Session 14 The Commissioning of the Twelve Apostles (Mt. 10)

1. introduction
   1. In this session, we will look at Jesus sending out the apostles (Mt. 10:1-42; Mk. 6:7-13; Lk. 9:1-6). Jesus gave timeless principles for those who are engaged in traveling ministry or missionary work.

*This is session fourteen. Tonight we are looking at the commissioning of the twelve apostles in Matthew 10. This is so important because there are so many leadership principles that are embodied in this chapter. Jesus is looking at this young leadership team, and He is giving them the basic vision and mandate of what they are to do. That vision and mandate is transferrable throughout or applicable to the entire church. So, this is a vision statement that we line up with. Then He gives them principles on how to conduct themselves. Then He really braces them with the right mindset so that they are not living in idealism or when they run into difficulty they will be all confused as to why it is difficult. This is a very necessary teaching, Matthew 10. It is very absent today in much of the Church, so a lot of offended believers are just mystified and confused when it gets difficult.*

*Jesus told these young men that He was going to anoint in an unusual, unprecedented way for that time of history. He gave them the mindset and the way forward. Again, this mindset is applicable today and has been throughout church history. I believe that God is going to raise up vessels that are going to move in greater power in the generation the Lord returns then they did in the first century in the book-of-Acts Church.*

*Now this happened just a little over a year before Jesus went to the cross. Sometimes we have this idea that they were functioning in power the whole time, but it was about the last twelve months plus a little bit more, possibly thirteen, fourteen months. Jesus said, “Now it is time. I have trained you. Now I want you to go out on your own.”*

*I want to point this out Matthew 10 has far more detail on this message than the parallel passages in Mark 6 and Luke 9. Again, it provides principles for traveling in ministry. Now it is also in ministry in general, but He really highlights those that travel a lot in ministry. Some of these principles that He lays out, we look at them today and say, “Um, you know, I do not know. Nobody talks about these.”*

*The Lord says, “Well, I do. He gives these to us because of His heart of wisdom and because He is for the Church excelling and walking in safety and victory.*

* 1. This probably occurred in Galilee in early AD 29, about one year before Jesus’ death. Matthew 10 reported Jesus’ message in far greater detail than did Mark 6 or Luke 9. This is the second long message in Matthew’s gospel—it is commonly referred to as “The Missionary Discourse.”

*First, so you do not get confused, here He is talking to them about their unique mission for the next twelve months or so. Since He has not gone to the cross yet, they were moving out in twos around the land only in the nation of Israel, so these are pre-crucifixion/resurrection mandates. The principles are timeless, though some of these specific things He is saying in the first few verses really did have a special application for them in that very moment. Later Jesus Himself as well as the apostles broaden the scope of this teaching to include the Church through history and to reaching all the Gentiles etc.*

1. The apostles were given new authority (Mt. 10:1-8)
   1. The context for the commissioning of the apostles was Jesus’ third and final tour of Galilee that occurred in late AD 28 (Mt. 9:35-38; Mk. 6:6). He called them to pray for laborers for the harvest.

35Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages…preaching…and healing every sickness… 36But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were …like sheep having no shepherd…37Then He said…, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” (Mt. 9:35-38)

*Well, the context of Matthew 10 actually begins in Matthew 9, the event right before. We are going a couple verses back to get the flow of the context of the conversation that He was in with them. He has come to the end of His third and final Galilean tour. That is His last tour that He is going to go on with His disciples. So, in verse 35, “Jesus went about all the cities and villages.” At this time the apostles are traveling with Him. They might not know this is the last time they are going to be traveling with Him in this way. It is Jesus’ final tour, His third tour of Galilee, ministry tour. He is in all the cities doing the things He always does. He preaches and heals the sick.*

*Verse 36, “He saw the multitudes, and He was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.” He is looking at the people of Israel. They do not have any idea who He is. They are aimless and moving in the wrong direction, making wrong discussions, having wrong mindsets. That is how the Lord looks at the nations even now–with compassion, not with anger, but with compassion. Of course, He is angry at persistent rebellion, particularly when it is in the face of knowledge of who He is. His emotions are more intense when He has given them a witness of Himself and they still resist Him. That is when His anger comes into play.*

*He looks at the nation of Israel at this time like He looks at the nations now—with compassion—like sheep moving around, because sheep without shepherd just scatter. It is like somebody said, “It is like trying to herd cats.” They are all moving in different directions. There is no purpose and no unified direction where they are going. They do not know where they are going.*

*Verse 37, “Jesus said, ‘The harvest is plentiful.’” The harvest of Israel was plentiful, and Jesus the great Prophet, yea more than a prophet, is looking through history. He says, “The harvest that I am planting is beyond anything you can imagine.” Verse 38, so He links prayer with the release of anointed workers. He says to pray for the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers. So, pray to the Father and the Son and say, “Send out laborers.” What Jesus really means is to ask for “sent-out” laborers. Because, laborers who just go is one thing, but laborers who are sent by the Lord is another. There is a clarity and a commissioning and a grace that is on them. We need more sent out laborers, people who are really connecting to God, not looking at ministry as an opportunity to kind of establish their brand or to kind of get their life you know working well for them. Sent out ones, ones that are gripped by God that have a sense of “regardless what it costs them, they are going to do the commission.”*

*Our prayer, night-and day-prayer, is linked to God raising more and more sent ones—predominately it is young people in this hour all over the earth—who are gripped not just by the opportunity of establishing their brand and their name and their “niche,” but really gripped with the kingdom regardless what it costs them personally.*

* 1. Jesus commissioned the Twelve (Mt. 10:1-4; Mk. 6:7; Lk. 9:1- 2) This is a part of Jesus’ answer to sending out workers for the harvest (Mt. 9:38). The Twelve were just the *beginning* of workers that Jesus sent to continue His ministry by proclaiming the kingdom message and releasing His power.

