

4. Developing Ministry Skills Through Doing and Reporting – Part 1

In our last two topics, we discussed how Christ developed the ministry skills of the disciples by observation and participation. Today, we will begin discussing how Christ developed the ministry skills of the disciples by doing and reporting. The disciples spent two years observing Christ as He ministered. They had also participated with Christ. During this two-year period, the disciples traveled with Christ, throughout Galilee, as He preached the kingdom of God (Matthew 4:23-25; Luke 4:42-44; Mark 1:35-39). The disciples also traveled with Christ as He ministered in Judea (John 4:1-3). During this period, they even traveled with Him through Samaria (John 4:4-42).

In Matthew 10, we see that Christ began the next phase in the training of the disciples as He sent them out to minister. The first time Christ sent the disciples out to minister without Him, He gave them very specific instructions in Matthew 10:5-14. In Matthew 10:5-8, we read, “These twelve 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 the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”” First, we see what Christ told the disciples they were not to do on this ministry trip:

- they were not to go to the Gentiles
- they were not to go to the Samaritans

In an earlier topic, we said that we learn to cross four barriers as we learn to share the Gospel. Acts 1:8 says, “But 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.” Those barriers are:

- ♦ Jerusalem – the barrier of our own fear (our Jerusalem is our relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors and other acquaintances)
- ♦ Judea – the barrier of making contacts
- ♦ Samaria – the barrier of another culture, religion or ethnic group
- ♦ The uttermost part of the earth – the barrier of language

As Christ sent the disciples out, they were not yet ready to cross the barrier of sharing the message of the kingdom of God across a language barrier. They were not even ready to share the message across the barrier of culture, religion, or another ethnic group. The disciples had already shared about Christ with their relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and other acquaintances, so they had learned to depend on Christ to give them strength. They had learned that Christ would help them cross the barrier of fear with people they already knew.

Second, Christ told the twelve that they were to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As a result, on this first ministry trip without Christ physically present with them, they were to learn to cross the barrier of making contacts with Jews they did not already know. In the same way, once we have helped developing Christians learn to depend on the Lord to witness with boldness to relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and other acquaintances, we want to help them learn to depend on the Lord for boldness to make contacts with strangers of their own culture.

Third, Christ told the disciples what they were to preach. Luke 9:2 says, “He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” By comparing Mark 1:35-39 with Luke 4:42-44, we see that the disciples had traveled throughout Galilee with Christ as He preached the kingdom of God. Luke 4:43-44 says, “But He said to them, ‘I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.’ And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.” Here, we see that Christ sent the twelve out to preach the same message they had heard Him preach throughout Galilee.

Since the phrase “the kingdom of God” is used fifty-four times in the Gospels, we need to understand what this phrase means, since this is the thing we want people to share when we first send them out to minister in the homes of others. In Luke 17:20-21, Christ explained what “the kingdom of God” means for us today. Those verses say, “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with observation, nor will they say, “See here!” or “See there!” For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.’”

Here, we see that “the kingdom of God” in this present age is *God’s spiritual rule over the hearts of believers*. The kingdom of God comes to each believer through repentance and faith. The way to enter the kingdom of God is explained for us in Mark 1:14-15. We read, in those verses, “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’” This is the message we want to help every Christian learn to clearly explain to those who are not yet Christians. This is the message Christ told the twelve to preach, and this is the message we are to tell developing leaders to preach when we send them out to minister.

Christ also told the twelve that they had been given signs to verify their message. In Hebrews 2:3-4 we read, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” Four signs, that Christ said would confirm the message of the apostles, are listed in Matthew 10:8. That verse says, “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.” Those four signs were:

- healing the sick
- cleansing the lepers
- raising the dead
- casting out demons

Since these were the signs of the apostles, Christ led James to write instructions about healing for the church as a whole, in James 5:14-15. There we read, “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.” In these verses, we see that:

- we are to call for the elders of the church

- the elders are all to pray over the one who is sick
- the elders are to anoint the sick
- the elders are to pray in faith
- the Lord is concerned to meet both physical and spiritual needs
- the result of such prayer is that glory will be given to God, not to man

Christ gave a further instruction, in Matthew 10:8, when He said, “Freely you have received, freely give.” Since Christ had just given them four signs to verify their message, there could have been a temptation to charge money for their ministry. That would have caused many people to miss the message of “the kingdom of God”. Christ did not, in any way, want them to cause confusion about their message. In the next few verses, Christ went on to point out that people could share to meet their basic needs, but the disciples could not charge for the things God would do through them to confirm their message.

As we have looked at these verses, we see that Christ gave the disciples very specific instructions for their first period of ministry when Christ was not physically with them. In the same way, most Christians need very specific instructions for their first times of ministry, when they are not with another leader. As we help developing leaders, we give them specific instructions as they begin to minister. As they develop as leaders, they will no longer need such specific instructions, because they will be learning to depend on the Holy Spirit.

In our next topic, we will see that Christ gave some additional instructions before sending out the twelve. It is a great privilege to be used by Christ to develop spiritual leadership through on-the-job training. Christ will bless our ministry as we follow His example in the way we develop leaders. May the Lord richly bless you as you develop the ministry skills of developing leaders through observation, participation, and on-the-job training.