

The Apostolic Mission of Jesus' Disciples

Text: Matthew 10:5-25

Series Overview: “Dead man walking.” It’s a phrase that has been used over the years to describe a person who has committed a capital offense walking to their impending death. Of course, the person is not literally dead (in contrast to your favorite zombie movie, dead people can’t actually walk), but the death the criminal is facing is so imminent, so certain, so real that it looms over every step they take toward their execution.

“Dead man walking” is a poignant way to describe the incarnate life and ministry of Jesus. His death was so imminent, so certain, so real that it loomed over every step he took toward Jerusalem and the cross. As the time drew closer, Jesus spoke about it with his disciples.

Overview:

Jesus’ walk to the cross was not a journey he made alone. He chose 12 disciples to make the journey with him. Others joined their ranks along the way. This growing band of followers was not primarily about providing support for Jesus. He was preparing them. He was giving them authority. His mission would become their mission. The message he preached would become the message they preached. His deeds would be multiplied in them. But there would be a cost. And so Jesus reminded his disciples that the painful rejection he faced, they would face as well.

If you follow Jesus, you are a part of his apostolic mission. You continue the succession of disciples who have followed Jesus over the past 2,000 years. His mission is your mission. His message of the kingdom is the message you proclaim. His acts of loving compassion are manifested in your life. No one who follows Jesus merely consumes the grace he offers. We are all on mission. And even though the heart of that mission is motivated by love, those who live it out will, at times, be misunderstood, marginalized and rejected. Following Jesus is not always easy. But the rewards always outweigh the costs and love is always victorious over hate.

Resources: Check out <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/matthew/> for more information on the book of Matthew.

WELCOME

DISCUSSION

A. Getting Warmed Up

- Who were the 12 disciples? What do you know about them? (names, who they were, why they were chosen by Jesus, what did they do before following Jesus)

B. Digging In

- Read aloud Matthew 10:5-25
- What is the difference between being a disciple and being an apostle?
- Verse 16 says, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves." Why did Jesus tell the apostles this? What would that mean for you as we go out?

C. Bringing It Home

- Beth talked about HOW we are sent out:
 1. Without fanfare.
 2. Eat with them.
 3. Bless them.

Talk about these things so you can embody them as a group. What does this mean for us? What does this look like? What are the steps to embrace this? We know the mission. Now what's the strategy?

- "This is simple. But it isn't easy." What makes this difficult?
- Beth said that while we are ALL sent into ALL the world. We can't be in the whole world all at once. There is a specific group that you have been sent to that is likely closer than you think. Who do you think God might be sending you to?
- What are you most hopeful about in this new thing your group is talking about doing?
- (You probably talked about this last week but it needs re-visiting...) Did you think and pray on what you or your group can do to respond to the brokenness in our community?

RECAP from last week: Although ideas may flow here, write them all down (no idea is a bad idea) and pray over them tonight together. When you gather again, remember to revisit the conversation and start with something small and MAKE A PLAN. Ask for someone in the group to help oversee the plan.

Ideas: Maybe the elementary school could use some fresh school supplies as the year ends for students who don't have them

(pencils, paper, tissues). Call the school and ask. Maybe there is an elderly neighbor who needs a spring cleanup? Are there meals to make for a family in need? A free food pantry placed in the neighborhood? Does someone in the group know of a need at their workplace?

CLOSING PRAYER: Pray for your group to find an area of service in your neighborhood - look on your doorstep, in plain sight.

Talk about this...

- Here's the information if needed for the group about challenging your group to reading the book of Matthew during this series. Here's all the info you need:
 - Challenge them to read the book of Matthew using the 27 chapters as a backdrop to the weekend message and study in our group. Ask them to read five to six chapters a week. It won't work out evenly and the readings we will be doing won't always line up exactly with the study for the week. But we'll be reading together and sharing fresh insights as we read from the gospel of Matthew.

Week of March 16/17	Chapters 1-6
Week of March 23/24	Chapters 7-12
Week of March 30/31	Chapters 13-18
Week of April 6/7	Chapters 19-24
Week of April 13/14	Chapters 23-27

Resource: the bibleproject.com/explore/matthew