1And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness…2Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew…James…and John his brother; 3Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew…James…4Simon…and Judas Iscariot… (Mt. 10:1-4)

*The next thing that happens is that Jesus sends out laborers. He actually fulfills the very thing that He charged them to pray for. He fulfilled it in a down-payment that says, “This is the kind of laborer I am prepared to send out: anointed with power, gripped with My purposes, and not opportunists, but real kingdom people.” Here Jesus again gives a model or a snapshot of what it looks like when He answers this prayer. He is going to answer it on a grand and global scale.*

*Verse 1, “when He called the twelve disciples to Himself He gave them power over demons—unclean spirits—to cast them out. He gave them power to heal all kinds of sicknesses.” Verse 2, here are the names of the twelve apostles. You can read it. There are four different lists in the New Testament of twelve apostles. You can study that out on your own. This is only a down-payment of more to come. If this is where it begins, this is not the ceiling; this is the floor for where the end-time purpose begins. There are going to be anointed ministries that are going to go far beyond this, that are going to be released by the saints in the earth praying for God to raise up sent-out laborers. They are going to do the same thing. They are going to speak the message of the kingdom, and they are going to cast out devils and pray for the sick.*

*Of course, all believers are commissioned to do this. Obviously, some do it with greater effectiveness than others, but everybody in the kingdom has this commission to share the Gospel when opportunity presents and to pray for the sick, to lay hands on people, and break the power of demonic spirits, demonic activity and harassment. A lot will happen if the people of God will do it, if they will line up to fulfill the commission. So much more happens when the people of God are really lined up with this commission. A lot of folks think, “Well, you know, later when a great revival happens I will jump into that. You know, when I see really big miracles start happening, then I am going to really start praying for the sick. When I see really dramatic manifestation of demons coming out, then I will start praying, casting out devils.”*

*I tell you: if you lay hands on people and then in the name of Jesus say, “I take authority over that spirit that is harassing you,” I tell you there will be some difference. You may pray that a number of times over them, but it will make a difference. We do not have to wait for a great revival. That mandate is alive and well and functioning right now in the kingdom.*

* + 1. The Scriptures never suggest that the disciples had healed the sick before this time. This is another aspect of Jesus’ unprecedented power. Not even Moses or Elijah had authority to impart power like this to their disciples. Elijah’s power was imparted to Elisha only after he was taken up to heaven.

*The Scripture never before described the disciples as moving in power; this is the first time. They have been with Him for about a year or two, different ones of the Twelve longer than the others. One to two years, they have been with Him, but they have been witnessing His power, not moving in power. Now this is unprecedented–that Jesus could impart His power to other people. No other person has done that in history. No one has ever empowered their disciples to cast out devils and raise the dead and heal the sick by impartation from themselves. That is unprecedented.*

* + 1. Later, Jesus commissioned them to reach all nations (Gentiles) and emphasized that all believers can preach the gospel, heal the sick, and cast out demons (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:17-20). The mission to the Gentiles was mandated following the resurrection of Jesus.

17And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues…18they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”  
(Mk. 16:17-18)

*Later this is going to go beyond just Israel. You will see in a moment He is focused here on Israel. He said to just go to Israel for now. Again, that is for about the next twelve-plus months until after the cross and resurrection, then the scope is broadened to go to the nations. Just so we know: the mandate is for all believers and for the nations outside of just the local focus that they had for that first year. Jesus made it clear at His resurrection. In Mark 16, He is talking to them after He was raised from the dead, returned to them from the Father. Here He is in His resurrected body. He says, “I want you to give this message out,” Mark 16:17, “and these signs will follow those who believe.” Not just apostles, but for “those who believe” these signs will follow them.*

*Now notice the signs follow the believers, not the other way around. What I mean by that a lot of folks wait for a sign, and then they say, “Now I will start doing something.”*

*The Lord says, “No, start speaking the Word. Lay hands on people, and the signs will follow.” They will come behind you. The Lord will back up His Word. Many times it will not be dramatic, but it will still have an impact on a person’s life. He said, “These signs will follow those that believe: in My name they will cast out devils.”*

*You do not need a two-year training course to cast out devils. Say, “In the name of Jesus, I take authority over that spirit that is tormenting you, and in Jesus’ name I break the power of it.” So, I just gave you the whole seminar again. Now I believe there is a place for some more training, but do not wait for some time down the road to start doing this. Start doing it right now.*

*“They will speak with new tongues.” Every believer can receive a devotional prayer language and speak in tongues, 1 Corinthians 14. That is not the same thing as the gift of tongues to the corporate body. There is that personal devotional prayer language that every believer can receive.*

*Verse 18, “They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” Now the word “recover” trips some people because the word recover has the element of progressively recover. We like instant, we like dramatic, and we like “Wow!” The Lord would say, “I do ‘Wow!’ and instant, but I have reasons why I do not do it as much as some people would want Me to. I will. I have instituted a recovering dimension for the Body of Christ laying hands on the sick.” So miracles are instantaneous; healing is typically recovery. Now there are exceptions to that, but this is just to give you a sense of understanding that word. Because things are not always dramatic, people often give up on the reality of it.*

*The underlying principle of being a new covenant believer is that we host the Holy Spirit’s presence. Meaning wherever we go, the Spirit goes with us. The Spirit is released when we say words. If we do not say words, the Spirit does far less. If we say words, because we host the Holy Spirit—He is in us and He is in partnership with us—He will do more. If you say, “Lord, bless them,” He will bless them more. If you look at them and say, “Jesus loves you,” some unbelievers will say, “Really? I want to know more.” A believer will say, “Wow! I needed that.” If we say words, the Holy Spirit will move. We host His presence.*

* + 1. ***Apostle***: The word “apostle” speaks of one who is *sent with authority* to represent a dignitary. The Twelve had been traveling with Jesus, but were now given a new official title— apostles.

*This is the first time in the gospel of Matthew and the only time, actually, that they are actually called apostles. This is a new term. Now “apostle” was a term used in the Roman world. It spoke of a person that was sent with authority to represent a dignitary. They were sent ones. Apostles were ambassadors for governmental officials.*

*Jesus took that term in their culture and used it in a very specific way to describe a ministry office in the Church. From this day when He used it the word “apostles,” it had a whole new dimension and is now associated with the Church. I do not think anybody uses it in the culture like they did in the ancient world. It was just a normal word used in that culture.*

*So the apostles have a new beginning, a new mandate. They are not going to be with Jesus every day. They are going to be going out, coming back in, and reporting. He is going to be with them still, but they are going to be coming and going. They receive this new mandate and this new office, and He is going to watch them for a year and train them, knowing that the whole future of the Church and how it is birthed and its right foundations is being entrusted to these men, these young men. This is remarkable. That the Lord entrusts so much to weak and broken people is the part that I am referring to that is remarkable–that it works. You know I have said to the Lord, “Lord, if I were You, I do not know if I would choose me, and I do not know if I would choose us.”*

*The Lord is more gracious, and His power is more sure. Though His purposes are fulfilled over periods of time longer than we want, He would say, “I will get it done by you just doing what I tell you. I will get it done.”*

* + 1. Scripture provides four lists of the apostles (Mt. 10:2-4; Mk. 3:16-19; Lk. 6:13-16; Acts 1:13).
    2. Choosing twelve apostles corresponds to the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt. 19:28), emphasizing their messianic kingdom purpose.

*He chooses twelve apostles, I think, undoubtedly to correspond with the twelve tribes of Israel, because He is emphasizing to Israel that this is in continuity to the covenant purposes that the prophets have spoken over Israel. It is not a new religion. It is not a new Gentile thing. This is a Jewish thing, and it is the faithful covenant God fulfilling His promises to Israel.*

* + 1. Mark added that Jesus sent them out “two by two” (Mk. 6:7). He sent them out in twos to provide relational support, protection, and accountability.

