

Preparation for Real Kingdom Witness

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Date: 07 February 2021

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[0 : 00] And so we come now to our Bible reading, so please do grab a Bible and turn to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 9. Willie, our senior pastor, will be preaching to us later on in the service, beginning a new series all about real kingdom witness, a mission that claims everything.

And we're going to read from Matthew, chapter 9, beginning at verse 36 into chapter 10, verse 15. So let's read the Word of God together. Hear the Word of the Lord.

Send out laborers into his harvest. And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal every disease and every affliction.

The names of the twelve apostles are these. First, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector, James, the son of Alphaeus and Theodos, Simon, the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out instructing them, go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and proclaim as you go, saying, The kingdom of God is at hand.

[2 : 33] As you enter, find out who is worthy in it, and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it.

But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.

Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town. Amen. Well, amen.

And may God bless to us his words. Well, do open your Bibles with me to Matthew's Gospel and perhaps first have it open just at the end of chapter 4.

Matthew's Gospel is supremely the Gospel of the King. Back at Christmas, we focused on the opening chapters 1 and 2, which present us with the coming of a king.

[3 : 41] Not an earthly king like Herod, a vile one at that, but the true son of David come at last. Heaven's king and earth's great king and lord.

And in chapter 3, we begin with John the Baptist's witness about what that actually means. Repent, he says, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And then at his baptism, Jesus is declared to be the true human son of God at last. Not a failure, a self-server like Adam, but triumphant over the devil in the temptations of chapter 4.

Uncorruptible by evil and utterly faithful to God. And so in fulfillment of all the prophetic scriptures, Jesus begins his ministry on earth, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.

Repent, chapter 4, verse 17. For the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And then from then on, the end of chapter 4, we have the first section of Jesus' teaching about his kingdom.

[4 : 54] We call it the Sermon on the Mount, chapters 5 to 7. And after that comes chapters 8 and 9. Chapters we looked at a little bit last summer. Where Matthew groups together accounts of Jesus demonstrating the power of his kingdom in action.

And it's very deliberate. If you look there at chapter 4, verse 23, you'll see that he summarizes everything that's going to follow. Jesus going through Galilee, teaching and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.

And also healing every disease and every affliction. The breaking in of heaven's power here on earth. Turn over then with me to the end of chapter 9 and verse 35 there.

And you'll see an almost identical summary verse. Jesus teaching and proclaiming the kingdom. And demonstrating it by healing every disease.

And so on. So two brackets if you like there. End of chapter 4 and end of chapter 9. And in between we have the kingdom teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

[6 : 04] And the kingdom power of Jesus made plain to all in his presence. Healing every vestige of the curse of sin and death. And that was Jesus' earthly ministry and mission.

And now here in chapter 10. Jesus turns to his disciples. And he begins to teach them what they have been called to do.

In joining with him in that kingdom witness to the world. In chapter 5 he'd already taught them that they were to be his witnesses. The salt and the light of his kingdom in the world.

And now he's giving to them his royal briefing. About what it will mean to be ambassadors of the king. The true king. Taking his kingdom rule to the ends of the earth.

What we're seeing here really is like a foretaste. Of the great commission at the end of chapter 28. When all the church after Christ's ascension is given their marching orders. But here it's his personal briefing to those who he calls to be apostles.

[7 : 14] Who are to join him in that unique earthly ministry. Look at verses 7 and 8. You see. As I've done. So you are going to do.

He's saying. Proclaiming the kingdom. And showing the power of the king's presence. Right here on earth. Right now. But you see.

In his briefing of these first apostles. Jesus is teaching them. And he's teaching all of us also. About what real gospel mission is about. What it's going to entail. For those who will be his real kingdom witnesses.

To be part of Jesus' real kingdom witness to the world. Is going to be a mission. That claims everything. It claimed all of Jesus' earthly life.

And it will likewise claim all of the earthly life. Of his true disciples. Of his true missionary ambassadors. To the world.

[8 : 15] An ambassador. Is one that faithfully represents the views of their sovereign. In every way. Making his heart. Making his mind.

Clearly known. And Matthew shows us here at the end of chapter 9. Doesn't he? How Jesus' heart and mind was focused. Very vividly.

Look again at verses 36 to 38. When he saw the crowds. He had compassion for them. Because they were harassed and helpless. Like sheep without a shepherd. And then he said to his disciples. The harvest is plentiful. But the laborers are few. And therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest. To send out laborers into his harvest field.

