

(Luke 9:1~6)

Beloved, God has chosen to save fallen man, through the preaching of the Kingdom, which refers to the message of Jesus Christ. Jesus is Lord, and He is the King of this kingdom. And the citizen's of that kingdom, are those who hear the gospel, and repentant, turning from this world, to live their lives unto Jesus Christ.

**(1Corinthians 1)** <sup>18</sup>For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ...<sup>21</sup>For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

**(Romans 10)** <sup>13</sup>For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. <sup>14</sup>**How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?** ...<sup>17</sup>So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Throughout the scriptures, the testimony is clear, that God has chosen to save the souls of men, through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, through the instruments of men. Which fascinates me, when you consider “*the likes*” of some of those he chooses for the task. To think, that God would entrust His Precious Word...into the hands of sinful, depraved men, like myself...boggles the mind. But that is exactly what He has chosen to do...

Just so we don't misunderstand anything, it's important to understand, that it is not only “*preachers*” who are commissioned to share the gospel with others, but it is the responsibility and service of every disciple of Jesus Christ. True, some are “*called out*” for the specific task of preaching, those set aside for the purpose of teaching the church, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Which is what we see here in this passage. The picture here is one where Jesus had been teaching the disciples for some time, and now He sends them out into the world to do the work the work of God. This morning, you've come submitting yourselves under my leadership, to hear the word, and to be equipped, so that when you leave here, you can be better equipped to do what God has called all of us to do...proclaim “*this word...the Precious Word of God,*” to the ears of those out here dying in sin.

I'm very concerned about the general mindset in the church in our day... The general mindset in our day, is to try and get people to come to church, to hear the gospel and get saved. But that is not the way the Lord structured the church. The Lord's structure of the church was that His disciples would come together to be edified, “*built up*” in the word of God, that they might take that word to those out here who are lost.

Here we see Jesus, implementing the pattern by which the church will function in this world... He calls His disciples together, equips them for the task, and sends them out into the highways and byways!

Now this passage is interesting for a couple of reasons, one is the special power He gave them. It says that He gave them power and authority over devils and the power to heal. And according to Mark's account, they did just that. It say that they went forth, casting out devils and healing the sick. They were able to do the same things that Jesus had been doing.

The second thing that makes this very interesting, are the instructions that Jesus gave them, in preparation for their journey...<sup>3</sup>And he said unto them, ***Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.***

He emphatically states, that they are not to take anything with them... Then goes on to give a very specific, and detailed list of things that they are not to take. He is insistent that they literally do not take anything with them. Basically, they are to go with nothing more than the clothes on their back.

**Take nothing for your journey...neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.**

That word “*staves*” refers to a *walking stick* or a *staff*...A “*scrip*” refers to a *leather bag* used to carry things in. “*Bread*” simply refers to *food*...“*Money*” is just that, *money*...And the “*Two Coats*” refers to *extra clothing*...

Considering the detailed list of things he instructed them not to take, basically, they were to go with ***nothing more*** than *the clothes on their backs*...

Given that, the question then becomes...**Why?** Why is He *so adamant* that they take absolutely nothing with them on their journey? The answer...***faith***... Not only was Jesus teaching them about the work they would inherit, when he was gone, but He wanted to teach them to “*walk by faith*.” By taking absolutely nothing with them, they would be walking in ***total dependence*** on God *to supply their needs*. They’d be dependent on God for everything from clothes, food, provisions, protection, a place to stay...***everything!***

That word “*staves*” refers to a *walking stick* or a *staff*... The significance of the staff is, it was an instrument of “*protection*.” Though they served various things, such as a walking stick, or to thresh wheat, a measuring stick...but the obvious intention here, is that of a weapon, an instrument of protection.

***In Psalms 23, it says...<sup>4</sup>Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.***

The clear reference there is “*protection*.” In that Psalm, the writer David, portrays himself as a sheep, with the Lord being his shepherd. The scene there is the sheep are following the shepherd through extremely dangerous and deadly territory. But the sheep have no fear, because of their faith in the Shepherds protection, “...***thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.***” The rod and staff of a shepherd were used as weapons of protection, to protect the sheep from the attacks of wolves.

