

# (Matthew) ch.9:14-10:23

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in the New Covenant, highlighting the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, and the significance of Jesus' attitude towards the old system.*

**Duration:** 54:56

**Topics:** "Discipleship Training", "Kingdom Power"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Matthew 9:14-38. He begins by discussing the disciples of John who questioned Jesus about fasting. Jesus explains that fasting is not necessary while the bridegroom (Jesus himself) is present, but will be appropriate when he is taken away. The preacher then delves into the parables Jesus spoke, emphasizing the importance of understanding the principles behind the instructions given to the disciples. He highlights the need for disciples to be shrewd and wise, as they are sent out among wolves. The sermon concludes with Jesus selecting twelve disciples and performing miracles, demonstrating the power available in the kingdom.

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## Transcript

Let's turn today to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 9, and verse 14. We were considering in our last study how the disciples of John came to Jesus and asked Him why His disciples did not fast. And Jesus replied that there could be no fasting as long as the bridegroom was present, but when the bridegroom is taken away, then His disciples would, out of longing for their absent bridegroom.

And then He went on to speak two parables. Verse 16, He said, No one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, that is, a new patch, patch of a new cloth on an old garment, for the patch pulls away from the garment and a worse tear results. We understand that, that cotton shrinks when it is put in the water, and if you put a patch of a new unshrunk cloth onto an old garment, when you wash it, the shrinking of that new patch will tear the old garment.

And this is a picture of a new attitude towards fasting and every other commandment compared to the old attitude that there was in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, people obeyed God out of fear of judgment. You read Deuteronomy chapter 28 and you find how many curses could come upon the Israelites if they disobeyed God.

On the other hand, many blessings would come if they obeyed. And so we see that there was the possibility of judgment if they disobeyed and the hope of reward if they obeyed. And it was these two

motives that prompted obedience under the Old Covenant.

We could say that was the old garment. Now, you can't take part of the New Covenant and attach it to the Old Covenant. The New Covenant is a completely new garment.

It's a new attitude to obedience, for example. Jesus said, if you love Me, keep My commandments. Not if you're afraid of judgment, keep My commandments.

Not if you want a reward, keep My commandments. But if you love Me, John 14, 15, keep My commandments. And so love is the basis, is the foundation on which, because of which, the motivation for obedience.

Now, if we were to take the Old Covenant attitude, which is rigid legalism and the fear of judgment and the hope of reward, and try to obey the New Testament commandments like that, it's going to tear our life, just like this garment gets torn, whether it's fasting or any other commandment in the New Covenant. And Jesus used another illustration in verse 17 about new wine has to be put into new wineskins. He said, if you put it into old wineskins, the wineskins, which were made of leather in those days, where they used to put wine in leather skins, the leather stretches because of the fermenting of the wine.

And after some time, it cannot stretch anymore. Its stretchability has reached its maximum. And if you put new wine, which is the possibility of fermenting, into old wineskins, the wineskins will burst because it cannot stretch anymore, just like in the previous case of the old garment.

And the wine is spilt, and the wineskin is also ruined. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins, and then both are preserved. And the new wine speaks about the life that we can receive under the New Covenant, through the Holy Spirit, the life of Jesus.

And that cannot be contained in this old covenant system, the old wineskin. It would burst it. And that's why we find that the Pharisees, who were trying to preserve the old wineskin, could not contain Jesus.

Jesus was constantly bursting forth out of their rigid systems. For example, the Sabbath. As the Pharisees understood it, Jesus was constantly breaking the Sabbath.

That's because they didn't understand the meaning of the Sabbath at all. And many other things. They felt that Jesus was breaking the commandments that Moses had given.

But Jesus had come with a life, not with more rituals. And so we see here, this is something that has application for us today. If we want the life of Jesus, and want to live that life, we'll have to get rid of a lot of things in the old system that we've grown up in, which are contrary to God's Word.

We must be willing to dispense with any wineskin that we find is contrary to the life of Jesus and the teaching of God's Word in the New Covenant. We're not to go back to the old covenant. For example, you never find tithing taught in any of the Epistles.

That's part of the old covenant system. In the New Covenant, we're taught to give cheerfully. It's the attitude that counts more than the percentage.

In the old covenant, it didn't matter what attitude you gave your tithe with. Even if you gave it out of fear of judgment, you still had to give your ten percent. But that's part of the old wineskin.

The life of Jesus can't be contained in that. In the New Covenant, it's the attitude with which you give, not the percentage that is important. And that applies to many other things in life.

