

## CARRYING ON JESUS' WORK

As we look at the life and teachings of Jesus, we can find not only what the Kingdom of God is all about, but we can also see a methodology that is useful in starting a successful operation of any kind. Jesus first directed those who would follow Him. He laid out the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven in His discourse on the mountain. A basic understanding of the underlying principles is necessary in anything we undertake. We would legitimately expect a physician to understand the basic principles of how the human body functions and the principles of the medicines and drugs he prescribes before he treats an injury or illness. Similarly, we would anticipate needing a basic understanding of electrical circuitry before replacing a wall socket in our house. If these are needed, why would we think we could be successful in life without understanding some of the basic life principles such as Jesus outlined in the Sermon on the Mount? The next step the methodology that Jesus used was to demonstrate the practice of the life-changing power that is available to those who would be His followers. He demonstrated for all to see what He taught really worked. The final step was to delegate to other this same kind of ministry. The methodology is to direct, demonstrate, and delegate.

**MATTHEW 10:1** Jesus recognized that delegation of responsibility must be preceded by delegation of authority. The authority He granted was in three areas:

1. Unclean spirits: Paul taught that our real battles in life are not in the physical realm but the spiritual realm. Our understanding of the spiritual realm is limited; however, we need to discern and recognize the source of problems. Jesus said to “cast them out.” Some problems in life cannot be corrected via education, psychological counseling, or medical treatment. (Spiritual)
2. Sickness (unsoundness): Jesus did not limit the type of sickness but included all manner of sickness in the body. We should not hesitate to ask for healing for anything. It should not matter if it is psychosomatic, organic or the result of an injury. (Physical Body)
3. Diseases (malady): This ailment may be related to general listlessness and is often caused by our outlook on life. (Soul)

God is concerned for the total person. We tend, so often, to relegate His influence to the spiritual and forget that He is the Creator of all that is. God is El Shaddiah - All Mighty.

**MATTHEW 10:2-4** The twelve apostles are named.

**MATTHEW 10:5-6** Jesus gave specific assignments to those who went out. He said “Go here, but do not go there.” The keys are timing and focus. Concentrated effort is needed to get any job done. We cannot solve every problem at the same time. Many people, businesses, churches have too many “irons in the fire.” *Prioritize* is good advice for living our lives as well as carrying out the Great Commission or operating a business.

If we try to help everyone, we wind up helping no one and we ourselves become discouraged. Focus on one or two people to help over a given time period. Concentration on that person and make a significant impact and then go help someone else.

**MATTHEW 10:7-8** All the disciples had the same message. All used the same general method. The message was the Kingdom of Heaven. This message is about authority in your life. We would say in messages today “Jesus is to be Lord.” The kingdom concept implies the rule and reign of some authority in our world or sphere of influence.

How were others to know that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand? By the demonstration of the power of the Kingdom. Jesus told them to demonstrate that power by three means:

1. Heal the sick: This is quite specific. They didn't have time to build a hospital, they didn't have any training in medicine, they simply imposed the authority of the Kingdom over the sickness.
2. Cleanse the lepers: This was a challenge to take on the nearly impossible. People would lose hope and be in despair if they had this disease.

3. Raise the dead: Jesus moved from the nearly impossible to the impossible. Nothing is impossible for God. The authority of the Kingdom of Heaven transcends the grave and death.

The message and power of the Church is the greatest thing the world has ever seen. But not all churches are declaring the right message nor are they operating in the power of the Holy Spirit. Such power is not to be abused, it is not to be a source of profit, it is not to be traded for contributions. It is freely given (the grace of God) and it is to be freely shared as a demonstration and extension of God's grace.

The work of the disciples would require those who receive the benefit of their ministry to trust God or exercise whatever faith they had. Jesus instructed the disciples to demonstrate they also were trusting God for their well being.

**MATTHEW 10:9-10** The requirements Jesus gave to the disciples would be very difficult for most of us. We might go so far as to actually go to another city to witness and minister in the name of Jesus. We might even be so bold as to pray for the sick to be healed, but to leave all your money behind and not even pack a lunch might be too much! We are dependent on material things that to be put in position of trusting that these will be provided is a real test of our faith.

**MATTHEW 10:11-13** Another principle is seen here. We need to target specific persons. Got to those who are likely to be receptive. Know those to who you are speaking. A little research work will save a lot of frustration and wasted time. Once a person has accepted the Gospel message in a town, it will be easier to have others accept. If the most likely person in a particular area rejects the message, then it is probably a waste of time to keep trying at that place and time. The wise thing to do would be to move on to the next opportunity.

**MATTHEW 10:14-16** Many will reject the Gospel. We should not assume a position fault every time that happens. We need to be faithful in sharing the Gospel and we need to do so will skill that bears fruit. However, even the very angels of God have been rejected. Also, people have clear examples of the consequences of rejecting the word of God and going their own way in a life of sin. For those who reject the love of God manifested in the work of Jesus and the revelation of the loving nature of God the Father seen in the Living Word, then the is no hope for them.

Did Jesus realize that what He taught about turning the other cheek and going the second mile was setting his followers up for others to take advantage of them? I think so! He said, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." Therefore, we are to exercise wisdom and be watchful.

**MATTHEW 10:17-20** Persecution is going to happen. When we stand for what is right, then others will oppose us. Christians will be misunderstood; however such misunderstanding can be an opportunity to spread the Gospel even further. Much of what Jesus said about persecution happened during the lifetime of His disciples. However, the reality of persecution is with us today (more people have been killed for their faith in Christ in the 20th century than in all the preceding centuries). We can also rely on His promise of the Holy Spirit speaking through us as these situations arise.

We are to carry on the work that Jesus started. We need to have direction or instruction in the principles, we need to see these principles demonstrated, and to demonstrate them for others. We must exercise trust and walk in God's wisdom as we carry out the commission in eh power and authority granted to the church. But most of all we need to be about doing it!