

LIFE BIBLE STUDY

SESSION OBJECTIVE: MATTHEW 10:1-11:1

To understand the cost of sharing the Gospel to a hostile world.

A Pep Talk

I love sports for a variety of reasons. In every great team there is a leader that has figured out how to get more out of a group of people than what they are able to do individually, and that is no small task. In some of the great sports battles of our time, behind the stunning victories and obstacles that were overcome, it's not



uncommon to find a pre-game, “pep talk” that really ignited the players to give it their all. In the 1980 Winter Olympics, Coach Herb Brooks led his U.S. hockey team to achieve the so-called, “Miracle on Ice,” defeating the Soviet Union in one of the greatest upsets of all time. He said to his team, “Great moments are born from great opportunity, and that's what you have here tonight, boys.” Imagine, the passion and the intensity of that moment! How inspired do you think they were by his words?

In Matthew 10, Jesus gathers His twelve disciples and we get the second discourse from Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel. Before sending them out, the Lord gives a, “pre-game” sort of speech, but this speech is not one to

inspire, but one to caution. In this portion, Jesus warns His disciples of the cost of following Him and proclaiming the Gospel. As you study, imagine this moment. Imagine the feeling the disciples had as they listened to their Lord speak to them before being sent out. Imagine the butterflies, the excitement, the fear, all wrapped up in one moment. There is a cost of being a Christian, and all twelve of these disciples eventually found that out the hard way. History tells us that all of them died very brutal deaths in different times and locations, with the exception of John who was exiled to Patmos, the place from which he wrote, "Revelation."

"These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them..." (Matt. 10:5)

The Twelve Chosen

Jesus calls His twelve disciples at the beginning of chapter ten. Below is a brief description of each of these disciples. Very little detail is given about some of these men in the scriptures, and so I have included some historical observations as well. They are listed in six pairs, probably a nod to the Deuteronomic insistence of two witnesses (Deut. 17:6; 19:15). The number twelve is also connected to the twelve Tribes of Israel. The institution of these disciples therefore could be seen as a protest against the current leadership of Israel. They are also called, "apostles," here. This is the only time they are referred to as such in Matthew's Gospel.

SIMON

First is Simon, from the Hebrew word meaning, "hearing." He is later called Peter or Cephas, both meaning, "rock" in Greek and Aramaic respectively. The significance of his name is later identified in Matthew 16:16-19. The extra-biblical writing known as, "The Apocalypse of Peter," narrates his death by crucifixion. History tell us Peter did not feel worthy to die in the same way as his Lord, so he requested to be crucified upside down.

ANDREW

Andrew's name comes from the Hebrew word for, "manliness." Andrew was Peter's brother, and also a fisherman. He is one of the first of John the Baptist's followers (John 1:40).

JAMES

"James" comes from the Hebrew names for Jacob. He is also a fisherman, and the son of Zebedee (Matt. 4:21-22), and was executed in A.D. 44 by Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:2). This is not the same James who was the half-brother of Jesus, who wrote the Epistle of James.

JOHN

The brother of James, John means, "the Lord is gracious." Together with Peter and James, the three made up the often called, "inner three," of Jesus. They were the closest to Jesus and experienced things with Him that the other disciples did not (the transfiguration, etc.). John went on to write the fourth Gospel, three epistles, and Revelation.

PHILIP

Philip was one of the three earliest followers of Jesus. His name means, "horse lover," and he is not the same Philip who was a deacon in Acts 6:5.

BARTHOLOMEW

Bartholomew is Hebrew for, "the son of Talmi," and is more than likely the same person as Nathaniel, the travel mate of Philip.

THOMAS

Thomas is sometimes called, “Didymus,” which is the Hebrew word for, “twin.” (Jn. 11:16; 21:2). His Aramaic name means twin as well. He is notably the one who doubted the physical resurrection of Jesus (John 20:24-28). A somewhat reliable historical source tells us that he established the church in India.

MATTHEW

He was also called Levi, the converted tax collector and author of this Gospel.

JAMES THE LESSER

Written as “James, son of Alphaeus,” he is also called, “James the Lesser” or “James the Younger,” likely to set him apart from James, son of Zebedee. There is not much information about him recorded.