Life in the New Covenant, I mean. For example, in the old covenant, only some people were priests, the Levites. But in the New Covenant, we read in Revelation 1.7 that all are priests.

We're all priests. We've been made kings and priests unto God. And we're a kingdom, a royal priesthood unto God.

There are many things like this. And if we want the life of Jesus in its fullest expression, it has to be contained in a new wineskin. It has to be contained in the teaching of the New Testament, and not in the teaching of the old.

Otherwise, we will not be able to preserve that life. The wine will be spilt out, and the wineskin will be ruined. And here's where we find many people are not willing to dispense with the old wineskin, because they're not willing to give up the traditions of the fathers, even though they see it to be contrary to what they read in the New Testament.

We must be willing to obey God rather than men, and to give up everything in our life which is contrary to the clear teaching of the New Testament. While he was saying these things, we read in verse 18, Behold, there came a synagogue official and bowed down before him, saying, My daughter has just died. Here's another instance of worship.

Somebody falling down and worshiping Jesus, and Jesus accepting that worship, indicating that he was God, manifest in the flesh. And this synagogue official said, My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live. Here again is an expression of faith on the part of the parent.

And that is a tremendous encouragement to us, that we can go to Jesus on behalf of our children, even if they're not able to exercise faith. For example, a little baby may be sick in the home. That baby is not able to exercise faith.

For physical healing, even a parent can exercise faith on behalf of the child. A parent cannot exercise faith for salvation on behalf of any of his children, for salvation is an individual matter, and each child has to find salvation himself. But when it comes to physical healing, or physical benefits, there's more than one instance in the Scripture where we read that the Lord responds to the faith of the parent.

And here is one of those examples. My daughter has died. Come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.

There's no doubt in his mind. He had probably never seen Jesus raise a dead person. He'd heard, perhaps, of Jesus healing the sick, or even seen that.

But here was faith that rose beyond what he had seen. It rose above all that he had ever seen. He said, Lord, I believe that you have power to raise the dead.

And Jesus rose and began to follow him, and so did his disciples. And as he was going, notice one thing here, that Jesus did not have a prejudice against the rulers of the synagogue just because the whole synagogue system was wrong. He had just spoken in verse 17 about the old wineskin.

And it's very refreshing to see that Jesus was willing to help a person who was in the old system, even though he remained there. Jesus' attitude was, wherever I can bless, I will bless. And he went and followed him.

He didn't go only to the houses of sinners. He went to the houses of Pharisees, tax collectors, rich people, poor people, synagogue officials. All human beings were the same to him.

There was a blessed freedom from partiality in the life of Jesus. And this is the nature we are to partake of, too. For we find that the life that we receive from Adam tends to make us very partial.

In our unconverted days, our partiality is expressed in one way. And when we are converted and become religious, we can find that our partiality is expressed in another way. There are some who would only go to the rich, and there are some who react against that and would only go to the poor.

There are some who would go only to the homes of those who have understood the new wineskin. There are some who say they would go to the homes of those who are in the old system. But with Jesus, it did not make any difference.

He looked at all human beings as those who needed salvation. And it did not make any difference to him what that person was or what system he was in. He was willing to go and bless and lead them into the truth.

This is the attitude we must have as well. Let's turn today to Matthew chapter 9 and verse 20. Here we read of the instance where Jesus is on his way to the house of Jairus, the synagogue official whose daughter has died.

And on the way, we read, a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak. For she was saying to herself, If I only touch his garment, I shall get well. Here again is an expression of faith.

It's not easy to have faith when you have suffered with a sickness for twelve years. And another gospel tells us that this woman had been to a number of doctors and perhaps spent all her money, and at the end of it was worse than when she began. There was no healing.

It's easy to despair. But she didn't lose faith. She knew that though she had tried many doctors, she had not come to Jesus.

And she had faith that there's no need for Jesus to speak to me. If I can touch his garment, I shall get well. Think of the faith there.

It's easy to have faith once we have already seen another who has touched that garment. But this was original. It was the first time that anyone had expressed faith of this nature.

And Jesus always honored faith. It thrilled him when he saw faith. He's just the same today, yesterday, today and forever.

Jesus is the same. He responds to faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

That's an amazing verse in Hebrews 11, 6. That you can live a holy life, and if you don't have faith, you don't please God. It's faith that delights the heart of God. Of course, we need to live a holy life too, for it

says in Romans 8 that those who are in the flesh cannot please God either.

