

Jesus Training the Twelve

by Bill McLeod

Jesus' training of the Twelve was a process of teaching, training, and empowering them for ministry, and it is a model for Christian discipleship today.

Duration: 35:49

Scripture: Matthew 7:24-27, Mark 1:15, Mark 6:12, Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4-5, Acts 2:1-4, Acts 19:1-6

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the loss of fire and power in the church. He shares examples of workers in South America who had lost their fire, but emphasizes that God is willing to renew their strength if they wait on Him. The speaker emphasizes the importance of seeking God's face and confessing the truth about ourselves before Him. He also highlights the need for repentance in preaching, citing examples from John the Baptist, Jesus, and the disciples. The speaker concludes by questioning why the church has lost the understanding of the need for waiting on God and repentance.

Transcript

So I want to talk today, with the power of God, about Jesus and the training of the Twelve. You know, when God created the world in Isaiah 45, 18, it says, He did not do this in vain. He formed it to be inhabited.

And there's no other planet like it in the whole universe. The scientists say they're looking for one, they're positive, they'll find many. But these powerful telescopes they have, while they look at thousands of stars and stuff they couldn't see before, they haven't found one.

And they never will. Somebody said that the Earth is the theater of the universe. It's where it's all happening.

It's where Jesus came. And we must keep this clearly in mind. Now, He had to train people, He had to, well, first of all, He had to pick twelve men.

And He didn't pick the kind of men we think He should have, perhaps, I don't know. Fishermen, farmers, tax collectors, nobodies. There are probably many people He could have chosen that would have been better in some ways.

But they were not the kind of people He wanted. He hasn't chosen the mighty and the great or the rich. But the poor and the lowly.

And obviously He picked the right men. Then He had to train them. And He did it in a number of ways.

I suppose the healing miracles which they watched for three years, they must have seen literally thousands of people healed. Because wherever Jesus went, there were great crowds following Him. Because they knew He'd be working miracles and healing others, and they wanted to see this.

But Jesus rebuked them one day. He said, you seek me not because you saw the miracles, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. They didn't have a good motive in following Him around.

But when He reached the village and word would spread that Jesus of Nazareth was in town, all the sick people in the area were carried by their relatives and friends out to where Jesus was and laid down at His feet. And He healed them. It mentions every kind of sickness and disease that was brought to Jesus.

He healed. And the twelve saw this. Then at one point He gave them the power to heal and to cast out demons.

By the way, casting out demons three times in the New Testament is called healing. So when He healed them, when He cast out demons, that was a form of healing also. Well, feeding the thousands, stilling storms, walking on water, casting out demons, feeding thousands.

Did you know that He and the disciples in a boat on the Sea of Galilee, about six miles from land, when Jesus came on board the boat, it moved from where it was to the shore in a second. It says immediately. Now, that's a great miracle to move a boat.

I don't know what the weight would be. But to move it that distance in a second was one of the mighty miracles Jesus did that we don't hear much about. He was aware of things going on all around Him.

He told the disciples one day, when you go into the village you'll meet a man with a picture on his shoulder. Follow him into the house and that's where you'll make your Passover. Now, how did He know there was a man walking down the street with a picture on his shoulder? He knew somehow.

He sometimes read people's minds. When one man began to think certain things, we're told in John 7, that Jesus answered him. Well, he hadn't said anything.

How did Jesus answer him? Because he read his mind. He knew he was able to do that. He was different from us in many ways.

Then He raised the dead. Lazarus, a widow named Son. But there were others besides.

Because when the men came from John the Baptist, wondering if Jesus was really the one they were looking for, they were told to go back and tell them that He was healing the sick, He was raising the dead. So there were probably numbers of people raised from the dead through His training. So part of the training was healing people, helping others, using your power to relieve other people's sufferings.

This was all part of the training. Then there was His teaching, which was, in some cases, amazing. For example, He taught that if you loan somebody some money, don't expect to get anything back.

Do we operate that way? Not really. We'd like to get back what we loaned at least, and maybe a little more if possible. But that's what He said.