7And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two… (Mk. 6:7)

*Now Mark 6, because Mark 6 is a parallel passage to Matthew 10, the passage we are looking at. Mark adds the idea that Jesus sent them out in twos. The reason He sent them out in twos is obvious for relational support, for protection. I mean they were safer together–protection from animals or thieves or people. Just going out in twos was safer in that regard in a very practical way.*

*Also, He sent them out in twos for accountability. There are a whole lot of things that people might do alone they will do better with a kingdom-of-God partner, even though they were weak men. There is a whole lot of things that people will* ***not*** *do if they are with someone else who loves the Lord. There is an increase synergism: one will put a thousand to flight; two will put ten thousand. When two of them operate together there is greater wisdom. There is great encouragement. So the Lord’s purpose is to send people out in twos or more.*

*The enemy wants to isolate you and to separate you. The enemy knows if he can separate you, he can pick you off really easily. His basic way of separating people is getting them full of condemnation so they run and hide in shame and do not relate to the Body of Christ, or he gets them offended at the Church. So somebody did not treat them right in a Church somewhere, and now they completely write off the Church for the next twenty, thirty years because of that one guy that did that one thing. The enemy says, “Got you! Whether I got you by condemnation and accusation, or if I got you by offense, I got you isolated and I can destroy your vibrancy.” They may not totally backslide, but they will not stay vibrant alone. The analogy I have used over the years is that you can put a log in a fire and it is burning and it is red hot. But if you take that the log with the most fire coming out of it, and you pull it out by itself, it will go out in time. Jesus understood the human nature involved in this.*

1. Jesus gave Specific Instructions for traveling (Mt. 10:5-15)
   1. Jesus preached this “commissioning message” to prepare them for their new mandate. He gave them a clear ministry mandate (10:5-8), principles to embrace when traveling (10:9-15), the expectation for certain persecution (10:16-39), and a strong encouragement (10:40-42).

*Let’s look at now some of the specific instructions. First He is going to give them a really clear mission statement, a purpose, in verses 5-8. Then He is going to give them principles they are to use in traveling, verses 9-15. Then He is going to prepare them with a realistic expectation about persecution and how universal persecution is; that is in verses 16-31. The reason is that, again, a lot of people today are not aware of that. When difficulties come, they are thinking something like, “God, what happened? I thought you loved me. How come this happened?”*

*Beloved, if you take a stand for the gospel, you will be persecuted by believers and unbelievers alike. Once you settle that, you won’t get offended. That is what He was doing here in Matthew 10 with these young men. He was saying, in effect, “Settle it.” He spent much time on that, shifting their expectations so they were not confused, bewildered, or offended that people were against them. Even the people of God are sometimes against the people of God; it happens all the time. So, Jesus spent far more time in this commissioning sermon shifting their mindset not to be thrown off when people treat them wrongly, because if you get confused by it, if you get offended at people or offended by God, you will quit. He knew that was human nature; we are all the same.*

* 1. Initially the apostles’ call was to go *only* to Israel (10:5-6). Jesus was highlighting God’s faithfulness to fulfil His covenant promises to Israel, and the continuity of His purposes with Israel.

5These twelve Jesus sent out…saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. 6But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Mt. 10:5-6)

*He starts off with a very focused mandate. You got to get this: this is for one year only, from this commissioning until His death and resurrection. He says in verse 5, “Do not go to the Gentiles.” Now when He appeared to them after the resurrection in Acts 1:8, He said, “Go to the Gentiles and the Samaritans.”*

*They could have said, “Well, a year ago You told us not to.”*

*He would have said, “Well, I had a very specific purpose for that twelve to fourteen-month period. That’s why I said, ‘Do not go to the Samaritans.’” Again, later in Acts 1:8 He says to go to Samaria. Now you know the Samaritans were half Jewish, but they had pagan ideas. They were not loyal to the Word, and they had all kinds of ideas that were not right, so the Jews did not like the Samaritans. They saw them as compromising, pagan, defiling, etc.*

*Verse 6, “but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Again, this is a twelve-month mandate while He is still with them. There are reasons for that. The reason I am emphasizing this is so that, when you read this passage, you get the context and you are not thrown off by it. Some people read that and they respond, “Well, I guess I just will not go anywhere.”*

* 1. Jesus is first Israel’s savior—Jewish Christians are faithful to Israel’s prophetic hopes. Jesus was confirming that Christianity is neither a “different” religion, nor a “Gentile” religion. Choosing twelve apostles corresponds to the twelve tribes of Israel, emphasizing their continuity with the Messiah and kingdom promised in the Old Testament (Mt. 19:28).

*So why only Israel? Jesus was highlighting God’s faithfulness to fulfill His covenant promises to Israel. He was confirming that Christianity is not a different religion. It is the fullness of the Jewish religion. Through history what has happened is Christianity became a Gentile religion. The idea is that Jewish people leave Judaism to join the Gentile religion. Jesus would say, “No, when the Church was birthed, when I trained My apostles, I made the priority of Israel very, very clear. I wanted Israel and the nations in history to understand it is the Jewish religion.” Jesus was Savior first to the Jewish people. As Gentiles, we joined the Jewish covenant, not the other way around. They did not join a Gentile religion; we joined the fullness of the covenant that God made with Israel. We were grafted in, Romans 11 says.*

*This is very important for that first year they were moving in power, and He wanted this recorded so even 2,000 years later we would see this was a priority. You see, at the end of the age God’s mandate is for the Jews and the Gentiles to understand each other’s purpose in God in the one new covenant as one new man. The Gentiles were to have a sense of indebtedness and gratitude to the Jewish heritage and the covenants.*

*Today it is common everywhere for Gentile believers to say, “I do not really get that Israel thing,” because they were raised in a ministry atmosphere that does not understand how God is committed to the nation of Israel. At the very beginning of church history the leaders were all Jewish apostles and they did not want to go to the Gentiles. They did not see the importance of the Gentiles. Now, 2,000 years, later it is the opposite. The Gentiles do not see the value and the importance of the Jews.*

*Jesus could say, “Go look at My leadership mandate, Matthew 10. It is My classic leadership training. See the importance and the priority I put on Israel. The first full year I limited it so the root system would be established in the Church as to the priority of God’s heart for Israel and the continuity of the Church with the promises God gave Israel.” We are grafted into the tree of Abraham, as one pastor said. I love that. It is that Jewish root system that we have been grafted into.*

* 1. Paul’ ministry was offered to “the Jew first” (Rom. 1:16; 11;11-12, 25-26; Acts 13:46; 18:6; 19:9; 28:25-28). Believing Gentiles are compared to branches grafted onto the “tree of Abraham” (Rom. 11). It was important that the Church be birthed in a Jewish context for the Romans 11 dynamics at the end of the age—for Gentiles to have a sense of gratitude towards the Jewish people.