Well won't every true disciple of Jesus. Every ambassador of Jesus. Won't they see also the real lostness all around about them.

[9 : 13] People helpless. Without a shepherd to lead them. And won't they share then. Both Christ's compassion for them. But also his urgency to bring in.

A plentiful harvest. And to serve with him. Both praying for laborers to be sent out into the harvest field. But also being prepared also to be sent out themselves.

In answer to their own prayers. Notice. Notice that for Jesus. The supreme response of compassion for the people of this world.

Is not found. In feeding the hungry. Or helping the poor. Or fighting for justice. All of these are noble things. Good things. And of course. Christians will want to pursue these things.

Although I'm sure we'll all have differing views. About how best to achieve some of those things. But these are not the thing. That Jesus defines the mission of his followers as being all about.

[10 : 15] Are they? No. The supreme response of compassion. That Jesus shows. And shares with his followers. Is telling them to pray for.

And to be prepared for. The proclamation of the gospel of his kingdom. Because that alone. Can heal. The great sickness in this world.

The sickness of sin and death. Chapter 10 verse 7. Proclaim as you go. Saying. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick. Raise the dead.

Cleanse the lepers. Cast out demons. See what a lost world. A helpless world needs. More than everything else. Is the gospel of the kingdom. Of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And a church therefore. That is. Is truly compassionate. That shares. The eyes and the heart. Of the Lord Jesus himself. Will have that mission. And no other mission.

[11:11] Always at its heart. And always on its heart. But you see. And this is why. This chapter is in our Bibles. That church.

Will need to know. That this kind of real kingdom witness. Will always be. As it was for Jesus. And his apostles. It will always be. A mission. That claims everything.

And that's what we're being taught here. In this. Second. Main. Teaching section. In Matthew's gospel. You can see how Matthew lays it out. First chapter 10. Verse 1.

He called to him. His 12 disciples. Look then at chapter 11. Verse 1. He finished. Instructing. His 12. Disciples.

In between. We've got this coherently. Ordered section. Of teaching. By Jesus. About. What real. Kingdom. Witness. Looks like. And it's so important.

[12:11] For us. Today. To understand this properly. When. When. Many. Many. People. In the church. Of Jesus Christ. Are actually very confused. About what. Christian mission is.

And often quite wrong. In their thinking. About what it means. To be. A good witness. In our world. And to our family. And among our friends. So we're going to spend.

Three weeks. I think. In this chapter. Together. First of all. Looking today. Mainly at verses. One to fifteen. Where we see. The king. Jesus. Briefing.

His very first. Missionary ambassadors. In preparation. For. Real kingdom. Witness. But perhaps. I think. That the key verse.

In this whole chapter. Comes in verse sixteen. Look. Behold. I'm sending you out. As sheep. In the midst of wolves. So be wise. As serpents.

[13:05] And innocent. As doves. It's a bit of a surprise. Isn't it? That the answer. To lost sheep. Is actually. To send out sheep. But you see.

The ambassadors. Of this king. Are not on a power grab. Their mission. Is not to be marked. By spin. By. By subterfuge. By diplomatic. Language. No.

They're to be as innocent. As doves. They are emissaries. Of real peace. God's peace. The king's peace. So they're straight. They're sincere. They're transparent.

But they're not to be soft. Notice. They're also to be wise as serpents. They're to be shrewd. They're to be prudent. They're to be realistic.

Why? Well because. In this world's terms. And in this world's eyes. They are very weak.

[14:01] And they're very powerless. And they're even very foolish. In the eyes of the world. Whoever heard of a sheep. Being sent out. To save a bunch of wolves.

And the truth is. You see. That they will face. A very hostile environment. For their message.

They're to be salt and light. In a very rotten. And dark world. But Jesus words.

Back in. In Matthew chapter 5. Yes. Sometimes people will. See and hear your gospel work. And praise the father in heaven. But often also. They will certainly revile you.

They will persecute you. They will slander you. On Christ's account. An ambassador will always receive. The reaction. On behalf of their sovereign.

And a hostile power. Will vent its rage. Won't it? Upon that ambassador. Look at verse 40. Whoever receives you. Says Jesus receives me.

[15:01] And him who sent me. And this world. For the most part. Scorns God. Hates God. And rejected his son. Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ.

And that is what faces. All true. Disciples. As his ambassadors. Jesus Christ. Was led like a lamb. To the slaughter. That was God's power. At work. For salvation. And so also his disciples. Will be sent out. As lambs. Among wolves.

