

February 10, 2019
Sunday Morning Service
Series: Luke
Community Baptist Church
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To Ponder . . .

Questions to ponder as we prepare to hear from Luke 9:1-9.

1. Why did Jesus send out twelve disciples at this point in His ministry?
2. What does the word “apostle” mean?
3. What were the expected traits of the official messengers in Jesus’s day?
4. Why didn’t Jesus allow Herod to see Him?
5. How do you think Judas felt or what was he thinking while he was one of the twelve?
6. Compare your weaknesses and inabilities to serve Christ with the apostles.

AUTHORITY OVER DISCIPLES AND KINGS

Luke 9:1-9

When I was fourteen years old, I worked in a “Mom and Pop” grocery store. I was already car crazy by then. I knew a man about ten years my senior who had recently purchased a 1966 Shelby GT 350. One day his wife had purchased her groceries and I carried them out to her car for her. And there it was—that Shelby Mustang. I was awestruck. It was love at first sight. Her husband Paul was sitting in the car so I struck up a conversation with him. Soon he said, “Hey, do

you want to sit in the driver’s seat?” Of course I did. I was sitting there with my hands on the steering wheel fantasizing what it would be like to drive that beast when he said, “Crank it up.” With trembling hands I turned the key and released the sound of 305 horsepower. The throbbing sound of that engine got in my bloodstream and has never left. What power I had in my hands. But, again, I was only fourteen. Though I held power in my hands, I had no authority to use it. What good is power without authority?

God the Son possessed all power in heaven and in earth. He had the potential to heal all diseases, cast out demons, and even raise the dead to life. But, God the Son was also sent from heaven with all the authority to use that power. Over and over He proved that He is one with the all-powerful Creator who has the authority to change the laws and events that govern life.

Jesus also demonstrated His authority over earthly rulers. No religious rulers, governor, king or emperor could force Jesus to His death before the time appointed by the Father. And when the time came for Him to provide the sacrifice for sin, no authority on earth could prevent it from happening. They could not even withdraw themselves from participating.

But maybe more astonishing than the power and authority of Jesus Christ is the fact that He granted the same power and authority to stumbling, failing followers who were very much like us. In the part of Luke’s account of the Good News that makes up our text, we discover a prelude, almost like a trial run, of the great commission.

Before He ascended to heaven, Jesus said to followers who were our predecessors, “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age*” (Matthew 28:18-20). What do we think about that power and authority He has given us?

King Jesus Sent Representatives (vv.1-6).

Jesus sent these representatives out to declare the Good News. They were the “twelve” privileged followers. *And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons*

and to cure diseases (v.1). Based on the stories in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John we can fairly conclude that there were possibly hundreds of people who would be considered bonafide disciples of Jesus.

By now Jesus had reached the halfway point of His earthly ministry. The crowds grew larger and larger by this time but would shortly begin to diminish until at the end even the twelve closest followers would abandon Him. Also, it was approaching the time when Jesus would cut back on His ministry to the towns and villages in Galilee and move into Judea, closer to Jerusalem and the cross.

Twelve particular disciples were unique among the hundreds. Matthew gave us their names. *The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him (Matthew 10:2-4).*

In that list, we find fishermen Simon and his brother Andrew were among the first to follow Jesus. Then there were fishermen brothers James and John were also among the first followers. There was Philip, also an original follower, who had a penchant for detail. He was also quick to tell the good news to others and on the second day after meeting Jesus invited Nathanael to follow. Bartholomew is the same person named Nathanael, the sincere, authentic Jew who Jesus saw sitting under the fig tree (John 1:48). Thomas, we know as the pessimist who at the same time was intensely loyal. Matthew was the former tax collector, cheat, and sinner. Then there was James the son of Alphaeus. He is also known as James the Less, meaning less important than James son of Zebedee. Thaddaeus, was also known as Lebbaeus whose surname was Thaddeaus (Matthew 10:3) and even as Judas not Iscariot (John 14:22). Simon the Cananaean, had been a member of an ultra right-wing political party called the Zealots. And finally Judas Iscariot, the traitor.

It was a very un auspicious group of guys to say the least. The list includes no one famous, no one important, no one particularly bright or with a promising future. All in all the twelve were much like us, especially James the son of Alphaeus who is virtually unknown.

In spite of the accolades some might receive, we are very ordinary people. We are worse than ordinary because when God found us, we were children of His archenemy, doing the work of Satan, deserving God's wrath. But He graciously saved us and gave us the ability to serve Him along with the power and the authority.

Notice that having called these twelve together, Jesus gave them power over demons and to cure diseases. No one on earth truly had that power to do that kind of good except Jesus. Now, He shared that power with twelve very ordinary guys. Would that be an ego trip? It would for a lot of us.

