

You Are Sent Matthew 10:1-42

Introduction

Going on a Mission: Grocery shopping is like a seal team mission to me. I want a list, planned and prepped. I want to know my entrances and exits. Coupons? Check. Get-in, get-out. Contingencies and obstacles are accounted for. Jesus sends his disciples on a mission.

Jesus sends us into the world to accomplish his plan of seeking and saving the lost. Jesus reaches the world through us. We must go to the lost in obedience to the command of Christ.

1. Sent by Jesus (vv. 1-7)

¹ 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. ² 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; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. ⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, ¹ ⁶ but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷ And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

Delegated Authority: 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. Jesus gathers his main twelve disciples (cf. the list below is important but we don't have time). All who follow Jesus are his disciples (e.g., discipleship) but these are the twelve that were chosen to be his closest followers on this earth. They are sent out (e.g., apostles vv. 2, 5). He gathers them and gives them **his authority**. They become the extension of Jesus' ministry.

- The same is true for us. Some things in this passage apply only to the apostles (e.g., Israel only, etc.) but most of what is here are the general patterns and call of discipleship for all believers. **Every [believer] is either a missionary or an imposter** (Spurgeon). "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us" (2 Cor 5:20).
- "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? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'" (Rom 10:14-15).
- The local church is God's Plan A and there is no plan B. God has called and commissioned us to go as the visible, tangible extension of his authority and witness in the world. **Jesus reaches the world through us!** How will your neighbors, friends, coworkers, families, etc. be reached? **Through you.**

¹ **Israel:** "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶ but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Don't get too hung up on the Israel only vs. Gentiles mission (progressive revelation, for these twelve, etc). We know that Jesus' plan started in Israel (i.e., Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth).

- How are we to go to the world if not in the authority and strength of Jesus? We are not sent on our own or in our own strength. We go with the commission and authority of the king (e.g., derivative authority) (e.g., kid taking names when the teacher is out of the classroom).
- This should produce **humble confidence**. Humility because it is not any of our power or authority and confidence because it is the power of God (*way more* than our power).

Sent: These twelve Jesus sent out It's easy to focus so much on the incarnation that we forget we are not Jesus come to save but are sent from Jesus as ambassadors (e.g., more strangers and exiles than "at home" in the world). These are "apostles" (i.e., "sent ones").

- While we are not the apostles in the sense of the original twelve, we are equally "sent" (e.g., Matthew 28, Great Commission; John 20:21, "as the Father sent me, so I send you," etc.). You are sent (e.g., Redemption Heights Church, you are sent). We are not monks hiding from the dangers of the world, we are a community of missionaries who come together to grow, be encouraged, and learn **so we can go and tell others** (e.g., not come and see but go and tell). No one is a spectator. How will we reach our community, our city, our region, our nation, our world? It's not if I go, it's if every one of us owns the mission to make disciples and send them out to make disciples.
- The sign of our success in obeying Jesus is not how many people we can get into these doors (though we pray that happens) but how many people who we bring in we can build up and send back out to reach more (e.g., "success is not measured by our seating capacity but by our sending capacity). In some sense we actually pray for you to leave! Jesus summons and sends. He calls and commissions (e.g., why college ministry is "gaining by losing," it's a terrible strategy for sustainability but an amazing strategy for kingdom mission).

Gospel Proclamation: And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand. They had an itinerant mission and they proclaimed as they went. To proclaim "as you go" means to disciple all the time as part of every area of life (e.g., job, hobbies, etc.). It also means, you don't wait until you have it all figured out (e.g., if we waited until we perfected, we'd never obey).

- E.g., parenting. What if we waited until we understood human psychology, had a large enough financial buffer, etc.? We would never have kids. But we don't wait. Why do we wait to tell about Jesus?

2. Sent to the Needy (vv. 8-15)

⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. ⁹ Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, ¹⁰ no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. ¹¹ And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. ¹² As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³ And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. ¹⁵ 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.

To the Downtrodden: Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. Where does Jesus send us but to the needy. His mission is our mission and he focused on going to the sick not the healthy, the sinful rather than the righteous. So he sends us to the diseased, dying, despised, and despair (Platt). If we are to continue the mission of Jesus then we can't go only to the easy and comfortable places (e.g., SJU *no other Christian groups, West Philly, etc.*). Our mission is an extension of Jesus' mission so our goal is not to do everything Jesus did (e.g., walk on water, raise the dead, etc.) but to connect people to Jesus.