Weak. And frail. And utterly foolish. As far as the world is concerned. But God loves. To use the weak things. In the world. To shame the strong.

To use the foolish things. In the world. To shame. The wise. And the gospel of Christ. The gospel of a crucified. Savior is foolishness. To those who are perishing.

[15:56] Says Paul. And so we are weak. And frail. And feeble. Gospel messengers. Because.

Like master. Like servants. That's the heart of the challenge. Isn't it? All the way through this chapter. Look at verse 25. The disciple. Is like his teacher.

The servant. Is like his master. And if the one is maligned. By the world. And in the world. So will the other be. If. That is. He's a real witness.

A true witness. True. Witnesses to Christ. Will receive the same. Treatment. From this world. But they will also.

Know the same power of God. At work. Through them. In this world. And when heaven's power. Is at work. In the world. It will always.

[16:54] Face. Opposition. And it's always a power. That's closed. In human frailty. And that's why. Christ's followers. In every age. Need great wisdom. And great realism. About what it means. To be part. Of real kingdom witness. And here in.

Verses 1 to 15. Jesus himself. Is briefing. These first missionary ambassadors. The apostles. And he teaches us. As he teaches them. The wisdom.

And the realism. That we will need. For our mission today. There's four main commands. Here in these verses. Jesus says. Go. Proclaim. Give.

And find partners. So let's look at each. In turn. First of all. In verses 1 to 6. Jesus tells us. That we need. Wisdom. And realism. About the unfolding. Plan. For the church's mission.

[17:51] In the world. For us to go in mission. We need to understand. That our witness today. Is directed. By our place. In the progressively. Unfolding story.

Of the kingdom of God. And if we don't grasp that. We will. Find ourselves. In great confusion. Now Christians. Naturally. Are eager. To apply.

The Bible. To themselves. Of course they are. But. We've got to be careful. As we do that. Look at the first half. Of verse 8 here. You see. Some Christians today.

Want to claim. That command. Of miraculous. Healing power. As for all of us. Today. It's the meat and drink. Isn't it. Of the TV evangelists. And so on. It's funny though.

Isn't it. That they don't tend to mention. The second half of the verse. Very much. Give. Without pay. You don't get your private jets. As a TV evangelist. Do you. Without much pay. You get others.

[18:48] In contrast. Who look at verse 9. And. They want to say. That that's a. A permanent call. Literally. To poverty today. So we must live by faith. In that sense. But if we look at these verses.

That way. What do we do with verses 5 and 6? Are we to only evangelize Jews. And nobody else? You see the problem.

And there's a vital principle. That we're learning here. Put rather bluntly. It's this. He's not talking to you silly. See the Bible.

Didn't fall out of heaven. Into our lap today. Did it? All of it. Of course. Is for us today. Indeed it is. But none of it. Was written directly.

To you and me today. And that is a vital distinction. That we have to grasp. That's why we must read the Bible. In its proper context. In the context here.

[19:47] Of Matthew's gospel. Verses 1 to 6 here. Are clearly showing us. That Jesus. At this point. Is doing something. Utterly unique. In history. He is inaugurating.

The new. Kingdom. People. Of God. The new covenant. People. The church. It's a seismic. Shift. Happening. In world history. The true.

Israel. Of God. Who are his people. From the beginning. Are being redefined. For these days. Of fulfillment. When Jesus. The Messiah King.

At last. Has come. That's why there's the emphasis here. Look in verse 1. On the 12. Disciples. Verse 2. He calls them. The 12. Apostles.

Verse 5. These 12. He sent out. End of the chapter. These 12. He finished teaching. He is redefining. The 12 tribes of Israel.

[20:42] For this new age. And notice in chapter 11. Verse 1. His teaching here. Was directly. For these 12. Unique.

Men. Then. Wasn't given directly. To you and me. Now. We've got to recognize that. We don't recognize that. Here. And in other. Parts of the Bible.

It's reading a message. For somebody else. As if it was for us. It's like reading somebody else's diary. For example. Sometimes my wife. Will put her diary out.

Open. On the kitchen top. Because she'll tell me something. First thing in the morning. And I'm half asleep. And she knows I won't remember. So she'll put it there. So that I know. And if I come in at lunchtime.

And I look in that diary. And it says in. In big letters. On the page. Dentist at one o'clock. Then she's telling me. She's at the dentist. And I shouldn't be expecting her to be there.