Jesus did not only grant amazing power to these twelve privileged followers, but He also gave them the authority to use the power. From His gracious hand the "twelve" received unique authority. *And he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal (v.2).* Jesus sent the apostles out with authority to use the power He gave them. The verb translated "sent" in this verse is *apostello*, which is commonly known to mean "to send with authority." This is the same word that described the act of God the Father sending God the Son into the world. Jesus told Nicodemus, *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him (John 3:17).*

The word gives us the English word "apostle." In this action, Jesus sent out twelve ordinary guys with His authority to represent Him by exercising His authority. We do not enjoy all the power Jesus possessed and gave to the apostles. But we do represent Jesus with all His authority.

According to Luke's account, Jesus had a twofold purpose for the authoritative sending. First, He sent the apostles to proclaim the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is where the presence of the King is. Therefore, John preached that the Kingdom was at hand because he was introducing Christ the King to the world. Jesus preached that the Kingdom was at hand because He is the King. But the Kingdom of God is a kingdom within the kingdoms of this world. Just because Jesus showed up doesn't mean that the whole world became His kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is wherever King Jesus reigns supreme in His people's hearts. The only means for becoming a citizen in that Kingdom is through faith in the finished sacrificial work of the King.

The Good News is that Christ the King has provided the only entrance to His Kingdom through His blood shed on the cross for sin. The Good News is that sinners can be forgiven, enter the Kingdom of God, and have Christ as their King.

Christ the King sent His representatives out to proclaim that good news with all power and authority. The word translated proclaim is *keirusso*. The noun behind that verb (*keirux*) described a very important person in ancient Greek and Roman culture. He was a man chosen specifically by the king to be the king's representative and spokesperson. His duty was kind of like the job of Sarah Huckabee, the White House Press Secretary. This person had to have the gifts and abilities to speak well, be articulate, and communicate accurately. He had to be intensely loyal to the king. He had to deliver the message precisely as the king gave it without commentary or injecting personal opinions.

We are those authoritative spokespersons in the world today. Christ the King has chosen us, given us the message to proclaim, given us the authority to do, and gives us opportunities. The message is the clear statements of the Bible. How often do we buy up opportunities to talk about it? How well do we know the Kingdom message we are supposed to be proclaiming?

The second reason Christ sent out His representatives was to heal. The purpose of miracle gifts like this was not for the apostles to draw attention to themselves. The miracles were intended to attract attention to the message of the Kingdom. After Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came and indwelt these men, they attracted attention to Jesus. For example, when Peter and John healed the crippled man, we read the rulers' response. *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).*

That was the purpose of the sign gifts until the full Scripture had been given. Once God had breathed out the bulk of Scripture, miracle signs by God's representatives ceased. We can even see the steady decline in the history of *The Acts of the Apostles*. Of course God can still do miracles according to His will and purpose in any age. But the regular exercise of gifts of healing and exorcism has ceased.

When Jesus sent out the twelve ordinary men, He sent them with specific instruction. He required that the representatives take no provisions. *And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics" (v.3).* That Jesus intended for the representatives to travel lightly is an understatement. The word *nothing* appears to mean "Go out with only the clothes on your back" . . . and "don't take any extra clothes with you!" Why the command for austerity?

This was a special mission by which Christ intended to increase the apostles' faith. They already were aware that their faith was weak, or shallow, or barely existing. Think of all the times in the past year-and-a-half when Jesus had brought up that weakness. There is *Matthew 14:31*, "*O you of little faith, why did you doubt?*" when Peter was sinking in the sea. Or when they marveled at the withered fig tree, He said to them, "*Because of your little faith*" (*Matthew 17:20*). We just studied couple of weeks ago how Jesus said to these guys, "*Where is your faith?*" And they were afraid, when He calmed the storm on the sea (*Luke 8:25*). Or again in *Mark 4:40*, He said to them, "*Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?*"

This sending out was for a short-term ministry trip. It does not set the same standard for the life's work of these apostles or for all of Christ's representatives even unto our age. The contrast is found in the context of some of Jesus's last instruction before the crucifixion where He taught, "*When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?*" They said, "*Nothing.*" He said to them, "*But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one*" (*Luke 22:35-36*). In our age, based on our experience, we know the Lord provides for His messengers. But His messengers should go out prepared.

On this trial run, the representatives would learn about reception and rejection of their proclamation of the Good News. "*And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them*" (*vv.4-5*).

When the messengers found a house that was hospitable, they were to stay there and be satisfied with what was graciously given. King Jesus desired for His representatives to be unlike the false

teachers who went from house to house gathering whatever money they could get to put in their bags. On the other hand, if a town was not receptive, Jesus instructed them to “*Shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.*” This odd bit of instruction stems from the old Jewish tradition of Jews returning home from a trip to Gentile lands. They would literally shake out their robes to remove any dust from the Gentiles that might contaminate them and make them ceremonially unclean.

