

Yeshua Instructs His Emissaries on Their Mission ~ Part 1

To Be Like Yeshua Means – To Affirm Others

In my last post, we introduced the twelve talmidim who Yeshua commissioned to be His emissaries. In this post and the next, we will explore the instructions that He gave to them to carry His message to their neighbors.

"These twelve Yeshua sent out with the following instructions: ¹⁵Don't go into the territory of the Goyim, and don't enter any town in Shomron, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Isra'el. ⁷As you go, proclaim, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is near,' ⁸heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those afflicted with tzara'at, expel demons. ⁹You have received without paying, so give without asking payment. Don't take money in your belts, no gold, no silver, no copper; ¹⁰and for the trip don't take a pack, an extra shirt, shoes or a walking stick — a worker should be given what he needs." ~ Matthew 10:5-10

Yeshua **sent out** the twelve emissaries on a mission to preach the coming of the kingdom (10:7) and exercise the authority over demons and sickness that Yeshua gave them (10:1). Yeshua gave specific **instructions**, however, regarding the focus of their ministry: **"Don't go into the territory of the Goyim, and don't enter any town in Shomron** (Samaria)." A "**Goyim**" was anyone who was not a Jew. The "**Samaritans**" were a race that resulted from intermarriage between Jews and Goyim after the exile (2 Kings 17:24).

This did not mean that Yeshua opposed evangelizing Gentiles and Samaritans; in fact, Matthew had already described Yeshua's encounter with Gentiles (8:28-34), and John 4 recounts his conversation with a Samaritan woman. Yeshua's command to **go rather to the lost sheep of Israel** means that the emissaries should spend their time among the Jews (see also 15:24).

These words restricted the emissaries to "short-term" missions in Galilee. Gentile territory lay to the north and Samaritan territory to the south. Yeshua came not to the Jews only, but to the Jews "first" (Romans 1:16). God chose them to tell the rest of the world about him. Later, these emissaries would receive the commission to "go and make talmidim of all nations" (28:19). Jewish talmidim and emissaries preached the Gospel of the risen Messiah all around the Roman Empire, and soon Gentiles were pouring into the messianic community. The Bible clearly teaches that God's message of salvation is for all people, regardless of race, sex, or national origin (Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 25:6; 56:3-7; Malachi 1:11; Acts 10:34, 35; Romans 3:29, 30; Galatians 3:28).

"Sheep" was an affectionate term used often of God's people in the Tanakh (Isaiah 53:6; Jeremiah 50:6; Ezekiel 34). We can see their "**lostness**" in the thoughtless rituals and man-made laws commanded by their religious leaders. Yeshua, the Good Shepherd, came to re-gather the lost sheep.

The emissaries went out as Yeshua's representatives, spreading His message. Both John the Baptist and Yeshua had preached **"the kingdom of heaven is at hand"** (3:2; 4:17), so He sent His emissaries out to also **proclaim** that **the kingdom of heaven** was near. The Jews were waiting for the Messiah to usher in His kingdom. They were hoping for a political and military kingdom that would free them from Roman rule and bring back the days of glory under David and Shlomo. But Yeshua was talking about a spiritual kingdom.

The Gospel today is that the kingdom is still "**near.**" Yeshua, the Messiah, has already begun His kingdom on earth in the hearts of His followers. One day the kingdom will be fully realized. The emissaries were also to use the authority and power he had given them (10:1) to **heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those afflicted with tzara'at, expel demons**, just as they had seen Yeshua do. These four miracles were exactly the miracles Yeshua had done and would demonstrate that the emissaries had Yeshua's power.

Yeshua gave the emissaries a principle to guide their actions as they ministered to others: ***Freely you have received, freely give.*** ^(NASB) The emissaries had received salvation and the kingdom without cost; they should

give their time under the same principle. Because God has showered us with his blessings, we should give generously to others of our time, love, and possessions.

These instructions seem, at first, to be contrary to our normal travel plans, but they simply reveal the urgency of the task and its temporary nature. Mark records that Yeshua sent the talmidim in pairs (Mark 6:7), expecting them to return with a full report. This was a training mission; they were to leave immediately and travel light, taking along only minimal supplies. They were to depend on God and on the people to whom they ministered (10:11).

Most people leaving on a journey would carry money in their *belts*. Normally each one would carry a *bag for the journey* to carry supplies, an *extra tunic* for added warmth at night, *sandals* to protect feet on rough terrain, and a *staff* for help in walking. But Yeshua forbade them to take along any of these things. Mark recorded that Yeshua instructed the talmidim to take nothing with them *except* staffs, while the accounts in Matthew and Luke say that Yeshua told them *not* to take staffs. One explanation for this difference is that Matthew and Luke were referring to a club used for protection, whereas Mark was talking about a shepherd's crook used for walking. Another explanation is that according to Matthew and Luke, Yeshua was forbidding them to acquire an *additional* staff or sandals, but instead to use what they already had. The point in all three accounts is the same: The emissaries were to leave at once, without extensive preparation, trusting in God's care rather than in their own resources. Yeshua's instructions pertained only to this particular mission.

Indeed, just after Yeshua and the emissaries ate the Last Supper, Yeshua would ask them: "*When I sent you out without wallet, pack or shoes, were you ever short of anything?*" "*Not a thing,*" they answered.³⁶ "*But now,*" he said, *if you have a wallet or a pack, take it; and if you don't have a sword, sell your robe to buy one.*" (Luke 22:35-36). Different times and situations would call for different measures, but Messianic workers still can reveal the simplicity of Messiah when they carry out ministry without excessive worldly entanglements. Yeshua said "*the worker is worth his keep,*" meaning that those who minister are to receive care from those to whom they minister. The emissaries could expect food and shelter in return for the spiritual service they provided. These words are paralleled in Luke 10:17 and were quoted by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:18, where they are given the ascription, "the Scripture" ~ alongside a quotation of Deuteronomy 25:4. Thus, this Scripture was used by Paul to urge the Messianics to financially support the workers among them.

In my next post, we will continue with the instructions that Yeshua gave to the 12 emissaries for their training mission.