- Does your relationship with people connect them to Jesus?

Go to the Needy as One Who is Needy: You received without paying; give without pay. ⁹ Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, ¹⁰ no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. The way we serve our community, the "way we go" demonstrates the gospel. We don't go as the wealthy to fix the problems of the poor (e.g., "silver and gold I don't have"). We don't charge for the gospel (there is no entrance fee). The offering plate is an opportunity to support the ministry of the church cheerfully and sacrificially not membership dues.

Trust: To obey God and "go" requires we live our lives **practically** trusting him. What good is your trust in God's salvation if it doesn't extend to the rest of your life? If God sends you, you can trust that he will provide for you. Often his provision comes in the form of the generosity of others.

- We think our planning, technology, etc. matters then something like coronavirus comes and reminds us how fragile life really is (PSA, wash your hands and why haven't you been washing them all along). It shouldn't take a pandemic to remind us to live humbly and know everything we have is from God anyway (cf. John 3:27).
- Are you trusting God during the ins and outs of your life (or just for heaven)? Are you relying on God or yourself? Are you building it, fixing it, etc. or is God?

How Are You Received?: ¹¹ And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. ¹² As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³ And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. ¹⁵ 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. God will provide through the generosity of those who receive you on behalf of him. We've seen this since moving to Philly (e.g., neighbors, etc.). Those who receive Jesus' disciples are blessed and those who do not are cursed (e.g., Sodom and Gomorrah had it better even though they were destroyed by fire).

- Not everyone will receive you. You can only control your obedience, not their response. Sometimes you have to move on to the next house.
- Ultimately, our eternal perspective (i.e., on the day of judgment) will determine our behavior in the face of rejection.

3. Sent to Danger (vv. 16-31)

¹⁶ “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. ¹⁷ Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, ¹⁸ and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. ¹⁹ When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. ²⁰ For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ²¹ Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, ²² and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ²³ When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. ²⁴ “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. ²⁶ “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. ²⁸ And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Dangerous Mission: I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves Think of that picture, a sheep in the midst of a wolfpack. It highlights the danger of our assignment and our own helplessness. It only works if we are under the protection of the shepherd. Safety is not a Christian virtue! We were not made for safety.

Discipleship Tension: Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. If the mission is so dangerous then we need to be wise about our “going.” We are too be wise, thoughtful, careful, discerning, etc. *and* innocent, pure, sincere, etc.

- Shrewdness without innocence is cheap cunning. It's manipulative and gaming the system. It's pragmatic rather than genuine.
- But innocence without prudence is naïvete, wasteful, unrealistic.
 - We must embrace the tension of walking *wise* as disciples. Genuinely loving *everyone* but also knowing when to press in and when to walk away.
- We're animals (i.e., foolish as sheep, smart as snakes, and pure as doves).

Obstacles: Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, ¹⁸ and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. Beware of men (the advice I give to Abby until she's 37). Persecution is a part of the Christian life. When we trust God's goodness and care we learn that persecution is not useless or counter-productive. **Obstacles are opportunities for the gospel to be proclaimed** (e.g., Paul in prison). People pay when you glorify God in the midst of persecution.

Trust: ⁹ When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. ²⁰ For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your

Father speaking through you. We don't just trust God's provision but his presence. Trust in the midst of persecution that God will not only provide for you practical needs but his presence will guide you with what to say, how to respond, etc. The Holy Spirit is our comforter and our guide, leading us into truth, praying for us, empowering us to obey the commands of Christ.

- Trust in evangelism. We think we have to be super-apologists. We rely on ourselves rather than the spirit of God (cf. this isn't anti-study, prep, or learning it is anti self-reliance).

Perseverance: ²¹ Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, ²² and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. In the midst of difficult discipleship, the primary character trait necessary for success is not powerful speech, creative strategies, etc. The primary character trait is **perseverance**. Can you remain faithful to the end?

- "Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus" (Rev 14:12). The point of Revelation is not how to escape the tribulations of the world but to faithfully endure them.
- Jesus is not describing some sort of active resistance but *patient endurance*. A lifestyle of calm in the midst of chaos because of one's complete trust in the plans and purposes of God.

Persecution Like Jesus: ²³ When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. ²⁴ "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. Here's the point, if Jesus suffered then we are going to suffer if we walk in his path. "The danger of our lives increases in proportion to the depth of our relationship to Christ" (Platt).