16“…salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” (Rom 1:16)

* 1. After the resurrection, Jesus addressed their calling to reach the Gentiles (Mt. 28:19; Acts 1:8).

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

* 1. Matthew wrote of the Gentiles receiving salvation (Mt. 2:1-12; 3:9; 8:10-11; 10:18; 12:18; 15:21-28; 22:1-10; 21:43; 24:14; 28:19). There was controversy among Jewish leaders in the early church about the role and importance of the Gentiles even after the resurrection (Acts 11:1-18; 15:1-20). Today, there is controversy among Gentile leaders about the role and importance of Israel.
  2. The Twelve were probably not prepared theologically or spiritually to engage in the cross-cultural evangelism of Gentiles—as seen when John wanted to call fire on a Samaritan village (Lk. 9:54).  
     Possibly, in the initial stages of their mission, Jesus did not want them to deal with the additional opposition that came from Jewish leaders towards Jews who related to Gentiles and Samaritans.
  3. The apostles were to preach the same message as John the Baptist (Mt. 3:2) and Jesus (Mt. 4:17), with demonstrations of power to validate and express the good news of the kingdom.

7And as you go, preach, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” 8Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. (Mt. 10:7-8)

*Here is the apostles’ purpose—and we might say, “Well, it is so obvious,” but it is not that obvious—they were to preach the same message of the kingdom of God, which means the rule and the reign of God. God’s reign, which is His authority, and not just His authority meaning power, but His leadership too. He is the boss. His reign is God’s will being done in the marketplace, in the home, in the courtroom, the classroom, the bedroom, every room. The will of God being done–that is the message: the reign of God, the will of God done in every sphere.*

*When you proclaim the reign of God, R-E-I-G-N—I do not mean rain from heaven—His rule, His reign, you also heal the sick, cleanse lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Do not be content just to proclaim His leadership and His authority and His supremacy, but back it up for praying for people. We do not want to separate the proclamation of the reign of God and the supremacy of Jesus from laying hands on the sick. Every believer needs to do it.*

*You know, I have found that as a pastor —and I have found this for forty years being a pastor so I am not discouraged by this negative thing I am going to say—one of the more challenging things—and I have a few on the list that a lot of pastors agree with—is getting people, leaders, members of the Body to pray for people at ministry time. They just think, “Well, I do not want to. Nothing really happens, I do not want to.” No, wrong idea. We cannot ever separate the praying from the preaching. By the grace of God, I will never be in a context where we preach the reign of God and do not pray for the sick. Regardless what the measure is that happens, it must be done. I do not mean every single meeting, but almost every single meeting. My desire is to always get people out of their chairs, hands out of their pockets, lay them on people all the time, not one here, one there, not twice a year, but as a lifestyle.*

*One of the reasons I feel so strongly about it is because, right here, this is the mandate. This is the mission statement. We cannot separate the message from the laying of hands on and speaking the Word over people, which is the demonstration of power. Whether the power is a level one or a level ten, we lay hands on them and we speak the Word. We do it over and over and over. It is our privilege.*

* 1. ***Freely give***: They were not to charge for their “healings” because they freely received their call to be in God’s kingdom, and to speak His message and be anointed to heal the sick.

*Then Jesus said, “Freely you have received, freely give.” That is, “Freely you have received this anointing, this message, this involvement in this glorious kingdom. I open the door to this kingdom widely to you. You received it freely; I gave you the message freely. I gave you the authority to lay hands on people freely. So, do not charge people when you heal them, when you lay hands on them.” Of course, it is God who healed them anyway, but do not put a money dimension on it when you lay hands on them because you received it freely. Give it away freely. I could go off on that, but I am just not going to.*

1. What to take on their missionary trips (Mt. 10:9-15)
   1. Jesus gave instruction about what provisions they should take and how to secure lodging when preaching in a new city during their missionary journeys (Mt. 10:9-15; Mk. 6:8-11; Lk. 9:3-5).

9Provide neither gold nor silver…in your money belts, 10nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs…11“Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. 12And when you go into a household, greet it. 13If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.  
14And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. 15Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city! (Mt. 10:9-15)

*Now He is changing subjects. Verses 9-15: what to take on their ministry trips. They are going to a city for three, four, five, six, seven, eight, ten days maybe, and then going to another city. I do not know how many days, but they are going village to village, city to city. They do this on and off for the next year. Of course, they are going to do it for the rest of their life.*

*So, He is going to give them some pre-resurrection commandments. In these commandments there are post resurrection principles, though we do not have to obey all these restrictions that they had before the resurrection. But the principles are valid and very, very helpful.*

*He starts off telling them what provisions they should take. Verses 9-10, do not take gold, do not take silver, and do not take money in your wallets. Go with an empty wallet. Like, “Gulp, really? Well, that is interesting.”*

*Verse 10, do not take a bag on the journey. Do not take a suitcase. Do not take two tunics; take the one. What happens when it gets dirty? Do not take two pair of shoes; take one. Do not take two staffs; take one. They would walk with a staff, but a staff was also used more practically for protection. There were wild animals everywhere and bad people. There was an element of protection with a staff. Wow!*

*Then in verse 11, He is going to tell them how to secure their lodging. Whatever city you go to, walk into the town, start asking around, start talking about the kingdom, and see who responds. You will find, you will inquire, you will search it out is what it means. It does not mean go to the city office and ask who is a really cool person in town. That is not what it means. To inquire meant to search for a worthy person. Now a worthy person by biblical definition here is someone who responds to the message about Jesus and His leadership. That does not mean somebody rich, somebody really gifted, somebody really cool, or somebody really popular. They might be, but that is not what worthy means. Really able, that is not the point. Responsive is what worthy means; they are responsive. So inquire; go to the city and start talking about Jesus. When you find a responsive heart who really wants to be a part of this, then stay at their house. Of course, they have to invite you, but the idea is that they would. So, to inquire means to search it out, to be on the lookout when you go into the city. Now here was an unusual requirement. He said, “Stay in their house. Do not move house to house. Stay in their house.” There are reasons for that.*

*Verse 12, now He tells them what to do when they are in that person’s house. They might be in it for a week or two, maybe more, maybe less. They were not there for a year or two, but typically more than a day or two as they were going to preach to the whole area. Verse 12, “When you go to the house, greet it.”*

*You might think, “Greet the house? Say, ‘Greetings, house.’?” He is talking about something far more substantial than that. He is talking about them using their commissioned position before God, as they are commissioned by God. They host the Holy Spirit’s presence. They are ambassadors, and they can speak a blessing. It is more than a greeting like we would think of “Hi! How are you doing?” It is a declaration of God’s kingdom rule and blessing entering into that house and that family. The reason they would do that is because the blessing would increase on that family and that house. We can do this today. Most believers do not do that, but we can. More will happen in a house or in a family if more people do it. So, Jesus was speaking out of the premise that this really releases something.*

