

## Mind of Christ - Lesson 111

June 18, 2021

Welcome to another edition of The Mind of Christ. We are making our way through the Gospels and looking to discover as many things as we can about the mind of Christ so that we can ‘know Him’, and so that we can be ‘like Him’. I am using A. T. Robertson’s “Harmony of the Gospels” as our chronological sequence for this study.

We are in Section 70. We have come a long way in this study and I thank you for joining us today. I spent about seven years studying the ‘mind of Christ’ and journaling and in those twenty-one journals I have accumulated a lot of material that I think has *helped me to know Jesus better* and I’m glad to be able to share that with you. So, we’re going to jump right in today. We’re in a new section (70) called “The Third Tour of Galilee After Instructing the Twelve and Sending them Forth by Twos”. That’s the way A. T. Robertson has named this section.

We’re going to back up in Matthew 9 and we’ll read a section here that we will try to cover today. We’ll start in **Matthew 9:35** and go down to about verse 14 of Chapter 10. It says,

### **Matthew 9:35-10:14**

<sup>35</sup> Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

<sup>36</sup> Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup> Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”

### **Chapter 10**

<sup>1</sup> Jesus summonsed His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

<sup>2</sup> Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; <sup>3</sup> Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup> Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; <sup>6</sup> but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ <sup>8</sup> Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. <sup>9</sup> Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, <sup>10</sup> or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support. <sup>11</sup> And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city. <sup>12</sup> As you enter the house, give it your greeting. <sup>13</sup> If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace. <sup>14</sup> Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. <sup>15</sup> Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

Now there are some parallel passages here; not nearly as long as this section. Matthew's section actually goes all the way to **Matthew 11:1**. The parallel passages are in **Mark 6:6-13** and **Luke 9:1-6**. We will bring these in as necessary to this discussion.

### **Mark 6:6-13**

<sup>6</sup>And He was going around the villages teaching.

<sup>7</sup> And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits; <sup>8</sup> and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belt—<sup>9</sup> but to wear sandals; and He added, “Do not put on two tunics.” <sup>10</sup> And He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town. <sup>11</sup> Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them. And He was going around the villages teaching.

<sup>12</sup> They went out and preached that men should repent. <sup>13</sup> And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them.”

### **Luke 9:1-6**

<sup>1</sup> And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. <sup>2</sup> And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. <sup>3</sup> And He said to them, “Take nothing for *your* journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not *even* have two tunics apiece. <sup>4</sup> Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city. <sup>5</sup> And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” <sup>6</sup> Departing, they *began* going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

We are remembering that Jesus faced much unbelief in Nazareth. He keeps up the teaching and the preaching of the Gospel of The Kingdom.

**Romans 10:9-17** says,

“...that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; <sup>10</sup> for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.” <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; <sup>13</sup> for “Whoever will call on the Name of the Lord will be saved.”

<sup>14</sup> How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? <sup>15</sup> How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News of good things.”

<sup>16</sup> However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?” <sup>17</sup> **So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.**

The antidote for unbelief is “**The Word of God**”. Matthew tells us that He did these things

1. Teaching in their Synagogues
2. Proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom
3. Healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness

This was a three-fold strategy for turning **unbelief** into **faith** if possible, because of free will.

