

Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

H . Jesus Equips the Twelve Before the 3rd Tour of Galilee

Part 1: The Locale, Message, Gifting, and Grace for Their Ministries

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #103

MT 10.1-8 (Parallel Texts: MK 6.7; LK 9.1-2)

¹ ^{MT}Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them ^Lpower and ^{MT}authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. ^LHe sent them out to keep on proclaiming the kingdom of God and to keep healing the sick.

² ^{MT}These are the names of the twelve apostles: 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.

⁵ Jesus sent out the twelve, ^Mtwo by two, ^{MT}with the following instructions:

"I command you not to go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Rather I command you to keep on going to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ "As you go, continue to proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'"

⁸ I command that you keep on healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing those who have leprosy, and driving out demons. Freely you have received; freely give."

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are italicized in red*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

| | CONTEXT DIGEST |
|---------------------|---|
| Location | Probably Capernaum, in Galilee |
| Timeline | Oct. (Month 21, just before the 3 rd Tour) |
| Jesus' Life Context | Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry |
| | H. Jesus Equips the Twelve Before the 3 rd Tour of Galilee |
| Title | Part I: The Locale, Message, Gifting, and Grace for Their Ministries |

COMMENT:

Jesus ended his 2nd tour of Galilee by commanding his disciples to pray for workers to join him in the harvest fields. The weeks of visiting the final towns on circuit gave them a season to do this. After returning to their base in Capernaum, Jesus next directed the twelve apostles to become the answer to their own prayers. This is how God works. He brings us into harmony with his will through our prayers, then he accomplishes what we have prayed about by working in and through us by his powerful Spirit.

Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

H . Jesus Equips the Twelve Before the 3rd Tour of Galilee

After following Jesus for roughly a year and a half, Jesus gave the apostles their first ministry assignment. This shows us the importance of Jesus' example in his teaching method. He had modeled how to have a relationship with his Father, and how to minister every day, all day long. The disciples had spend at least ten hours a day observing Jesus, and receiving his tips and explanations for what he did. They had seen how he had responded to all kinds of people and situations. Now it was up to them to go, do, and say the same.

MT. 10 gives us the highlights of Jesus' training session with the apostles before he sent them out, two by two, to visit all the cities, towns and villages of Galilee prior to his own arrival in each place on his upcoming 3rd and final tour of Galilee. This tour was a joint ministry, with the apostles doing the "advance" work in each location where he would be coming for the last time.

The apostles would follow Jesus' ministry example by saying and doing the same things they had been watching him do for over a year and half at that point. Jesus laid out the foundational principles of ministry in this key training session , many of which would continue to apply to the apostles for their entire lifetimes, and to us as well.

We will take note of four important aspects of Jesus' commands and instructions to the apostles in these verses. **First, Jesus clearly defined the scope of their ministry before sending them out.** On his third tour Jesus was limiting his ministry to the towns and villages of Galilee. Therefore, he told the apostles to do the same.

The key thing here is that Jesus commanded the apostles to go to where he was already planning on going. They could be sure that he would follow them into every place he sent them. How encouraging! Like John the Immerser, their role was to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus, and therefore his kingdom, in every place.

The command to limit ministry to Galilee, and Jewish people may seem restrictive. We must remember that this command was specific to the ministry of the apostles on Jesus' 3rd Tour. The principle of ministering within the sphere of God's sovereign direction is important here--not the specific application to Galilee alone on this tour. Later Jesus will direct them to **"make disciples of all the nations."** The obedience of the Twelve in limiting their ministry to Jewish people alone on the 3rd Tour is part of what equipped them to eventually **"make disciples of all the nations."** This was all part of Jesus' master training and equipping plan for them.

Secondly, Jesus gave them the message to deliver: "The kingdom of heaven has come near." This was Jesus' own message, not theirs. They were to announce Jesus' message as his representatives, in his Name. Because Jesus was the King of Kings, with his arrival in Galilee the kingdom of God had arrived with him. He would soon be coming to each town and village the apostle's visited. Like John the Immerser, they were to prepare the people for Jesus to arrive, so that they would believe and receive him as their personal Lord and Savior.

It is also very important that **Jesus sent them out to minister on the basis of spiritual gifting.** He "gave" them power over demons and disease, and the authority to preach as well. These were spiritual gifts, all of which were first demonstrated in Jesus' ministry by the anointing of the Spirit. The apostles were to function in their work according to the gracious gifting of Jesus, not according to their own initiatives and abilities. All ministry according to Jesus is determined by his sovereign spiritual gifting.

The apostles learned the principle of ministering according to their spiritual gifting from Jesus. They would pass on this principle on to the churches they planted. Peter would write near the end of his life:

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful managers of God's grace in its many splendid forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who is speaking about the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with all the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen." 1 Peter 4.10-11

Finally, the apostles were to share what they had personally received and experienced in Jesus on the basis of his boundless grace. "You have continued to receive freely--so keep on giving freely."

God loves, therefore God gives freely, on the basis of his grace. That is the only attitude appropriate for his servants who minister in his name. True ministry is all of grace, not of works, so that no one can boast in God's

Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

H . Jesus Equips the Twelve Before the 3rd Tour of Galilee

presence. The apostles were not worthy to serve in themselves, nor did they have anything to offer to people that came from them. Everything was from Jesus, through him, and for his kingdom purposes. π

Likewise, the people they ministered to were not worthy to receive anything from Jesus in themselves either--it was all by his grace. Boundless grace is always the defining attitude for ministry according to Jesus. This attitude keeps pride at bay in God's servant, and it motivates us to minister to all people with no conditions or expectations attached. Jesus was teaching them to minister as an expression of his love.

APPLICATION:

Jesus chooses the sphere (locale), message, gifts, and grace that determine and direct our own ministries. He does this for every disciple, with no exception, just as he did for the apostles.

What spiritual gifts has Jesus given you?

What locale has he directed you to focus the use of your gifts?

How have you seen his grace working in you, and in those to whom you minister?

Are you as actively involved in your ministry as Jesus has planned for you? Are you distracted? What more do you need to do to fully minister in Jesus' name?