

Agents of Hope God's Great Missionaries Lesson 5 3Q 2008

Matthew 10: Jesus and His Disciples

Did you have any questions about Matthew 10? Were there any verses which you wanted to explore?

Here are some I thought we might explore:

MT 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

MT 10:14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. ¹⁵ I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. ¹⁶ I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

MT 10:32 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

MT 10:34 "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn " `a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- MT 10:36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' MT 10:37

"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

How do we understand Matt 10:5-8?

MT 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

Why would Jesus tell His disciples to go only to Israel and not the other people of the world? Does God care more about children of Abraham than other people in the world? Do children of Abraham have a special pass into heaven? Why the instruction?

1. The bias of the people: This was early in the ministry and if the disciples initially went to the Gentiles they would have lost most of the Jewish audience, whereas the Gentiles would not have been closed to hearing later.
2. The bias of the disciples: The disciples still had much prejudice against the Gentiles and weren't prepared to be effective witnesses to the Gentiles. They needed more work and conversion before they could be trusted to work for the Gentiles. Thus this first missionary journey was also for the development of the disciples.
3. To enlist God's helpers: Strategically the Jewish nation had been privileged with the lessons of God, misunderstood to be sure, but the Bible had been taught.

Therefore, if they could be converted, awakened, enlisted into Christ's cause the work of reaching the Gentiles would be much more effective as the Jews would welcome Christ as the world's redeemer.

What about the "kingdom of heaven is near" What is the kingdom of heaven? Is it not God's way of rulership, God's governing method, God's way of being king, which is the rule of love! "freely you have received freely give." The law of love.

How do you understand:

MT 10:14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. ¹⁵ I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. ¹⁶ I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

Why shake the dust off your feet? Was Christ telling His disciples to insult the people who rejected them? Was He telling them to show disdain or disgust for people who rejected them?

Was He telling them that if people reject you, call you names, insult you, criticize you, mock you, belittle you, demean, defame or in any other way attempt to discourage you don't take any of their attitude, comments, ideas, dirt with you. When you leave that place leave their negativity, their selfishness, hardness, cruelty, meanness, filthiness of character with them.

When Christ washed the disciples we read:

JN 13:8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."
Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

JN 13:9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

JN 13:10 Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

What do you think this exchange means? Was it just about dirt on the feet or was there more being communicated? Was Jesus symbolically washing away sinfulness, selfishness, evil? Does this have any bearing on what He told His disciples to do in the passage above?

What about the idea it will be better for Sodom and Gomorrah? What does that mean?

What do

RO 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart and EGW's statement that some suffer longer in the flames than others according to their sins have to do with this text? How are they all connected? Is there a common thread that underlies them all?

How do we pile up wrath for the day of wrath? When we sin what is the normal internal feeling/reaction after we have sinned? Conviction of guilt, shame, self-disgust, self-loathing, fear, insecurity etc. – what options do we have to resolve this situation? Repentance and reconciliation with God as the only healthy way or denial, distortion and externalization. We can twist our minds to hide ourselves from the truth of our own

selves. The more sin we commit without repentance the more we are damaged in mind and character and the more we have to pile lie upon lie, distortion upon distortion in order to hide from it.

What happens when someone comes face to face with absolute pure truth from which they cannot be hide? This is how we pile up wrath for the day of wrath and why some suffer longer in the flames, for the flames are the flames of God's life giving glory, the flames of truth and love!

How was Pharaoh's heart hardened? God presented truth to him and he chose to reject it hardening his own heart. What will it be like for Pharaoh when he comes face to face with ultimate truth in the end and the full realization of what he did to himself, his family and his country?

What was the sin of Sodom?

EZE 16:49 " `Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. 50 They were haughty and did detestable things before me.

What was Sodom's sin? Failure to be loving, to be giving, to be hospitable, to care for others, they were selfish to the max. Then why is it going to be worse for those who reject the disciples than for Sodom?

What was the message brought to Sodom by the angels? The city is going to be destroyed repent of self-indulgence. What was the message brought by the disciples? The truth about Christ! Who had more light presented? Who rejected more light? Who then will have more agony at the realization of what they passed by and rejected?