Jesus considered the multitudes or the crowds, the groups, the communities, even cities and nations; and He felt compassion on them. ***There was a lack of leadership*** and this causes the masses to be distressed and down trodden. The word distressed #1590 (this is really a very picturesque word meaning to flay, or to lacerate, to vex or to trouble. It can mean to annoy or something that is “faded” or really in a “sorry plight”. It may be something that is “spoiled” as in the spoils of war or being stripped off of an enemy. It means to plunder; so these are the various meanings of the word “skullo” #4660” (σκυλλω). In **Mark 5:35** it uses this word when the question is asked, “why ***trouble*** the teacher anymore {when Jairus’ daughter had already been declared dead}. It is used in **Luke 7:6**, a very similar phrase is also found, “**Lord, do not *trouble* Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to enter under my roof**”. In **Luke 11:22**, #2528 the idea of plunder is found in that particular place. Now the word “downcast” is a word that means to “cast” or to “***throw down***” as to the ground; to divide his spoils. #2325 therizo (θεριζω) is used in **Matthew 15:30** these people were “***laid down at the feet*** of Jesus and He healed them”. In **Matthew 27:5**, Judas threw the silver down. It’s the same word here; it’s kind of ... downcast. He threw it down. **Mark 4:35** the demons threw the man down. In **Luke 17:2** says, “***It is better for him if a millstone is hung around his neck and he is thrown into the sea, than that he may cause one of these little ones to sin***.” Do not cause a little one to “stumble”. In **Acts 22:23** says, “***As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks***”. Here the word downcast means throwing off their cloaks; they threw them down or cast them down. In **Acts 27:19** says, “***and on the third day they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands***.” They threw the tackle of the ship overboard during the storm that Paul encountered. In **Acts 27:29**, “Fearing that we might run aground somewhere on the rocks, they ***cast four anchors from the stern*** and prayed for daybreak”. The anchors were ***cast over*** the stern. ***Both words depict people who are at the mercy of others.***

How do we determine a victim? Some believe that no one in the United States could be a legitimate victim because there is always some move that person can make that will get them out of the circumstances that they are in. ***Well, this is not always true*** even in the United States. Finding this balance in the community, through government, and through people of faith, is difficult and has to be looked at closely ... new interventions that take both ends into account; both the ends of faith and the ends of government. What I mean by this is that when we look out into our society and we see people who are termed “victims” we have to decide ***how are we going to help them?*** I believe the government and the church have a great role to play in this.

Jesus, in keeping with using natural, everyday occurrences compares the multitude as “sheep without a shepherd”. He uses this metaphor often; in John 10 Jesus is the good shepherd and in Luke 15 in the parable of the ‘lost sheep’. My wife had sheep when she was growing up and she says that sheep are really dumb. They need direction. They need protection. Sheep are known as “prey”; they are not able to defend themselves. They can’t run fast; their legs are too short, and when being sheared, they are compliant. The shepherd helps reduce their stress and keeps predators from throwing them down.

Jesus has eyes of ***compassion*** for the “***helpless of the world***”. He looks with contempt on those who take advantage of the vulnerable ... ‘the least of these’ as He calls them. It is clear that God wants shepherds who actually watch over the sheep. We must not take the metaphor too far.

Our goal is not to create systems in which people **stay** vulnerable, but systems that liberate and cause sheep to become strong and capable and able to even become shepherds themselves. We commit the word to *faithful men* who will be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2).

Jesus then switches metaphors from sheep to farming ... “the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few”. Harvest excites us because it is *reward*; it is the *payoff* for hard work, and it gives a sense of accomplishment. In **John 4:35** Jesus, in Samaria, says the fields are *white for harvest*. He also makes clear that the disciples would be reaping a harvest that they did not work for. Others had done the hard work; one sows, and another reaps. We enter the labor of others. We have to recognize we do not enter the field of someone else’s life as “the first one” to do so. Others have gone before; some for good; others for harm. Some fields need much work while others are “harvest-ready”.

Jesus looked at people as to their need ... sheep in need of a shepherd and a crop that needs to be harvested. An un-harvested crop is a wasted crop. How can society be blessed if the crop is wasted in the field? It reminds me of dad having us go through the fields and pick up corn after the harvesters had gotten all they could with their machines. It just reminded me that we should always completely harvest the fields. Of course, in the Old Testament, they left some of the grain in the fields in order for the poor to come around, but they didn’t leave it there for it to be wasted; they left it there for it to be used. The harvested harvest; the sheep shepherded. God uses us to fulfill His work among others. Does that make us self-righteous **or** are we simply made righteous *showing others how to be made righteous* as in one beggar telling another beggar where to find food?