*Verse 13, “If the house is worthy,” meaning responsive—again, not able, not gifted with enriched opportunities to open doors for you, but if they are worthy, if they are responsive to Jesus and the message of His reign, His leadership over their life—“let your peace come upon it.” That is the shalom of God. It is not just a tranquil feeling. That is part of peace, but God’s shalom is that wrong things would be made right, troubled things would be settled. The peace of God is an active, real, decisive reality that is released by the words of God’s obedient servants into the lives of other people.*

*If you are staying there for a while, and that house is not found worthy, retract the kingdom blessing, because the blessing they release is related to their identifying with Jesus’ leadership. Now, why would they go to a house they found worthy, but after a little bit of time passes, a few days, a week or two, whatever, now they are not worthy. The way I understand it, pressure in the community came around. They say, “Hey, you got those new guys with that new religion in your house?”*

*The guy responds, “Well, I mean it is pretty powerful. It is, really. You ought to hear them.”*

*“Are you kidding? We do not want anything to do with those people. We heard about that Nazarene preacher, that carpenter guy.”*

*So, some of these people under pressure drew back. Jesus said that when that happens, move on to another place, and retract the blessing. Now, we pray blessing on our enemies in the general sense. This, however, is more than a spirit of goodwill towards enemies; this is a substantial blessing that is released by a commissioned servant of God. He said, “Let your peace come back to you.”*

*Verse 14, “If they will not hear you, if they will not hear your words”—respond to your words is what it means to—“depart from that house.” So if they change their mind under the pressure of the community coming against them, as there is a stigma that comes on them because they have you in their house, then He says, “Depart from the house.” If the city as a whole, the leaders of the city, the influential people, come and say to leave this city—that happened many times—shake off the dust from your feet.*

*Verse 15, “Assuredly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for that city on the day of judgment.” You see, on the final day, the day of judgment, the judgment for the wicked varies, with many different degrees of severity of judgment, just like the blessing on the righteous. We are all in the family; we all have that. We have resurrected bodies, and we are in the New Jerusalem. We are in the family, and that is really good. After that, which is substantial and is the big stuff, then the blessing, the sphere, and the measure of the glory of God varies with every single believer. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15, as star differs from star in glory, the resurrection will differ in glory, every person from one another. Though Sodom was severely judged by the temporal judgement that came and destroyed the city, the idea is that here are anointed witnesses of the Messiah in your city doing signs and wonders and you resisted Him, which is far more serious and culpable. You are far more liable at the judgment day having resisted a new covenant believer operating in power.*

*When the Lord releases power in a ministry or geographic area, the accountability on the last day goes up. It is not neutral. It is not like, “Well, that was a cool crusade they had here.” You know, I think of guys like Reinhard Bonnke. He would go into these large areas all through Africa, and he would have million-person meetings. His largest meeting was six million people, and one million people responded. That is just fantastic. A number of times, I have listened to a number of his stories, and they are amazing. The city officials would say to get him out of there. Even spiritual leaders, believers, would want to get him out of there. When a person moves in power, that geographic area is more responsible on the last day.*

* 1. The principles are *simplicity* (to travel lightly without being encumbered), with a sense of *urgency* about their mission and with *dependence* on God and *connection* to the people they serve.

*Well, I have a little bit of explanation here. He does not want them to bring gold or bring any money in their wallet. Now this is a limited restriction for that first year, but the principle is still real. Here are the principles that are consistent for us today. The first is simplicity. The Lord really wants His kingdom leaders to embrace simplicity, He really does. That is very offensive in some circles in the kingdom of God. In this hour, in a post-resurrection, hostile, Gentile, global environment we do not have to go out not having money as it is a different context than in that first year when Jesus was still on the earth with them, because they were in the context of Israel. They were Jews in Israel, and there was a hospitality code that it was common in the culture for a certain amount of hospitality. So, the danger and even the opportunity for blessing was far more likely even in the natural. After the resurrection, the door opened, and they go as Jews going to the Roman world, which was a really different story. The principle is the same: simplicity of lifestyle.*

*Another principle is urgency. Do not pile up so much extra things and so much luggage and baggage that you are just so preoccupied with it. Keep it simple, and go urgently. Do not get preoccupied with other things when you are in the midst of the mission. God wants a sense of dependency on God when people go. Now again, that first year, Jews going to Jews in that environment was more accommodating than when they went to the Gentiles later. But God says, “I will still meet your needs.” He wants a spirit of dependency upon Him. Not only that, He wants a certain connection that people have with the people that they are ministering to. Like when they would stay in their house and do good for them, they needed God to bless them to those people. There was a mutuality in it that the Lord builds His kingdom with these principles and more principles besides.*

* 1. The commands or restrictions in Matthew 10:9-10 were temporary and not required in the hostile era of the post-resurrection Church. These pre-resurrection *commands* are also post-resurrection *principles* to apply in various ways. Hospitality among fellow Jews in the towns of Israel was common, but such hospitality was not expected when they were traveling in the Gentile lands.

35He said…, “When I sent you without money bag… and sandals, did you lack anything?”   
So they said, “Nothing.” 36Then He said to them, “But now, he who has a money bag,   
let him take it …and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.” (Lk 22:35-36)

* 1. ***Gold in their money belts***: They were not to take enough money to sustain their long outreaches.

*He said, “Do not put any money in your wallet,” and again that was for that first twelve months. I have some reasons why here, not that I have them all.*

* + 1. Jesus did not want them to accumulate money during their trips—this may have been to maintain pure motives in going on trips, as well as demonstrating their sincerity to the people they ministered to and for their safety from thieves while traveling on dangerous roads with a lot of money on them. One temptation associated with connecting money to preaching is that the preacher often adapts their message to make their supporters happy.
    2. Scripture teaches that those who minister spiritual things are to receive financial blessing from those who receive it (1 Cor. 9:4-18; 2 Cor. 11:7; 1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Thes. 3:9; 3 Jn. 5-8).

*The Scripture does teach that the people who receive ministry are to sow financially to the people that give them ministry.*

* + 1. The apostles embraced a simple lifestyle— with their money, time, and enduring sigma.

