dove to illustrate the Church longing for the return of Christ. It has been observed that a dove quickly forgets injuries. A Christian loves his enemies, does good to them who hate him, and prays for them who persecute him (Matthew 5:44). All these qualities — the harmlessness of the dove and the wisdom and cleverness of a serpent — go to make up the character of a Christian. This is the combination the Lord expected of His Apostles. A Christian must speak up and take his stand against Satan and sin, yet do peaceably. He must not give in to sinful men but state the truth. Jesus said, "The truth shall make you free."

Jesus warned the Apostles that men would hate them and send them up for a hearing before the rulers because they were Christians. But He said that the Spirit of God would tell them what to answer.

Protection

These words of warning might have put fear in the hearts of some, but Jesus always knows when to give encouragement. He told them of God's care and protection. As we read the wonderful words of encouragement, we are reminded that they were meant not only for the Apostles but for all of Christ's followers. As God knew all about the Apostles so He knows all about us. Even the hairs of our head are numbered. We are of more value than sparrows, which are considered common,

servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call* them of his household?

²⁶ Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

²⁷ What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the housetops.

²⁸ And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

³⁰ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

³¹ Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

³² Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

³³ But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

³⁴ Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

³⁵ For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

³⁶ And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

³⁷ He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

³⁸ And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

cheap, and good for very little. But think how God clothes them, provides food for them, protects them, gives them a song, and notes their fall. God will not do less for us.

Confessing Christ

To confess Christ before men is the key to God's protection, both spiritual and physical. It is too important to overlook or neglect. It is that — *confessing* Christ before men — which will determine whether we are acknowledged by Jesus. There are many different ways to confess Christ: one is to testify before men, but not that alone. Some can speak beautifully but their everyday life contradicts the words. In like manner, to deny means more than renouncing Christ before men. To refuse Jesus an entrance into one's heart; to withhold something from God, to disown Him and His works — all this is denying. One cannot quietly become a Christian without anyone knowing it. In the seventh chapter of Matthew we are told, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.... Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

A Mans Foes

Jesus told them that a Christian is likely to have opposition from his family. The saved members of the family live different lives from the unsaved. An unsaved parent may oppose a godly child; sometimes it is an unsaved child who opposes a godly parent. There are not the same interests nor is there the closeness there once was. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness" (II Corinthians 6:14).

Then, too, we love our families very much. But the Bible tells us that God must have first place in our hearts. So a choice must be made — to love God most or to love our families or any one member more than God. If we are to be Christ's followers, He will and must come first. "Who shall separate *us* from the love of Christ?" (Romans 8:35).

To take up one's cross is more than bearing trials for the sake of the Gospel. It means being willing to give one's time and service for Christ's cause. As the world looks at it, one has lost his life when he gives it in loving service to God, whereas he really has gained eternal life. One does not deserve the blessings and privileges of God's love unless he does give his life to Him

A Christian not only takes up his cross but also follows Jesus. His prayer or consecration is: "To do what He wants me to do, to be what He wants me to be, to go where He wants me to go, and to say what He wants me to say." One may, like Peter, forsake all to follow Jesus, but the test is whether we remain true and follow to the end. Jesus said, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22).

Rewards

Just as rewards were promised to faithful Apostles so we shall be rewarded for service to God. In this life we find great pleasure and satisfaction in the Lord's service, but that is not all. In Heaven rewards will be handed out — not for great service but for faithful service. The Apostles served God for the same reason we do today. We want to serve God because of our love for Him, not for praise of man or for reward.

QUESTIONS

- 1 By whom were the Apostles sent?
- 2 Why did He give them power?
- 3 To whom were they sent?
- 4 What did they preach?

³⁹ He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

⁴⁰ He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

⁴¹ He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

⁴² And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

5 Why should we confess Christ before men?

6 Repeat from memory the names of the twelve Apostles.