In Jesus’ mind, when there is a harvest that is plentiful and the workers are few, instead of appealing to the workers, He says to beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the harvest. Maybe we don’t do enough praying to the Lord of the harvest to send in the workers. “*Beseech*” #1189 here is the word deomai (δεομαι) meaning to be, **to pray**, to beg, to petition or to request. We depend on the Lord to supply the workers for the harvest. This seems too simple ... from recruitment to requests. How will God raise up workers? How did Jesus select disciples? Certainly we have a role but dependence is the point. **He** is the Lord of the harvest who pays His workers and does as he pleases with his wages. He can pay all the same wage for different periods of work if He wants to. *It’s His field*. What makes a harvest plentiful?

We use the word “receptive”; a society that is open to hearing ... to having the seed planted in hearts. Do we create an atmosphere for hunger and righteousness, for truth and understanding, and knowledge of Jesus and the Father? It’s what we *should be* about ... people who are “eager for good works”. We’re trying to find those who are eager for good works ... people who are zealous to see God’s work duplicated on earth as it is in heaven. Is it the quantity or the quality of the harvest that we’re looking for? A farmer wants both. It seems hard to get both within a church. What I hear from those in larger churches is a lack of quality (in a recent conversation I had); while quantity is there. So, why is there often a discrepancy between quantity and quality of harvest? Perhaps we see how Jesus deals with this as He prepares to send out the workers into the harvest field. What is gathered or harvested will determine the quality of future harvest.

Jesus' disciples or apostles were the answer to the appeal to the Lord of the harvest. Matthew says they were summonsed, and **remember, I'm primarily using the New American Standard Bible so that's why some of the words may seem different** from the translation you are using. {The KJV says "send forth", #1544 (εκβαλλω)} The word summons means to **call towards oneself**. It means to invite someone. In **Matthew 15:10** the crowds were "called" to Jesus, they were summonsed to Him. In **Matthew 15:32** Jesus called His disciples to talk about the crowd needing food. He summonsed them. In **Matthew 18:2** a child was summonsed to Jesus. In **Matthew 18:32** it says 'the wicked slaved was summonsed'. In **Matthew 20:25** the disciples were summoned because they were involved in a dispute and Jesus gathered them up. But it shows – all of these show that Jesus had some authority to summons people or to call them or to invite them.

**Matthew** calls them "His twelve disciples". **Mark** and **Luke** say simply "the twelve". **Mark** says that He will send them out "two by two", so six pairs of *evangelists* and *healers*. **Mark** only, says that *they had authority over unclean spirits*. **Luke** adds that *they had authority to heal diseases*. **Matthew** is the most extensive ... He says they *have authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness*. Later, He will instruct them to preach so they must have had authority to do this, as well. **Luke** does indicate this; that He sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to perform healing. John came proclaiming the 'Kingdom at hand', Jesus came next, and now His disciples would do the same. ***It is clear kingdom proclamation. This was central to Jesus' ministry.*** He is entering the next stage: from students to becoming teachers. They have heard Him teach, and ***now it is their turn.***

By following Jesus' plan, I can understand why Pentecostals would always connect 'healing' with 'preaching'. But John the Baptist did not heal or cast out demons it seems. Why? But the common denominator was ***proclamation of the Kingdom of God in Heaven***. That's something that was common to all three; John the Baptist, Jesus and the Apostles. I wonder how the disciples were feeling to know that they were going to be entrusted with such a message, and I wonder how Jesus felt to know that He was placing His authority in them; especially since they were still pretty green.

**Matthew** lists the names of the Twelve. Perhaps he is accustomed as a tax collector, to keep list of people for collection purposes. He does refer to himself as a 'tax collector'. It is also interesting that Judas is described as 'the betrayer'.

### **Now, for the instructions:**

These will clearly tell us about how Jesus thinks. ***Here is the general preparing his troops; the coach preparing his team; the CEO preparing his employees ... oh more: the Lord preparing the laborers to go into the fields of harvest ... the grain that is ready for reaping.*** So, we're going to take this in some sections here.

