

## 6. Helping Our Children Work with the Holy Spirit by Becoming Reproducers

In our last topic, we discussed helping our children learn to work with the Holy Spirit by becoming examples. Today, we will be discussing the topic of how we help our physical and spiritual children learn to work with the Holy Spirit by becoming reproducing Christians. This means that we need to take the time to show our children how we lead others to Christ and then help them grow. That only happens as we take our physical and spiritual children along with us in ministry.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:8, we read, “For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.” Although the Thessalonians had been Christians for only a few months, people were already talking about their faith throughout Northern Greece (Macedonia) and Southern Greece (Achaia). The fact that the word of the Lord was sounding forth from them throughout Greece shows that the Thessalonian Christians were sharing the Gospel wherever they went. If they traveled to Southern Greece, they shared the Gospel there. If they traveled to other parts of Macedonia, they shared the Gospel in the various places they traveled in Macedonia.

Christ gave us an example of how to help our children become reproducing Christians. We read in Matthew 4:18-20, “And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.” Christ had known these men for about a year. In fact, the first several chapters of the book of John showed that these men had traveled with Christ to many different places during that year. However, Christ now said that He was going to show them how to fish for men and lead others to Christ.

Matthew 4:23 tells what happened next when it says, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” At the time of Christ, it is reported that there were 203 towns and villages that had a synagogue in the region of Galilee. The Jews would build a synagogue in any village that had ten or more men and so even the small villages had synagogues.

Mark records the same event and tells us that the following Sabbath Christ began this teaching in the synagogue that was in the town where Peter and Andrew as well as James and John lived. This meant that Christ began showing them how to share the Gospel with their own family, friends, co-workers, neighbors and other acquaintances. Later that evening, Christ began sharing the Gospel in the home of Peter. Mark 1:32-33 says, “At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered together at the door.” Here, we see that the first lesson Christ taught the disciples was how to use their own home to share the Gospel with family, relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors and other acquaintances. The first thing that we want to show our children is how to use our own home to share the Gospel with others.

Early the next morning, Christ went out long before sunrise. Christ went out to spend time alone

with the Father in prayer. Peter and the others went and found Christ where He was praying. They said that the people of their town wanted Christ to stay at their town. Christ answered in Mark 1:38, “But He said to them, ‘Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.’” The first thing we see, in this verse, is that Christ told them He was now going to show them how to share the Gospel in the neighboring towns. Since Christ had promised that He would show them how to become fishers of men as they followed Him, He now said that He was going to show them how to share the Gospel with people in the surrounding towns.

In addition, this verse also shows another key lesson that Christ taught these men. The last phrase says, “for this purpose I have come forth.” Here, we see that Christ wanted the disciples to learn to have a purpose for the things that they did. Christ modeled the importance of being led by our purpose to the disciples as He took them with Him. He showed them that His purpose was to proclaim the good news in other towns as well as the home town of the disciples. Here, we see that Christ was showing the disciples how to become purpose-led and expand their vision to other areas, as well as among the people they already knew.

Then, Mark 1:39 says, “And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.” The synagogues were used for many purposes. The synagogue was the school where the children in that village were taught to read the Old Testament. That was the gathering place where the people gathered for worship on the Sabbath. The synagogue was also used for many other purposes so that it was the center of community life. As a result, Christ knew that the synagogue was the place to meet the Jews of that community. As the disciples came to each village and town, Christ took them to the synagogue where they would meet the people of that community. By doing this, Christ showed them how to share the Gospel with the people in every community throughout the region of Galilee.

Christ took the disciples along with Him for the next nine months and showed them how to present the gospel of the kingdom in synagogues and homes throughout Galilee. About twenty-one months after Christ first met the disciples and about nine months after He said that He would show them how to become fishers of men, Christ entered a new phase of their development to help them become fishers of men. Mark 3:13-14 says, “And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach.” Here, we see that about twenty-one months after Christ began inviting people to follow Him, He selected the twelve. The first reason Christ selected them was so that they might be with Him. For the next twenty-one months, they would spend even more time with Him than they had spent during the previous twenty-one months.

However, Christ also had other reasons why He chose the twelve. We see that the second reason why He chose them was so that He could send them out to preach. Mark 6 tells us about their first preaching tour. Mark 6:7-9 says, “And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff--no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts--but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.” Here, we see that Christ showed them the importance of

ministering in teams as He sent them out two by two. Christ also showed them that He would supply their needs by sending them without any extra food, clothing or money. They had to learn to depend on Christ to supply their needs through others.

In Mark 6:12-13, we see what happened as they went out. Those verses say, “So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.” They went out and preached the same things that they had heard Christ preach. Notice that the focus of their message was that people should repent. This indicates that they had heard Christ tell people many times that they needed to repent of (turn from) their sin and turn to the Lord.

In Mark 6:30, we read, “Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.” Here, we see that Christ had them report back to Him after their ministry tour. The disciples gave Christ a complete report of their ministry tour. They told Him all of the things that they had done. They also told Christ what they had taught in the different towns that they visited.

Later, Christ sent out a total of seventy disciples with similar instructions. For the twelve, this would have been at least their second tour of ministry. Luke 10:1-3 gives a few additional thoughts that Christ gave the seventy as He sent them out. Those verses say, “After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, ‘The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.’” Christ wanted them to see the harvest and to see the need for more laborers.

Christ also told them that He sent them out as lambs among wolves. A lamb has no defense except the shepherd. If a wolf and a lamb are together alone a wolf has lunch and the lamb is lunch. However, if the lamb follows the shepherd, the shepherd kills the wolf and protects the lamb. The disciples needed to know that Christ was with them and that they needed to depend on Him for protection and not their own ideas. In the same way, that is a key lesson that we need to teach our physical and spiritual children as we begin to send them out in teams to share the Gospel with others. They will only be effective as they depend on the power of the Holy Spirit instead of their own strength.

Acts 20:20-21 shows that Paul used a similar training pattern to equip others to share the Gospel. Those verses say, “How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” May the Lord also richly bless you as you follow a similar training pattern to equip your children to become reproducing disciples.