

Romans 16:3–16
How Jesus Gathers His Sheep

Saturday, July 13, 2024 • Read Matthew 10:1–15

Questions from the Scripture text: Whom did Jesus call to Himself (v1)? What did He give them? What were their names (v2–4)? What did He do to them in v5? Where did He prohibit going? To whom did He say to go (v6)? What was their primary mission (v7)? What were they to do alongside this preaching (v8)? What were they to charge for these services, and why? What shouldn't they store up for the journey (v9–10)? Why not? What were they to inquire in each town (v11)? And what were they to do? When they enter, what are they to do to the household (v12)? How will this be received if they are worthy (v13)? But who will receive peace, even if the household is not? What response is indicative of this unworthiness (v14)? What is the apostle to do as he departs? To what frightful reality does this testify (v15)?

What is the gospel ministry? Matthew 10:1–15 prepares us for the morning sermon on the Lord's Day. In these fifteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **Jesus sends preachers to gather His sheep.**

Whom Jesus uses. From the full group of the disciples, the Lord Jesus now calls twelve (v1), who are especially distinguished by the devil-conquering, fall-correcting authority that He gives them. We notice in v2–4, six pairs, related in three groups of four. They are as varied in character as fiery Peter vs gentle John, and Matthew (who had collected taxes for Rome) and Simon (the zealot against Rome). Judas is a warning that calling, ordination, and even usefulness are not guarantees against future disaster or even guarantees of being in a state of grace. But this group of Galileans, unimpressive from a worldly standpoint, were the sort of people whose lives Jesus transforms, and whom Jesus educates and trains to be laborers in His harvest.

What Jesus uses. The Lord is gathering His lost sheep. This means that they will surely be gathered, and that those who are sent to do the gathering can be confident of the success that the Master wants. But by what means does the Lord of His harvest instruct His laborers to gather in His harvest? Preaching. v7 is the primary command.

We have just reviewed, in 9:35, what Jesus's preaching of the gospel of the kingdom was. We saw initial indication of this in John's preaching in ch3, and an extended exposition of it in chs5–7. The King of the kingdom is Himself the qualification for each of His subjects to have the kingdom, the King Himself grants the repentance and holiness to enter the kingdom, the King brings you near to God in true and spiritual religion, and the King gives you a relationship with God in which He Himself is your priority and pleasure, and every good thing is added to you.

Jesus had given them authority (v1) to do the works that attest to the genuineness and efficacy of their preaching (v8). These things attend the preaching, and the worldling would pay good money for them (so the apostles are warned not to charge for it), but it is the preaching that is primary. Those who heed it will receive not merely temporary and partial conquering of devils and correcting of the fall; they will receive these fully and eternally.

How Jesus provides. In short, Jesus provides however He wishes! For this brief preaching assignment, He did not wish for them to take pains to plan provisions. During this little "internship," they needed no more than worthy hearers would provide (v9–10). Jesus already had, in each town, those who had a reputation of loving the preaching of the kingdom; wherever they went they were to inquire about these and receive hospitality from them (v11). The Lord provides materially for the ministry through those whom He blesses by it.

What is at stake. For the worthy hearer, and especially the household employed in the support of the ministry, there was great blessing. The expression of delight (greeting) in v12 is not only the apostle's delight but Christ's. They would be able to tell if the reputation of worthiness is true, by whether this greeting is well-received (v13). Even if not, the apostle does not minister in vain, and the offered peace comes back to him as his own.

But how dreadful for those who do not receive them for the sake of their message (v14)! God has given men over to Sodomite sin and penalty for rejecting His glory in creation (cf. Rom 1:18–32); how much worse for those who reject His glory in redemption (v15)! Just as Jews were accustomed to shaking off even the remaining dust when leaving a pagan city, lest the uncleanness and condemnation come home with them, how much more should Christians beware of taking anything away with them from people and places of unbelief!

