

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 8, 2020

Sermon Title: “What’s My Mission Assignment?” Part One

Today’s Scripture: See insert

Introduction: Aren’t there better ways to evangelize than using the church? Angels? Visions in the night? Why would Jesus rely on the concept of discipleship to reach the nations? It’s slow. It’s suspect to breakdowns (If one generations fails to pass it along to the next). Yet somehow it seems that the church is still functioning and growing via this cumbersome process. There must be something to it, and most importantly, it can’t continue without you. I don’t mean the church will stop without you, I mean your part in the process will be hurt if you don’t pick up the reins. One area of course is children and grandchildren. My blog is key to that idea. We can do a lot to keep our children out of hell just by practicing Solomon’s wisdom in Proverbs 23.

Main point: The second level of discipleship training is OTJT (on the job training) where disciples of Jesus learn they have all the resources they need to do great damage to the kingdom of darkness.

Context: Jesus had demonstrated to the disciples how to enter a city, teach in the synagogue, how to gather a crowd in the city square, what to say when they gathered them, what to teach about entering the Kingdom of Heaven (much the same as John the Baptist’s preaching). Now it was their turn to imitate Jesus and do it all on their own 2 by 2. How would you feel if you received this assignment?

1. To win the war against the forces of darkness, Jesus had to use force multipliers called disciples. They had the same powers delegated to them that Jesus had. *So he summoned his twelve disciples to him, and gave them power and authority over all the unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and infirmity.*
 - You are a force multiplier.
 - In the military a force multiplier can be better weapons with greater power, accuracy and range, better intelligence, better training, better morale and greater numbers. We have all of that in our army.
 - How does that make you feel? Jesus says to you and I personally, I need more combatants in Alexandria and at (whatever place you work) to rescue more people from the clutches of Satan, people who will spend eternity in hell.
 - Do we have those powers delegated to us today? Yes we do! *Luke 10:19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. (ESV)*

- But can we use that power indiscriminately? No! Neither could Jesus. **John 5:30 “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. (ESV)**
 - This was not a one off or one-time event as some commentators want to say but it was certainly unique. We know from their after action reports AAR’s that everywhere they went they were successful at healing and casting out demons. This was likely to give them confidence but also to do great damage to the cause of the enemy’s kingdom and also to give a jump start to what will happen soon in the great expansion of the church after Pentecost.
 - Is that same power available to disciples today? Yes! If the Holy Spirit is telling you to pray for someone’s healing and you are asked to lay hands upon that person and you pray in faith that they will be healed, they will be healed. But you have to wait for the greenlight from the Holy Spirit before being confident your prayer will be answered.
 - Can you command demons to leave a person? Absolutely you have that power. Is it only for clergy? Not at all. If you are a disciple of Jesus then you have been granted the authority to cast out demons in the name of Jesus for his glory. Some however require a little more prayer and fasting than others but eventually they all have to obey the name of Jesus.
 - Why heal people of their sicknesses and infirmities? Can’t they accept Jesus and live with their illnesses? The healing of sicknesses was also part of the spiritual war. Sin was the original cause of all sickness and some sicknesses today are caused by sins. Plus Satan wants to keep people ill and lead them to an early death. So, when the disciples healed all kinds of illness and infirmities they were demonstrating that the power of the Kingdom of Light is far more powerful and beneficial than the Kingdom of Darkness.
 - So, why don’t we see more healings and powerful displays of God’s miraculous powers today? In America, we have great medical care and we think we don’t need miracles unlike third world countries where prayer is their only hope. Therefore there is a lack of need and a lack of faith here. And,
 - The First Century church was establishing a beachhead. It needed more miracles then to get a head start. Once the beachhead was established, much like D-Day, then slugging through the trenches and hedgerows is more the norm for today.
2. **Battling enemy forces works better in teams. *These twelve began Jesus to send out two by two, to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal those who were sick.***
- God designed us as humans to triple our abilities and effectiveness by pairing our strengths in a complementary way. Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (ESV)
 - This is a reflection of the Trinity. Yes God is One, but He is displayed in the community of three persons, Father Son and HS. This is huge. From eternity past God has displayed community, cooperation, love, peace within a framework of hierarchy, God being the

higher authority, Jesus being submissive to that authority and the HS submitting to both. The HS is often called the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of Christ.

- The disciples kept up this practice and never traveled alone. In Jerusalem it was Peter and John going up to the temple to pray when they healed the lame man. IN Antioch the Holy Spirit did not commission Paul alone, he commissioned Paul and Barnabas to go on a mission trip together. When they split up later each took assistants with them Barnabas taking John Mark and Paul taking Silas (Acts 15).
 - We can also see this wisdom reflected in church leadership. Paul tells Titus in Titus 1:5 This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— (ESV)
 - This is also why the Gifts of the Spirit are equally divided as needed among the members of the church. 1 Corinthians 12:11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. (ESV)
3. The disciples were required to prioritize their ministry efforts in order to fulfill God’s promises to His people. If the Jews did not get first dibs then God would have been unfaithful to His people. **And he commanded them saying, “Go not out into Gentile neighborhoods, and go not into any city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, make a proclamation, saying, ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!’**
- What are the Biblical concepts of a Kingdom? It is:
 1. A ruler – God
 2. A people – His subjects
 3. A territory- first the Promised Land then the world
 - How was the Kingdom envisioned by the Jews?
 - It started in the Garden but then lost by the fall.
 - Restarted with Abraham and God’s promises to Him in Genesis 12
 - Then it required a saving rescue which occurred at the Exodus.
 - Then the Kingdom was (Imperfectly) given a territory as Joshua entered the Promised Land.
 - Soon that Kingdom flourished under a godly King (David) who was given a promise that his descendent would sit on a throne forever.
 - Then with depravity of the worst kind that Kingdom was overthrown and the people sent into exile.
 - At the time of Christ, the people, now having returned from exile were looking for the restoration of the Kingdom under the Messiah’s rule and reign.
 - Amos prophesied this (As did most of the prophets) in Amos 9:11–15 “In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name,” declares the LORD who does this. “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant

vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them," says the LORD your God. (ESV)

- How did the Kingdom of God in the NT match the Kingdom concept in the OT?
 - There is a King a descendant of David - Jesus
 - There is a people – Christ followers
 - There is a salvation - an exodus from the Kingdom of Darkness to the Kingdom of Light
 - There is a territory – The New Jerusalem and our eternal home.
- If we minimize the role of our Jewish brothers and sisters in this cosmic plan of God for a Heavenly Kingdom then we are glorifying ourselves above them and dishonoring God by ignoring the plan of the ages he is unfolding. This is huge.

Application

As we approach Resurrection Sunday, please make an attempt with me to highlight and promote the importance of the biblical and Hebrew calendar with all its holidays. They are not just special days on the calendar like Valentine's Day or President's Day or Independence Day. No, the focal point of God's redemptive plan has always been around his chosen people. It is very important we figure out how we fit into that plan and what is our role in it. To ignore Israel in the end times is to miss the signs, the flashpoints the strategic events of our End Times calendar. Keep your eyes on what happens in Israel and you will have your countdown clock set accurately to know when the Messiah will be making his return. Please be ready.

In our second hour we might talk more about how to avoid the Mark of the Beast. Maybe. That's the opposite of the Kingdom of God.