

All Out: Equipped and Sent: Sept 15: The Authority, Mt 10:1-8:

1 Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. 7 As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

Intro:

I. The GIFT: Let the Giving Begin: *Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness (Mt 10:1).*

A. We are involved in a fundamental struggle between good and evil.

II. The NAMES: Let The Record Show: *These are the names of the twelve apostles (Mt. 10:2).*

A. We have their names. Some of them, like Thaddeus, are a little strange to us. But most are quite well known. We name our children after these 12 people.

B. They are commoners. Matthew makes a point to mention something simple about 8 of the 12. These are the children of so-and-so, the brother of Peter or James, nicknamed this or that. He gives one occupation—his own. He identifies himself as a “tax collector.”

C. They are Apostles. This is a “delegate” or “messenger.”

III. The LOST SHEEP: Let the Lost Be Found: *“Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel (Mt 10:5-6).*

A. Jesus ministered to both of these excluded groups during his time on this earth. The woman at the well was a Samaritan. The Canaanite woman with the demon-possessed daughter and the centurion with the sick servant were both Gentiles who received their miracles from the Lord.

B. He is sending his Apostles to the children of Abraham first. This was the order of his own ministry, which was largely to the Jews, and this was how the church began its work. The synagogues were the teaching forums for Christians. The Jews are the ones who first believed.

IV. The MESSAGE: Let the Good Times Roll: *Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.*

A. The FUTURE Kingdom:

1. “Heaven is a wonderful place, filled with glory and grace, I want to see my Savior’s face, heaven is a wonderful place—I want to go there!”

2. There is no sickness, no death, no leprosy, no demons in heaven. We are looking forward to the complete victory of the Lamb of God.

B. The PRESENT Kingdom: Kingdom is a political term. It is used to designate the realm of a king over which he has total authority. The kingdom of heaven is the term Matthew uses for “the kingdom of God” in the other Gospels.

1. Heal the sick

C. Jesus’ message involved the Kingdom. This was the center of his teaching, his parables, and his concern. He begins with “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven has come near” (Mt 4:17). This is parallel to Mark 1:15: “The kingdom of God has come near.” Jesus is announcing the reign of God in the hearts of people.

At the end of his ministry he says to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). And “My kingdom is from another place” (John 18:36).

The apostles will not talk nearly so much about the kingdom as they will talk about the King, Jesus of Nazareth—king of the Jews, as Pilate put on the cross. And now, as we believe, king of kings and Lord of lords.

D. The nearness of the kingdom is mysterious, both challenging and comforting.

1. This world feels so far from the kingdom of God. It must have felt that way for these first disciples who would go into the world like sheep among wolves--and for the first century believers who were persecuted and martyred for their faith in Christ.

2. It often feels that way to us. We look around at the suffering in the world—children dying of bullet wounds and poisonous gases and lack of food and preventable diseases. Surely this is not what the kingdom of God looks like.

3. So where is this kingdom that is near? It is among us and within us. Jesus said this, *Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, 21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."* (Luke 17:20-21). The KJV says here, "The kingdom of God is within you." The meaning is this: the kingdom of God is internal. It is about the internal life of the individual—"within you"—and the internal life of the community—"among you."