### **The first is the scope of the commission that He gave**

In **Matthew 10:5-6** Jesus limited their field to the "house of Israel" excluding for now, Gentiles and Samaritans, both of which He had ministered to previously. So Jesus is limiting their ministry but He has already ministered to some Gentiles ***and*** to the Samaritans. In **Matthew 4:15** it refers to Galilee of the gentiles, which I believe is east of Bethsaida. Certain cities were predominately gentile. There was also a distinct Samaritan territory.

Why would Jesus limit the Apostles simply to the household of Israel? Well, just watching Peter in Acts 10 and 11 tells me that they were not ready to mix with folks too different from themselves. This was training and the target audience was *the lost sheep of Israel*. These are the ones that he says are being destroyed or perishing or dying. They are the LOST. The word is #622, apollumi (απολλυμι). That's the word for "lost" in the Greek. *This was a rescue mission*; a Luke 15 mission ... parable of the lost sheep ... by one who knew that they needed help and that they were in trouble. *Read the Luke 15 introduction* and you'll get a sense of what I'm talking about. It seems part of the training as we will see in the strategy is to learn to identify "good soil", those with open hearts ... those who are ready to become disciples.

Jesus thinks about connecting with people who have a recognition of their need, and who will accept help to learn and to grow. This mission is about identification; learning to spot a "true Israelite"; those whose spiritual father is Abraham, not merely biological descendants. It is those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. **That's the scope of the mission.**

### **Second, what is the message?**

**Matthew** gives the message as "as you go, preach, saying, 'the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'." It doesn't change. This is primary in Jesus' mind. *This is the core message*. When He summarizes His teaching, this is it ... Kingdom centered ... the rule of God in our lives! This is what we fight against: our personal rule of our own lives, or His rule of our life. The battle is primary; *who rules?* Who wins? Who calls the shots and makes the choices and the decisions? Who determines the way and the path? Who reigns? *There can be no other King*. There is not room in God's Kingdom for two kings and He has already crowned Jesus as Lord.

The struggle is basic. *Who* decides our actions, words, and thoughts? **Who** sets our course? *Who* plots the trail we will follow? "It is not in man who lives to direct his own steps" – **Jeremiah 10:23**. *This is the kingdom message*. **Jesus is King and He leads His people**. So, that's the basic message they are going to preach.

### **Third, what is the mission?**

First of all, He says it is to 'proclaim the Kingdom'

Second, to heal the sick

Third, to raise the dead

Fourth, cleanse the lepers

Fifth, cast out demons

*Imagine what these men must have thought to hear this!* "You want us to do 'what?'"

Any one of these would have probably struck fear in the hearts of these men, but all five? *Can you imagine Peter's first sermon?* What must it have been like? Did he stutter? Did he have notes? Did he recall the parables correctly and tell them like Jesus did? Did he explain it to those who were real disciples as Jesus did to him? Did the Twelve take turns preaching? How did the first healing go? Did it surprise Thomas as much as it did the sick person? How about when a leper came? Did James touch him like Jesus did? Lepers were unclean. Imagine Matthew trying to raise a dead person. They are unclean, too. Did it scare him silly when the person woke up? **So that's the mission**

#### Fourth, what about their provisions?

Jesus speaks in terms of what they should take and much more about what they should not take.