[21:35] To share lunch with me. But if I look at that. If I look at that diary. And I see dentists at one o'clock. And I think. Oh my goodness. I'm late for the dentist. And I jump in my car. And drive to the dentist. Arrive there.

Panting and out of breath. Well I look like an idiot. Won't I? I might even get a filling. That I don't really want. By mistake. Because it wasn't written to me.

Silly. In that way. It was for me. To understand. That's what she was doing. And if we read the Bible. In that sense. As if everything there. Is directly about us.

Well we'll make utter fools of ourselves. So that's the first thing. Jesus words are not directed at us here. They're directed at these 12 apostles.

Nevertheless. Of course. We've also got to note. That in the context here. Jesus does clearly have. Have wider concerns. In view. And Jesus often.

[22 : 32] Will address in his teaching. Current events. But also future things. And deal with them together. And Matthew. In his gospel. Very often. Groups things together. Under one topic.

That's what he's doing here. Jesus teaching. All about mission. So clearly. Matthew realizes. The teaching here. Is also important. For those who are going to read his book. Later. Like us. And in fact.

If you look at verse 16. You'll see. From there onwards. Jesus is plainly. Envisaging. The later mission of the church. Where he talks about. Mission to the Gentiles.

And from chapter 26. To the end. Very plainly. He's. He's clearly talking about. Things that apply. To the future. Of the whole. Christian church. And of course.

We also. At the same time. Have got to read this chapter. Haven't we? In the light of the completed story. We've got Matthew chapter 28. Right to the end. And the great commission. For the whole church. So you see.

[23 : 30] All of this. Is just showing us. That we have to read the Bible. Intelligently. And not just superficially. And foolishly. And we must grasp.

The big picture. Of God's unfolding plan. Of salvation. And therefore. The plan. And the progress. Of his mission. To the world.

And here. In Matthew chapter 10. It's still before. The death. And the resurrection. And the ascension. Of Jesus. Obviously. It's not yet. The era.

Of the New Testament church. That we're now living in. And if we don't understand that. We will totally. Mishandle. This chapter. In the way that we apply it. To us.

Today. When Jesus said. Follow me. To Peter. And to Andrew. They literally. Got up. And they followed him. And they all around. Palestine.

[24 : 27] For three whole years. It was a unique experience. You and I. Are not going to do that. But of course. Jesus is still. Likewise. Calling us. Today. All of us. To that same.

Total. Discipleship. Well here. In Matthew chapter 10. We're still. In that unique. Stage. Of the inauguration.

Of the breaking. In. To history. Of the kingdom of God. That is unique. By definition. That's what explains. Verse 6.

Here. Isn't it? That Jesus. Personal mission. Was. To Israel. As its Messiah. Later on. In chapter 15. Verse 24.

Again. He says. I was sent. Only. To the lost sheep. Of Israel. So here. At this stage. What Jesus. Shares. With his 12.

[25 : 20] Apostles. Is likewise. Only. To Israel. It's not yet. The stage. Of going. To the world. Beyond. Just as later on. In fact. The apostle Paul. In his missionary journeys.

Went first. Didn't he? To the synagogues. To the Jews. To preach to them. And only then afterwards. To the Gentiles. To preach to them. So that's the first thing.

We need wisdom. And we need care. As we apply this. To ourselves now. In a very different stage. Of the unfolding story. Of God's kingdom.

And of our. Place. In that witness. To the world. And grasping that. As we must. Will also help us. Won't it? With the next point. Second half of verse 7.

And verse 8. That we need wisdom. And realism. About the undiminished power. For Christ's mission. To the world. See for us. To proclaim the kingdom today.

[26 : 15] We must also understand. That heaven's power today. Is demonstrated. Through. The proclamation. Of the same. Unchanging. Kingdom of God.

And it's gospel. Proclaim. As you go. Saying. The kingdom. Of heaven. Is at hand. Heal the sick. Raise the dead. Cleanse lepers. Cast out demons.

Kingdom mission. Means. Proclaiming. The gospel. Of the kingdom. Which demands. A response. Repent. And. That is a message.

That is always. Authenticated. By the power of God. Which shows. That it is not man's doing. But it is God's doing. And just as Jesus.

Proclaimed the kingdom. In word and deed. Just as he reversed. Every affliction. Even death itself. So. These twelve apostles. Are going to do exactly.

[27 : 13] The same thing. These miracles. You see. Are revelatory. They are not. Primarily. To do with. Healing the sick. And showing kindness. Although.