*At the same time the Lord tells the people who do ministry to depend on God, not be covetous, not be demanding. There is a balance between the two. God is going to restore this kind of leadership, this apostolic, New Testament leadership in the Church in the generation He returns. You can say in your heart, “I want to be of that spirit.” You might not know in what level of leadership God will use you, but you want to be of that spirit, you want to promote that spirit, those principles, in your life and in your interaction with others.*

* 1. ***Nor sandals, nor staffs***: Jesus was not forbidding to bring sandals but not bring to *extra* sandals—Luke clarified that they are not to “carry” sandals and staffs (plural) instead of forbidding them to “wear” sandals (Lk. 10:4). Their essentials—food and extra clothing—was given to them by those who accepted their ministry in the places where they traveled to minister.
  2. ***Inquire who is worthy***: Jesus give instruction on how they were to secure their lodging (10:11). When entering a town, they were to “search out” people who were “worthy.” A worthy person was one who received their message about Jesus. A host was deemed “unworthy” by not continuing to support Jesus. They were to stay in the homes of “worthy” hosts, not always the most luxurious home or the people who are most connected to open more doors.
  3. ***Stay there till you go out***: They were to remain in the same house to avoid the negative dynamics of jealousies, when a better offer comes along, and it provided some accountability and credibility for the traveling disciple whose character was seen by a host family over a period of time days.
  4. ***Shake off the dust***: It was customary for a devout Jew to shake the dust from their feet when returning from a Gentile region to symbolically remove the “pollution” of pagan lands from them.  
     Paul invoked this prophetic action on occasion when his message was rejected (Acts 13:51; 18:6).
  5. ***Greet a worthy household***: The apostles released a powerful blessing on a family who honored   
     God’s work—it was much more than a casual greeting that is common in our society. Believers are ambassadors of Christ being indwelt by the Spirit—thus, we *“host His presence”* by releasing it as we speak words (in God’s will). Jesus elaborated on this reality in verses 40-42.

20“…we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us…” (2 Cor. 5:20)

* 1. ***Let your peace return***: This spoke of taking back a special blessing (God’s shalom) from a household that decided to no longer stand with Jesus due to pressure that rose up in their community against them for hosting an apostle. An ambassador of Jesus has the authority to release God’s blessing, thus certain blessing would leave house when God’s servant left it.
  2. ***More tolerable for Sodom***: More severe judgment awaits the people in the Jewish towns who rejected Jesus in that generation than the judgment coming on Sodom (Gen. 18:20-19:28).
     1. To reject their message after it was confirmed by signs was a sin greater than the sin engaged in by the people of Sodom.
     2. The increasing severity was due to them rejecting God’s revelation in Christ that was also confirmed by miracles. There are varying degrees of eternal judgment (Lk. 12:47-48).

*Luke 22: 35-36 takes place at the very end when Jesus is going to the cross right here at the last hours before the cross. Jesus said, “Hey!”—well, He did not say “Hey!” but you know—“When I sent you with no wallets, no money, no extra shoes, no extra shirt, did you lack anything?*

*They said, “Actually, we did not. You were right. God really met us and the people really responded it. It was a miracle.”*

*He said, “Good.” Verse 36, but now He was opening the doors wide open. Now it is a global mandate. “If you have money, take it. If you have a wallet, take it. If you have no sword, go sell your coat and buy a sword.” People look at that and wonder what it means. I think it means what it says. Part of the protection was not just against evil. Traveling in that day was dangerous, particularly Jewish people in a Gentile, hostile-towards-them, Roman Empire, which was not everywhere, but it was plenty of places. Israel was a troublesome nation to the Roman authorities in the Roman Empire. Traveling was also very, very dangerous with many thieves and mobs and bandits on the road. There were wild animals when they started traveling around everywhere. So He says that if you need an element of protection, engage with it. You look at it that way and you see that it is interesting.*

1. Jesus prepared His disciples for persecution (Mt. 10:16-42)
   1. They needed to understand that they would be persecuted being sent out in the midst of wolves. There is no evidence the disciples appeared before governors and kings before the resurrection—thus He was speaking here of persecution *after* His resurrection. The parallels to this passage in Mark and Luke are seen in context to Jesus’ message on the end times (Mk. 13:9-13; Lk. 21:12).

16Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. 17But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18You will be brought before governors and kings…as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19But when they deliver you up, do not worry…for it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak20… [it will be by] the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.   
(Mt. 10:16-20)

*Now He is going to shift gears. He has talked a little bit about the principles of simplicity and urgency, dependence on God, connection with others. He told them to preach the reign of God and not just preach a bunch of other subjects, but preach about His leadership over people’s lives and nations, the supremacy of who He is, and people responding to His leadership. That is what the kingdom of God is. Lay hands on people when you do it. Do not skip that part. Pray for the sick, cast out devils, and break the power of tormenting influences over people.*

*Now for the majority of this commissioning sermon that He is giving them—but really He is giving it to the whole Body of Christ through them—He spends more time again on setting their expectations right so they are not confused or offended by being treated wrongly. He said, “You are going to be treated wrong by believers and unbelievers. It is just going to happen.”*

*Paul was treated wrongly in the churches so many times. If I laid it all out, it would take a whole hour to give all the examples of the way he was mistreated by believers. He might have said, “You know what? I am moving at a different level. I am understanding there is a reign of God, His leadership, His supremacy, the deliverance of people. It is not about how I feel and how I am treated; that is not where it is at. I am living in a different level.”*

*That is what Jesus is wanting to anchor His leadership team in at the beginning. It starts off in verse 16, where He says, “Now understand I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.” He just talked about them being sheep a few moments ago in Matthew 9:36, where He said that Israel is like sheep, but aimless. Here He is using the word sheep differently. He is saying, in effect, “I am sending you out without adequate physical strength to defend yourself against the onslaught of enemies that will gather against you.” So here He is not using sheep as aimless and kind of wandering off the path, but really as defenseless against the powers they will face, defenseless in the natural, defenseless against governments and whole collections of people that will join together against God’s cause.*

*He goes on, “Now, if you know that, you understand you have to be wise as serpents but harmless as doves” or innocent as doves. He is saying, “Do not be naïve.” Exercise good judgment is what He is telling them. Do not compromise the word of God. Be harmless. Another translation says, innocent as a dove. Another translation says, pure. So, exercise good judgment, do not be naïve, be cautious of people.*

*Some folks say, “I am just so trusting.” Well, it depends on what you mean by that. I hear that, you know, here and there. Do you mean you just trust everything you hear people say? As some would say, you do not want to do that. That is naïve. “Well, I am just a really trusting person.” Well, if you are talking about trusting God, that is good. That is really good. You want to be cautious about people. It is an evil world with people with all kinds of bad motives in the church and outside the church. What He is telling them is that through being cautious and wise they can avoid falling into the harm of evil people, if they use wisdom. If they do not use wisdom, they will have unnecessary evils come on them.*

*Jesus is saying that He is asking us as His leaders to be both. Wise, cautious, think it through, open eyes, but also good motives, no compromise. Some people are wise, but their motives are not so good. Others have got good motives, but their brain is not so good.*

*Verse 17, He said to beware of men, beware of them. Do not have some narrative where you just trust whatever they say. Do not go there. Most of you are not there, but every now and then I run into that. I say, “No, no! That is sounds cute, but that is dangerous in a dark, hostile world. Jesus said not to be that way because some of them are going to surprise you. Verse 17, they are going to deliver you up to court, to go to prison. They are going to trump up charges against you and turn you over to courts, whether it is church courts—religious courts that ban you, blackball you—or legal courts of the government that penalize you economically or with prison or death.*