1. They are to take a mere staff (**Mark 6:8**). But **Luke 9:3** says to not take a staff. **Luke 9:3** implies to take one tunic, as does **Matthew in 10:10**. **Matthew** also says **no** staff in 10:10! But note **Matthew** says do not “acquire” things for the trip. The King James Version says “provide”. The word here in the Greek means “to get” or “to procure” or “to provide” or “to make gain purchasing.” The word is #2532 “kai” (καί) means to gain, to purchase, to get under control, to possess. Perhaps Jesus is saying don’t go home and pack, or go on a shopping spree to get provision or a fund-raising tour. He was going to instruct them and send them out. Jesus often looked for the immediate response. You can see this in **Matthew 8:18-27**. Jesus wants immediate dependent obedience. Don’t pack; just go with what you have and *trust me* to provide what you need. Then, **Mark 6:9** mentions sandals as well, as something that they should take.
2. The second aspect of this is what they were **not** supposed to take. First, they weren’t supposed to take money; gold, silver or copper for your money belts. I guess they could take the money the money belt with whatever was in it. Suppose Thaddeus had \$10 and James the son of Alphaeus had \$20. I guess they might have to share. What if Peter had said, “Well, I’m broke.” **Matthew** may have had to ‘cover’ it, or trust that people would feed him. Did they pool their money and give it to Judas, and work out of that one pot? *Even Jesus’ band of disciples had corruption in it*. Remember, Judas later was revealed to have stolen from the pot.

They are also to take no bag. They’re to travel light. No carry-on luggage. No bag to check.

3. It says that they are not to have sandals. They were told to take sandals (**Mark 6:9**), but now it says they are not to ‘have’ sandals (**Matthew 10:10**). Perhaps this means take no extra sandals. Go with what’s on your feet; don’t go back to get an extra pair of shoes. And **Mark** says to “wear” sandals.
4. I’m not sure about the staff. I’m not sure whether they were supposed to take a staff or not.
5. They were to “take **no** bread” with them. If we read **Mark** and **Luke** where it says to take nothing we might conclude that they are to set out without any clothes. But if we combine it with **Matthew 10**, we see that they are not to go “and acquire” what they think they’re lacking but to use what they have and *to trust that God will provide for their needs*.

#### More on the provisions.

6. Jesus gives a principle: a worker is worthy of his support (**Matthew 10:10**). The old debate about “paid” or “not paid” preachers is put to rest in this statement, “for the worker is deserving of his support.” The fact that at times Paul chose not to receive support, as well as choosing not to have a wife ... if we are to conclude that it is more in the will of God not to receive financial support for ministry, then we should also choose celibacy in the ministry.

Jesus shows that God provides for His workers through those who are being served. He calls these people 'work men'. This phrase 'work men' is found 14 times in the New Testament. It is found in **Matthew 9:37-38**, "Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup>"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." In **Matthew 20:1-2** it talks about the laborers in the vineyard and in **Matthew 10:8** it mentions the laborers again. In **Luke 10:7** it says "The laborer is worthy of his wages" and here the word is "misthos" #3408 (μισθος). In **Acts 19:25** it talks about workers of similar trades, in **2 Corinthians 11:3** it talks about deceitful workers, and **Philippians 3:2** talks about evil workers, in **1 Timothy 5:18** it says, "For you shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing out the grain." And then it says the laborer is worthy of his wages. Now this is interesting because the first quotation is found in Deuteronomy 25:14 but the second is a quote from Jesus Himself in **Matthew 10:10** and **Luke 10:7**. So, Paul is quoting Jesus when he says a laborer is worthy of his wages. In **2 Timothy 2:15** it says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." If a man gives diligence (or studies), to show himself approved, he is a workman who does not have to be ashamed *accurately handling the word of truth*... or rightly dividing the word of truth. Then in **James 5:4** the laborers who mowed the field were discussed there; they weren't receiving their wages. Well, Matthew says that he is worthy; he is worthy of his wages. Literally the idea here is he is "worthy of the food of him". The word is #5160, trope (τροφή) and means food or nourishment. This may be translated "keep" or "supply". Different words may be used but it's *literally food* or nourishment. It is used 16 times in the New Testament as in **Matthew 3:4** where the food of John the Baptist was locusts and wild honey. In **Matthew 6:25** "*life is more than food*" and so on. There are so many different places where this word is used and so we're not going to go into all of those. **That's what we have on the provision**

### **Fifth is the strategy**

First, what strategy should be employed as they are sent out? Well, the strategy begins with *seeking receptive open people*. How do you "do that"? Well, see how they respond to you. The disciples are not operating in a vacuum. Jesus is well known and before Him John was well known. So the *apostles being the next wave* of attack and getting the same message out, it would have been partially understood already. They were saying the same message and performing the same kinds of miracles! So the strategy begins with testing "*a home's worthiness*".

