

## Series: Embracing a Radical Faith

VBC

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Matthew 10

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### “Is Believing Enough”

One Tuesday afternoon in Feb 2008, Starbucks closed all of its US stores

- a note on each of the 7,100 locked doors explained—  
“We’re taking time to perfect our espresso”
- like lots of successful organizations that grow really fast
- it began to take its eye off of operations
- lose some of its signature traits
- baristas became careless--started going through the motions
- serving up inferior espressos—either too weak or too strong
- according to its founder--Starbucks was on the verge of losing what it set out to do 40 years earlier—“to inspire the human spirit”
- *“touch lives with a cup of coffee”*
- so for 3.5 hours—every store went offline to re-train

Do you ever wonder if the church needs to do something like this?

- for after a while—churches can get their eyes off their essential purpose, *their mission*
- distracted by programs and buildings and pleasing congregants
- believers can begin to go through the motions
- lose sight of what the church set out to do 2,000 years earlier—see peoples lives radically changed through the Person of Jesus

Imagine Matthew 10 as a re-training manual of sorts

- for it’s here God reminds us who we are, what we have in Christ, what our mission is all about
- after seeing the world in its desperate condition (chapter 9)
- Jesus called those He had poured His life into-and He sent them out on mission (read 10:1-7, 14-16)
- if we are to be missional, purposeful—get back to our signature traits—we need to lay hold of five essentials revealed in this text—

1-HIS AUTHORITY-read vs. 1

- to be this undomesticated, untamable revolutionary force
- they would have to go out with a power to influence
- the sort that demonstrates they had been sent by Jesus
- by One who Himself has authority
  
- it's just as true with us
- it's important we remember we have been empowered to minister with the same authority of Jesus
- the One who is over everything (Eph 1:20)
- the One who sits enthroned over all peoples, all times, all places, and all cultures
- the One who in Him all things hold together
- the One who whatever He wills—He does
- and He gives us His authority
- to be His ambassadors--through whom Christ makes His appeal-2 Cor. 5:20
- to pray in His name—with the promise it sets things in motion
- to command the spirits—over the perpetual enemies of the soul—and where they can get off-Js. 4:7
- for Christ has broken their sovereignty
  
- *it is the task of the church to demonstrate this!*
- meaning with it we have no reason to fear-be intimidated as we step into this world

## 2-HIS MISSION

- this is where we might be missing it most
- there is an essential identity many in the church are missing
- the transformation that occurred in chap. 10 with Jesus' 12—has been lost on too many of us
  
- for the first time—Jesus referred to those who followed Him as “sent ones”, envoys, apostles
- following Jesus suddenly meant something else
  
- the church is comprised of people somewhere on this continuum—
- alienated—disinterested—open—seeker—believer
  
- but believing is not enough—Christianity isn't merely about assent—it's about action
- Jesus didn't say—come study Me—but come follow Me
- but becoming a follower is not the end point either
- in the process of following—we are called to be His disciples
- followers increasingly becoming like Jesus--with an unfettered allegiance, adherence to Jesus and His message

- but as this passage underscores--even disciple is not the end point
- it's critical to the next step—but it is not the terminus
- all of us must make the same shift Jesus called His disciples to make in Matt. 10
- from “disciple” to “apostle”
- *this is our essential identity*
- if we are going to be this undomesticated, untamable revolutionary force
- this is who we must become
- there has to be an “apostolic ethos” about us—people who live missionally
- but many churches have lost this

In 1974, a missionary from India returned home to his native—England

- his name was Leslie Newbegin
- he had been gone more than 30 years
- and lots of things had changed—most of all—the church
- it had once sent people out as apostles—people on mission—to carry out what Matt. 10 is about
- but somewhere—the church lost sight of its mission
- *became domesticated—an institutionalized “safe house” rather than a missional outpost*
- something other than the true church

Illus-the other night-working out a strategy for getting people into the story

- but this assumes we see ourselves as missional rather than institutional

### 3-HIS STRATEGY

- like retraining baristas—Jesus goes over procedures
- He tells us how to create space for mission
  - a. it first begins with proximity-start in your neighborhood-verse 5
    - within our natural social networks—families, neighborhoods, associations
    - just as Jesus moved into our neighborhood—identifying with those He first came to live with
    - and pray daily—and be intentional
  - b. go to the lost-verse 6
    - to those (lit perishing)-to those who—because of sin—are stuck in destructive patterns that are killing them-and serve them

- c. go to the receptive—to the hospitable –verse 14
  - time is too short to waste on the closed who simply want to debate, argue
- d. most importantly-go where Jesus is going—where God has clearly gone before us
  - He is the Lord of the harvest-9:38

Illus.-Mother Teresa-when asked how God called her to work among the poor

- she replied-“God did not call me to work among the poor. He called me to follow Him, and He led me there”

#### 4-HIS MESSAGE

- is not so complex
- God is at work in this world-the kingdom of God has approached--is at hand-verse 7
- this was the center of Jesus’ message—it was to be at the center of theirs-it is to be the center of ours
- heaven is breaking in—it is not merely our future hope
- it is actively at work here—it is already and not yet
- it is happening under your noses—so watch out, or you will be left on the outside
- tell people their lives must conform life to this kingdom
- which can only come by a deep interior change
- a total life transformation that they cannot accomplish on their own
- it is only possible by Jesus’ saving work
- this is the gospel—the good news—our message

#### 5-HIS PRESENCE

- a. This mission will not be easy
  - we step into a world out of step with God’s intentions
  - we are calling people to a complete turnaround
  - telling people there is only one way out—and that is Jesus
  - meaning we will be at odds with culture
  - we might even be hated-verse 22
  - *when we go out to be like Jesus—we will be treated like Jesus*

- b. Jesus tells us—think of it as being sheep thrown to the wolves—verse 16
  - but don't be naïve—stupidly vulnerable
  - we are sheep—but be smart sheep--wise as serpents
  - shrewd—thoughtful, wise, astute, discerning, cautious—knowing where we are
  - aware of the dangers—knowing when to act
  
- c. yet—we are to be innocent—pure, harmless as doves
  - going out with His authority—but also in His example
  - filled with the Spirit—saturated with truth—humble in our approach, showing grace
  
- d. and know this above all else
  - He is with us
  - we will occasionally have these stunning reminders this is His battle—not ours
  - in the moment of desperation--He will give us needed words—speak through us—verses 19-20

## CONCLUSION

- So what does this look like?
- here's one story
- Fed Ex driver—letter falls out of truck
- calls driver—who retraces his steps five miles
- finds the jeep—and the letter attached to the bumper
  
- You would have to believe there is a God
  
- Would you like to explore is there really is a God?
  
- and for weeks they have been meeting

It all begins with being missional, intentional

- determined to be the church