They are supremely. Kind. And wonderful. In that way. But rather. In this context. They are announcing. The promised kingdom. Of God. And they are doing it. In terms. Of the expectations. Of all the prophets. And in language. That every single. Jew. In Jesus day. Would understand. Absolutely. Loud and clear. That's very evident.

Actually. If you turn over. To the beginning. Of chapter 11. In verses 4 and 5. Where. Jesus. Speaks. To the disciples. Of John the Baptist. And John is doubting. Go. He says. Go and tell John. What you see.

And what you hear. The blind. Are receiving their sight. The lame. Are walking. Lepers are clenched. The deaf. Are hearing. And the dead. Are raised. And the poor. Have good news.

[28 : 08] Proclaimed to them. What he's saying. Is this. Is obviously that. It's the fulfillment. Of those prophets. It's the heavenly kingdom.

That the prophets foretold. And it's come. At last. All of this. You see. All of what Jesus is doing. Is revealing.

That unique. Momentous event. In history. And that it is now. Here. In the personal presence. Of Jesus Christ. The son of God. It's a foretaste.

Of what. One day. Will be permanent. When Jesus. Personal presence. Is permanent. In this world. Forever. But it's not a promise.

Is it. Of what all. Followers of Jesus. Are to expect. In the absence. Of his personal presence. That's so important. You see it later on.

[29 : 04] In Matthew itself. In chapter 17. Verse 16. Where you'll find. That even the disciples. Couldn't heal. All the time. And back in chapter 9. Verse 15. Jesus said. Explicitly.

There'll be days of darkness. Days of fasting coming. When the bridegroom. Will no longer be left. With you. And you'll be longing. For his return. And all the things. That once you did see. In his presence.

You see the events. That surround. Jesus life. And ministry. His death. His resurrection. His ascension. And indeed. The apostolic.

Earthly ministry. Which completed. The great revelation. Of the kingdom of God. These are unique. They're once and for all. In history. And unless we see that.

Friends. We will find ourselves. In the midst of all kinds. Of confusion. Even disaster. Because we'll have all. The wrong expectations.

[29 : 59] Of God. Won't we? Thinking these miracles. Are guaranteed. For us today. And that can end up. In huge disappointment. In God.

In people abandoning. Their faith. Even because they don't see. The miracles. In their own life. That perhaps. They were. Expecting. Now don't misunderstand me.

Of course. God can do. What he pleases. And I think perhaps. Such signs. Do sometimes. Happen today. In. Frontier situations.

For example. Where the kingdom of God. Is. Is being established. For the very. Very first time. And these. Signs. Can be revelatory. In that sense. In certain places. In certain cultures.

But we have to be clear. Jesus himself. Told us. That for the most part. The days.

[30 : 55] In which we live. Waiting for his return. Will be days of fasting. Not days of feasting. That will be.

When he comes again. Forever. And his presence. Is in this earth. And the last. Vestiges. Of the curse. Of sin and death. Will be destroyed. Forever and ever. Forever. But we're not.

To expect things. In our day. To be. Just as they were. Uniquely. Around the personal. Presence. Of the Messiah himself. Not until he comes.

That's why. The great cry. Of the Christian church. Through all the ages. Is Maranatha. Come Lord Jesus. Come. So that we will see that again. Forever. But of course.

The principle. Of the life-changing power. Of the gospel of God. Is the same. The Lord Jesus. Does always.

[31 : 53] Authenticate. The proclamation. Of his kingdom. With divine power. He works. Miracles. Today. And every day. Greater miracles. Than these. Not so much.

Miracles. Of historic. Revelation. Because we now. Have the full. And final. Revelation. Of the gospel of Christ. In the new testament. Gospel. But miracles. Yes.

Of personal. Revelation. Unto salvation. We are living now. In the days. Of this. Worldwide harvest. The days of rescue.

To life. Everlasting. That is the greatest. Miracle of all. God is working miracles. Of transformation. Of salvation. He's calling the dead.

To life. Everlasting. All the world over. And that is. Exactly what Jesus promised. Isn't it? For this new age. That's what he said.

[32 : 49] Would come. In the days. After his resurrection. John chapter 5. Jesus says. You'll see far. Greater works. Than these. After he just.

Bodily healed somebody. We will witness. The voice. Of the son of God. He said. Calling the dead. To life eternal. Through the proclamation. Of his glorious gospel.

And that's why. Here in Matthew 10. You see. There's such an emphasis. On the words. That are spoken. Verse 14. It's all about. Whether people receive.