But it's not holiness alone. And the holiness without faith is a counterfeit holiness in any case. Genuine holiness is that which comes through faith.

And a really holy man is a man who's got faith as well. Here we see the expression of faith. If I touch his garment, if I only do that, that's enough.

I shall get well. And she touched him. She pressed through the crowd, determined to touch him.

For we read there was a great throng surrounding him. And Jesus turning, seeing her, said, Daughter, take courage. Your faith has made you well.

Jesus sensed it immediately. In the midst of the throng, there was one who touched by faith. And that is often the case even today.

There are many thronging around Jesus today. There are many Christians in the world who throng around him at meetings, come together in meetings where the word of God is preached, and even where the Lord is present in the midst. But not all receive something from him.

For in the midst of the throng that surrounds Jesus even today in meetings and in church buildings and in meeting halls, here and there, there are some who touch him by faith. And those are the ones who get a benefit. The others do not.

And Jesus always spoke the word of encouragement to those who had faith. Don't be discouraged, daughter. Take courage.

Your faith has made you well. Think of that. It's not just Jesus' power that healed her.

It was her faith that healed her. That's what Jesus says. He doesn't say, my power or the power of God has made you well.

That's true. It was the power of God that healed her. But the power of God could have done nothing for her if she didn't have faith.

The power of God is available for everyone. But it's only those who have faith who receive that power. It's something like the two wires that are always needed in any electric connection.

Whether it's a tape recorder or an electric bulb or a fan or anything, there has to be two wires. And it's when both these wires make contact at a switch that the power flows. There are always two wires.

You cannot have electricity with just one wire. And it's just the same with God's power. His power flows, but there must be the other wire of my faith.

And where my faith makes contact with God's power, that's like putting on the switch, and the power of God flows. The power of God is always flowing. It's like the live wire in an electric circuit in a house.

There's always current in that live wire. But the switch allows that neutral wire also to become a channel of current. And then the gadget runs.

Otherwise, it doesn't run. And it is the switch that's not put on in many of our lives that prevents the power of God from flowing into our lives in many, many areas. That is a word that we need to keep in mind.

And at once, the woman was made well. One of the wonderful things we see about the healings of Jesus is there was no gradual recovery. There is only one instance, as far as we know, where a blind man was partially healed and Jesus prayed for him immediately, and he was healed completely immediately.

There was no gradual recovery over a period of six months or any such thing. Jesus' healings were instantaneous. His miracles were instantaneous.

At once, the woman was made well. The sickness of 12 years disappeared in a moment because of her faith. And that's a word to us according to our need, whatever our need is.

Even if we have struggled with something for 12 years, we can receive an answer from the Lord if we will come to Him in faith in a moment. And when Jesus came to the official's house, verse 23, Matthew 9, 23, and saw the flute players and the crowd in noisy disorder, the flute players were playing the funeral tune, and the crowd in confusion because this great man's daughter had died, he began to say, Move away from here, depart, for the girl is not dead, but is asleep. And they were laughing at him.

And Jesus moved the crowd away from the house. He wouldn't do things publicly as a demonstration of His power, for He never sought honor from the masses. It's a wonderful example of humility and of doing things for the glory of God.

Jesus knew He was going to raise that dead girl, but He did not want to do it publicly. He wanted to do it quietly. He entered and took her by the hand, and the girl was raised up.

And this news went out into all that land. I believe we see here the way in which we are to do our works. If God gives us power or authority to do anything for Him, it must be done in secret.

It must be done for His glory. It must be done before His face, not before the face of men. If it is done as a demonstration that brings us honor, it has no value before God.

That is the wood, hay and straw that will be burnt up at the judgment seat of Christ. All our works must be done for God's honor before His face. Verse 27, And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, saying, Have mercy on us, Son of David.

Again, an expression of faith. What did they want? They were not asking for money. Another gospel tells us very clearly that when Jesus asked them, What do you want? They said that our eyes may be opened.

They were beggars, but they were not asking Jesus for money. They would ask other people for money. But when they came to Jesus, they asked for something more than money.

They wanted healing of their eyes. And they had faith. As we see very clearly in verse 28, And after He had come into the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? This is a very important question.

Jesus does not work until we answer that question. Concerning any matter, you ask the Lord for something in prayer, no answer is going to come until you answer this question first. Do you believe, the Lord says, that I am able to do this for you? And they said to Him, Yes, Lord.