**Matthew** says they should inquire 'who is worthy' when they enter a city or a village. In other words, ask around. Who is the Kingdom-minded person among the people of that village? Perhaps it's a *zealous opinion leader* or a *quiet couple* who serves the village or provides wise counsel. Perhaps they are students of Old Testament prophecy; they are able to interpret the times well, or perhaps they are merely honest seekers of righteousness and not afraid to listen to these new teachers.

### **Sixth, they are to give the house their greeting**

If they get a friendly greeting in response, then they know that this is a hospitable situation. Hospitality is a ★ *key* to evangelism. How do we find the hospitable people? Who receives you and listens to you? They are those who are *eager to listen and learn*.

In Jesus' context, His message

1. Was a natural extension of the Old Testament message and one that many would be looking forward to.
2. Though there was Jewish confusion regarding the teachings of God, as in the various Jewish sects, and though Jesus was viewed, then at least, as another sectarian many, there is a ***much different*** and ***more complicated*** environment in the world that we live in today.

***The cultural and philosophical influences coupled with the 2,000 years of history of Christian division and splintering has made the lost even more vulnerable to skepticism and less able to interpret the message and get a clear fix on the center of God's will.*** We must learn to retell the story in a way that is clear. In other words, during Jesus' day, finding a receptive person may have been a little bit easier because today we have two thousand years of history, of doctrines of which church is right, skepticism of many philosophies that have led people away from God, and even though the world was full of some of those things back then, it is even more so today.

3. Well, ***Jesus says give the house your greeting.*** How people receive and / or return that initial greeting or even non-verbally react to you tells much about their receptivity. Are they angry, distracted, put off, suspicious, nervous, afraid or in some way signaling if they are reluctant; even simply defiant at your greeting? Or are they welcoming, friendly, inviting, curious, interested or eager to hear what you have to say? Do they indicate that they want to hear and understand your message? Do they look you in the eye and seem excited that you have come? Surely, all these have heard of Jesus and when the disciples say that they are there in His name, some will want to know more and ask some questions.

***I wonder what would be the most often asked question about Jesus.*** I never had that thought before. What would people want to know about Him: How does He do miracles? Is He really the Messiah? What is His plan in overtaking the Romans? When will the revolution begin? What did He mean when He said 'such and such'? What is it like to travel with Him? They might ask about His family, too. All of these are questions that maybe the disciples were asked on this limited commission.

4. ***Jesus tells them not to just visit but to 'stay' with this family.*** Hospitality was very important then. You offered travelers, even strangers, protection. Those who did showed a generous and an open heart as well as an open home.

***Unfortunately we have become less trusting today, and for a good reason, but this has caused us to cut ourselves off from others, from new ideas, from interaction.***

We do not sit in our front yards anymore; but in our backyards behind fences. So, how do you reach those backyard societies? How do you get invited over the fence to share barbecues and swimming pools? It's the same principles today but a different dynamic and lifestyle to deal with.

Jesus describes the receptive house as "worthy". The word #514 is "axios", (αξιός) means of equal value, estimable, people who are suited for the gospel; the Kingdom 'fits' them. Jesus has already said that the workman is worthy of his hire. In **Romans 8:18** Paul says ***the sufferings of this world are not "worthy" to be compared to the glory that will be revealed.*** There is no comparison. There is no comparison with the glory that will be so worth it! Whatever we have had to go through here for the sake of the Kingdom will seem as 'nothing' compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ. A 'worthy' person or home is where the people ***value*** knowing Jesus above all things. See Philippians 3.

**Colossians 1:10** says that we must walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. Paul says, in order to do so, we must be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. This ‘worthy’ person or house one who will: 1. Please the Lord in all respects, 2. Bear fruit and every good work, 3. Increase in the knowledge of God. *The Hebrew writer* describes the ‘worthy’ as those who *in faith* went through all kinds of persecutions ... men of whom the world was not ‘worthy’ **Hebrews 11:38**.

