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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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Messengers for the Master, Part 2

Matthew 10:1-4

I. Context: Not Enough Merely To Pray

A. Co-Laborer with Martin Luther

Kingdom would be advanced by prayer first, then by resolute courageous action

Illus. William Barclay reports tale of Martin Luther: while living in an Augustinian monastery, he became convinced of the Biblical doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ alone, and he began to preach and teach courageously throughout Germany, starting the Protestant Reformation; a friend of his was equally convinced of the truth of the gospel, and the two agreed that Luther would spend his time out preaching, teaching, evangelizing, writing, debating, while the friend would spend his time in the monastery praying for everything Luther did... as Luther would visit his friend, he would share his struggles, conflicts, and obstacles... the friend would intensify his zealous prayers for Luther. "One night the friend had a dream in which he saw a gigantic field that stretched over the whole earth. But only one lone figure was working in the field. When the man looked closer he saw that the lone figure was his dear friend Luther. When he awoke, he went immediately to tell Luther that God had made it clear to him: he must also go out into the mission field and work, spreading the good news of the Gospel. It was not enough merely to pray, and not be the answer to your prayers for laborers in the harvest field

So, the King of the Kingdom of Heaven here commissions His Twelve Heralds, Twelve Messengers, Twelve Apostles of the Gospel, and sends them out into the harvest field to work

B. Harvest is Plentiful, Laborers Few

Matthew 9:35-38 ***When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."***

1. First step: Earnest intercession...

God's work more potent than that of any individual laborer

2. BUT: Can't just pray about lost & dying world... need to be willing to be a laborer ourselves

C. Last Week:

1. Apostles: Heralds on Kings Business
2. The Strategy of Christ
 - a. the centrality of proclamation
 - b. delegating the ministry of reconciliation
 - c. shaping the ministers: like a potter shaping clay
 - d. spiritual multiplication: only hope for completing the world gospel mission
 - e. unique role of apostles: eyewitnesses, foundation, miracles, authority
3. The Selections of Christ
 - a. all night in prayer to His Father
 - b. no concern for human opinion
 - c. who did he choose? General observations

“inner circle” + “inner inner circle”: intensive time spent with them

D. This Week: Specific Observations and Lessons from the Twelve Apostles

II. Lessons from the Master's Men

A. Humble, Ordinary Men

Acts 4:12-13 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

1. Unschooled = not professional theologians
2. Ordinary = unskilled, ignorant lit. Gk. “idiotes”

3. God delights in using the lowest and simplest to accomplish His work
4. Most of the Twelve were manual laborers... blue collar workers

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-- and the things that are not-- to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.

God chooses men that no one else would choose, to prove His power and glory by accomplishing great things through the lowliest

Illus. Tertullian acknowledging that Christians were mostly of the slave class

B. Order and Authority

1. Paired for witnessing

Mark 6:7 Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.

So also in Matthew's list, Twelve "paired up"

vs. 2-4 first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Peter and Andrew... James and John... Philip and Bartholomew... Thomas and Matthew... James and Thaddeus... Simon and Judas

2. Peter first

vs. 2 First, Simon (who is called Peter)

- a. Greek: "protos"... Peter was designated to be the "first" of the apostles, the leader; in every list of the Twelve, Peter's name is always first
- b. everything in Christ's Kingdom is ordered
- c. always spoke what everyone else was feeling... natural leader

d. stood up to preach on the day of Pentecost... with the Twelve, but their leader

Acts 2:14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd

3. Judas last

in like manner, in every list of names of the Twelve, Judas Iscariot's name is always last, and never without a mention that he was the traitor

