

A Lean, Mean Missionary Machine!

By Tierce Green

***“As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near’”
(Matthew 10:7 NIV).***

(Read Matthew 10; Mark 6:7–13; Luke 9:1–6; 10:1–17 and 22:35)

In what special way did Jesus equip His disciples for this mission? (Matthew 10:1)

What specific group were they to “target”? (Matthew 10:5–6)

What was their specific message? (Matthew 10:7)

List the twelve men Jesus called as apostles and sent on this mission. Include any information about them from Matthew 10:2–4.

In Matthew 9:37, Jesus told His disciples to pray that God would send more workers into the mission fields.

They must have prayed. In the first few verses of Matthew 10, Jesus selected and sent the twelve into the fields. Praying passionately for people who don't know Christ personally can radically alter the lives of those who pray. When we pray for God to send out workers, He is likely to respond by sending us! Don't be afraid.

When He calls us and sends us, He will also prepare us.

Jesus was very specific about where they were *not* to go—to the Gentiles or the Samaritans. We can be certain that this was not a permanent command. We see Jesus talking graciously to a Samaritan woman while traveling through Sychar in John 4. The hero in one of His stories is a Samaritan in Luke 10. Jesus heals the daughter of a Canaanite woman in Matthew 15 and gives His final commission in Matthew 28:19–20.

The target group of this mission trip was the Jews—the lost sheep of Israel. The Jews have a very special place in God's scheme of things. They had to be given the first offer of the gospel. It is true that they rejected it, but God designed history for them to have the first opportunity to accept it.

How did Jesus group the twelve for this mission? (Mark 6:7)

What does this unusual mixture of men from diverse backgrounds, working together on this mission, teach us about our own mission partnerships?

If Matthew 10:2–4 is a probable grouping of the twelve, why do you think Matthew the tax collector and Simon the Zealot (a radical Jewish nationalist—an extremist) were not “roommates” on this mission trip?

The twelve were probably not equipped to preach to the Gentiles. Why not?

At every point in our mission, we must remember—it is all about Jesus. The details of what we did, what we sacrificed for the mission, even the results of the harvest should all fade in the light of Jesus (Galatians 6:14).

Why is it important to focus our mission and limit our objectives?

The apostles were sent on a mission of words and deeds. Their message was that the kingdom of heaven was near. Of all the people who ever lived, Jesus was, and is, the only person who ever perfectly did—obeyed and fulfilled—God’s will. In Him, the kingdom of heaven had come. To the Jews who had dreamed of the kingdom and longed for the kingdom, these messengers were saying, “Here in the life of Jesus is the kingdom!

Look at Him and see what being in the kingdom means!”

The mission of the twelve was not confined to words. They were equipped by Jesus to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cleanse the lepers, to cast out demons. Imagine what it must have been like for them to experience the power of God flowing so freely through them! This strategy of preaching with power was designed to capture the attention of the Jews who had lost sight of God’s salvation. The twelve were a complete package—a lean, mean missionary machine—with a message of hope and a ministry of helps.

Why is the combination of words and deeds so important? (James 2:14–17)

What are the spiritual parallels to healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing lepers, and casting out demons?

How can we help people who are confused about the kingdom of heaven? What should be the focal point of our message?

Jesus prepared the twelve for a negative reaction to their message. From which groups of people did He expect this persecution to come? (Matthew 10:17–36)

In Luke 10:1–20 Jesus sends 72 missionaries to the towns and villages He would visit later. He gives many of the same instructions He gave in the first mission trip. Verses 17–20 record their excitement, particularly about how the demons submitted to them. While it would be hard not to be excited about that, Jesus reminded them of the thing that should be most exciting to them.

What is it? (v. 20)

At every point in our mission, we must remember—it is all about Jesus. The details of what we did, what we sacrificed for the mission, even the results of the harvest should all fade in the light of Jesus (Galatians 6:14).

The kingdom of heaven is near! Do you want to see it? Look at Him!

Where is He sending you today?

What do you need to take with you or leave behind?