*Worthy* is determined by comparison. What is something equal to? A piece of paper with a ten dollar symbol on it is equal to a \$10 value ... at least in theory. Every person and family needs the gospel, but every person and family is not worthy of the gospel. Jesus is looking for those who appreciate the gospel for what it is. They see it and understand its value. They get it. He imparts gifts to those who value the **gift** ... not pearls before swine. He sees no need to share really important things with those who do not want them. He explains the secrets of the Kingdom to those who have made the decision to be disciples. He gives the treasure to those who are willing to sell all in order to have it. *They knew what it was worth*.

*So how does this relate to the persuasion of men?*

**2 Corinthians 5:11** says, “Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.” Where is the line between the first response of hospitality and the extent of persuasion that should be used to convict someone? Perhaps the initial response of receptivity and interest is followed by persuasion. Paul provides a model in the book of Acts.

What we’re going to do is we’re going to look at some places where people may *initially have seemed receptive* but then it took a turn.

In **Acts** Paul, in his new faith and enthusiasm, immediately began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues. The response was amazement that Paul had converted Acts 9:19-24. This was in Damascus. But as Paul got stronger and bolder, the Jews plotted to do away with him. They were not very receptive.

In Jerusalem, after the disciples and the apostles were skeptical of him, Barnabas interceded and he began speaking boldly of Jesus in Jerusalem. This is Paul. He talked and he argued with the Hellenistic Jews and their response was to attempt to kill him **Acts 9:26-31**! You see, they weren’t very receptive. They weren’t ‘worthy’ of the Gospel.

In Pisidian, Antioch Paul and Barnabas taught in the synagogues and the response was very positive. The people begged them to come back the next Sabbath; even following them after they left (**Acts 13:42-43**). But on the next Sabbath, the leaders saw the crowds that showed up and because of jealousy they contradicted the things spoken by Paul and said that they were blaspheming.

Notice Paul’s statement: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.” By repudiating it, they judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. The Gentiles rejoiced and believed but the Jews drove Paul and company out. *Paul and company shook the dust from their feet in protest* in (**Acts 13:44-51**).

Then in **Acts 14:1** and following, in Iconium both Jews and Greeks believed. The ones who didn't stirred up the minds of people against Paul and company this was a divided city. Paul spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance on the Lord until they were plotting to kill him. Then in **Acts 14:8-19** in Lystra, Paul and company were received as gods, but the Jews came and turned against them and stoned Paul and they dragged him outside of the city.

Then, according to **Acts 16:15**, the Holy Spirit was often involved in closing and opening doors to some regions. So the Holy Spirit can direct us to receptive people. In **Acts 16:14** the Lord opened Lydia's heart to respond to the gospel. In **Acts 16:22-34** receptive people are found in the most unlikely places and within most unlikely circumstances like in a jail cell at midnight. In **Acts 17:1** and following those in Thessalonica Paul reasoned with them from the Scriptures for three Sabbaths in their Synagogues. Two responses: some were persuaded but the *Jewish leaders* organized a mob to oppose Paul and Silas.

Then in **Acts 17:10** and following the Bereans were more noble because they searched the scriptures daily to see if what Paul taught was true ... receptive, worthy people. But again, Jewish leaders stirred up crowds to hinder the spread of the gospel in that place.

Then in **Acts 17:16** and following when Paul went to Athens there were two different responses here, but most of it was superficial receptivity.

In chapter 18 in Corinth Paul reasoned in the Synagogue weekly trying to persuade but he was resisted and blasphemed and he left and turned to the Gentiles, those who would be more receptive. Note how Jesus comforts Paul in this place. He says, **“Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you. No man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city”** in **Acts 18:9-10**.

“**Acts**” is a history of finding worthy people, and here are some bullet points:

1. Paul went to many different places; not just one area.
2. Paul began with the Jews; those who logically should have been looking for the Messiah.
3. Paul reasoned or persuaded from Scripture.
4. Often within a short time, with no positive response, he moved to the Gentiles who were more receptive.
5. Then number five he was directed by Jesus and by the Holy Spirit.