4. Three groups of four, "leader of each"?

Just a theory, but perhaps Christ's ordering went even beyond Peter as the first, and Peter, James and John as the inner circle

a. Matthew, Mark and Luke ALL seem to arrange the list of Twelve in three groups of four... same name always heads each group of four, possibly the leader of that sub-division

b. first group: Peter, John, James, Andrew... Peter the leader

c. second group: Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew: Philip the leader

d. third group: James and Thaddeus, Simon and Judas; James the leader

C. Family Ties: Three Sets of Brothers??

1. Peter & Andrew, James and John

2. If Levi = Matthew, his father was Alphaeus (Mk. 2:14)... James's father was also called "Alphaeus"... possibly Matthew and James the Lesser were brothers

2. Christ obviously desired to work along family lines

3. throughout history of the church, family relationships important for advance of the gospel

D. Overcoming Hatred with Higher Commitment

1. Simon the Zealot and Matthew the Tax-Collector

2. Simon the Canaanite... Aramaic form for "Zealot"

3. Zealots a nationalistic group dedicated to the overthrow of Rome

4. Probably would have hated tax-collectors more than any other group of people in Israel

5. YET Simon the Zealot and Matthew the Tax-Collector were beloved brothers in Christ, former allegiances and hostilities a thing of the past

2 Corinthians 5:17 IF any man is in Christ he is a new creation; the old is gone, everything has become new.

Ephesians 2:14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility

III. Looking Closely At Each of the Twelve

A. Simon Peter

- Often wrong, never in doubt
- Four times said “NEVER!!” to Christ... stating that Christ was wrong
- Speak first, think later
- Very self-confident... his greatest weakness
- BUT greatest natural leader of the Twelve... man full of faith, ultimately broken by his denial of Christ, yet boldly proclaiming Christ on the Day of Pentecost
- The first to proclaim the Deity of Christ... which he did in Caesarea Philippi

B. Andrew

- Peter’s brother, much quieter and not so ready to lead
- John’s gospel shows him constantly and quietly bringing other men to Christ
- He actually brought his own brother, Simon Peter, to Christ

Illus. Humble, nameless Primitive Methodist lay-preacher who led Charles Spurgeon to Christ... Andrew represents nameless heroes of church history whose commitment to evangelism led some of the greatest figures in history into the church

C. James

- Son of Zebedee, with brother John
- Fishermen in his father’s business, successful enough to employ other men
- Willing to leave fishing business when Jesus called them
- With brother John, called a “Son of Thunder”... fiery, willing to destroy a Samaritan village who refused to accept Christ
- Wife helped support Jesus’ ministry financially
- Mother interceded with Jesus to allow him and John to be Jesus’ two most important advisors in the Kingdom
- First martyr of the Twelve... beheaded by King Herod in Acts 12

D. John

- Also son of Zebedee, Son of Thunder
- Probably originally a disciple of John the Baptist
- Ambitious to sit next to Christ in the Kingdom
- In the end, so humble he wouldn’t even write his own name in his gospel... simply called himself “The disciple whom Jesus loved”
- Other than Peter, the most famous of the Twelve

- Was the only one of the Twelve courageous enough to stand at the foot of the cross and watch Jesus die
- Was the first apostle to believe the resurrection had occurred
- Wrote the Gospel of John, three epistles, and the mysterious book of Revelation
- Tradition says he was the only one of the Twelve not martyred

E. Philip

- Like Peter and Andrew, hometown was Bethsaida
- Originally a disciple of John the Baptist, left him to follow Jesus
- Called Nathanael to follow Jesus
- At the feeding of the 5000, Jesus tested him and asked where they could buy enough bread to feed the crowd... Philip failed the test
- Brought a bunch of Greeks who'd come to the Passover feast to see Andrew... Andrew brought them to Jesus
- It was Philip who said to Jesus "Lord, show us the Father and it will be enough for us!" To which Jesus replied, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been with you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father!"