- "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church" (Col 1:24).
- "For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake" (Phil 1:29).
- ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰ **that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,** ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead" (Phil 3:8-11).
- This is one reason why prosperity teachings often ring hollow because they define prosperity has money and health rather than knowing God **and** they exclude Jesus. Jesus would never be considered healthy and wealthy. If your Christian theology has no room for the life and death of Jesus then it is anti-Christian.

- To be like Jesus means to suffer with joy, to persevere with patience, to endure with hope. By aligning our expectations to the life of Jesus we can avoid a lot of the heartache that comes when difficulties arise.

Fear the Right Thing: How do we prepare ourselves for persecution? We “fear the right thing.”

²⁶ “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. ²⁸ And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. We can be bold in the midst of persecution because we have an eternal perspective. In the end, everything will come to light. We don’t need to manage our reputation (it will all come to the light).

- In the end, what’s the worst that can happen? Death (cf. Phi 1:21, “to live is Christ, to die is gain,” win/win).
- Fear of God is good and right because our heavenly judge is infinitely more powerful than all the earthly persecutors combined (e.g., fearing the shot/vaccine more than the disease).
- In our day and age, our fears are all mixed up. We fear mockery, ridicule, pain, discomfort, or, even death, and we don’t fear eternity or God.

4. Go without Looking Back (vv. 32-42)

³² So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. ³⁴ “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. ³⁷ 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 his cross and follow 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. ⁴⁰ “Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. ⁴¹ The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. ⁴² And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

Public Confession: ³² So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. “To boldly go” (i.e., the famous Star Trek split infinitive). It is a hard teaching and a difficult condition. We know that there is grace even in our denial (e.g., Peter). But we can’t expect the benefits and blessings of Jesus without identifying with him. Lots of Christians want Jesus’ help but they don’t want to belong to him.

- E.g., “public confession” in baptism (one reason). When you get baptized you are publicly confessing, attaching your life to Jesus. I’m team Jesus, no matter what happens.

Dividing Line: ³⁴ “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. How can the “prince of peace” not bring peace but a sword? A sword cuts, severs, separates. The peace of Jesus is founded on the exclusive truth (i.e., John 14:6, “way, truth, life). We don’t separate based on sociological factors but the gospel divides those who are in Christ from those who are not. Unity cannot be achieved if it has no basis (i.e., **gospel unity**, unity around and out of the gospel). Make sure that the only obstacle people encounter is the gospel.

- The gospel critiques every culture, political system, and sin this world has ever seen.
- When you submit to Jesus you will find that you are separated from the things of this world. The way you think, act, etc. will no longer “fit in.”

Priorities: ⁷ 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 his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Following Jesus requires we supremely love Jesus above all things. We’ll never endure persecution or obey fully if Jesus is competing for first place in our lives (e.g., anti-nominal Christianity). Christianity is a terrible hobby. Christianity is boring, obligatory, burdensome when it is a part-time hobby for emotional support, cultural accommodation, or family tradition. But when Jesus is grand and supreme and glorious in your heart like he deserves to be, then the path of following him is joyful, restful, comforting, etc. Are you too tired to pray? Are you too tired to read your Bible? Are you too scared to share your faith? The more you pursue Jesus in these and other invitations he gives, the more rested, joyful, etc. you will be.

Discipleship Paradox: ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. The paradox of discipleship is that the more of your hopes, dreams, plans, comforts, and life you give away to follow Jesus, the more **true life** you find. The more you stop pursuing the comforts and joys of this world, the more true joy you find. You find **true life** not by finding yourself but by losing yourself and finding Jesus. illustration

Conclusion

Last week we prayed to see like Jesus (i.e., compassion and heart for the lost). Now we are praying to **obey** Jesus. Can you really call yourself a follower of Jesus if you have positive feelings about him but are unwilling to obey his commands? A lot of people want to know the hidden will of God (e.g., college students, etc.). How can you want to know more if you haven’t obeyed what you already know.

- Going as an ambassador of Jesus is not a religious duty or a difficult obligation, it is a beautiful opportunity to demonstrate the grace of the gospel and shine the light of the kingdom of God into people's lives.
- Will you put your yes on the table (e.g., baptism; (1) do you believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior? (2) will you do whatever he calls you to do and go wherever he tells you to go?).
- God loves to answer our prayer for laborers and he loves to make us the answer to that prayer.