Then He said, you know, in those days, a Roman soldier walking down the highway, he could call on any person he saw and ask them to walk a mile with him and carry his pack. And they had to do that. So Jesus said, if you're asked to carry a pack for a mile, carry it two miles.

Does that sound right? It's certainly different, but it was right. That's one of the things He said. So if they smite you on one cheek, you're to offer them the other.

You're not to run away and be mad. You offer the other cheek. And then He told them to rejoice when you're persecuted.

Leap for joy, He said in one place. Leap for joy? When people are maybe throwing stones at me? Well, you know, Wesley in Whitsfield had a lot of that. Not only stones, but rotten eggs and dead cats and stuff were thrown at them while they were preaching.

And they just wiped off the blood and kept on going. They knew what Jesus had said. So we're to rejoice when we are persecuted.

Then He told His disciples, your light and your salt. You're to be both the light of the world. As long as I'm in the world, I'm the light of the world.

But He said to them, you are the light of the world. He was going back to heaven. And He left 12 lights burning.

Now these are things that Jesus had taught them. He said when you're fasting, or when you're giving, you're to do it very secretly. You're not to parade it.

You're not to want to have people watch what you do so you can brag over it. You're not to do that or be that. You're to do it very secretly, and your Father in heaven, your Father who sees you in secret, will reward you openly.

So there are things... Well, He told them to build on rock, not on sand. I mean, He gave them a lot of good practical thoughts to work on as well. It was a great help.

And it's a help to us, of course, or should be today. Then they found out very quickly that if you're going to preach, you've got to preach repentance. John the Baptist began it.

Jesus, in Mark 1, when He began to preach, He said, repent. I believe the Gospel. And then the disciples, when they were sent out in the Gospel of Mark, it says they preached that men should repent.

I'm sure that wasn't all they said, but the writers wanted us to understand this was a major part of their preaching. Everything else was based on this. It's not going to help you unless you have repented of your sin and turned with your whole heart unto God.

So they learned many things through His miracles, the healing miracles, and the other miracles. And then they learned just being ready with Him day by day, watching Him, hearing Him, asking Him questions. I'm sure that all of the apostles apart from Judas at times would have serious internal questions that they would bring to Jesus and have them answered.

That was something else, part of the training. Then we notice another thing He did, which is very unpopular today with preachers, He strongly publicly condemned those who were teaching false doctrine. Now we've been told and taught you can't do that because you'd be guilty of hurting somebody's feelings.

But read Matthew 23. And others, not Christians who have read this, say this was not right. He should never have said those things about the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

But He did it and they heard it. And they knew it had to be part of their ministry too. Wesley and Whitefield, those two great preachers, if they saw an unconverted preacher in the audience and they knew his name, they'd call out his name and rebuke him publicly for not preaching the Gospel.

And Whitefield did that a lot more even than Wesley, but both of them did it. And they felt constrained to publicly rebuke men who were not preaching the truth. And the minute they found out, they did something about it.

Nobody's doing that today. You don't want to hurt anybody's feelings. It never occurred to the authorities that when they preach false doctrine, they're hurting my feelings.

Don't my feelings count too? Of course they do. And so we should be publicly rebuking where we can, where we have the facts, not be guessing but sure. Part of their training.

But you know, after those three years of watching Jesus night and day, they were still not ready. You'd think, well man, the training they've had is amazing. Nobody else in the history of the world has ever had this kind of training that they have.

But he told them not to go. He didn't send them out. He sent them out on little journeys but it was not the big thing that happened after Pentecost.

So they were not ready. He knew that. They didn't know it probably.

They probably thought they were ready to go. But he wouldn't let them go. Now in John 20, 22, after his resurrection, he breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

Now this puzzles some Bible scholars. They don't understand what happened there because that was quite a bit before Pentecost. I think perhaps what happened then, we might say they received the indwelling Spirit.

Not the baptism of the Spirit but the indwelling of the Spirit. And others agree with that idea as well. But that still did not make them ready because he did not send them then.