F. Bartholomew

- Many scholars say he was the Nathanael of John 1, who said about Jesus of Nazareth, "Nazareth, can anything good come from there?!" If so, it was of this man that Jesus said, "Here is a true Israelite in whom there is nothing false."
- If Bartholomew was Nathanel, we know that he was without guile, a true Israelite

G. Thomas

- Also called "Didymus", meaning "Twin"
- Famous for his unbelief of Jesus' resurrection... "Doubting Thomas"
- Should be as famous for willingness to go back to Judea to die at the time of Lazarus's death
- His profound confession of Christ is the absolute climax of John's magnificent gospel: **"Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God.'" To which Jesus replied, "Because you have seen me you have believed. Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed."**
- Tradition has him going to India to begin Christianity there

H. Matthew the Tax Collector

- Already met him in the sermon on Matthew 9:9
- Willing to leave a life of sin and collaboration with Rome to follow Christ

I. James, son of Alphaeus

- Called "James the Lesser"
- As mentioned, possibly Matthew's brother
- Almost nothing is known about him

J. Thaddaeus

- Lots of trouble identifying this man

- Probably the same as Judas, brother of James... remotely possible that he wrote book of Jude

K. Simon the Zealot

- Lit. "Simon the Cananaean", Aramaic form of Zealot
- As mentioned, before he came to Christ, he lived for the violent overthrow of Rome
- Willing instead to befriend a former tax-collector (Matthew) and to advance Christ's kingdom by preaching and by dying for Christ instead of killing for the glory of Israel

L. Judas Iscariot

- In every case, called the betrayer or traitor
- "Iscariot" probably means "man of Kerioth", a small village in Judea
- Treasurer for the group, but dishonest... stole money constantly from the bag
- Criticized Jesus for accepting Mary's lavish gift of perfume for his feet
- Betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver in fulfillment of prophecy
- Jesus said it would have been better for him if he had never been born
- Was possessed by Satan himself when betraying Christ
- In the end, filled with remorse and hanged himself
- Was never a true disciple of Christ... Jesus: **"Have I not chosen you , the Twelve... Yet one of you is a devil."**

IV. Strengthened by Their Weakness

Luke 22:31-32 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Accessible as sinners to us sinners: not "marble saints"

Low-quality clay in the hands of the greatest potter in history

1. Ignorance, Dull-wittedness, Lack of understanding
2. Argumentiveness
3. Little Faith, Unbelief
4. Pride, Jealousy
5. Yearning for Power
6. Overconfidence (Self-confidence)
7. Lack of compassion for the lost
8. Out of step with Christ
9. Worldliness
10. Prayerlessness
11. Cowardice
12. Rejection of the Crucifixion, Unbelief in the Resurrection

1. Ignorance, Dull-wittedness, Lack of understanding

Didn't understand the parables: Matt. 15:15

Didn't understand the miracles: Mk. 6:52

Didn't understand the footwashing: John 13:6-8

Didn't understand that Jesus had to die and rise from the dead: John 20:9

2. Argumentiveness

Mark 9:33-35 *They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" 34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. 35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."*

Matthew 16... argued about forgetting to bring bread!!

3. Little Faith, Unbelief

Matthew 17:14-20 *When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. 15 "Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. 16 I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him." 17 "O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." 18 Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" 20 He replied, "Because you have so little faith."*

Understand Jesus had already granted them authority over demons and had sent them out to do so

They had already returned overjoyed that even the demons were subject to them in Christ's name. They had been fully trained... but they did not have the faith to drive out this demon!

Jesus called his disciples, "Little faith" five times in Matthew's gospel

4. Pride, Jealousy

Repeated arguments over which one was the greatest! The ugliest was the night before Jesus died, leading to Christ's powerful footwashing display

Luke 22:24 *Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.*

5. Yearning for Power

Matthew 20:20-28 ...[sitting on Jesus right and left in the Kingdom]

6. Overconfidence

Matthew 26:31-35 Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' 32 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." 33 Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." 34 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." 35 But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

So confident in their own courage and righteousness, they believed in themselves even to the point of asserting that Christ was WRONG!!!

7. Lack of compassion for the lost

Luke 9:51-56 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. 52 And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; 53 but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. 54 When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" 55 But Jesus turned and rebuked them, 56 and they went to another village.