### **Jesus speaks of the greeting of peace.**

It's the greeting of peace, or shalom, but *more than peace*. It's more than simply 'a word' for peace. **Strong's Concordance** says peace means 'completeness or wholeness, or health, or peace or welfare or safety or soundness or tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness or rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord. *It is a rich word* ... this word for peace. The mere greeting encompasses all God desires for His people and all He wants us to pursue by grace. *This completeness is found only in Jesus* and His sacrifice. The greeting is a first installment of a message of peace that the disciples were sent to tell. The greeting comes upon the house. It lays like a blanket over it. It is a covering, an anointing but if the house is not worthy, then the greeting is to return to the one who gave it.

In **Numbers 6:26** the blessing is, **“The LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.”** *It was customary to offer a city terms of peace before waging war against it*, and that is what is happening with this greeting.

In **Judges 6:23** when Gideon thought he would die because he saw an angel of the Lord, God spoke peace into the situation and drove out fear. “The LORD said to him, “Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die.” For Paul, ‘Grace and Peace’ was a common greeting given to worthy people ... those who had proven worthy of the gospel. The test of those who receive the greeting of peace is:

1. To receive the messenger
2. To heed the words of the messenger

***Both go together. How can you receive a person without also receiving their words?***

The word “heed” is #191 “akouo” (ακουο) meaning **to hear**. {It’s where we get the word “acoustics” from}. A worthy person will listen to the words. They do not immediately dismiss them. They consider them. They give them a fair hearing before rejecting them. God is looking for people who will listen to Him. God does not like to be ignored. He offers terms of peace, but for those who reject the message and the messenger He will bring wrath. **Romans 2:8**: wrath and indignation for all who are 1. Selfishly ambitious 2. Do not obey the truth, and 3. Obey unrighteousness. It says, “... **to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.**”

Where did “***shaking the dust from one’s feet***” begin? This began as a practice of the Jews against the Gentiles. The Jews believed that the Gentiles to be unclean and they were to ‘touch no unclean things’ so if they had to visit a Gentile city, they were told to “shake off the Gentile dust when they left, like washing one’s hands when you leave a patient’s room. Jesus applied this practice to unreceptive Jews. Paul practiced this at least once in **Acts 13:50-51**. As an aside, why do we not practice this today? Is this not only a direct command but an approved example just as washing feet is? I’m just thinking out loud here. This became a predominant practice of the Mormons in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century but it fell out of use. Few have taken it up as a permanent requirement in today’s Christian groups. I wonder if Jesus used it to make a very strong point. ***An unbelieving Jew, one who does not believe in Jesus as Messiah, is just as lost as a Gentile!***

Romans 11 where it talks about the Olive Tree figure makes this point. I wonder if the Twelve were surprised by such an instruction. To do to their countrymen, what they would do to a non-Jew or Gentile surely would seem odd to them; but it would demonstrate that Jews get no special privilege in the Kingdom just because they are descendants of Abraham as Jesus made clear often. And then, for Jesus to compare the unreceptive Jewish home or city to Sodom and Gomorrah (making them worse than Sodom and Gomorrah) would have raised the eyebrows of the disciples. It’s a serious matter to reject Jesus and His messengers and their message of peace. When peace is rejected, there is no peace. **So the strategy of Jesus involved not only locating the receptive worthy person but also branding the unreceptive home and city by a very visible outward act of separation.** How would this look in our day of political correctness and or tolerance? Surely our strategy needs to be more bold and decisive. Reception of Jesus is key.

We’ll stop here now and pick up again next week. But I hope you can see this section of Jesus sending his disciples out is filled with keys as to how Jesus thought. To find our more about our series on The Mind of Christ please go to <https://www.centraisarasota.org/>, our website where you’ll find links to all the videos we have done. Have a great day; God bless and take care.