Imagine if one of those blind men had said to Him, Lord, I believe you can open at least one eye. He would have gone out with one eye open. Because, it says in verse 29, He touched their eyes, saying, Be it done to you according to your faith.

In other words, if one of them had faith only that one of his eyes could be open, according to his faith he would have received. And if the other man went in and had faith for both eyes to be open, he would have got both eyes open. The principle is this.

Be it done to you, not according to my power, says the Lord, but according to your faith. If God were to deal with us, and do to us according to His power, then all of us would receive exactly the same benefit. But, why is it that different Christians receive different degrees of benefit and blessing from God, spiritually, physically, in every way, particularly spiritually? Why is it some come into a greater measure of victory over sin? Partake more of God's nature, and others less? Is there partiality with Him? No, there isn't.

It is a measure of our faith. According to your faith. Be it done to you.

As much as you believe that Jesus can do for you, He will do for you. The Word of God says, Sin shall not have dominion over you. If you believe that He can do that for you, He'll do it.

Their eyes were opened. And Jesus warned them, saying, See here, let no one know about this. Notice again His humility.

His desire to hide that which was merely physical, because He had come with a spiritual message. But, of course, they didn't obey Him. They went out and spread the news about Him in all that land.

It's wonderful to see that Jesus did not come primarily to heal, but to lead people into the new covenant. This is why He asked people to keep quiet about physical healing, so that people would not be distracted from the main message He had for them. Let's turn today to Matthew's Gospel, chapter nine, and verse thirty-two.

And as they were going out, that is, Jesus and His disciples, behold, a dumb man, demon-possessed, was brought to Him. And after the demon was cast out, the dumb man spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, Nothing like this was ever seen in Israel.

But the Pharisees were saying, He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons. Here we see this amazing fact, that a demon can cause a man to be dumb. For it is clear that when the demon was cast out, verse thirty-three, the dumb man spoke.

In other words, there was nothing wrong with his vocal cords. He was a perfectly normal man physically, in his body. But there was a demon that had got inside him and made him dumb.

If that could have happened two thousand years ago, it can happen even today. But of course, people would not have recognized it. But Jesus did.

He had the discernment of the Spirit. And when the demon-possessed person was brought to Him, He cast the demon out, and the dumb man spoke. It's easy for a person to try and imitate Jesus here, without the same discerning of spirits that Jesus had, and begin to cause confusion.

And there are many people who have done that. For not every dumb person has a demon. Most dumb people, perhaps, are dumb because of a physical defect.

Maybe in hearing. And so Jesus didn't live by a rulebook, that said that every dumb person has a demon, like some people do. He did not live by rulebooks.

He lived by the leading of the Spirit, in each individual case. And it is more difficult to live like that, than to live by a rulebook. Many Christians prefer to live by a rulebook.

Jesus lived by the leading of the Spirit, and this is why He was never wrong. He was so sensitive to hear the Spirit's voice, that He knew exactly what the problem was in each case. And the problem was not the same in any two cases.

It was different. And the multitudes marveled, when this demon was cast out, saying nothing like this was ever seen in Israel. In other words, they had never seen demons being cast out.

They had seen counterfeit manifestations, and the Pharisees trying to do it, but they'd never seen anything like this. And here we see in verse thirty-four, the expression of the jealousy of the Pharisees. They couldn't cast out the demon themselves.

And when they saw someone casting out demons, they said, that must be by the ruler of the demons. He must be inspired by the devil. It's amazing how we can be jealous of a ministry or a gift that we ourselves do not have.

It's far better in such cases to be silent. It's easy to criticize. It's difficult to do something rightly.

If you feel that some other Christian or some other person is doing something in a wrong way, what is the right thing to do? To criticize it would be to be like the Pharisees. It's easy to curse the darkness. Jesus lit a lamp instead of cursing the darkness.

And that's our calling, too. It's better to light a candle than to curse the darkness. If you feel that someone is exercising a particular gift of the Spirit in a wrong way, instead of criticizing it, demonstrate in your own life or in your own church the right way to do it.

That would be a far greater thing. That would be a candle, a light. But to curse the darkness and to criticize the wrong of others, any fool can do that.

And we're not to be among the fools who merely criticize. And the only one who has the right to expose something wrong is the one who is doing it in the right way himself. It's easy to criticize the way another person is building a church, for example.

And by church I do not mean a building, but I mean a group of people who are the Body of Christ. But who has the right to criticize that? Only the one who has built a fellowship, which is the Body of Christ. That applies to every area.