We have to remember that when Jesus came, well Isaiah, for example, said that darkness would cover the earth and gross darkness would cover the people. The gross darkness he was talking about was the darkness that was on Israel. Because if the light is in you as darkness, how great is that darkness.

They thought they had it. They didn't have it. They'd lost it.

It wasn't there. They were operating as if they had it but they never really had it. And so he rebuked them the way that he did.

And then gross darkness, yes. There's a verse in Ephesians 6 that's a very shocking verse to me. It speaks about our enemies, Satan and the hosts that follow him, the fallen angels.

And they're called the rulers of the darkness of this world. Don't be wondering why it's so dark spiritually out there. There are people keeping it dark.

They're the rulers of the darkness of this age. That's why Isaiah called it gross darkness. It is.

They're leading people in thousands of wicked ways, evil ways, and sometimes in religious ways that are just as evil as the other. And so they are our enemies. And if they're the rulers of the darkness, and you're a light for God, watch out.

They won't like you. Things will happen sometimes that you can't explain. But don't be alarmed.

God is with us. He's given us all the wisdom we need to have. And if you happen to lack wisdom, in James it says if you lack wisdom, ask of God that gives to all men liberally, greatly He means.

But He said let them ask in faith, nothing wavering, because if you waver, you'll be like a wave of the sea wind and tossed. You have to believe when you pray and ask for wisdom from God. You may pray and then walk away and say, I wonder if he did anything.

Oh, forget about it. He didn't do anything he couldn't because you never believe. So whatever situation you happen to be in, believe God when you're asking for some help, for guidance or power or whatever.

Believe. All right, gross darkness. The rulers of the darkness.

Well, that'll be all over when Jesus returns and the hosts that serve him will be thrown into the fire and the devil himself will end up in that lake of fire by the grace and power of our God. But then one day something happened and is put this way in Acts that Jesus Christ, He's at the right hand of God and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has shed forth this which you now see and hear. So Pentecost was something that Jesus did.

He was the one that authored that. Remember it says now, He received the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, Jesus did. And having received this promise, then He shed forth the Holy Spirit on the twelve.

That's how it happened. Christ did it. He sent the Spirit in power.

There have been many in Christian work down through the years that have experienced this kind of a baptism that they experienced on the day of Pentecost. You know, in one day after they were baptized in the Spirit, 3,000 Jews were converted. Think of it.

In one day, 3,000. More were converted in one day than had been converted in the three years when they were traveling around and preaching. And then later, a week or two later, Peter preached and 5,000 were converted at the end of his sermon.

Nothing like that had happened before. There were happy men like Dwight L. Moody in Chicago. He had a large Sunday school.

But he wasn't getting anywhere like in preaching. He wasn't really a preacher. He got very few invitations to preach.

He did some preaching. But nothing seemed to happen. And he spent six months crying to God for the power of the Spirit in his life.

And it happened one day while I was walking down the street in Chicago, he suddenly felt the power of God and he ran to a friend's house and asked for a room where he could be alone for a couple of days. And he found a place and went in and he spent hours just talking to God and was filled mightily with the Holy Spirit. Now when he went out of there, he began to preach the same sermons, he said, that he preached before.

But before when he preached, nothing happened. Now when he preached, hundreds were being converted. And in some cases, thousands.

Now Charles Finney, a lawyer, converted suddenly. He received this baptism of the Spirit, whatever you want to call it, an imbuement of God's Spirit and power. And everybody he talked to the following day was converted.

Everybody. He walked around the village talking to different people. Everybody found Christ.

And he had that great power and was probably used of God. Two and a half million people to Christ back when the population in the States was much smaller. Torrey, a helper of Moody's, had the same experience.

J.B. Earle, a great evangelist, so fruitless in his ministry, and he got serious about it and spent one night with God. And he was trying to find out who to blame. And God said, well, I'm blaming you.

You're the fault. You're your own trouble. You have to deal with it.

