

19. Jesus Sent Out the Twelve

In our last topic, we saw that Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead and then told the parents and the disciples with Him not to tell anyone. We also saw that we can use this as an illustration as we help our physical and spiritual children define their purpose in life, both when they are talking with Christians and when they are talking with those who are not Christians.

Jesus then went to Nazareth, the town where He had lived before He began His public ministry. Mark 6:1-6 says, “Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, ‘Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?’ So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.’ Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.” We see that the disciples of Jesus also followed Him as He went to Nazareth, because this visit was now a part of His public ministry.

On the Sabbath day, Jesus went into the synagogue in Nazareth and began to teach. These were the people who had known Jesus since He was a boy. As Jesus taught, we see that the people of His hometown were astonished. This was the same reaction Jesus had received when He taught in the synagogue at Capernaum. Mark 1:22 says, “And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” The word “astonished” means “*to be filled with amazement.*” The reason people were filled with amazement, when they heard the teaching of Jesus, was due to the fact that He taught with authority, instead of teaching like the scribes. The scribes gave the opinions of other scribes about what the Old Testament taught. In contrast, we see that Jesus taught with authority. This means that Jesus explained what the Old Testament was teaching. We are also to use the Word of God to explain each passage, instead of giving our own opinions, so that we can speak with authority.

The people of Nazareth showed their amazement by asking the question, “where *did* this Man *get* these things?” They also asked, “what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him?” Here, we see that the people of Nazareth were forced to recognize that Jesus was teaching with authority. However, they did not understand what made it possible for Him to have such wisdom. They had also heard about the miracles Jesus had done and wondered how Jesus could do such miracles. As a result, even with their amazement, the people responded with unbelief. In fact, at this time, that was true even of his brothers. John 7:3-5 says, “His brothers therefore said to Him, ‘Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.’ For even His brothers did not believe in Him.” We see that Jesus had four brothers, and later, they did believe. In fact, two of them, James and Judas, wrote the books of James and Jude.

Jesus knew the people of Nazareth did not believe that He was God. They said they knew His mother, His brothers, and His sisters. They viewed Him as just a carpenter. In fact, we read that the people of Nazareth were offended at Him. They knew that Jesus had the same limited education each of them had received in Nazareth. They knew He had not gone to Jerusalem to study at the feet of some well-known teacher. As a result, they did not want to accept His teaching, even though they were amazed at what He taught.

Jesus knew that the people of Nazareth were rejecting Him and His teaching. To them, Jesus was just a boy who had grown up in their town. They felt no need to really listen to Him. In fact, one time after Jesus spoke in the synagogue in Nazareth, Luke 4:28-29 says, “So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.” That is why Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.”

Because of this unbelief, Jesus did not do a lot of miracles in Nazareth or the surrounding area. We see that He did lay His hands on a few sick people and healed them. Jesus was amazed that the people of His home town thought they knew Him, yet at the same time rejected Him. The fact that Jesus had never committed any sin meant that these people had known Him for nearly thirty years, but had not recognized the fact that He was without sin. Then, Jesus left Nazareth and made a teaching circuit throughout the area of Galilee. Matthew 9:35 says, “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” Jesus did many miracles in these other towns and cities to verify His teaching, but not in Nazareth.

We go on to read, in Mark 6:7-9, “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.” After this preaching tour, Jesus sent the Twelve out to learn how to minister. Jesus had just shown them, with this preaching tour, what to preach, and now, He sent them out to learn to trust Him as they preached the same message, while He prepared them for the future after His resurrection. However, Jesus also wanted to teach them that He would supply their needs as they went. That is why Jesus gave them these instructions.

Jesus sent them out two-by-two so they could learn to minister as teams. He also gave them power over unclean spirits so that they had the power to cast out demons just as Jesus had done. Then, He commanded them to take nothing for the journey – no bag for supplies, no food, and no money. He told them to wear sandals but not to take an extra coat. Matthew 10:8-10 says, “Heal the sick, cleanse the 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.” Jesus wanted the disciples to learn that He would provide for their needs. This is an important lesson for every Christian to learn.

Then, in Mark 6:10-13, we read, “Also He said to them, ‘In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!’ 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*.” Here, we see that the disciples were to stay in one house in each city they visited, not move from house-to-house.

Matthew 10:11-13 says, “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. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.” When the disciples first arrived at a city, they were to inquire and find out who was respected. Then, they were to go to that household and give that household a blessing. Jesus said they would be invited to stay at that home, if the head of that household was a worthy person. Jesus said that the disciples were to stay at that home while they were in that city.

Jesus also told the disciples what to do if a person, or city, refused to accept them and their message of the Gospel. Jesus said that when they left that city, they were to shake off the dust from their feet as a testimony against them. The Jews commonly shook the dust off their feet when they returned from a land of the Gentiles. As a result, Jesus told the disciples that Jews who rejected the Gospel were to be warned about their unbelief by seeing the messenger shake the dust off his feet. In Acts 13:45-49, Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles in Antioch when the Jews refused to listen. Later, in Acts 13:50-51, we read, “But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium.” Here, we see that Paul and Barnabas followed these instructions that Jesus had given the disciples.

We read that the Twelve went out and preached that the people should repent. The word “repent” means “*to turn from sin and to turn to God.*” Paul later gives thanks for the Thessalonians and records how they turned from sin, when he mentioned how the whole area had heard the word of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 1:19-10, where it says, “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” Jesus also gave the Twelve signs to confirm their message. We see that they cast out many demons and healed many who were sick.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why Jesus told the disciples to take nothing extra as they went out to preach the Gospel. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to depend on the Lord.