Who are the ordained servants that the Lord is using in your life? What use are you making of prayer, and the sacraments, and especially of preaching? How are you being used to provide for the ministry of the gospel? What is your habit for making use of the gospel preaching that you hear? How do you receive it and those whom the Lord has sent to preach it?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for sending Your Word to gather Your sheep. Gather us to Yourself, and give us to love You and be grateful for Your Word and those by Whom You send it, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP67 "O God, Give Us Your Blessing" or TPH130A "Lord, from the Depths"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Matthew 10 verses 1 through 23. These are God's words. And when he had called his 12 disciples to him, He gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out. And to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. Now, the names of the 12 Apostles are these First Simon, who is called Peter and Andrew his brother.

James, the son of Zebedee and John his brother. Philip and Bartholomew. Thomas and Matthew the tax collector. James, the son of alphaeus and labeus his. Third surname was Thaddeus. Simon the Canaanite and Judas, Iscariot who also betrayed him. These 12 Jesus sent out and commanded them saying, Do not go into the way of the Gentiles and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.

But go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. And as you go preach, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick cleanse lepers. Raise the dead cast out demons. Freely, you have received freely give Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts.

Nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs. For a worker is worthy of his food. Now, whatever city or town you enter? Inquire who in it. Is worthy and stay there till you go out. And when you go into a household, greet it, and if the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it.

But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever will not receive you, nor hear your words. When you depart from that house or city shake off the dust from your feet, Assuredly, I say to you it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In the day of judgment then for that City. Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But to beware of men for, they will deliver you up to councils and Scourge you And their synagogues. You will be brought before Governors and Kings for my sake as a testimony to them.

And to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given you in that hour that you should speak, what you

should speak. For it is not you who speak but the spirit of your father, who speaks in you Now, brother, we'll deliver brother to death and to father, his child When children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death, And you will be hated by all for my name's sake.

But he who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in this city, flee to another For assuredly, I say to you. You will not have gone through the cities of Israel. Before the son of man. Comes.

So far the reading of God's inspired. And Aaron twerked.

The Lord Jesus has just described. Those who are as sheep without a Shepherd as a harvest that is plentiful. And he has identified himself as the Lord of the Harvest. And commanded that. We pray to him. To send out laborers into his Harvest. Those who will do the same work that the Lord Jesus himself.

Has been doing. It's at this point in Matthew's gospel that he lists for us the 12 disciples and Here alone. Matthew's gospel. He refers to them as Apostles which means sent months the ones for whom they were instructed to pray. Now, not all whom the Lord, send are in the office of Apostle.

There are Only the Uh, Thrones And 12 gates. In the picture of Zion, in the Book of Revelation. But, All those whom the Lord ordains. For the preaching and teaching Ministry are indeed sent once. And so we are learning something about Uh, what the Uh, does how he works as he sends those through whom he is going to gather his Harvest.

Through whom he himself will come to a people by his word and by his Giving them faith and so on. Very briefly in the list of the Apostles here we see that they come from all sorts of backgrounds With all sorts of different personalities. There's no personality profile that helps you identify whether or not someone.

May be sent by Christ. Everyone, of course, must be Um, whom the Lord sends must be his Must be in Christ by faith. Must be men of Grace. Men who are learning from him men who are being trained by him. This he has been doing and Now, he sends them out.

Uh, before The end of his ministry, there are actually two sendings, Luke records, both of them for us. So that we may know that they are different one. The sending of The Twelve and one ascending of 72 among whom almost certainly the twelve Or from that number. Of 72.

But you see here, Uh, people whose personalities are as different as. Peters is from John. You see here, those who are And different ends of the political Spectrum. From Simon. Who's cold here, Canaanite, but it's mistaking, a word. That looks very similar. But is really off the root. For Zeal.

