

Devotion: June 11, 2020

Matthew 10: 1-23

¹ *Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.*

² *These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.*

⁵ *These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.*

⁹ *“Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts—¹⁰ no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. ¹¹ Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. ¹² As you enter the home, give it your greeting. ¹³ If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.*

¹⁶ *“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. ¹⁷ Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. ¹⁸ On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, ²⁰ for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.*

²¹ *“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. ²² You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. ²³ When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.*

George Floyd

Sean Monterrosa

Ahmaud Arbery

Breonna Taylor

Philando Castile

Trayvon Martin

Eric Garner

Where does it start?

Does it start with the recognition that in the Gospel Jesus warns his disciples not about outsiders but insiders? The wolves aren't the Gentiles or the Samaritans... or the immigrants or illegals; they're the synagogue leaders and council elders, the temple security and political officials that will threaten the mission of the disciples.

Or does it start with the fact that Matthew says their names.

Twelve apostles about whom we know next to nothing, twelve among far more who witnessed Jesus. Yet we remember them because Matthew says their names.

Since 2014, when Michael's Brown's death at the hands of white police officers started an outcry for reform, the levels of similar deaths have stayed constant, hovering between 1000-1200 every year. No decline. None.

Of late, we have been called to, like Matthew, say the names: George Floyd, Sean Monterrosa, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Philando Castile, Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner. We don't know much about most of these folks. They are certainly not alone. But saying their names keeps their memory before us.

Perhaps, like Jesus and all of the apostles, it's naming the names to honor those unjustly killed, And while we may differ on a lot of issues and bring different experiences and perspectives, God entrusts us to proclaim the good news in word and also in deed: "*Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.*" Or perhaps it's simply the invitation for us to model Jesus' example and his teachings to look beyond actions to need, to see the pain and hurt and unheard cries, to view those around us not in fear but with compassion.

That's where we start.

Let us pray:

From self-righteousness that will not compromise,

and from selfishness that gains by the oppression of others,
O Lord, deliver us.

From the lust for money or power that drives to kill,

O Lord, deliver us.

*From trusting in the weapons of war,
and mistrusting the councils of peace,*

O Lord, deliver us.

From hearing, believing, and speaking lies about other nations

O Lord, deliver us.

From suspicions and fears that stand in the way of reconciliation

O Lord, deliver us.

*From words and deeds that encourage discord, prejudice, and hatred;
from everything that prevents us from fulfilling your promise of peace,
O Lord, deliver us. Amen.*