

You know the old saying, “If you want something done right, you’ve gotta do it yourself”, Sometimes:

- there’s a fair bit of truth in that;
- there’s a fair bit of ugly pride in that statement; and
- because we’re not willing to let someone else do stuff, we ourselves get so busy, it means:
 - that thing that’s really important, doesn’t get done at all; or
 - it doesn’t get done at the right time;**and**
 - we’re preventing the development of another person – for **them** to learn how to do it properly.

When I used to teach at the Ag College, it wasn’t a difficult thing, to pick the lads who’s fathers had taken the time to teach them to do stuff...

There were two other types:

- *There were those who had free-reign – they were allowed to go and do stuff without first being taught. And these sorts of fellows were “full of confidence”, but “hard on gear”. Yes, they knew how to do stuff, and they were confident in doing stuff, but they didn’t know how to do it well.*
- *And then there were others, who probably had very capable fathers, who **could’ve** taught them, but they didn’t (simply because they could do it a whole lot quicker themselves, their sons didn’t get a chance, because it would slow the whole operation down)...*

And so, I was teaching the practical side of farming (a lot of machinery operation), and some of the students were starting from up here. Before they turned up at college, somebody had taken the time to teach them. Whereas some of them were starting from down here (not because they were stupid, but because nobody had taken the time to teach them practical skills).

My job then, was to train them to operate machinery properly, and to show them how to look after machinery, ,, and there'd be different stages to this training:

- *First, we'd go through the workings, and I'd teach them how it works; and*
- *how to maintain it; and*
- *then I'd get in the drivers' seat myself, and show them how it's supposed to be done; and*
- *then they'd get in the drivers' seat and I'd sit beside them, and talk them through it, and I'd be with them while they got the hang-of-it.; and*
- *during that time, I'd:*
 - *give them a few pointers;*
 - *correct what they were doing wrong;*
 - *talk to them about the possible problems they might have*

- *And then finally, it would get to the stage where I would have to decide that it was now safe to get off the machine, and let them develop their skills without me there.*

That's what training is about. We teach; impart; and then let them have a go... Does that mean that they're going to do everything perfectly when I get out of the cab? No. But there's going to be opportunities for feedback and more training later on...

And that's what's happening in today's Bible reading.

Up to this point, Jesus has been demonstrating His power/authority, and the Disciples are beginning to grasp "who Jesus is". And Jesus has been preaching, and He's been teaching.

He's been teaching:

- in the synagogues;
- in the crowds;
- in private;
- from the boat
- on the side of a hill
- in parables;
- in plain language;

What's He been teaching? - The Good News of the Kingdom of God.

And the disciples have been with Him every step of the way – they’ve been seeing/hearing/learning...

And this is what Discipleship is about – Hearing; Seeing; Learning; - not just to increase knowledge, but to be trained in the things of God – to **know** the Good News of the Kingdom of God...

And then, the **next** step of Discipleship, is like when I got out of the tractor, and said, “Right, it’s now your turn.” — The next step of being Disciples of Jesus, is to take what we’ve learned and to put it into action, and to impart what we’ve been taught, on to others. And so Jesus sends the 12 Apostles out on the first ever short-term church mission trip.

Now, at this stage, it is only the 12 apostles that Jesus sends out – they are the first batch of Jesus' trainees (if you like). When we get to chapter 10, Jesus sends an additional 72 of His disciples on a very similar mission trip.

And so what Jesus is doing here (sending out the 12), isn’t only something the special Apostles do. **All** Disciples of Jesus are trained up and sent out, to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God.... (this just happens to be the 1st batch).

Righto, so there’s 9 points that I want to bring out of today’s reading:

1. Jesus equips His chosen disciples – He **empowers** them and authorises them.

Up until now, the Gospel of Luke has been establishing the power and authority of Jesus, but today, we encounter **another** aspect of Jesus' power:– We discover that Jesus also has the power and authority to empower and authorise, those whom He sends out on mission....

[He] gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases

Now, some folk get all wrapped up in this bit, because they love the power-rush... (*“Oh yeah - Look how wonderful we are – we’ve got the power”*)... But the focus here, isn’t on basking in their new-found power and authority – the focus is on **the mission**. The power and authority are simply aids, for the sake of the mission. And we’ll get to what the mission is shortly.

2. Jesus sends out His disciples.

And we’ve already touched on this. Jesus calls us to not be mere converts or “groupies” – He calls us to be disciples. We watch Him (/listen to/learn from). And the whole time, He’s preparing **us** to be sent out.

To send us out for what? (get a coffee? Have a holiday?) To be sent out on mission.

3. The **purpose** of being sent out, is to proclaim the Kingdom of God, and to heal.

The “Kingdom of God” is an important concept in the Gospel of Luke. I think it’s 32 times Jesus refers to the Kingdom of God.

And the Kingdom of God, is what is being preached.

The Kingdom of God is like a tiny seed that gets planted, but grows into an enormous tree... And that’s what’s happening here. Jesus began preaching the Good News of the Kingdom of God. And He passed the batten on to His disciples (12), and then onto the 72, and then at Pentecost, it was 120.

And God has been faithful. In every generation, God has been faithful in sending His disciples out. And the Gospel has been proclaimed into every corner of this spherical world.

How has that been achieved? By empowering, authorising, and sending out Disciples of Jesus, to proclaim the Kingdom of God.