Do you feel that the gift of tongues, for example, is being abused in some place? Maybe you're right. But you have the authority to criticize it only if you demonstrate the right way to use it in your church or fellowship. Do you feel the gift of healing is being exercised in a bad way? Maybe you're right.

Well, there should be a demonstration of the right way to do it in your midst. If we would follow the simple principle that we have authority to correct only that where we are able to demonstrate the right way, then we will save ourselves from a lot of foolish criticism and cursing of the darkness. Remember this, it's better to light a lamp than to curse the darkness.

Ride the darkness out yourself. Jesus lit a lamp. Now we come to this closing paragraph of chapter 9, and Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

There was no sickness or disease that he did not heal. There was a ministry of healing manifested through the life of Jesus such as has never been seen before or after. For it says every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

There was nothing that wasn't healed. And he didn't do this as God. He did this as a man with the gift of healing and the gift of miracles, the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The reason why the ministry was so vast and so perfect was because Jesus' walk with his Father was so perfect. The imperfect expression of the gift of healing and miracles today is because of the imperfect walk with God of those who are exercising those gifts. In Jesus' case, there was a perfect demonstration of those gifts because it was a perfect walk with the Father in his private life.

Notice what Jesus did in every city and every village. Three things. He preached the gospel, proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom.

Not just the gospel of forgiveness of sins, but the gospel of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, we read in Romans 14, 17. Healing was the second thing he did and third was teaching the word. Preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and teaching.

And this is what Jesus is doing even today. And seeing the multitudes, verse 36, he felt compassion for them. Not because they were sick, not because they were poor financially, but because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

When Jesus looked at the multitude, the thing that stirred his emotions was not primarily their physical need or their material need, but their spiritual need. That's because Jesus was a spiritual man. Spiritual men, when they look at others, are concerned about their spiritual need.

Carnal men are concerned about their physical and material need alone. Jesus was concerned about their physical need and their material need. He provided bread for the multitudes.

He provided healing for the sick. But above all, he was concerned for their spiritual need primarily. Because he knew that any satisfaction of their physical and material need will only be temporal in this earth.

But their material, their spiritual need was what was greater and which, if met, would bless them for all eternity. And it is in this context that he said to his disciples, The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. When he saw the multitudes, they were distressed, or the margin says, harassed and thrown down.

They didn't have true shepherds. They had hirelings who called themselves shepherds, but worked for pay. They were interested in their profession.

They were interested in their salary. And therefore the people were harassed by them and thrown down by them instead of being built up and encouraged. It's a sad thing when the leaders among God's people cast God's people down and discourage them and throw them down instead of building them up.

Then he said to his disciples, verse 37, The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. What type of workers? He was not speaking here about evangelists. He didn't say the evangelists are few.

He looked at the multitudes, verse 36, and saw that the shepherds were few. The people who could feed the flock. The shepherds are few.

The evangelists may have been many. And so the workers spoken of here are shepherds. And that is the need in our country and in every country today.

True shepherds are few. Evangelists are many. Hirelings who work for a salary, who are only interested in preparing their sermons to preach to the people, are many.

But true shepherds who lay down their life for the sheep, feed the flock in green pastures and lead them beside still waters and lead them to victory over their enemies and anoint their head with oil so that their cup runs over. Such shepherds, as described in Psalm 23, are few. What shall we do then when such shepherds are few? Can we rush out and become shepherds ourselves? Today we would probably hear someone preach on this verse saying the harvest is plentiful, the workers are few.

So go out yourself, give up your job. But Jesus never said that. He said, When you see that the harvest is plentiful and the workers are few, you must pray that the Lord will thrust out workers into His harvest.

Only the Lord of the harvest has the right to send a man into the harvest. You cannot volunteer to serve the Lord. The Lord has to call you.

If He doesn't send you out, you go out, you'd be living in disobedience and you'll create confusion for yourself and others. Wait till the Lord sends you out if He calls you. Maybe He's called you somewhere else, but pray.

That is what we should do when we find the harvest is plentiful and the workers are few. Let's turn today to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 10, and verse 1. In our previous studies, we've been considering how Jesus called His disciples up to the mountain, as we read in Matthew, chapter 5, and gave them instructions concerning the life that was to be found in the kingdom of God, the quality of life, that He had come to impart to them in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. And then in Matthew, chapters 8 and 9, we see a demonstration by Jesus before His disciples in various circumstances and situations of the power that was available in the kingdom to help establish that kingdom. The power to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cast out demons, and to still storms, power over all the forces of nature, power over all the forces of sickness, power over all the forces of Satan.

