

C. The Risk of Rejection (12-15)

- i. The kingdom grows through rejection, not acceptance alone.

“Whenever Christ calls us, his call leads us to death.”

“Suffering and rejection express in summary form the cross of Jesus. Death on the cross means to suffer and die as one rejected and cast out. It was by divine necessity that Jesus had to suffer and be rejected. Any attempt to hinder what is necessary is satanic. Even, or especially, if such an attempt comes from the circle of disciples, because it intends to prevent Christ from being Christ.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*)

- ii. What is this “greeting” and why are they to take it back?

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- Have you seen evidences of pastors who have abandoned their posts? Or of pastors who have transformed into shopkeepers with shopkeepers’ concerns? (See the two Peterson quotes.)
- Does it surprise you that Jesus actually restricted the ministry of these first missionaries? Why is it important for ministers of the Gospel to recognize this today?
- What can we discern from the description of those who the disciples were to go to as “lost” tell us about Christ’s kingdom mission?
- How do these instructions teach us that the mission must include a restorative message as well as a restorative ministry? Can you think of how we see this taking place in the early church in Acts?
- Why is the mission, as Jesus gave it, risky? How is it risky?
- What are risks that you are called to make for the mission of Christ?
- How do Christ’s instructions prevent these disciples from building on human appearances?

The Three R’s of Christ’s Mission

Jerry Cisar — August 4, 2019

Text: Matthew 10:1-15

Introduction (1-5a)

“American pastors are abandoning their posts, left and right, and at an alarming rate. They are not leaving their churches and getting other jobs. Congregations still pay their salaries. Their names remain on the church stationery and they continue to appear in pulpits on Sundays. But they are abandoning their posts, their *calling*. They have gone whoring after other gods. What they do with their time under the guise of pastoral ministry hasn't the remotest connection with what the church's pastors have done for most of twenty centuries.” (Eugene H. Peterson, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity*)

I. The Mission is Restricted (5b-6)

- A. Why the Warning?

- B. The Lord of the harvest restricts the mission in ways that may slow or, in our minds, hinder its apparent success.

Peterson: “The pastors of America have metamorphosed into a company of shopkeepers, and the shops they keep are churches. They are preoccupied with shopkeeper's concerns - how to keep the customers happy, how to lure customers away from competitors down the street, how to package the goods so that the customers will lay out more money.”

C. Who are the lost sheep of Israel?

- i. Lost

- ii. Not theologically precise term for the Christian.

Part of what makes this commission so applicable to our own day is that after the resurrection, “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” are understood (at least by Paul) to include the gentiles who were coming into the Kingdom. *Israel* itself, undergoes a death and resurrection in Jesus!

- iii. Christ’s kingdom announcement is to be given to those who are on the underside of earthly power.

II. The Mission is Restorative (7-8d)

A. The Message is Restorative

B. The Ministry is Restorative

- i. All Gospel-centered mission must include the declaration of the reign of Jesus Christ and call people to the obedience to Him through faith.

- ii. All Gospel-centered mission must pursue compassionate restoration to the brokenness and uncleanness of humanity.

“Mission confronts Rome’s world of injustice, power, greed, false commitments, and death, with God’s mercy and justice.” (Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*)

III. The Mission is Risky (8e-15)

A. The Risk of Dependence

B. The Risk of Appearances

“Christianity is not a philosophy that can be learned separate from those who embody it. If the truth that is Christ were a truth that could be known ‘in principle’ then we would not need apostles. But the way the gospel is known is by one person being for another person the story of Christ.” (Stanley Hauerwas, *Matthew* (Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible))

- i. The disciples had to live the message of the Sermon on the Mount in order to proclaim it!

- ii. The disciples have nothing else to commend but Jesus Himself.
“[Being] a follower of Jesus has not made them wealthy, powerful, or secure. ... [Therefore] they cannot promise that Jesus will make his followers well-off, worry free, successful, or any other worldly good.” (Hauerwas)

- iii. The method of carrying out the mission must center on faithfulness, not success.