Alright, so what part does “healing” play in this? (**to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.**) You know, we good evangelical types will often focus on the first part and neglect the second. And the Pentecostals might focus on the healing and neglect the “proclaiming”.

Healing, has always been a demonstration of the power and the mercy of God. It's a little foretaste of the full healing that's going to come when Christ returns and we are raised with Him in glory.

Don't ever get it into your head that people aren't miraculously healed today. Of course they are healed. That's why we pray for healing for those who are sick. But we also pray, "Your will be done", because we know that healing isn't the greatest blessing – salvation is.

4. When we are sent, go in faith, trusting in the provision of God.

Jesus said to His disciples, "Don't take anything with you".

Don't take:

- a staff;
- a bag;
- bread;
- money
- 2nd set of clothes

Alright, He was sending them on a short-term mission trip.

Sadly, most short-term mission trips of today, are more like a holiday-style emersion experience., Where the camper pays up front, and all their flights, accommodation and catering is guaranteed, and they've got their medical insurance for if any health issues arise, and they know that they're going to have a good time while they are away. They know their guide is

going to be leading them, and they're not going to go wanting...

But when Jesus sent His disciples on their short-term mission trip, it was very different. They took nothing, and so they were totally dependent on God, and they were totally dependent on the locals they were sent to. And so they experienced the provision of God.

When the Kingdom of God is preached, it is right for those who are receiving the ministry, to provide for those who are doing the ministry.

And when out on a short-term mission, it doesn't take much.

5. Live simply.

Jesus said, "When you find someone who will take you in, stay with that one host until you're leaving."

We've got a friend (some of you will know Him), When his wife would go away, if we knew she was away, we might invite him to dinner. And he'd say with a smile on his face, "What is for dinner?" And we'd tell him. And he'd say, "I'll let you know later in the day – I might get a better offer."

(It was a great old joke)

But that's pretty much what Jesus is getting at here – don't go looking for a more comfy bed or a better cook – When someone opens up their home, that's where God has put you – that's where you stay, and be content with what's provided.

Live simply – not about our comfort.

6. When we go about Jesus' business, don't expect that we're always going to be welcome.

Jesus said, **wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet..."**

Sometimes the Good News of the Kingdom of God, **is** very well received. And praise God for when people respond to the Gospel, and turn their hearts toward Him...

But often, the message, and those who proclaim it, are despised... And how sad that is – the Gospel that **would** bring them life – they hate it...

Which brings us to:

7. When the Kingdom of God **is** rejected, it's not the fault of the message, **Nor** is it the fault of the one who delivers the message – the responsibility and the consequences of rejecting Jesus – that's on the hearer...

I reckon way too often, we beat ourselves up when others reject Jesus:

- It's the Pastor's fault. If only had a better Pastor, then the person I brought along to church would've been

converted; or

- It's my fault. If I did it better, then they would have believed;
- If I was more convincing/entertaining/interesting, then they would've believed...

No they wouldn't...

And sadly, often the fear of doing it wrong, stops us from sharing our faith at all – It's the fear of failure... "What if I share my faith with this person, and I don't convert them? It'll be **my** fault: **I** failed."

No. You **haven't** failed. Any time you share your faith – Any time you share the good news of the Kingdom of God, that is complete success. When a person rejects Jesus, that's on them.

Jesus said:

wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them."

Apparently that's something the Jews would do when they were leaving Gentile territory. Sometimes, rather than walk through Gentile territory, they might go miles out of their way to skirt around it. But if they **had** to pass through Gentile territory, as they left, they'd shake the dust off their feet, because they didn't want to be bringing any of them filthy, stinking Gentile germs into their world of purity...

And Jesus is saying, if that place rejects you and rejects the Gospel, don't let them rub off on you – don't you carry that burden of rejection – it's on them.

In John 15, Jesus said:

John 15:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

He also said:

John 15:20 (ESV)

²⁰ ... If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. ...

Being rejected for the sake of Jesus – that's normal. But it's not your burden.

So, what does God require of us?

8. Obedience.

Jesus sent them out, and what did they do? ⁶ ... they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

There's no greater satisfaction, than obediently stepping out to do what Jesus sends us to do. If those Disciples had stayed put when Jesus said "Go", firstly they wouldn't be disciples. But secondly, they never would have experienced the work that God did through them.

9. When God does His work through the lowly, even kings will notice.

Jesus has been drawing crowds; healing the sick; raising the dead,,. But it's when the **Disciples** of Jesus were given power and authority, and when the **Disciples** of Jesus went out to proclaim the Kingdom of God, that's when King Herod (tetrarch) sat up and took notice...

He'd killed John the Baptist, but some were saying, "He's come back to life again". Some said it was Elijah; some said it was one of the other prophets of old... But it made Herod decide, "I want to see Jesus for myself."

And that's the way it's supposed to be. As we obediently step out to be witnesses for Jesus, it's not about us – it's all about Jesus.

When we proclaim the Kingdom of God (with the authority and power of Jesus), it's Jesus they'll want to see (not us), and I'm happy with that.

And this is what being a Disciples of Jesus is about.

- Learning from Jesus;
- learning about the Kingdom of God;
- and stepping out to teach others about the Kingdom of God... (in order to bring them to Him.)

To the glory of Jesus.

Sentence: Empowered and authorised to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal. For the glory of Jesus.

Scripture: Luke 9:1-9

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Page: 13 of 13

Bush Disciples

Amen.