

LESSON 11

CHRIST AUTHORIZES APOSTLES

Scripture Text: Matthew 10:1-10, 34-39



When God calls one to His work He gives power to do that work. When we choose our own way, we cannot expect His help. Uncalled ones are unempowered ones. He calls not only leaders but each one to some place in His work. If we follow His leading, receive His Spirit, pray, study, and exercise to develop, He will enable us to fill those places. Jesus promised those He sent, then, and from that time on, **Lo, I am with you alway.**

This lesson aims to point out the need for workers to go into all the world and to set forth the opportunities and difficulties that confront Jesus' followers in their mission.

MEMORY VERSE: *He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*
Matthew 10:39

Jesus Gave Them Authority

Matthew 10:1-7 He . . . called unto him his twelve disciples. Jesus gave them authority for a special work. Rome would not have given men like Peter, Thomas, James, and John authority because they were not men with clenched fists. Caiaphas would never have given them authority because they were unlearned men. But Jesus did. They were given authority that men who seized power and who tried to assume authority could not come close to. **Gave them power against unclean spirits.** These spirits are demons and have greater power than humans. No human can withstand them without power from God. **And to heal**—neither can a human do this in his own power. When one operates under divine authority no unclean spirit or sickness can stand against the supernatural power of Christ's authority.

Names of the twelve . . . All were common workingmen, **unlearned and ignorant** (Acts 4:13). **Go not into the way of the Gentiles . . . Samaritans . . .** A temporary command for the present. Paul later on was to go to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46-47). **Go rather to the lost sheep . . . of Israel**—This limitation of their efforts was put on them because the time had not yet come for them to minister to the Gentile nations. It took a marvelous vision later to convince Peter of the worldwide need of the Gospel. **As ye go, preach . . .** We are to preach every minute of the day, not necessarily by the spoken Word but by conducting ourselves in such a way that people will see the Gospel of Christ manifested in our lives. Their message was a simple one: **The kingdom of heaven is at hand.** Heaven came to earth in the Person of Jesus. He it was who established the heavenly life among men. By the exercise of the authority which He has given us, by the consecration of our hearts to His Spirit, by continual submission to His guidance, and by wholehearted service, we can be co-workers with Him in His great kingdom. **At hand**—for you and for me and for all the world.

Our Working Orders

Matthew 10:8-10 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils—the message backed up, verified by miracles. Notice how Jesus describes the kingdom of Heaven. It was to be an era in which the sick would be healed, the infected cleansed, the dead raised, and the distraught by Satan would be restored to sanity. Physical and spiritual miracles both were authorized. In a sense it can be said that it is the business of the church to bring

Heaven down to earth. **Provide neither gold**—money, **scrip**—food, **two coats**—clothing, **staves**—weapons. Did God want them to be foolish? No, God just had a better way. **The workman is worthy of his meat**—food. God was going to care for them through others of His children, thus giving a double blessing—to both the giver and the receiver. The Apostles lacked nothing (Luke 22:35). (Later Jesus was to tell them to take such things as they needed in Luke 22:36.) The twelve received two temporary commands applying to that trip alone—to go to Israel only, and to carry no provisions. This shows God's power and will to provide for His servants. It is not wrong but our duty to use our resources to supply our needs so long as doing so does not turn our eyes from Jesus or hinder in the work He has given us. Christ wants our faith placed in Him as Provider. God still provides for those who cut loose from dependence on self and the world, putting God's will first and trusting Him for all needs (Matthew 6:33).

The Reward of the Righteous

Matthew 8:34-39 Not . . . peace, but a sword. Christ's Gospel is revolutionary. It upsets lives, customs, families, and nations. Make an all-out commitment to Christ and you will see and feel the sword. Christ's program is not one of complacency, compromise, acceptance of everything. It is one of final separation between right and wrong, true and false, holiness and sin. One will find there is war between Christ and Satan. Christ's peace is with God in the heart, not peace with the world. **He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me**—Our dearest earthly loves must be second to our love for Christ. **He that taketh not his cross . . . is not worthy of me.** To us the counsel is that we are to be prepared for opposition as we take our stand for Christ. Let us be neither amazed nor discouraged if men jeer at us and oppose us when we take our stand for the things of Christ against their love of comfort, their spiritual indifference, and their evil ways. **Taketh**—taking our cross is voluntary acceptance of all hardship and sacrifice that comes because of our devotion to Him. Our Lord's basic demand is surrender to His will.

Findeth his life . . . lose it—accept the cross—the daily pain and death to self and the flesh. (Read Matthew 16:24-25.) There are those who live for themselves, who draw to themselves those pleasures, possessions, friends, and accomplishments which they think will build up their lives into something that will please themselves. Such lives may appear a great success in this world, but they will be lost in the next one. **Loseth his life for my sake . . . find it.** He who lives for the Lord, who has died to self and gives himself, his possessions, labor, love, and life for Jesus' sake, who measures his actions by whether or not it will please and serve God, who counts not his life dear unto himself, will live eternally in Heaven. Not only that, but this life is worth living in this world also. When God calls one to His work He gives power to do that work. When we try to choose our own way, we cannot expect His help. Uncalled ones are unempowered ones. He calls not only leaders but each one to some place in His work (1 Corinthians 12:18).

JUST A THOUGHT

We are called by Jesus when the Spirit first speaks to our hearts; we are commissioned when some opportunity for service challenges us.