James and John would rather see this arrogant Samaritan village wiped out by fire from heaven

Jesus would rather see it converted!

John 4:27-35 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?" 28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him. 31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." 33 Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" 34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. 35 Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

Disciples had gone into Samaritan village and had accomplished NOTHING of eternal value... but they had bought some lunch!!! The Samaritan woman risked her reputation and goes into her own town, and the whole village came to Christ

8. Out of step with Christ

Mark 10:13-16 People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Christ wanted to be with the children and pray with them... the disciples thought he was too important for that

9. Worldliness

Mark 13:1 As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" 2 "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

Strange time to comment on the magnificence of the temple buildings! They were thinking in a worldly fashion... unable to see through the outer magnificence of their eyes

10. Prayerlessness

Matthew 26:36-46 [Asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane]

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

The disciples' lack of faith and overconfidence resulted in prayerlessness... so they were completely unprepared for what happened next

11. Cowardice

- Afraid of drowning in the storm
- Afraid of Jesus walking on the water
- Afraid on the mount of transfiguration
- Afraid to ask Jesus a question
- Afraid to go up to Jerusalem
- Afraid to be arrested with Jesus

Matthew 26:56 "Then the disciples all deserted him and fled."

Peter denied knowing Christ because he was afraid of dying

- Afraid to be killed by the Jews

John 20:19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

A week later... the same thing

John 20:26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

12. Rejection of the Crucifixion, Unbelief in the Resurrection

Could not understand

Luke 18:31-34 Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. 32 He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. 33 On the third day he will rise again." 34 The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.

Peter openly rejected it!!

Matthew 16:21-23 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. 22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" 23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Thomas's open unbelief:

John 20:24-25 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

The cumulative picture of the apostles is not a pretty one

1. Ignorance, Dull-wittedness, Lack of understanding
2. Argumentiveness
3. Little Faith, Unbelief
4. Pride, Jealousy
5. Yearning for Power
6. Overconfidence (Self-confidence)
7. Lack of compassion for the lost
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However... they were absolutely loyal to Christ, they believed in Him, stuck with Him even when His teaching was way over their heads

John 6:66-69 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. 67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

With men such as this, Jesus could change the world... and He did!!

V. The School of Christ: Training the Twelve

- Stages: conversion, call to follow, internship, final commissioning
- Blended training, 1: passive observation... listening to words, watching example
- Blended training, 2: sent out to practice (by doing)
- Matthew 10: overview... verbal instructions; intense complexities of the chapter

Christ shaped these Twelve patiently, following a clear strategy. They were in Christ's school day after day. They quit their jobs, and simply stayed with Christ daily, observing, learning, growing, getting ready. Their careers followed four distinct stages: conversion, discipleship, apostolic internship, final commissioning and apostolic ministry. Their training during their internship involved first of all passive reception of truth by word and deed from Christ, the Master. Secondly, it involved active ministry along with evaluation by the Master. Matthew 10 is Christ's timeless instruction manual for the Twelve as they went out in small ways at first, and ultimately to the "ends of the earth." It is a very complicated chapter with great difficulties, but these difficulties can be overcome by simple reading of the text, and by understanding the progressive nature of their mission PLUS the unchanging nature of their instructions.

VI. The Sending by Christ: Matthew 10

- Sent in answer to prayer of Matthew 9
- Sent to Israel
- Sent in simplicity

- Sent with supernatural power
- Sent to give what they have received: Gospel, healing, love
- Sent to suffer
- Sent to be protected by the Father
- Sent to be rewarded

VII. Application

A. Be Active

Christ can use ANYONE to advance His Kingdom

B. Be Humbly Confident

Human Sinfulness Cannot Stop Christ's Kingdom

C. Be Molded (like a potter shaping the clay)

Christ Trains By Active Ministry

D. Pray and Go!!

Prayer Coupled With Faith-Filled Obedience Is Unstoppable!!