And at the end of all this time, all this demonstration and this teaching, we read in the concluding paragraph of Matthew, chapter 9, that we saw in our last study, that Jesus looked at the multitudes and they were like sheep without a shepherd. Matthew 9, 36. The harvest was plentiful, but the workers, true shepherds, were few.

The hirelings were many, the evangelists were many, but the shepherds were few. Therefore Jesus said to His disciples, Beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest. Verse 38.

And then, out of all His many disciples, He selected twelve. We find there a demonstration of what we were considering last week, that we cannot go out into the Lord's ministry unless He calls us specifically and entrusts a charge to us. There were many who followed the Lord, but not all were apostles.

An apostle means a sent one. We read in chapter 10, verse 1, these were the ones who were to fulfill that need that Jesus saw of shepherds. It is in the context of the harvest being few, of the harvest being plentiful, of the shepherds being few, and of prayer to the Lord of the harvest to thrust out workers into His harvest, no doubt Jesus prayed Himself that prayer, and the Father did thrust out through Jesus twelve apostles who were to be shepherds.

And this is the primary ministry of an apostle, to be a shepherd, to raise up those who were thrown down, as we read in verse 36, to encourage those who are distressed, to build the church, the kingdom of God. And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority. We read in verse 2, they were called apostles, and an apostle must be one who has authority, authority over Satan primarily.

He gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out, to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. The same phrase used in verse 35 concerning Jesus, every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. He gave that authority, which He had, to His apostles.

If Jesus doesn't give us authority, we have none, no spiritual authority anyway. We cannot have spiritual authority unless the Lord gives it to us. And authority in the realm of the physical, in the realm of the gifts of the Spirit, is something that the Lord gives in His sovereignty to whom He wills.

And here we see Him giving it to these twelve apostles. Matthew 10, verse 2. The names are listed in verses 2 to 4. Simon, who is called Peter, Andrew, his brother. James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother.

Philip and Bartholomew. Thomas and Matthew, the tax gatherer. James, the son of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus.

Simon, the Canaanite, or the Zealot. And Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. Very interesting to see how the Lord brought together Matthew, the tax collector, and Simon, the Zealot.

These belonged to two opposite groups among the Jews. Matthew, the tax collector, would be despised by the other Jews as a servant of the Romans, collecting taxes for the Romans. And Simon belonged to the... this is not Simon Peter, but Simon the Canaanite, or Simon the Zealot, mentioned in verse 4, belonged to the party called the Zealots, who were determined to oust Rome from Palestine.

And here, in the presence of the Lord, they come together. In any other place, Simon would probably have finished Matthew off. But in the presence of the Lord, they could work together.

Of course, we see the full fulfillment of this in the New Covenant, after the Day of Pentecost. And the last one, of course, was Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. When the Lord called him, he was just as sincere and devoted as the other disciples.

For we read very clearly in Luke chapter 6, verse 16, that Judas Iscariot became a traitor. He was not a traitor when he started. He became a traitor after a while.

And that is what is a warning to all of us, that one can start well like Judas Iscariot and end up to be in such a state where the Lord had to say to him, it is better for him that he was not even born. These twelve, Matthew 10, verse 5, Jesus sent out after instructing them, saying, Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans, but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Jesus himself once said to a Canaanite woman in Matthew 15, verse 24, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Jesus knew that the Father had drawn a circle around his life and his ministry, and he could not go beyond those boundaries that the Father had drawn. The new covenant had not yet been established. It was not yet time for the gospel to go to the ends of the earth.

Jesus had come with a ministry primarily to the house of Israel, and this is why he limited himself to the house of Israel, and he told his disciples, Stay within these bounds of the house of Israel. Do not go to the Gentiles, and do not go into any city of the Samaritans. That's not valid any longer, because later on in Matthew 28, Jesus said, Go and make disciples of all nations.

Our commission today as Christians is not found in Matthew chapter 10. It's found in Matthew chapter 28, the last three verses, or in the latter part of Mark chapter 16. It would be foolish to go into Matthew chapter 10 and find our commission there.

But to the lost sheep of the house of Israel they were to go and preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Or has come near. Today, we don't say the kingdom of heaven has come near, or is at hand.

It is already here in our midst. And we can enter it. Then, they could only preach it's coming, it's near, it's close at hand now.