Do we see why it will be worse for those who reject the truth about God than for Sodom? Do we understand why some suffer more than others in the final destruction of the wicked?

Thoughts about:

MT 10:32 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.
 33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

What does this mean? Can Jesus lie? Can He state someone is healthy and healed when they are not? Can He acknowledge someone as His friend when in fact they are His enemy? Can He stand before God and the universe and declare someone to be Christlike in heart when they have refused Christ into the heart? Can we be healed in mind, heart and character if we reject the truth that Jesus has brought? So how can Jesus say, this fellow is like me in character, this fellow has my character reproduced within, this person has been healed in the inner man if we reject Jesus?

Thoughts about:

MT 10:34 "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to turn " `a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- MT 10:36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' MT 10:37 "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

In what condition are we born into the world? Are we born with hearts and minds in harmony with God's character of love or hearts and minds filled with fear and selfishness? Does God want to cut us away from such a life to a new life free of fear, free of selfishness, free of insecurity, free of heartache and pain?

SUNDAY

What is the kingdom of heaven?

Read bottom green section- thoughts?

MONDAY

Third question down states, "What special powers did the disciples have? How can we, without those powers, still minister and witness to the world?"

Did the disciples themselves have special powers? Or was the power the power of the Holy Spirit? When Christ said,

Matthew 10:1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

What did Christ give them? Were they the ones healing? Were they the ones driving out evil spirits? Or were they agents, being used by the Holy Spirit and it was God accomplishing these works through them? So, what did Christ give them? Confidence? Assurance? His promise? His Holy Spirit?

Are we promised the Holy Spirit? Can we do any effectual work in God's cause without the Holy Spirit?

... Just as soon as we begin to work in the lines of true reform, the Holy Spirit will lead us and guide us if we are willing to be guided. It is a delicate matter to deal with human minds, and no one should engage in this work

without the aid of the Holy Spirit. All must place themselves under the influence of this Spirit. When they place themselves under the direction of the Spirit, they will accommodate themselves to Bible lines. When the word of God take possession of the minds of teachers, then they are fitted to deal with the education of others. {General Conference Bulletin, April 24, 1901 par. 24}

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph “In our mission...” thoughts?

How are we to take culture into consideration today? Are there some cultures in which they find a need for a God who is powerful and vengeful and therefore they cling to the idea that God will inflict punishment upon the wicked in the end?

How can we approach them?

WEDNESDAY

Today’s lesson explores the importance of dealing with physical illness, suffering and human need. Why did Jesus and the disciples spend so much time healing physical illness?

1. it is the best way to represent the plan of salvation, which is the plan of healing
2. sickness negatively affects the functioning of the mind/brain and thus impairs our ability to have healed minds and characters.
 - a. If you had just fallen and broken your leg and were in severe pain, how would you respond if I said, “Why don’t we study Matthew chapter 10”? Would you need to have some physical relief, some physical healing before your mind could benefit from spiritual healing?
 - b. How does this relate to healthful living?

What was the purpose of the Jubilee? Was it merely for earthly equality or was there a reason which was designed to help spiritual growth and teach eternal lessons?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "Much of Jesus'..." thoughts?

Why is there opposition to the truth?

1. What happens to those who have rejected the truth when the truth is presented? It causes suffering of psyche, conviction of guilt, embarrassment, wounding of pride, shame, humiliation etc.
2. The truth may threaten position, power, wealth, status, relationships etc.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Why do people do this? They see in others what is actually in themselves. When Jesus said,

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Matthew 7:1,2

What did He mean? Does it mean God keeps track of how you judge others and will use His power to make sure to impose this back on you?

No, it means that when we judge others we reveal what is actually in our own heart and the reason we are judged in the same way is because that is the way we actually are. When Satan judges God as being selfish Satan is actually revealing that Satan is the selfish one and thus Satan is judged, by his own condition, character etc. to be selfish.

Question 2 – read – thoughts? Is our church the kingdom of heaven? Or do the wheat and tares grow up together?

Question 3 read – thoughts? What are we to be evangelizing people to? Did the Jews in Christ's day evangelize? And what did Christ say about it? They converted people and made them twice the sons of hell as before, are we in such danger?