The apostles words. Verse 19 and 20. It's all about. What they're going to speak. Isn't it? Before governments. And kings. Because. Look at verse 20.

It's the spirit. Of God himself. Who is speaking. Through their. Words. And that's the miracle.

Friends. To get really. Excited about.

[33 : 46] What could be. Greater than that. God. Whose word. Spoke the whole. Of creation. Into being. And whose word. Calls the dead.

To eternal life. And he speaks. Through you. That word of power. When you witness. To the gospel of Christ.

He authenticates. That proclamation. With. Heavenly kingdom power. He brings new creation. Into being. And that is always true. And that is still true.

Always. Today. Where the gospel is preached. And however weak we feel. Indeed. However weak we are. We needn't fear.

To share. To share this gospel of Jesus. Because it is. The power of God. For salvation. For everyone who believes. So we need to grasp that.

[34 : 42] Undiminished power. For the church's mission. To the world. And it's ours. In this. Unchanging gospel. Third. Third. We need wisdom and realism.

Also. About the unselfish. Provision. For Christ's. Mission. To the world. You receive without paying. Give.

Without pay. Says in verse 8. See for us to give. We need to understand. That our giving today. Is demanded. By the urgent responsibility.

There is. On all believers. To serve the kingdom of God. In all our earthly lives. Now clearly. Verses 8 to 10 here. Are not.

A command. Abiding forever. In this literal form. That no. Christian. Must ever have any pay. Or any possessions. Or even. Provide themselves. With what they need. On the journey. In fact.

[35 : 39] Luke. At 22. Verse 35. Clearly supersedes that. Jesus himself. Says no. Now. You are to take. Provisions. You are to take a knapsack. On your journey. With you.

Some Christians. Have failed to see that. And. That also. Has led to foolish ideas. That can be harmful. To mission. But nevertheless. The principle.

That Jesus. Is teaching here. Is. Clear. And it's abiding. First of all. He's saying. Isn't he. In verse 8. That kingdom witness. Involves self-giving.

And not. Self-gain. Give. Without gain. Spend. And be spent. For the gospel. He's saying. The gospel. Is all about grace. It's all about.

God's giving to us. We've received. Freely. Of his grace. So there can never. Possibly. Be any place. To use. That gospel. For our own. Personal gain.

[36 : 34] There just can't be. Any place. Can there. For that. Ostentatious wealth. Of the TV evangelists. Can't be.

Any place. For the so-called. Prosperity gospel. Which in fact. Only ever seems to. Prosper. The pastors. No. It's about. Self-giving. Not self-gain. And only. If we have. That attitude. We'll be able to see. How to put first things first. Because. You see. He's saying that. Kingdom witness. Is all about. Simplicity. That's the point. Isn't it. In verse 10. Leave the provision to God. Focus on the priority. The work of the gospel. Because the urgency. Of the. Of the. Mission of the gospel. Demands that. Simple-minded. Simplicity. With regards to. Earthly needs. Nothing wrong with money. There's nothing wrong with. Clothes. And shoes. And all of these things. [37 : 29] Things. He's just saying that. The priority. Of mission. Means that we can. We can leave. Concerns about these things. With God. And he will provide.

Remember Matthew chapter 6. Don't be anxious. About earthly needs. Clothes. And food. And these things. God knows what you need. He will provide for you. But. You see. Jesus is also teaching us here. That the way God provides. For these things. Will very often be. Directly through God's own people. The whole church. Has got responsibility. For gospel mission. For. Look. Verse 10. For. The laborer deserves his food. Gospel work. Isn't a call to asceticism. Or to penury. Rather. It's a call. For gospel workers. To be enabled. To focus. On the priorities. Of their work. Without anxiety. [38 : 24] And they'll do that. Because the people of God. See. And they value. The work of ministry. And they support it properly. That's two-sided.

Do you see that? For the Christian disciple. And that's for all of us. But it's. I think especially so. For those who are set aside. Full time. For gospel work. For the gospel worker. They must be clear. Mission and materialism. Materialism. Do not mix. Very sad. When you see. People try to mix it. Either by chasing wealth. Trying to get wealth. Through their ministry. Or indeed. Just by envying it. By craving it. You can actually be. Just as wealth conscious. Can't you? Without wealth. As with wealth. Sometimes you can be. More wealth conscious. Because you envy. What you don't have. And that's why Paul says. About Christian leaders. They're not to be. Lovers of money. [39 : 21] Because that will kill their witness. Kill the church. But the other side. Of course. Is that the church. As a whole. Has got a responsibility. To enable.

