

Living on Mission as Sent Ones - Essentials.
From Matthew 10

The Context

After the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus told them how they could impact contemporary culture with Christian character Matthew highlights several miracles demonstrating the authority and power of Jesus over sickness and disease, over nature, over evil spirits and over forgiveness of sin. In all of these Matthew is establishing the Messiahship of Jesus.

Jesus ends chapter 9 with a picture of a crowd that is helpless and harassed like sheep without a shepherd. Then he says to the disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers.

Then in chapter 10, Jesus sends out the 12 and gives them his authority to do the same things he has been doing: Delivering unclean spirits. Healing every disease and affliction. Raising the dead. And, casting out demons.

The context is clear. Matthew's task is to present Jesus as the anointed one that Israel has been waiting on. The commissioning of the disciples is specifically for that purpose as well. He then sends them out with great clarity on **who** to go to, **what** to say and **how** to act on mission.

Scripture was written to a certain group of people at a certain time and place in history, with a certain contextual implication. But often there are there are life principles to learn we can learn from the biblical context. I believe in this case, the text leaves us with some very practical lessons to apply as we are sent ones on mission for Jesus.

1. **The first observation was the extreme clarity of Jesus in his instructions.**
 - a. He told them clearly where to go and where not to go. "Go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (7)
 - b. And he told them clearly, keep your message simple and uncluttered. "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." (7)
2. **Stay close to those who are worthy.** He tells them to find a worthy person and stay with them. These people of peace can be your alongsiders in your life, while on mission. We need the mutual encouragement of others while on mission. (11)
3. **As we go "be wise as serpents and innocent as doves".** (16) Be discerning. Be authentic and pure of heart. Protect yourself. Be discriminate. Balance grace and truth. Know your audience. Don't walk blindly into an ambush.
4. **Expect resistance.** We are invading enemy territory. "Sheep in the midst of wolves" Be armored up with weapons of righteousness in the right and left hands. The expectation was clear there will persecution from the government and from your own family. And remember persecution advances the Gospel and Kingdom. (16, 23, 34-39)

5. **Have the right perspective of fear.** Expect the temptation of fear. Three times Jesus says, “do not fear” (man). But, “fear God who can destroy the body and the soul.” (28)
6. **Don’t have unrealistic expectations.** Don’t expect peace. Expect division. Expect spiritual warfare. (34-39)
7. **Jesus ends this chapter with the character of a true sent one.** Sent ones are other-centered and self-denying (33) and willing to take up their cross and follow Jesus wherever it leads. (38-39)
8. **Go in total dependence and trust in God.** No plan B. No gold or silver, no bag, no extra clothing and even the words you say will be given to you in that hour (9-10, 19-20)
9. **We are not in the results business – But God is.**