And is called in other places, Simon, the Zealot You'll get this in some translations where they say, Simon the Canadian So Simon, the Zealot would have been against

Simon. The Zealot would have been Against everything, Roman and Matthew, the tax collector was actually Collecting taxes for Rome. These are not men of.

These are not men. The Uh, what is team? Many of them. Fisherman. Um, probably all of them. Galileans. And yet, the Lord. Is able and willing and pleased. To use them. These 12, Jesus sends out. Now, there is a Sending out that. During his Earthly Ministry. And this one is specifically to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.

Now, praise God. That there are lost sheep among the house of Israel because Uh, we are going to hear in verse 16. That there are also wolves. And so not only are there. The lost sheep among the household of Israel, but even later, when they start still in Jerusalem and Judea, And then are permitted at that point to go to Samaria.

Although here they are not to turn off. In the direction of. Samaritan towns. But then when they go into Judea and Samaria and then to the ends of the Earth, there will be wolves there as well. But, Uh, over all the Earth and in the House of household of Israel.

There are lost sheep meaning. They are those who belong to his flock. So he's going back to the sheet metaphor, he had the field metaphor. They're his field. There he is planted. He is now sending laborers to reap them. And they're also lost sheep. They're sheep without a Shepherd, they're the ones upon whom.

He has this compassion, and in his compassion to them. He wants to give them himself. The Lord Jesus. When he presents you with the gospel, he doesn't just teach you, um, to show you how to have a better life where to get good grass. Where to shelter from predators.

Where to find. Good drinking water. No, he gives you a Shepherd. He gives you himself. And yes, he attends to everything that you need. But, Main benefits of the Gospel are not. The ancillary blessings that come by way of having a Shepherd. The main blessing of the Gospel is having and belonging to the shepherd himself, no longer being a lost sheep, no longer being a scattered sheep.

And so, since there are those Among the household of Israel, they're told to go to them now obviously not everyone that they go to not everyone in these Israelite towns that they go to Are going to be lost sheep who are going to be recovered by the preaching of the Kingdom.

But it is, especially for the sake of the sheep that they go. This is one of the reasons why we Pace. We are to pay such good attention to the instruction of Jesus, the great Shepherd. He's the one who's gathering the sheep and this is one of the reasons why Especially those who are called into gospel Ministry, but every believer who has the name of Christ upon him and is in this world can expect.

Much of the same resistance and hatred, and attack. That are described in Matthew chapter 10. But we are not to be. Dissuaded or discouraged or disparing. On account of these things. Because the Lord Jesus has sheep, who are his, and he will gather them all to himself. When he says, lost sheep.

He immediately. Excludes the possibility. That any of them would remain lost. If they're his sheep. He will gather them. None of them are going to be lost, that's impossible. And so, Even here when he says to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Uh, it sounds a little bit negative in our ears, but if we really think about what he's saying, it's very positive.

Very Um, Confidence giving. To know that the Lord is going to use the ministers, whom he sends the word that he sends the ministry that he sends to gather those sheep to himself. And so he gives them the primary instruction. As you go preach, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is a hand.

Now, he's gonna give them these other commands in verse 8. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers. Raise the dead. Cast out demons. Okay, so

He gives them Authority in verse 1. Over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal. All kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. So, Uh, they are given Authority for conquering Satan and his kingdom and correcting what has happened in the fall? And this is something that they are commanded to do in verse 8.

But this is attending The primary means that he gives them for Gathering sheep, which is preaching the gospel. Of the Kingdom. So just as we heard in verse 35, Jesus is preaching, the gospel of the Kingdom, and we remembered earlier. Both John saying, repent for the Kingdom of Heaven as a hand, and Jesus saying, repent for the

Kingdom of Heaven, as a hand in Jesus, preaching, the gospel of the Kingdom.

So chapter 4, verse 17, chapter 4 verse 23. And then that big example of what the gospel of the Kingdom, sounded like in chapters five through seven. So now they who have attended on his preaching, Uh, all this time. Are commanded to reach the same. They don't just repeat over and over again.