Ministry and mission. To happen. So that it can have priority. And so that those doing it. Are not distracted. And constantly worrying. About resources. And that means. Quite simply. A responsibility. To provide properly. For the laborer. Deserves his food. Food. There's no conflict there. With verse 8. Saying that we have to give. Without pay. Because he's not talking here. About extravagant rewards. And private jets. And nonsense like that. He's talking about. Adequate keep. Paul quotes the same thing. Doesn't he? In 1st Timothy 5. And he says. The laborer deserves his wage. He's talking about. Giving people. The wherewithal. To live. [40 : 16] So they can work. And that has a lot of practical implications. I think for the church. Today. So called living by faith. Among Christian workers.

Well that can only happen. If the church also. Is committed to living by its responsibilities. Our faith. In action. Through generous giving. That's real living by faith. Jesus is saying. And if gospel workers. Are set aside to serve. If they're. If they're living in penury. How on earth can they. Can they work. And labor. Undistracted. If they're worrying about the next bill to pay. Or worrying how to feed their family. Of course they can't. They can't. If the church. Is living by disobedience. And not by obedient faith. To Jesus here. And in the same way. We as churches. We must provide. Resources. For evangelism. [41 : 12] For mission. For Christian ministry. We must budget for it. We must prioritize. Unselfish provision. For mission to the world. Not. Prioritizing.

Our own comfort. And our own ease. Mission. And materialism. Do not mix. Either in our personal lives. Or. In our corporate life. Life. And that means. Our lifestyle. And our spending. And our budgeting. Must reflect. The priority. Of gospel witness. I wonder if we think about that enough.

In our. In our personal finances. For we need to. And in our church budgeting. The same way. With wisdom. And with great realism. And fourth.

Also. Jesus is teaching us here. That we need the same wisdom. And realism. About what verses. 11 to 15. Are focusing on. The uniting. Partnerships. For. The church's mission.

[42 : 11] To the world. For us to find. Gospel partners. As we also need to understand. That our fellowship. And mission today. Must be dictated. By a shared submission.

To the apostolic teaching. Of the kingdom of God. Find out who is worthy. Says verse 11. And stick with them. In your witness. You're not to be isolationist.

He's saying. There's no place for the lone ranger. In gospel work. Well we know. Don't we. So often. Things go badly wrong. When there is a lone ranger. No. We're to join with. The king's people.

We're to find fellowship. In mission together. He says. Partnership. In mission. Is vital. But naivety. About such partnership.

Is also very dangerous. And we need to find. Worthy partners. So who are these. Worthy ones. Of verse 11. Well he's not talking here. About moral worthiness. Nor is he saying.

[43 : 10] Oh find people. That you like. Or find people. Who are like you. In every respect. In every single practice. Or preference. No no. Look at verse 14. The worthy ones.

Are simply those. Who welcome. The true gospel. And therefore. Who will naturally welcome. The true gospel messenger. Not. The opposite.

In other words. It's only the gospel itself. That will distinguish. And will dictate. The possibilities. That there are. For real. Fellowship. In gospel work.

Because it's the true gospel. That divides. Between men and women. See verses 13 and 14. Here are clear. Some. Will. Welcome those.

For whom the gospel. Is number one priority. And there'll be peace. There'll be glad. Fellowship together. But others will reject it. And there can't be any peace.

[44 : 09] And fellowship. In shared priorities. True gospel fellowship. Occurs. When the message of the gospel. Is clear. And is transparent.

And is open. And those shared priorities. Will lead. To shared partnerships. But of necessity. You can't.

Possibly have. Such. Gospel clarity. And priority. Without it necessarily. Excluding some others. And causing you. To be excluded. By others. You see.

That's why. Ecumenical movements. And multi-faith movements. Are just naive. They can never. Build real gospel fellowship. Jesus is plainly telling us. Don't be sentimental.

About that. Be realistic. You can only. Unite. With people. Who reject. The true gospel. If the focus. Of your unity. Is not going to be.

[45 : 02] Gospel mission. If it's going to be. Some kind of. Institutional. Unity. For example. That means. You sacrifice. The true gospel. Or it's some kind of.

Shared politics. That trumps. The gospel. And pushes. That out. No. The whole. Focus. Of real kingdom. Witness. Is gospel. Proclamation. It's the true.

Apostolic. Gospel. Of Christ. And hence. You see. Jesus says. In verse 14. The deciding. Factor. Of all. Meaningful.