*Verse 18, the day will come, and this did not happen in that first year before the resurrection, but after it in the book of Acts, “You will be brought before governors and kings”—the Gentile ones is the idea. You will be able to answer them. When you come before these Gentile rulers, it will be an opportunity for you to speak the Word. So, though it will be a burden to you in the flesh, it will be an opportunity for the advancement of the kingdom. Therefore, keep the big picture in focus.*

*Verse 19, “When they deliver you up”—to the legal system is what it is talking about or the church systems to be blackballed and to be banished from the synagogue or in the church world. That happens all the time through history in the church systems—“do not worry about what you speak, for it will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks.”*

*Now the context of this is when they are brought into a legal setting where they are being charged, again whether it is a church court or a legal, government court. The reason I stress this is because some people use this verse for never preparing in the Word of God for speaking the Word to people. They say, “I am not going to prepare. God will speak.”*

*I reply, “No, it is talking about if you are delivered up to evil court systems.” So, turn off your Facebook and your TV or whatever and start studying and get prepared. Do not use that verse out of context. It is not about playing around and then when you get to the meeting, if God has called you to minister in a public way, you are going to claim that verse. That is not what He is talking about.*

* 1. ***Wise as serpents****:* Jesus called them to be wise and not naïve, but to exercise good judgment without compromising God’s word or to possess shrewdness with integrity. This is a call to be cautious of others so to avoid unnecessarily falling into the hands of people who would harm them.   
     They must be “innocent as doves” (NAS, NIV, ESV)—innocent of the evil they are charged with. We must understand the reality of fallen people—their selfish, deceptive and harmful ways.
  2. ***Councils and beatings***: Jesus made it clear that His leaders would be arrested and delivered up to councils or legal court systems (civil, synagogue, or church courts) and then beaten as a result.   
     The apostles embraced many sufferings like these (Acts 5:27; 6:12; 22:19; 2 Cor. 11:23-25).
  3. ***The Spirit of your Father***: He will help defend His people in persecution, even in legal settings. When handed over to authorities to make a legal defense for their faith, they need not be anxious.
  4. Hostility will come from people’s families too, not only religious and governmental authorities. Persecution will intensify as families turn one another over to be put to death (10:21, 34-36).

21Now brother will deliver up brother to death…22You will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23When they persecute you in this city, flee to another…You will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.   
(Mt. 10:21-23)

*He goes on that the persecution is going to intensify. It is going to go beyond legal court systems and Gentile rulers and synagogue leaders. It is going to touch your families. Now He is telling this to the twelve apostles, but He is speaking about throughout church history. The reason we know He is speaking to all the Church throughout history is because this part of the sermon that He gave to the twelve apostles Jesus also taught in Mark 13 and Luke 21 in the end-time passage when He was talking to the end-time Church. He used these same principles. So what He is saying is that the conflict that occurred when the Church was birthed is going to come to fullness in the generation in which He returns and the principles are the same.*

*Verse 21, “brother will deliver up brother to death.” I mean, this just unthinkable. We have seen it happen through history. “A father will deliver up his child,” his adult child. It is not like his four-year-old, but you know the child is an adult and the father is older. They are in a huge conflict about Jesus, children against parents.*

*Verse 22 He says that it is going to go beyond your families. He would say, “You are going to be hated, not by every person, but in every sphere of life there will be people who hate those who stand for My reign, My leadership, My kingdom. The person that endures to the end will be saved.”*

* 1. ***Flee***: Jesus calls His people to flee in persecution instead of responding with “foolish courage.” Those who flee will often face similar pressures in the city the flee to thus, requiring endurance. They may flee to many cities—there will be some cities receptive to help them in the end times.

*Verse 23, now this here is interesting. You want to get this because He told this to the Twelve. “When they persecute you in this city, flee to the next.” It is a balance and takes the Holy Spirit’s wisdom, but some people have a “bravado” kind of spirit. Some people have foolish courage. Other people have real courage and stand strong in a place of persecution. I do not want to ever minimize that. Others have kind of a bravado, a martyr complex, a “I will show everyone who is most faithful” attitude. He says, “No, no, move to the next city,” because the idea is not courage right there; the idea is endurance, keep moving. Not just because God needs your voice—He wants your voice—but He wants you to keep moving because there is a whole chain of events and dynamics that happen when you go to this city and that city, and the persecution is sweeping through the land. He is saying that the issue is going to be endurance when you are in flight, not giving in and giving up. You are going to find other people in the journey as well. In essence He is saying, “I want you to not just stand there and give in to the martyrdom and get it over and get to heaven. I want you actually to escape it.”*

*Then He gives an encouragement. This sounds like this is an interesting encouragement. He is talking now to Israel at the end of the age. He says, “Go to another city and flee, and they will chase you down in that city. Go to another city, there will be adversaries chasing you down in that city. Go to another one.” He goes on, “I have good news for you. You will go through the cities, but you will not go through all of them. There will still be cities that are refuge cities. Before I return, not all the cities will turn against the people of God, the believers.” So that was actually a statement of encouragement.*

* 1. We are to bear the sigma for obeying Jesus with courage and endurance by seeing the “big picture” of God’s final judgment and His care over us (10:24-31). The Jewish leaders told the people that Jesus had a demon and called Him, “Beelzebub”—the ruler of the demons (Mt. 12:24; Jn. 7:20). We are to fear God instead of man because the worse that a man can do to you does not compare with what God is able to do.

25…If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household! …28And do not fear those who kill the body…But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. 30But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Mt. 10:25-31)

*He is really breaking down persecution so I am not going to go through this with any detail, but just kind of point at it. Get your expectations right. A disciple is not above the teacher. Jesus said, “I am the teacher. They treated Me this way; they will treat you this way.” Settle it. Get the big picture. If they call the master of the house Beelzebub—Jesus is the Master of the house, and in Matthew 12:24 they called Him, Beelzebub; they called Him demonic—They are going to call you demonic too. Do not be so concerned by it. Do not fear. Lock into the big picture. Do not say, “Oh, my career, my ministry is over!” They said Jesus had a demon, and then people were against Him. Go higher in your perspective. The very worse they can do to you is not comparable to what God can do to a person. They can kill your body, but God can destroy body and soul forever. Lock into the big picture. Set it in your heart before persecution escalates that you are going to go deep in God, and you are going to live in the big picture of His reign, His supremacy. Eternity is what counts. Hassles and setbacks and losses in this age are rewarded in the glorious age to come. Get that narrative deep in your heart, He is telling the apostles, before the trouble comes on you.*

*You know, talking about the end times, the goal is not to avoid dying. I have talked to people who say, “Oh, I hear you talk about preparation for the end times.”*