And J.B. Earle says he did. He honestly, just let God search his heart, show him every sin, make restitution and everything else. He was ready for it all.

And he said at 2 o'clock in the morning, he was filled with the love of God by the Holy Spirit. And before he died, there were 200,000 people found Christ as their personal Savior. Before this happened that night in that room, he preached 10 times in a crusade.

Not one soul was saved. But that changed drastically. And they called it a personal Pentecost.

We have to be very careful here as to what we're thinking about because it's not something that comes easily, nor to everyone. But if we're serious about our Christian life and want to count for God and be something useful to God and His kingdom, if we want to glorify God, we have a right to go to God in prayer. Now we have some godly examples like Jacob in Genesis 32.

Remember he had wronged his brother Esau and Esau was coming to meet him and had 400 men with him and Jacob knew his brother intended to kill him. That's why he had 400 men with him. So he had to get this thing straightened out.

He tried three or four plans and none of them worked. There's a little phrase there that says, and Jacob was left alone. It's good to be left alone.

You have no more plans. You've got nothing left but God. And that's what happened to him.

And he began wrestling with this angel. And when the sun came up in the morning, the angel said, let me go for the sun of the day is breaking. And he said, I will not let you go unless you bless me.

And that's when he was touched by the angel and his name was changed from supplanter to Jacob. And his ministry, his whole ministry, became powerful. Much different than it had been before.

And when Esau met him the following day, Esau ran to him, fell on his neck and kissed him and they rejoiced together. And this happened because he persevered. Now in Hosea, there's a verse that refers to that and gives us some insight.

It says, therefore, after describing what happened to Jacob, he says, therefore, wait on your God continually. He's saying, do the same thing. Copy Jacob.

He didn't give up. He didn't pray a pretty little prayer. He sought God.

He got to a point he was willing to die even. And I've heard of men getting to that point where they tell God, give me power or I'll die. You know what John Knox prayed, that great Scottish preacher? He said, give me Scotland.

He prayed, give me Scotland or I'll die. And God gave him Scotland. He was a great, great preacher.

And wicked people were very much afraid of him because of the power in the ministry he had. So there has to be humility. There has to be perseverance.

That's mentioned in Ephesians 6.18. With all perseverance it says, hanging in there, believing God, trusting God, crying to God for power so that we don't just sit around being a nice Christian and having our picture taken and what not. That's not it. It's standing up and being counted.

It's sharing Christ in difficult places. It's doing things with our money that others would think were really crazy if they knew. One of the men in my church in Transcona years ago, his brothers, there were three of them.

They were potato farmers. And he became a Christian, his brothers didn't. And then one day, he was a heavy giver, you know, and he had the receipt from the church in his Bible, and one of his brothers found it.

And they gave him an awful time. They yacked at him for days on end, you crazy fool, giving all this money away, what are you doing? Are you going crazy or something, you know? Well, he didn't quit giving. He just made sure they never saw our receipt again.

That was a little easier. But he was changed dramatically. His brothers couldn't understand it, and I don't know, but as far as I've heard, his brothers never did become believers in Christ.

I can't say that definitely, but I believe that's how it was, so I was told. All right, humility and honesty with God and with others, and then persevere. And remember, whatever it is you're seeking, it must be for the glory of God.

It must be for the glory of God. Do you remember that group in Europe? I'm trying to think of their name now. But they did more for missions.

They did more for missions in one year than most of all the churches in the world in those days put together did. They started a prayer meeting that never quit day or night for a hundred years. I met one of the workers in South America years ago, and he still had the fire, but he admitted that most of their people had lost the fire.

It wasn't the way it had once been. Is God willing? They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. You'll get new power by waiting on God.

And He'll give each of us what we need to know and have by way of spiritual enablements and so on. He'll do it right. But we need to seek His face.

We need to get before God and confess that what He said about you is true. He said, you're but of nothing. You know nothing.

You're but of yesterday and know nothing. You're less than nothing, He said. Have you ever confessed that to God? Well, it's time you did that.