Fellowship. Is the words. Of Christ's. Apostles. People. So often. Say. Don't they. Oh. Don't let's quibble. About words. Don't quibble.

About doctrine. Well. Well. Meaning. Christians. Can say. That sort of thing. But. That is. Exactly. What Jesus. Says. Here.

[45 : 57] Matters. The most. Notice. Is. The status. That Jesus. Accords. To the apostles. Words. It's very fashionable. As well. Isn't it. Often. For people today.

To say. Well. Let's just get back. To Jesus. Don't worry. About Paul. And those others. They often. Twisted Jesus. Let's just go back. To Jesus. Words. Never mind. The apostles. Not so.

Says. Jesus himself. Verse 14. If anyone. Will not receive. You. My apostles. Or listen. To your words. Shake off.

The dust. From your feet. It's. People's acceptance. Of the apostles. Words. Now. That leads. To the verdict.

Jesus gives. In verse 13. Worthy. It's. Rejection. Of the apostles. Words. Now. That leads.

[46 : 51] To the opposite. Verdict. Verse 14. The verdict. Of condemnation. That's what. Shaking off. The dust. Of your feet. Means. And that will. Also. Therefore.

Says Jesus. Verse 15. Be the verdict. On the day. Of judgment. Reject. The apostolic. Gospel. Of Christ. Today.

He says. And it will. Worse. For you. On that day. Than for Sodom. And Gomorrah. And that's. Because. Submission. To the apostolic.

Teaching. Of the New Testament. Is. Submission. To the real. Jesus Christ. So there just can't be. Naivety.

About those. That will partner with. In crucial. Gospel work. It's the gospel. Itself. With all its apostolic. Demands. That is the. Great. Discriminator. And discrimination.

[47 : 46] Of that kind. Is not wrong. It is essential. According to Jesus. Himself. So he's saying to us. Very clearly.

Isn't he? We're not to be slow. To embrace. Real gospel. People. However much. We might differ. On peripheral matters. Secondary things. But the way that happens.

Is not by relentlessly. Seeking unity. But it's by relentlessly. Pursuing. True gospel. Proclamation. That will naturally. Draw people together. Who love the gospel. Who love the gospel's work.

And who love gospel people. And recognize them. But neither. Says Jesus. Must we be slow. To distance ourselves. From those. Who clearly reject.

The true gospel. Verse 14. Is a very clear. And necessary. Negative. From our Lord himself. There can be no. Pretense of peace.

[48 : 41] With those who reject. The apostolic truth. There can be no. Glossing over. Real differences. In. The name of unity. Rather.

There's to be a clear. Emphasis. On what is. Vital. Gospel. Truth. And that the true. Gospel is. As Peter says. In 2nd Peter 3.

Verse 2. It is the command. Of our Lord. And Savior. Through. Your. Apostles. Friends. And friends. If that sort of. Talk. About discrimination. And division. That makes you feel. Queasy. Because you shy away. Naturally. From anything. That's divisive. And we often do.

Don't we. Look again. At verse 15. The stakes. Are very high. There's a day. Of judgment. Coming. And the urgency.

[49 : 37] Of the gospel task. Demands. That kind. Of clarity. It must. Drive our thinking. In everything. That we do. Because we too.

Like these apostles. Have now been sent out. We've been sent out. In mission. To the whole world. To go. To proclaim. To give.

To partner. In real kingdom witness. And it's a hostile world. And so we too. We need great wisdom. We need great realism.

But we can also. Have great confidence. Because we're going. As ambassadors. Of a great king. We're going. In his name. And his promise. Is that he will be with us.

Right to the end. Of the task. He's in charge. Of the plan. And of our place in it. He gives the power. He has commanded.

[50 : 33] All the provision. That we need. And he will give. The partnerships. Also that we need. And that we will find. So that we can make. Real kingdom witness. The great.

Priority. Of our lives. So Tron Church. Are we listening? We must be listening. Mustn't we? And we must take this to heart.

And help one another. Take these words to heart also. Well let's pray. Proclaim as you go.

Saying the kingdom of heaven. Is at hand. Lord. May that indeed be the message. Of our lips. And the motivation.

Of our lives. Both now and always. As we seek. To serve you. Together with all those. Who love your word. Who love your gospel.

[51 : 34] And who live for your truth. May it be true of us. We pray. And help us. To keep helping one another. In this way. All the days of our lives.

And we ask it. For Jesus sake. Amen. Amen.