Here in this passage, the “*Stave or Staff*” in view here is that of a weapon, an *instrument of protection*. The terrain in Israel was treacherous, traveling was dangerous, and travelers walking on foot would carry staffs with them to fend off the attacks of wild animals. The thoughts of leaving your staff behind, while taking such a journey, would be unthinkable. It would leave them vulnerable and completely defenseless. But that’s exactly what Jesus wanted, given the fact He told them to leave their “*staffs*” behind... This staff was also used as a “*walking stick, a cane*.” And here it is seen as a “*crutch*” to faith in God. As long as they had this stick, they would trust in it and in themselves for their own protection. But given Jesus forbids them to take one, they would be walking in ***complete dependence*** on God for their ***protection!***

The next item Jesus forbid them to take, was a “*scrip*,” which refers to a *leather bag*... The significance of the leaving the bag behind, was that this was their source of “*provision*.” This bag was basically a bag they would pack, with the necessary items needed, when traveling. In that day, traveling was a major event. You just didn’t grab a few things, hop in the car, and take off. Everywhere they went, they went by foot, and it might take anywhere from one whole day, to several days. And along the way, you needed certain “*provisions*” just to survive the journey. I can imagine this bag contained cooking utensils, tools, knives, maybe a small tent, etc. Basically just necessities you need for traveling...

But here, Jesus is adamant, that they take no such “*provisions*.” Why? Again, to teach them a lesson on faith. He forbid them to take a bag, so that they would not trust in their own provisions. Jesus wanted them to learn that God would take care of them, by providing their necessities. Not only would they be completely dependent on God for protection, but also for their provisions.

Next on the list...“**Bread.**” Bread simply refers to *food*...including both food and drink. Here Jesus tells them not to take anything to eat or drink with them. We’re talking the “*basic necessities of life*” here! One might get by without a staff, and even make it without the supplies he needs, but no one can live without food and water. To make matters worse, He tells them not to take any “**money!**” Not only would they have no food, but they would have no means by which to buy food. They would have absolutely no means of nutrition, nor any way to get any. But once again, that was His point, that’s exactly the way Jesus wanted it to be! He wanted them to be completely dependent on the Lord for everything! Unless the Lord provided food for them to eat, they would starve to death!

The last thing He mentions, is they are not to take “**Two Coats**”... The actual reference here is to a “*tunic,*” the “*outer garment*” or a “*coat*” as stated here. The significance of this one is understood in understanding the climate of Israel. The days would be hot, while the nights would be very cool. Typically, Israelites slept on the floor (if home) or on the ground (if traveling), using the coat as a covering to keep them warm. One of the most prized possessions a man had in that day, was a good coat. It is for that reason, it is stated in the Law, that when suing a man, you could not take his cloak. Most who planned on traveling in that day, would take along an extra coat, just in case they need it. But once again, Jesus specifically tells them not to take one...again, trusting in the Lord to meet their needs.

***<sup>3</sup>Take nothing for your journey...neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.***

The point of all this, is ***faith***... Jesus would strip away everything they held on to, and trusted in, and teach them to cast their total dependence on God to meet their needs...

It hadn’t been many days prior to this, that these disciples had heard that great “Sermon on the Mount,” where Jesus talked about, “*How God, who clothes the fields with grass...would clothe you.*” “*How God, who feeds the birds of the air...will feed you.*” Jesus taught them not to worry about such things, that God would take care of them. Therefore they were to focus on the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, trusting that God would take care of their needs.

Here they would be put to the test, to see if they really believed that or not... “*Faith*” is easy as long as you have everything you need... If they would have taken those provisions, they would have never truly learned, the faithfulness of God. Most of us, are so busy, (like the Gentiles) providing our own provisions, our own things, that we basically don’t need God. When the call in Matthew 6, was for His people to stop living their lives the same way the Gentiles do (lost) and give ourselves to the work of God, seeking His kingdom and His righteousness.