Say, God, You said I'm less than nothing. I believe it. I accept that.

Thank You for being so kind as to tell me the truth. And we have to start from there. That's where we start.

We're nothing. We're less than nothing. We're not even a hole in the ground.

That's how God sees us. And of course, He's speaking of us in comparison to Himself. God is not as we are or anything like that.

The inhabitants of the earth, He said, are grass in Isaiah 40. And later on in Isaiah 40, He said we're grasshoppers. That's not very flattering.

He just wants His people to understand we don't have it. We don't have it. We have an intelligent mind.

But we have to see God to get the best in life. I say the best in life for the glory of God. And it comes through prevailing prayer.

Don't give up. Remember when the disciples said they asked Jesus to teach us to pray as John taught His disciples. And He taught them to pray.

He gave them part of the Lord's Prayer. And then He went into that parable about the fellow who needed some help. He went to a friend at night apparently asking for help because somebody had come in a journey and he had no food in the house.

Can you please give us some bread? And his friend hollered back, Shut up! The kids are with me in bed. I can't do this. But then it says this.

Jesus said, I say unto you, though He will not rise and give Him because He is His friend, but because of His importunity He will rise and give Him as many as He needs. So, God is our friend. We are friends to God.

It's got to be a little more than that. In a sense. His importunity has been called shameless asking or asking that could not be denied.

It's that kind of praying. Asking God. Persevering.

But you know, you have to make sure at the outset it's for the glory of God and for other people's good that you're crying to God for a power or whatever it is you have in mind. He's willing. He gives liberally to all men.

He's a giver. When you think of God, you think of His gifts. He's a giver.

And He's not a slow giver. You know, there were two things that caused Jesus to be amazed. One was He was amazed at their unbelief.

Another case, He was amazed at a certain Gentile's faith. He said, I haven't found faith like this in the whole of Israel. And He said, and He warned His disciples and others that there was a time coming when people would come from the east, the west, the north, and the south and sit down in the Kingdom of God.

He was referring to the conversion of thousands of Gentiles. That was a new thought also. Something, of course, that Jesus taught them.

Well, I don't have one particular text to leave. If I did have, I suppose it wouldn't be Ephesians 6.18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance, it says, and for all saints. Praying for one another.

Praying for the lost. Crying in the Spirit's power. It says, remember, in the Spirit.

We're told that twice in the New Testament. And I'm sure Jesus taught them. But you know, when you look at the contrast, all the training of three years, a little more than three years, all they had seen, all they had heard, all that they had done, they too had raised, I don't know about raising the dead, but they certainly had healed the sick and cast out demons and all of that.

But none of it was sufficient. And we have to keep this in mind because it's something we've lost in the church. We figure three or four years in a Bible school or seminary, that'll be all they need.

It isn't all they need. It wasn't all they knew. They had more than anybody in seminary or Bible college would ever see or ever hear or ever be a part of.

And yet they weren't ready to go. He said, Tarry until... Put those two words together. Tarry until you be endued with power.

The Spirit will come and fill your life. Then you'll have power to preach the Gospel. How is it that in the church of God we've lost this? Sometimes people say, well, the Pentecostals talk about it.

Well, thank God they do. And I'm sure there are some people among them that receive a true baptism with the Spirit. But this is open to all of God's children everywhere.

I close then. Honesty, humility, and perseverance. Don't give up.

But wait until God comes in great power. And He will. We're praying for that in the church.

That means, of course, we have to pray for it in our own life. It has to start with someone, somewhere. Let's pray.

Father above, thank you that you're here. You said, whom having not seen, you love. In whom though now you see him not, yet believe me, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

And Father, we know you could open our eyes in a second and show us this room filled with angels here to watch the work of God and your Spirit's power, everywhere. It's hidden from us now and will be until Jesus returns. We know that, dear Father.

But, Lord, you know the burden that's on many of our hearts here to see a deep working of personal revival. God grant it, we pray, for we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Hallelujah.

Amen.

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