And, as an authentication of their message, they were to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely they had received, freely they were to give. Now, as we said earlier, our commission does not come from Matthew chapter 10, but from Matthew chapter 28, because there are many things listed here in Matthew 10, which do not apply to the preaching of the gospel.

For example, in verse 9 he says, Do not acquire gold or silver or copper for your money belts. In other words, don't carry a purse with you. Don't carry any money with you.

Don't carry a bag for your journey, a knapsack, or even two garments. Don't take any clothes with you. Don't take extra sandals.

Don't take a staff. For the worker is worthy of his support. Where you go in Israel, the Lord would provide for your need, clothing, food, everything.

And into whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it. Don't go to any house you feel like. Inquire and abide in the house of one who is worthy.

And as you enter the house, give it your greeting. And if the house is worthy, let your greeting of peace come upon it. If it is not worthy, let your greeting of peace return to you.

And whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet. There is a dignity about the servant of God. He is not a beggar.

Truly, I say to you, to be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah and the Day of Judgment than for that city. There is a dignity about the man of God who goes out as Christ's representative. Later on, when Jesus was commissioning His disciples to go out into all the world, there He gave them different instructions.

He told them after the Last Supper, He said that when I sent you without purse or bag or sandals, did you lack anything? In Luke 22.35? No, they said nothing. But now He said in Luke 22.36, take your purse along, take a bag. And so the situation changed at the end of those three and a half years.

And we need to understand that this was an instruction given by Jesus for that particular period of time. Later on, we read that Paul even supported himself in preaching the Gospel. And this is ideally the best way to preach the Gospel, supporting oneself and earning one's own income.

But at that particular time, Jesus gave them this commission that they were to trust Him for all their needs, not take any extra clothing or food or anything, and God would provide for them in houses that He had prepared in different parts of the nation. And He would take care of His servants, and they were to conduct themselves with the dignity that is befitting a true servant of Christ. Let's turn now to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 10.

Here we read about Jesus giving instructions to His apostles concerning how they were to conduct themselves when they went out in His name. There are certain things in these instructions which are relevant only to that particular period of time before the establishing of the new covenant. The time when Jesus was on earth, for example, they were to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, verse 6, not into all the world, as we have been commanded to go in Mark 16 and Matthew 28.

And they could only preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. That means it was near. And they were to demonstrate that by healing the sick and raising the dead and cleansing the lepers and casting out demons.

And they were not to carry any money with them, not even an extra shirt or extra sandals. But in every place where they went, they were to look for a house that was worthy in the sense that a house that would receive them and stay there. And if someone didn't receive them, they were to shake the dust off their feet and turn away.

And God would judge such a home and such a city. But things are different in the new covenant now. Today we don't go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

We are to go into all the world. We don't preach that the kingdom of heaven is near. We preach that it has already come.

That righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, Romans 14, 17, the kingdom of God can be ours. That we can now live a life of victory over sin. Come into that joy of the Lord that is unending, that will enable us to rejoice always.

Come into that peace which passes all understanding, that will keep us free from anxiety always. And come into that righteousness which is not just external but inward because we partake of the divine nature. And further, the way our financial needs are met is not exactly the same as it was in those days for Jesus changed those instructions as we saw in our last study in Luke chapter 22.

He told them that now they were to take a bag with them. Luke 22 and verse 35 and 36. And they could provide for themselves.

But certain other things that He gave His instructions to them that are going out have relevance to us as well. The principles remain the same. For example, verse 16.

I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. This applies to us too. For there are wolves not only in Israel but all over the world.

They went as sheep in the midst of wolves in Israel. We go out as sheep in the midst of wolves around the world. Therefore, we are to be, verse 16, shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.

Two characteristics that are to be found among us as disciples of Jesus Christ. To be shrewd, wise, not gullible. There is no virtue in being easily deceived and fooled by other people.

Be wise. Be sharp in your thinking. Don't easily be deceived by people.

Don't easily be deceived by people who profess to accept the Lord with other motives. Don't be deceived by those who may be interested in your money or in your financial health or just merely in physical healing. Be wise.

At the same time, be innocent as doves. There is no virtue in saying, I'm a simple man. I'm easily fooled.

Well, you need to hear the word of God which says, be wise as a serpent and at the same time innocent as doves. In other words, our wisdom is not that which is designed to hurt others. Never.