*I say, “Yeah, I do some. I need to do it more.”*

*They ask, “Like, what kind of food and guns?”*

*I say, “No, I do not talk about physical preparation, I talk about spiritual preparation.”*

*They reply, “What?”*

*“I talk about having a mindset and a spiritual root system so we do not cave in to fear and deception and all those things, so we are prepared in our hearts. We are into the big picture, and our heart is steady, even if they kill us.” I say, “The goal is* ***not*** *to not die. Everyone is going to die. I want to live in the resurrection, billions and billions of years. I do not want to speed it up, but the goal is not to make sure you do not die physically.” I ask, “You are going to spend all of your life in the next ten and twenty years storing up food to go live in some cave somewhere? Then you will die?” I go on, “I would rather die in obedience on the front lines. I believe in this stuff.” Jesus is saying to lock into this ahead of time. Do not wait until the hour.*

* 1. ***More value***: The Father will not fail to see the pressures that come on His beloved children. He sees the smallest details occurring in the universe— the death of a sparrow and the number of hairs on our head—how much more does Him value and see the needs of His children.
  2. There are only two responses to Jesus—to confess publicly Him or to deny Him (10:32-42).   
     The most glorious thing that can happen in a person’s life is that Jesus declares their name before God on the last day (Rev 3:5) and the most terrible thing is if He denied that person on that day.

32“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father…   
33But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father…” (Mt. 10:32-33)

*I am going to end with one more passage here, verse 32. I love this one. He says that it is worth it. In the big picture, it is really worth it. So they beat you, so they take your stuff, so they call you a demon, so brother and sister turn on you, so the church kicks you out, so the government puts you in prison, verse 32, He says, I have something to tell you, “if you confess Me and bear this, if you endure, I will confess your name before My Father in the glory of God. I will say your name in front of all the angels. I will testify of your faithfulness openly in the presence of God.”*

*I look at that and I say, “Oh my gosh, I am in!”*

*He goes on, “If you deny Me”—you did not lock in, you did not grasp what I was telling you, you got swept away in the current—“when you stand before God, I will deny you. I do not know this one. He left Me. I will say this before God and the angels.”*

*I look at that and I say, “Ugh!” These are the two most glorious and terrible statements that could ever be uttered by the Son of Man. I am clear where I am going—verse 32—I am going there all the way!*

* 1. Believers are to be loyal to Jesus above all other relationships including their family (10:34-37). Commitment to our family is a primary kingdom value but it must not surpass out loyalty to Jesus.

34Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35For I have come to “set a man against his father…36a man’s enemies will be those of his own house...” 37He who loves father or mother…son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.   
(Mt. 10:34-37)

* 1. There is a growing anger in society as well as within family relationships toward people who hold different views in the “cultural wars” today. People on both sides of the conflicts often charge the other side of being *“intolerant.”* Those seeking to be loyal to Jesus insist on faithfully upholding what the Word of God says. Those who reject such a position claim it is intolerant, arrogant, and lacking compassion to uphold biblical truths that make others feel that they have done wrong. Many relationships even in families are harmed by being in the intense cross fire of opposing beliefs.
  2. Self-denial includes enduring persecution for standing for Jesus. To “take his cross” speaks of a willingness to sacrifice one’s comforts. The one who “loses life” comforts and pleasures in context to enduring persecution will “find life” in God now and in the age to come. The one who lives only for the present loses the ultimate purpose of their life and loses the potential of gaining eternal rewards.

38“And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. (Mt. 10:38-40)

* 1. The Lord’s people must receive God’s messengers and stand together in difficulty (Mt 10:40-42).   
     In this context of “state sponsored” persecution, showing hospitality to a fleeing disciple could be considered as harboring a criminal—thus putting those who offer hospitality to a disciple at risk.

40He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.   
41He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward.   
And he who receives a righteous man…shall receive a righteous man’s reward. 42And   
whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple,   
assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward. (Mt. 10:40-42)

* + 1. By receiving the Lord’s messengers, we receive the Lord Himself. Therefore, how a person receives God’s servants expresses their attitude toward the Lord who sent them (Mt. 25:37-40).

37“…Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?..”.  
40“…inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”   
(Mt. 25:37-40)

* + 1. ***He who receives you***: To “receive” these messengers sent by God spoke of *helping them* as they fled from persecution as well as *being receptive* to the grace of God operating in their ministry. These sent ones were to “host God’s presence” thus, releasing it as mentioned in verses 12-14.
    2. ***Reward***: The hospitable person who risks danger by helping a fleeing disciple receives a reward and also the receptive person receives the grace that operates through the one sent by the Lord. The “little ones” in this context refer to persecuted disciples. Anyone who help by giving him a cup of water will receive a reward. Even the smallest act of kindness is remembered by Jesus.

*Amen, let’s stand before the Lord. The Lord is calling some of you to really realign yourself. You are going to be about the kingdom message, you are going to pray for the sick, and you are going to stand, no matter who treats you badly in the church or outside the church. You are going to stay steady. You are going to live in that larger narrative, that big picture story. I want to invite anybody, but I am thinking of some of the students who are going back home for the Christmas break. Beloved, it is the time to line up. Do not go back home and get lost in that story of those other folks. Go home and talk about the kingdom, His leadership in your life.*

*They are saying, “Gosh, you go to that Bible school? What is going on?”*

*Pray for them. Offer to minister to them. Give them your testimony. Do not go the other way. Do not go to the silent witness program, “I will just wait…when the Lord gives me opportunity.” No, just start talking about His reign, His kingdom, His leadership in your life and their life. Offer to pray for them. You will mess up the whole equilibrium of the other days, the past years.*

*They say, “Man, he is no fun anymore.”*

*Set your heart before you go home. Set your heart, really. So they write you off—because everybody has got that system of friends back home that has gone that other way. The problem is a lot of them are Christians raised in the church, but they are in a whole different spirit right now. Just because they were homeschooled, went to Christian school, and raised in the church does not mean they are living out the kingdom narrative in their life.*

*So my point is this: do not yield to that. Go lovingly, but go with clarity regarding what you are about. You preach the kingdom or talk it, you offer to pray for them, and you do not back down when they write you off. I want to pray for any of the students going back. You are saying, “You know what? I could use some prayer on that.” I want to invite you to come up here. I want the others of us to pray for you. You will stand strong and clear. You will come back with a testimony, “I grew in the holidays. I did not lose ground. I grew. I took a step forward; I did not take a step backwards.”*

*Again, the old-Christian crowd, some of them are as bad as the non-Christian crowd. They have become so familiar with the kingdom stuff they do not care. Again, they are raised in the homeschool group and the church, or went to the Christian school, but there is no testimony of the kingdom vibrant in their life right now. Do not get caught in that. I just have a passion about that. I have seen it happen year after year; students get caught in that. It takes them a couple months to shake it all off when they get back.*