The Kingdom of Heaven is a hand, the Kingdom of Heaven is, and the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. No, they are preaching. The gospel of the Kingdom that Summarized for us here in this sentence. The Kingdom of Is at hand. The healing of the sick, the cleansing of the lepers, the casting out of demon demons.

This all proves. That Christ who sends them, his power is with them in their preaching Ministry, just as his power. Um, was displayed in his own preaching Ministry, and this really shows the greatness of Christ's Authority in Christ's power, is that he could give that Authority and that power to others.

This is something that even those to whom he gives The the preaching Ministry and even the apostles to whom he gave This particular Ministry, something they could not, do is give this authority to others and apparently Uh, when he says heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

Inverse one. This is a little bit different even than Gifts of healing. Um, That. Uh, In, in addition to those of the Apostles themselves, but attended, the Apostolic message, uh, while the New Testament was still being written. First Corinthians 12, Uses. Um, the plural. Gifts of healings. Um, Implying that there are different specific gifts of healing specific sicknesses or specific illnesses that are the quote unquote, lesser if you would Gifts of healing during the apostolic age but not necessarily by the apostles themselves.

So they're going to gather lost sheep by preaching the gospel. And one of the things they're going to do as they preach. The gospel is perform these healings to show that their preaching is authorized by Jesus and attended by his power. Now, he warns them, of course. Because if you are able to heal the sick cleanse the lepers, cast out the demons you can make for yourself quite a bit of money.

But he says freely, you have received freely give Uh, God there's nothing we could give God To get from him. Forgiveness, there's nothing we could give God to get from him. The Lord Jesus coming to Earth. Uh, the Lord Jesus, becoming a man. To die for us. They had not.

Given Christ something to get their calling as Apostles. They had not. Contributed or earned or paid in any way. For the authority that they would have in their preaching. All of this is given to them free of charge. That they are. They were not to charge anyone. For what they did.

However, They were to depend upon the Uh, generosity. And, Gratitude. Of those who were receiving freely from them. Note that this is a short-term thing. This is kind of like their internship. This is before. They are being sent out from Pentecost. Uh, even here though. He says the laborer is worthy of his wages but here he says, you know, don't Um, Don't make all of this Earthly provision for yourself.

Keep your focus on the mission. And so, they were not. Bring a bunch of money. Uh, for their incidentals along the way. Uh, they weren't to take an extra tunic. Uh, which means That. Would need to be dependent upon the hospitality of others. Uh, an extra tunic would have been nice if they were gonna Sleep out in the open.

Uh, and be exposed to the cold and damp of the night. Uh, they're not to take extra or new. Uh, sandals or staffs. But they were to labor in hope that the Lord would bless their Ministry and gather these sheep in And provide them provide for them by means of those whom he was saving.

They were to go into a town verse 11. Uh, they would go the work to go into a town and inquire. Uh, who in it is worthy. Now, this may have been by way of Actually asking around. Telling that they were sent by Christ to preach his gospel. And asking about, who cares for Christ and who cares for the gospel already.

Lord, Jesus has already had a very widespread Teaching Ministry. And there. Um, there may be some expectation that they're already. Some Believers in town who are known for believing. Not just part of the crowd, but those who are really

But those who are

Not just those who are part of the crowd, but those who are really full of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and their mouths are full of his praise. Their lives have been transformed. Uh, by belonging to him. And yet. Uh, even after they get to such a household, it might still not be worthy.

They might be they might have a reputation for this. But not actually B. According to their reputation are according to their profession. So he tells them that when they went into the household to greet everyone, And if the household is worthy, then they're greeting, they're wishing. Um, the household piece in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, it would be well received They would be glad to have a sent one from the Lord Jesus to greet them, and to communicate to them, the Peace of Christ.

