



Week 10 – March 10, 2013

Who is This Man? – Empowering

Mark 10:1-10

¹ Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness.

² Here are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (also called Peter), then Andrew (Peter's brother), James (son of Zebedee), John (James's brother), ³ Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew (the tax collector), James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, ⁴ Simon (the zealot), and Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed him).

⁵ Jesus sent out the twelve apostles with these instructions: "Don't go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, ⁶ but only to the people of Israel—God's lost sheep. ⁷ Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received!

⁹ "Don't take any money in your money belts—no gold, silver, or even copper coins. ¹⁰ Don't carry a traveler's bag with a change of clothes and sandals or even a walking stick. Don't hesitate to accept hospitality, because those who work deserve to be fed."

Ordinary People. Empowering God.

It is tempting to overlook the names in verses 2 to 4 and head directly to the teaching in verses 5 to 10. It is also a mistake. We learn they were ordinary people. Not much wealth, education, or social influence. We also learn they were an extraordinary mixture. Take Matthew and Simon. Tax collectors and zealots were enemies. Had they met in another setting hatred would have prevailed. Jesus unifies and brings people together. Jesus collected a diverse group of ordinary people and called them to serve the children of an extraordinary God.

The Greek word for "apostle" in verse 2 is *apostolos* which means "agent." An agent has the authority to act on behalf of another. The Greek word for "announce" in verse 7 is *k russein* which means "herald." A herald was a messenger sent by a monarch or noblemen to convey a proclamation. As followers of Jesus we must practice in the presence of Christ so that we can act on his behalf and share his message with the world.

The mission of the disciple can be discovered in verses 6 to 8. In our context today it would read like this: *Go to the searching and confused people right in your neighborhood. Tell them the Kingdom of Heaven is here. Give strength to the weak. Forgiveness to the sinner. Cleanse our polluted world. Offer freedom from self-destructive habits and addictions. You have been treated generously, so live generously. That was the call of the 12 apostles and is your calling as well.*

Questions for Reflection

1. Why do you think Jesus didn't find the best and the brightest people to start the Church? What do you think would have happened if he would have gone to the Temple and chose scholars and rabbis to do this kind of work?

2. Matthew teaches that you don't have to be perfect or from a certain social setting or have a certain type of education to be used by God. How does it feel knowing that God can use you to make a difference in the world?

3. Christianity brings people together. It unites divided people. Think of somebody you are experiencing difficulties with. How can Jesus bring understanding and healing to this relationship? What is your next step in this relationship?

4. God is asking you to be His agent and herald. The first step is growing in your relationship with God so that you can act on God's behalf. What steps are you taking to grow in this relationship? What else can you do?

5. Think of some people in your life or some people in the world who need clarity, strength, forgiveness, hope, and freedom. With God's guidance and resources, what are some ways God is leading you to serve and love these people?

This Week's Prayer Focus - Being Utilized by God

Pray this prayer daily during the week. Spend additional time focusing on a short section of the prayer. Spend a few moments in silence listening to God and being attentive to the ways God is speaking to you.

Dear God,

You called the twelve apostles by name. You challenged them.

To search for the people of Israel.

To announce that the Kingdom of Heaven is near.

To heal the sick.

To raise the dead.

To cure those with leprosy.

To cast out demons.

To give to others as freely as they have received from You!

You call me by my name. You challenge me.

To seek searching and confused people.

To tell them the Kingdom of Heaven is here.

To give strength to the weak.

To impart forgiveness to the sinner.

To cleanse our polluted world with justice.

To offer freedom from self-destructive habits and addictions.

You have blessed me generously. Help me give generously.

I live in a broken that needs Your wholeness.

I live in a contaminated world that needs Your purity.

I live in a confused world that needs Your direction.

I live in an anxious world that needs Your peace.

Give me wholeness, purity, direction, and peace.

Empower me to give as You have given to me.

May my words be like a mirror so that I reflect Your grace.

May my actions be like a window so that Your light shines through me.

When skepticism and sadness are present – let me be faith and delight.

When torment and tragedy are prevalent – let me be hope and help.

When hatred and indifference prevail – let me be love and understanding.

When depression and worry are powerful – let me be joy and harmony.

Shape me. Refine me. Empower me. Utilize me.

Amen.

This Week's Bible Memory Verse

Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. –Matthew 10:7

This Week's Resources

A book we have available this week at The Water's Edge:

Who is This Man? The Unpredictable Impact of the Inescapable Jesus by John Ortberg

Two books to consider ordering:

Radical by David Platt

Holy Discontent by Bill Hybels

A blog worth reading:

<http://jenniferdukeslee.com/the-radical-life-of-an-evangelical>

This Week's Challenge

Think of some people in your life or some people in the world who need clarity, strength, forgiveness, hope, and freedom. With God's guidance and resources, think of some ways God is leading you to serve and love these people. Take first step or the next step to serve and love at least one of the people you are thinking of.

Next Week – Who is this Man? - Forgiving