Here it was a picture that the people had opportunity to embrace the Good News but chose to reject it. So Paul at Antioch Pisidia: *But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium (Acts 13:51).* And he did the same thing in response to rejection in the synagogue in Corinth: *And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles” (Acts 18:6).*

More good news is that, having received the instruction, the power, and the authority, the representatives went out. *And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere (v.6).* They obeyed the King’s command. They exercised authority and power everywhere. It seems quite certain from the text that this obedience included Judas Iscariot. He did what Jesus told him to do. Apparently, he too had power to heal and cast out demons (of which he was one). *Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil” (John 6:70).*

It appears that Judas also proclaimed the news of the Kingdom. But he was never part of it. He understood the words, but was not motivated by them. He was motivated by selfish interests and simply played the game to his own ends. What a picture he painted of the Hebrews 6 kind of people who see, experience, and share in the work of the Holy Spirit among other people, but never are governed by Him. Judas was like many pastors/teachers/church members who know the language, do the acceptable stuff all their lives. But they are never really part of the Kingdom.

King Jesus Avoided King Herod (vv.7-9).

The earthly king was perplexed (vv.7-9a). Herod heard all that was happening in his kingdom. *Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was perplexed (v.7a).* Herod ruled as king over an area approved and appointed by the Emperor Augustus. He had ruled throughout the entire earthly life of Jesus. He had to have heard all about Jesus. He, like a lot of people who hear about Jesus, was perplexed. He was at a loss to know what to think. He did not know how to put all the evidence together. He was convinced that things did not make sense.

One would think that Herod was perplexed specifically because he feared John. He knew that *it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead (v.7b).* And so in his confusion *Herod said, “John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?”(v.9a).* Fake news was causing Herod great fear. But in light of Jesus raising dead people, why wouldn’t God raise righteous John? If anyone should have had a guilty conscience, it should have been Herod. He admitted that John was a holy and righteous man (Mark 6:20). In fact, Herod seemed to enjoy hearing John preach.

Herod was not only perplexed about Jesus, but with that turmoil in his soul he understood something about prophets. He also heard by *some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. (v.8).* Herod had known that John was a prophet who spoke God’s truth. Living among Jews all his life, Herod knew about the Old Testament prophets and their messages against sin. Maybe he was aware of Malachi’s promise: *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes” (Malachi 4:5).* Even Jesus taught that John had been a type of the promised Elijah. Herod seemed to be afraid of Jesus, but in a strange way he was really interested in talking to Jesus.

Be that as it may, the heavenly King avoided Herod. Herod sought a meeting with Jesus (v.9b). Maybe he sent word to his servants that if Jesus was in the area he would like a meeting. But when he finally met Jesus, King Jesus took control of the circumstances and disappointed the wicked earthly king. In the context of Jesus’s illegal trial and crucifixion, *When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer*

(*Luke 23:8-9*). It appears that Jesus giving Herod the silent treatment didn't make him very happy. *And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate (Luke 23:11).*

Herod did not understand that Jesus, the King of kings, controlled Herod's destiny. Herod was such an evil man. John had confronted him about sin. Luke told us earlier in our study *But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reprovved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done" (Luke 3:19)*. Quite frankly, Herod had stolen his brother's wife.

This was Herod Antipas "the Tetrarch." Tetrarch means ruler of a fourth or one of four. He was the son of Herod the Great (the wicked Herod who killed the babies in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1-12). Herod the Great died in 4 BC about two years after Jesus was born. We read about that in Matthew's Gospel. *But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." (Matthew 2:19-20).*

Herod the Great bequeathed his kingdom (under oversight of the Emperor Augustus) to three of his sons (and one lesser known ruler, thus four rulers). Archelaus received Judea and Samaria. Antipas "the Tetrarch" (the guy in our text) received Galilee and Peraea. Philip received the Northeastern region of the kingdom. Jesus did not hesitate to expose this man's sinful nature to the apostles. *He cautioned them, saying, "Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod" (Mark 8:15)*. And though the man was a king, son of a powerful man, approved by the Emperor, Jesus held authority over the wicked king. Some time after this event, some Pharisees came and said to Jesus, *"Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you."* And he said to them, *"Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem'" (Luke 13:31-33)*. The timing of Jesus's life, ministry, death and resurrection was determined by His heavenly Father. Kings like Herod were merely pawns under the real King's authority.

King Jesus chose twelve very ordinary guys to carry out His ministry. He sent them out with power and the authority to use that power as a test for what they would experience as they served Him the rest of their lives. It is instructive to realize that a fraud like Judas was able to play the game so well. King Jesus also refused to submit to the earthly king Herod. It was not necessary for the King of kings to submit to earthly kings until it was time for Him to offer the sacrifice for sin. What do you think of King Jesus?