THADDAEUS

Thaddaeus is sometimes known as Lebbaeus or Judas (Luke 6:16). Both are likely nicknames of sorts.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Simon the Zealot was likely linked to a revolutionary group that promoted violence against the Roman government. This is not to be mistaken for the formal group known as the, “Zealots,” who came later in history.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

The infamous Judas Iscariot, the one who betrays Jesus, was the treasurer of the group (John 12:6). His name means something like, “man of Kerioth,” the name of cities in both Judea and Moab. If that is the case, he is the only disciple of the twelve that is not from Galilee. Judas is mentioned more by Matthew than any other disciple with the exception of Peter, which poses a fascinating reality: Peter and Judas are the only two whose future’s are told by Jesus (one is the rock, the other is the betrayer).

The Prince of Peace?

One of the things Jesus is often and correctly identified with is peace. In the beginning when God created, He did so perfectly and there was *shalom* (perfect peace). Upon sin entering the world, that peace was disturbed and since that moment, creation has been in turmoil. Part of what Jesus does in instituting the kingdom is restore that which was broken by sin, and thus, He is the bringer of peace. He is the, “child born to us,” in Isaiah 9:6, who will be called, “Prince of *peace*.” In Romans 5:1, we are told that, “since we have been justified by faith, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Peace is even one of the things mentioned in the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). However, in this chapter, Jesus flips things around a little and says something that should come as a shock to us, the readers. He says in verse 34, “Do not think that I came to bring *peace* on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a *sword*.” This is not what we expect to hear Jesus say. The point, however, of not only this statement but the whole of chapter 10 is that the Gospel is something that causes disagreement and division even in the closest of relationships such as the nuclear family. This is what Paul was getting at in 1 Corinthians 1:23 when he wrote that, “Christ crucified is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.” This is why Peter says in 1 Peter 2:7, “so the honor is for you who believe.”

Study Questions

Day One

1. Read Matthew 10:1. What are some key words or phrases in this verse? Why is this information included in the narrative?

2. Read Matthew 10:2-4. Write down any unique phrasing or words used that you feel like are intentional. Why do you think these words or phrases were used? What is significant about it? Once again, why are the twelve named? Why was this important information to include?

Day Two

1. Read Matthew 10:5-15. Summarize this passage and write down the distinct instructions Jesus gives to His disciples as they go out.
2. What do you think the practicality of these instructions is?

Day Three

1. Read Matthew 10:16-20. What does this passage remind you of? What two individuals were treated this way? See Matthew 26:57-27:44 and Acts 13, 24, and 25.
2. Read Matthew 10:21-23. What should a disciple do if he is persecuted? What does Jesus mean that all of the towns of Israel must be gone through before the Son of Man comes?

Day Four

1. Read Matthew 10:24-33. Summarize these verses. What is the main idea that Jesus is presenting here?
2. Read Matthew 10:34-11:1. The Gospel forces people to make hard decisions. What are the decisions that people will be faced with in this passage according to Jesus?

Week 14 Discussion: Choosing Wisely

Matthew 10 is filled with so many tough scenarios. Jesus is preparing His disciples for a journey that history tells us ultimately ended in death. The type of persecution they faced was far worse than what we have potential for today, at least in America. The bottom line is not one of great popularity, but it's the truth: following Jesus is divisive, costly, and difficult, and the choices we make as believers have consequences.

1. Icebreaker: In your opinion, what's the most offensive thing about the Gospel?
2. Have you ever had to sever a relationship with a family member because of spiritual reasons? What was the reason, and what was the end result?
3. How difficult is it to take a stance on a spiritual or politically spiritual issue that you know will be unpopular among non-believers? What is at stake for us if we deny Him?
4. Read Matthew 10:24-25. How does the world view Jesus *today*? What kind of things do they say about Him? What does the world's view of Jesus say about the way they will also view Christians?
5. How does the overall message of Jesus in chapter 10 line up with the way the modern church presents what it is like to follow Jesus? What kind of problems does this present?

Takeaways:

1. Jesus' message of the kingdom is one that will cause even the closest relationships to be divided.
2. The expectation of any disciple of Jesus should be one of difficulty.

PRAYER REQUESTS: