

Focus Text

"These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town."

(Matthew 10:5-15, ESV)

1. Purposeful Priorities

"These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." **(Matthew 10:5-6, ESV)**

The instructions are given to the disciples that they are to start with the lost sheep of Israel, their community, and not to wander to other communities first. The heart of scripture remains constant on this matter: God has a special place for Israel as they are His chosen people. Jesus' mission was to reveal the fullness of the kingdom first to them so that they would be the light that brings the rest of the world into the kingdom. To reiterate, it is Jesus' co-mission in Acts 1:8 that the disciples will be witnesses to Jerusalem and Judea (the Jewish Communities), then move into Samaria and the ends of the earth. Jesus is calling His disciples to amplify the preaching of good news that the kingdom of God has arrived to the Jewish people.

This mission calls us on two fronts. First, that God has a heart for the conversion of the Jewish people, when we pray for Israel, our first prayer is that they would have softened hearts to the Messiah, Jesus, who came first to them. God uniquely loves Israel, and we should pray that their eyes are opened to the Messiah who bled and died first for them. This doesn't diminish Jesus' salvation with the whole world in any manner, but God's mission began with a chosen people, and God loves them always. Second, this challenges us to ask how we are bringing the witness of Jesus to the people closest to us first. Before you book a ticket to share the good news of Jesus across the globe, can we ask a simple question: How do we share the good news of Jesus with those closest to us first? It's essential to take Jesus to the whole wide world, but following Jesus' example, we should start with the people we love and in our circle.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” **(Acts 1:8, ESV)**

“It is not clear that even the end of Acts heralds a change in strategy,¹⁴ and it is at least possible that God intended Israel to be the first mission field in every era of Christian history”¹

2. Proclaim and Practice

“And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.” **(Matthew 10:7–8, ESV)**

Jesus then reiterates the practical aspects of the mission, to remind the lost in Israel that the Kingdom of God is at hand, and to heal the sick and cast out demons. Jesus adds the dimension that they hadn't had to pay for the gifts given, so they weren't to demand payment for their healing. This would make the twelve stand out from the more common spiritual healers who travel around, charging money for both healings and magic. These diviners made their living offering these healings. Jesus wants the disciples to stand out because their provision isn't in the paycheck, but in the fact that God will supply their needs.

¹ 14 See esp. R. C. Tannehill, “Rejection by Jews and Turning to Gentiles: The Pattern of Paul's Mission in Acts,” in *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives*, ed. J. B. Tyson (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 83–101.

Additionally, Jesus echoes the vision of the kingdom found in Isaiah 55. This vision in the kingdom reminds the disciples that in God's house, the fridge is full, the water is good to drink, and everything is taken care of. As difficult as it may be to trust in God, Jesus expects us to understand that in God's house all things will be supplied.

"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food." **(Isaiah 55:1-2, ESV)**

3. Peaceful Provision

"Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food."

(Matthew 10:9-10, ESV)

Here is where Matthew reveals the condition of the travelers; they are going out holding onto nothing at all. As stated by B. Berakoth, this was a mandate that when a man went to the temple, they were to be without staff, sandal, or coin to underscore their devotion to the Lord and to emphasize their poverty before God. The twelve will be noticed for their poverty as a signal that they are out on a mission, not merely for pleasure.

Welcome to another uncomfortable challenge. As we live our lives for Jesus, it will be noticeable. Growing up, I wanted to blend into society and not be a "weirdo" Christian. I have heard sermons declaring that we shouldn't be "weird" as Christ followers. I must argue that to follow Jesus, we will be oddities in the world. What's one way you can think of to stand out for Jesus that lets the world around you know that you're not playing, you're actively following Jesus?

"In B. Berakoth 54a it is said that men were forbidden to use the Temple courts as a thoroughfare. Consequently they went there without a staff in the hand, without shoes on the feet, and without money, whether in the girdle or in a purse. It is possible that Christ wished His missionaries to avoid anything that would make them look like ordinary travellers journeying for purposes of trade or pleasure. In that case, the prohibition of staff and sandals would be more natural than the command to take them."²

² B. Babylonian Talmud.

Allen, Willoughby C. 1907. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Matthew. International Critical Commentary. New York: C. Scribner's Sons.

4. Responding to the Message

"And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town." **(Matthew 10:11-15, ESV)**

Finally, we see that the disciples are to bring their peace, the security and comfort of living in the kingdom of God and serving King Jesus, to the towns and villages around the Galilee. They are to be open to folks who will house them and feed them while they are on mission, and as long as the host is comfortable, they should stay at this home while healing the sick and casting out demons. Those who host and listen will receive the peace of Jesus the King. Once they leave and go to the next town, the peace of Christ will stay upon the house and the people who received it.

The dire warning in the story is that if they arrive and find no home and no listeners, they are to shake the dust off their sandals and depart. The shaking of the dust is a sign that no one will follow their ways. When a student follows a rabbi, the prayer is that the student would be covered in the dust of the rabbi's sandals. Shaking this dust off means no one has inherited the teachings of the rabbi. Jesus declares this place will not have the peace of the kingdom, and it will be better in Sodom and Gomorrah than this place when the final judgment arrives. The unreceptive community has been sent God's messengers and has rejected them; therefore, they will not have a place in His Kingdom because they rejected the King. One important note is that the disciples are to be seen as Jesus Christ; He gave them His authority, meaning that what happens to them in the world happens to Christ. Jesus says that when we care the least for His people, we have cared for Him personally.

The challenge here is to remember that you operate under the banner of King Jesus. Regardless of the outcome, if you are faithful to Christ, you have and bring His peace. If others desire it, that is great; if they reject it, God will be the judge. Just walk with Jesus and let the Lord work out the rest.

"The concept of peace in Matthew chapter 10 is far more profound than a mere social greeting. The peace greeting is an offer of divine goodwill from God, with the disciples representing God's gracious presence^[1]. This is not an ordinary Semitic greeting, but a special blessing that spreads "the material presence of God's salvation" and potentially connects to the eschatological peace of God's kingdom^[2].

“The peace has transformative power—it can be received or rejected. Those who are “children of peace” (receptive to the message) will be blessed, while those who oppose the message will have the peace “return” to the disciples. Importantly, when rejected, the disciples are instructed not to react violently, but simply to withdraw^{[1][3]}. Rejection means the people no longer live in the realm of God’s eschatological peace. The ultimate significance is that “the issue of salvation or disaster is finally decided in the encounter with the disciples of Jesus”^[2]. This nuanced understanding reveals peace not as passive tranquility, but as an active, transformative divine presence that demands a response.”³

Application

Taking the Lord’s Peace with You!

Take a look at your calendar for the upcoming week. What’s on it? Where are you scheduled to be? Who will you meet and interact with? The most important question is, how are you going to bring the Lord’s Peace into those spaces?

With your cornerman, spend some time in prayer this week, so that as you go into the world, you will take Christ’s peace with you! Amen!

³ [1] Darrell L. Bock, [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), [997–998](#).

[2] Ulrich Luz, [Matthew: A Commentary](#), ed. Helmut Koester, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), [81](#).

[3] Brian Wintle, [“Matthew,”](#) in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, ed. Brian Wintle (Rajasthan, India: Open Door Publications, 2015), [1242](#).