

# Sermon Series: Spurred on to Holiness (and Power) by Immersing Ourselves into the Life of Christ Through the Eyes of the Apostles – A Harmony of All Four Gospels

March 1, 2020

Sermon Title: “Taking the Gospel to the Masses-A Method to Reach the World.”

Today’s Scripture: See insert

Introduction: Ask congregation “Where should Bible instruction take place and where should evangelism take place? Open it up for discussion.

Main point: We are on a mission to rescue souls from an unimaginable eternity.

Context: There were about 3 million people living in Galilee at this time located in about 200 cities and villages. There was a lot of territory to cover and people to reach that Jesus could not reach by himself, nor with his 12.

1. Jesus wants everyone to have the chance to hear the Gospel. Then Jesus journeyed about to all the cities and the villages teaching in their synagogues and continuing to proclaim the Glad News of the Kingdom,
  - People gathered in the synagogues at least twice a week to be taught the Scriptures. Every Sabbath, mid-week, and then every feast and holiday. The main purpose was to read the Scriptures and have them explained to them. They would read from the Law, (Torah) then the Prophets.
  - Visiting rabbis were given the pulpit to preach from whatever text they wanted or the passage that was scheduled for that week.
  - Someone then had to take the readings and translate the Scriptures from Hebrew to Aramaic. Aramaic is the language that Jesus and family and disciples spoke, not Hebrew. Isn’t it truly amazing how the Father has protected Scriptural content despite having been spoken in one language, then translated into another such as Greek.
  - In this way, Jesus was spreading the Gospel message to every single village, hamlet, and city within the district of Galilee. Since Jesus knew all along he could never get to all the people of Galilee and certainly not the entire world, he had instituted a plan called discipleship, where he would train disciples to multiply themselves into future disciples who would multiply themselves until the whole world was reached.
  - The Bible was taught in the synagogues and preaching the Kingdom or evangelism was done outside the synagogue. The same pattern should hold true for today. Edification Inside, evangelism outside.
  - There was not just one method or approach Jesus used to attract a gathering. Woman at the well – he was thirsty. Walking along the fields he may shout out to the farmer, “Hey, would you like to hear more about the Bread of Life?” Or to all, “Hey, would you like to know more about how to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?”

- The Great Commission was given to the twelve and they knew that through the process of discipleship they would eventually, through multiplication, reach the world with the message of the Gospel.
  - Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (ESV)
  - Matthew 28:18–19 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (ESV)
  - Here is how I have always envisioned ministry happening in Cornerstone. One person take another through the Heartbeats and see that person take two others who will take two others. Our gospel mailings are getting the content into people’s homes and if they look up or read the messages we give them they will be confronted with the Good News. So far our numbers have reached 705 homes and probably over a thousand people. At this rate it will take us an additional 13 years just to get the gospel in the mail to each home in Alex. But,
  - If we practiced the discipleship method as Jesus did, we could speed up that process.
2. Jesus displayed the tender heart of God the Father by ministering to the body as well as the soul. and healing (therapuwun) every sickness and infirmity (including deformities – cleft palates, etc.) among the people.
- This is a balancing act for sure. Missionaries know they get a hearing if they feed people or cure their diseases, and all the hospitals in the world got their start from Christians who cared for the sick. But,
  - It can produce “Rice Christians” those who will do and say anything to get another meal.
  - But, that’s a risk worth taking.
  - On the way home from St. Paul after praying over our reps, Dean gave me a call. There are still some who need shelter from the fire, can we help. Of course we could help. Without stopping I went straight to the Fire hall where the police told me they were staying. By that time all were placed in hotels by the Red Cross. Notice the title of that agency? It’s the Red Cross.
  - Next time we send out mailers, I am going to put a list together of all the people we have sent letters to and give it to all of you. If you know someone on that list or feel a prompting by the Lord to call them I’ll give you phone numbers as well- simply ask for prayer requests. Maybe God will use something as simple as a phone call to meet a physical or spiritual need.
3. Genuine compassion caused Jesus to spend enormous amounts of energy and time to minister to the masses, one by one. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion toward them, for they were harried and desolated like sheep that had no shepherd.
- The Greek word for compassion (Latin is compassion) is splagnoi. Meaning Jesus was practically sick to his stomach his emotions were running so high.

- Today we would call that empathy moreso than sympathy. Sympathy is mentally having a concern for someone's suffering but empathy is feeling it in your gut. It means Jesus was entering into their sad state of affairs.
  - He could look from any vantage point and see the masses (not hard when there are 5 million in the region) and feel the enormous sadness in his soul.
  - I have been semi-plagued with an over active heart of sympathy. If I see a little boy or girl in the store crying I can't help but head in that direct and see if I can't do something to take the tears away. Jesus felt that and so much more since his divine heart had a much larger capacity than yours or mine.
  - This passage indicates that Jesus was so moved by his feelings that he started to cry. When was the last time you cried over people you did not know personally?
  - It says they were harried and desolate like sheep without a shepherd. Wow does that describe the millennials today and other groups as well. In many ways they are the discarded generation. Parents signed them up for activity after activity hoping it filled the void in their children's hearts and their failure to parent properly by taking the necessary time to connect on a deeper level. Their college degrees are useless in the market place, the spiritual climate of our culture says they will cease to exist when they die and they are supposed to thrive? If Jesus was at the Mall of America today you would find him at level three looking down and crying just like he did back then until security shows up and escorts him out of the mall for disturbing the peace.
  - They were like sheep scattered and hungry without a shepherd. Who is shepherding our nation today. Pastors? Hardly. Perhaps 15 % of the population is in church this morning and only a fraction of them are being fed the truth of God's word. Just like the Pharisees failure to shepherd Israel from law to grace so today the mind-controllers of the population are leading them to nihilism (the belief that life is meaningless). Media, Hollywood, Academia, are all shepherding this generation into hell by spouting Satan's lies that life has no meaning and when your dead your dead.
  - Paul had the same concern of false shepherds in the church in Corinth. He said **2 Corinthians 11:20 For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. (ESV)**
  - I don't know how often you get out of the house and into stores but if I may, this week, try slowing down and making eye contact with everyone in the aisle you pass. The eyes say so much. If the Holy Spirit prompts, tell that person, I sense the Holy Spirit telling me to pray for you. May I do that? I'm a Christ-follower.
4. Jesus's knowledge of hell and it's eternal suffering made him plea for more workers. Then said he to his disciples. "The harvest is plentiful indeed, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest that he thrust out laborers into his harvest."

- Which harvest is Jesus referring to? Most likely this one: Joel 3:11–13 Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather yourselves there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD. Let the nations stir themselves up and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great. (ESV)
- How do we know? He said so Matthew 13:39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. (ESV)

### Application

Church is not something to fit into your crowded schedule. It is not like a country club where you are served. It is a training center designed to equip you to rescue those you rub shoulders with and those you don't. If your neighbors have not heard the gospel, if they have not yet been invited to come to hear the Lord say to them "Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden and enter into my rest" then why are you here?