The final instruction Jesus gives the disciples, deals with how they are to respond, to those who “**Receive**” them, and their message...and to those who “**Reject**” them and their message...

***(Vs 4~5) <sup>4</sup>And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. <sup>5</sup>And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.***

It’s important to keep in mind, the issue is ***how they are to respond***, to those who “**Receive**” them, and their message...and to those who “**Reject**” them and their message...

The emphasis is, that they proclaim a clear “***blessing***” on those who receive them and the message of the kingdom. While in contrast, they make it clear to those who “***reject***” them and their message of the kingdom that “***Judgment***” abides on their house.

First, the response to those who “**Receive**” them...<sup>4</sup> *And whatsoever house ye enter into, (that is to say, those who “**Receive**” you) ...there abide, and thence depart.*

Jesus says, “When you come to a city, and someone invites you to stay with them...accept their offer.” By “there abide, and thence depart,” Jesus was saying that they were to stay in that same house, until it is time for them to leave the city. In other words, Jesus was saying that He would provide for them, and meet all their needs, through individuals in each city. Upon their arrival in each city, they were to seek out the one’s whom God had prepared to receive them, and go in to that house, staying there until they had completed the work there.

Matthew makes an interesting comment about his that Luke does not, that really *heightens* His point...that being how they are to respond to those who “receive” and those who “reject” them...

**(Mt. 10)** <sup>11</sup> *And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.* <sup>12</sup> *And when ye come into an house, salute it.* <sup>13</sup> *And if the house be worthy, **let your peace come upon it**; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.*

“Let your peace come upon it”...is a picture of “Blessings”... They are to pronounce the “Blessings of God’s peace” upon the home of those who receive them and their message!

**(Vs 5)** Which is in contrast, to those who “**reject**” them...<sup>5</sup> *And **whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.***

In contrast to the “Blessings of Peace,” He instructs them to respond by declaring judgment upon the house of those who “**reject**” them! To do this, Jesus tells them as they are leaving the city, to shake off the dust from your feet...as a witness to them. The shaking off of dust from ones feet was a sign of judgment! It was an act, showing contempt for the city.

To fully understand this, it’s important to first understand that this “*evangelistic crusade*” was aimed at the cities of Israel alone...(We learn this from Matthew’s account) The cities of the Gentiles would be at a later time. That helps us understand why Jesus told the disciples to “*shake off the dust of their shoes,*” because that was a “*Jewish thing.*” An orthodox Jew, hated their neighbors, the Gentiles. (*That’s why Jesus gave as the second greatest commandment, was to love thy neighbor as thyself.*) But fact was, the Jews hated the Gentiles, they literally hated the “*ground*” they walked on. For that’s where this symbolism of rejected came from. Anytime a Jew (when traveling) had to travel across Gentile soil, upon leaving, to enter back onto Jewish soil, he would stop, and shake the dust off of his sandals, in a show of contempt for their land!

The real picture behind that was the fact that the Jews considered themselves to be the people of God, the chosen ones! They saw themselves as holy and righteous, while they considered the Gentiles as the scum of the earth, the low life’s... The fact they considered themselves Holy, and the Gentiles as Unholy, they wanted nothing to do with them! (*Sounds like a lot of religious folks in our day...huh?*)

Well here, Jesus uses their own symbolic jester of “**Rejection and Judgment**” against them... He tells His disciples, that upon leaving a city that has “*rejected*” you...shake off the dust from your shoes, as a sign of Judgment on them! They’ll know what you mean...they may “*Reject*” your message of the kingdom, but they will “*Get that message!*”

**What does all this mean?** The kingdom of God is to be offered to all... The gospel is an invitation to sinners to become citizens of the kingdom. Anyone who hears this gospel, and repents, and comes to Christ, will inherit the kingdom of God and enter the peace of God...all at the expense of Jesus Christ! On the other hand, all who hear God’s offer of forgiveness and mercy, and reject it, counting it as unworthy and undesirable...they need to understand, that God’s Judgment looms over your house!