We are to be innocent concerning evil. Innocent as far as evil is concerned. There is a wonderful verse which speaks in somewhat similar terms in Romans chapter 16 where Paul, writing to the Christians in Rome, says in Romans 16, 19, I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent or unlearned in what is evil.

There is no need for us to learn what is evil in order to preach against it. That is the instruction of Satan that you need to understand the evil that's going on somewhere before you can preach against it. It's a lot of rubbish.

We are to be innocent concerning what is evil. Innocent as doves. The purity of the dove.

At the same time, the wisdom of the serpent. For we are going out as sheep in the midst of wolves. We're not wolves.

We are sheep. And the wolves would like to tear us apart. And so be wise.

Be wise in what you say. Be wise in your committing yourself to someone. Jesus did not commit himself to everybody who claimed to believe in him.

For he knew what was in man, we read in the last two verses of John chapter 2. Many believed in him, but he would not commit himself to them. Let's follow his example. To be wise when a person claims to have faith.

To see whether it's genuine. To see what his motives are. Beware of men, verse 17.

Be careful. For they will deliver you up to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be persecuted.

You will even be brought before governors and kings for my sake, Matthew 10, 18. And as a testimony to them and finally to the Gentiles. And this is how we know it applies to us as well.

Because he's speaking about the non-Jews here. Even though earlier he had said to them not to go in the way of the Gentiles, verse 5. But this obviously refers to us who are in the new covenant. Obviously.

For we are to be brought before the governors and kings for my sake as a testimony to the Gentiles as well. And when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak. Now this is not referring, as has been often misinterpreted and misquoted to getting up and speaking in a meeting.

He's not saying when you're going to speak in a meeting, don't prepare anything beforehand. There are people who seek to do that and waste everybody's time when they get up to speak. But, this is referring to the time when we are brought before courts and synagogues or before religious people in persecution.

In times of persecution you don't have to plan beforehand as to how you're going to defend yourself in that court. No, he says, don't become anxious. For it will be given you in that hour what you are to speak.

The Lord will give you a supernatural wisdom at that time. Provided you have walked with God before, you cannot expect to receive that word if you have lived in the flesh all your life and then expect to have a word from the Spirit. But if we have lived in the Spirit, we shall have a word at that time when we are brought before a court to defend ourselves.

For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who will speak in you and give you the right words at that time to speak for the glory of God. We are not to imagine that if we have not waited on God, we can have a word to speak in a meeting if we have not walked in the Spirit. And this does not prevent us from waiting on God to receive a word if we are to speak.

In a meeting, this is referring to the time of persecution. And at that time, brother will deliver up brother to death and a father his child. And children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.

The sort of thing that has happened throughout the history of Christianity in all these two thousand years. Brother has delivered brother up to death. A father his child and children their parents.

And you will be hated by all on account of my name. And in the midst of this fantastic hatred that others will have. It says in verse 22 that we are to endure till the end.

Obviously the meaning is to endure till the end in love which is the opposite of hatred. And that becomes more clear when we compare this with Matthew chapter 24 where he says in verse 12 that most people's love will grow cold but the one who endures to the end in love will be saved. So this enduring till the end is enduring in love.

That is in love to God and love to the people who hate us. Salvation comes to those who work out their own salvation with fear and trembling in order to endure in love until the very end. And that is what is referred to here in Matthew 10.22. The one who endures in love to God in other words in faithfulness to God and in faithful love and goodness to those who hate them and who treat them in an evil way for Jesus said love those who are your enemies bless those who curse you do good to those who hate you and pray

for those who persecute you.

The one who endures to the end along this way will be saved will be saved from the corruption that he has inherited from Adam. And further one more instruction concerning persecution Jesus gave in Matthew 10.23 whenever they persecute you in this city flee to the next. For truly I say to you you shall not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.

Two things we can see there one is that there is no virtue in staying on in a city when you are being persecuted. We read concerning Jesus himself in John 7.1 that he was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill him. Later on he did go to Judea because it was the leading of the Father it was time to go to be killed but he did not want to go unnecessarily and expose himself to danger.

He would not jump off the pinnacle of the temple neither would he go to Judea unnecessarily where people were seeking to kill him and the time had not yet come. When they persecute you in one city flee to the next one so that you can live and proclaim the gospel. And then he will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes and that refers to the coming of Christ in power through the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

That before they could finish the cities of Israel the power of the Spirit of God had come the kingdom of the Son of Man had been established and that is the fulfillment of that verse Matthew 10 verse 23.

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