But, If? They weren't so welcome there. They would be able to tell. Their greeting of Peace would not be well received. It would be obvious that. Uh, the hospitality was not so willing. Uh, not so glad. In that case. The greeting of Peace is not wasted or lost verse 13 says that the peace would return to them.

They're doing what Jesus had called them to do. They had done it in Jesus name and for Jesus's sake, they would not lose their reward simply because this particular Um, household. Uh, was not.

I'm glad to have them. But then there is this very Sobering warning. About those who do not gladly receive. Those that the Lord sends for the ministry of the word. Says, whoever will not receive you. Nor hear your words and these two things go together. Insofar as someone values.

The truth of the word and the preaching of the Gospel. Itself. They will receive. Uh, even from as Florida list of people, as we have at the beginning of this chapter, And as flawed a group of people, as the Lord has used now for 2000 years. They will receive them and they will receive the words that come from them.

But whoever did not. Receive them or their words, he tells the Apostle, when you depart from that house or that City shake off the dust, From your feet. Now, this was something that Jews actually used to do when they left Gentile towns. Uh, because Uh, We're being over careful.

Not even to get. Unclean dust. On themselves or retain any unclean dust on themselves and accidentally carry that into an Israelite town and desecrate. Maybe a levite. Their house or something. That needs to be ceremonially, clean or holy? It's a reminder, just like the word unclean. Uh, doesn't mean like a spirit that gets muddy.

Uh, it means a spirit. Who teaches and provokes. False theology. And wicked imaginations and desires and actions. Uh, and so also There was a testimony that those who are without God, those who are without the word those who are outside. Of the household of God. Um, are given over.

Uh, to false religion false Theology. And to the sinfulness of their hearts. And so, There's much more at stake or maybe better to say they don't. Those who reject? The ministers and the gospel, the apostles and the gospel, could not imagine how much is at stake? Because they are without Christ.

Given up to their own false theology. Given up To their own sinfulness. And here, the Lord has sent preachers. Who preach a gospel by which they might, Uh, trust in him, turn from their sin, repent and belong to the King by faith and enter the kingdom. And yet, they reject them.

And the Lord Jesus says assuredly I say to you it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah. And the day of judgment then for that City. And this, of course, makes sense. Because if For the rejection of the display of God's glory. Uh, in his creation.

Uh God has given men up to the sort of Wrath that is poured out on Sodom and Gomorrah as described in Romans chapter 1. How much more? Those who have rejected not only God, As he displays himself in creation, but God as he has displayed himself in Redemption, God as he has displayed himself in Christ.

Those who reject the gospel. And so, Uh, those who No, not God. Uh, Under judgment, but those who obey not the gospel. Are under even More terrible. Judgment.

I really did want to go through. Verse 23 this week, but just having opened that up and Remembering all the other things that need to be said in applications that need to be made. Should probably stop there, I think. I'm not gonna preach more than that on the Lord's day.

So, let us How the Lord? Himself comes. By way of his servants whom he sends, And he has sheep that he is gathering through the preaching of the word. And it is through that, preaching of that word that he is. Conquering the Kingdom of Satan and correcting. What has happened in the fall?

Uh, and there is much. Um, For us riding on. How we receive? His gospel. And those by whom. He sends his gospel to us. Amen, let's pray. Our Father in Heaven, we pray that you would Forgive us our sins. We realize that we deserve. Like, Sodom and Gomorrah. And even worse for we have had privileges greater than they how many times.

We have heard the gospel of the Kingdom proclaimed. And so we pray. Lord that you would Continue to gather all of your lost sheep to yourself. Thank you for seeking us out by Ministry your gospel. And pray that you would. Uh, continue to cleanse us. From all unrighteousness. Help us to be grateful.

And count, what you have? Given us in the gospel, in your son, our Lord Jesus. To count it more than all Earthly wealth. And to be grateful to you. With the generosity. Uh, that knows no boundaries. We ask all these things in Jesus name. Amen.