

## 40. The ambassadors for Christ

July 31, 2016

The definition of “ambassador” is “an accredited diplomat sent by a country as its official representative to a foreign country.” In other words, what an ambassador says and does in a foreign country is a reflection of the country he was sent from.

We who are born-again Christians are the ambassadors for Christ. Some of you are thinking, “Hey, I got a promotion. Where are my limousine and chauffeur?” Dream on! The apostle Paul told us that our citizenship is in heaven and we are here temporarily. While we are here on earth, we represent our Lord Jesus to all the unbelievers.

*Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ*

Before the Lord Jesus sent out His disciples two by two at the beginning of His third circuit tour around the Galilee region, He gave them clear instructions what to do while they were out there without Him. As He was doing it, He also spoke to His future disciples who will go through tremendously tough times during the Great Tribulation as well as those who are living in the present time. We can learn valuable lessons for the way of our living from today’s lesson.

### A. COMMISSION OF THE APOSTLES

*Matthew 10:5-10 These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. 9 Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, 10 nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.*

I probably mentioned this previously. A “disciple” means a “learner,” one who follows a teacher and learns from him. Jesus had many disciples – some just hung around because He was a miracle worker, but some truly believed in Him. The Lord Jesus chose 12 men and these were called “apostles.” The Greek word for this is “apostolos,” which means “to send forth with a commission.” It was used by the Greeks for the personal representatives of the king. In other words, it is like an ambassador who functioned with the king’s authority.

Speaking of apostles, there are some people who are alive now claim to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. Wrong, very wrong. The title should not come from humans, but from the Lord. Here are three qualifications of Jesus’ apostle:

#### 1) He must have seen the risen Christ.

*1 Corinthians 9:1 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?*

#### 2) He must have fellowshiped with the risen Christ.

*Acts 1:21-22 “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”*

### 3) He must have chosen by Christ.

*Ephesians 4:11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers*

It means that the office of the apostleship of the Lord Jesus Christ is closed.

I know some of you are thinking, "Uh, what about Judas? Was he not a part of this group? Does it mean that we should consider him an apostle?" No, he was replaced by the apostle Paul of Tarsus, not Matthias who was selected by the apostles. How do I know? Do any of you know any NT verse that mentions Matthias other than Acts 1:26? Not once. One of my favorite Bible commentators Warren Wiersbe wrote that Matthias replaced Judas as an apostle in one of his commentaries. All due respect, Dr. Wiersbe, you are wrong on that one.

### B. JESUS' INSTRUCTIONS TO THE APOSTLES

*Matthew 10:11-15 Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. 12 And when you go into a household, greet it. 13 If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. 15 Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!*

The apostles were supposed to start to minister to the Israelis first, then to the Gentiles. These chosen people were not to compromise. If people rejected their words, they were to leave them with the warning of God's judgment.

### C. JESUS' INSTRUCTIONS TO FUTURE DISCIPLES

*Matthew 10:16-23 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18 You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. 21 Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.*

Now Jesus is talking about the ministry to the Gentiles, the Holy Spirit who has not come upon His disciples yet. The Lord also mentions about a worldwide persecution. These are the reasons, I believe, are His instructions to the future disciples, the followers of Jesus during the Great Tribulation.

God's servants will be like sheep in the midst of wolves. They will need to be "tough-minded, but tenderhearted." This opposition will come from organized religion – v17, government – v18, and even the family – v21.

I am going to get off to a side track for a few minutes. In my opinion, this year's election is the most important election that all of us face in the US. Let me make this

very clear to you that Trump is not my choice, but he is far better than the other one – Hillary Clinton. She will make this country much worse than what Obama did. During her administration, if she gets elected, at least 3 of the Supreme Court Justices will retire. She will replace them with the ultra liberal judges and they will reinterpret the Constitution of the United States according to Hillary's agendas.

You can kiss your freedom of religion and expression goodbye. Any comment against her and her agendas will be suppressed legally. There will be a nationwide civil war that will pretty much divide the citizens according to the race – white vs. black. This war will make the previous civil war that was fought from 1861 to 1865 like nothing. It means that the stock market will go down in the dump and your retirement fund will be evaporated. If you are planning to vote for her as the next president, please do not complain about what she will do to this country, your freedom, and your life in the future.

The persecutions against Christianity and the followers of Jesus Christ have been continuing since Jesus started His public ministry. Currently over 100,000 people die every year around the world for the sake of their belief in Christ Jesus according to the Voice of the Martyrs ministry. This persecution against the believers will be intensified to its maximum during the Tribulation period.

Did you notice what Jesus said, "*for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the gentiles*" in v18? God is allowing persecutions against Christians to bring testimonies of Jesus Christ to the people who persecute us. Because God loves them and He wants them to come to know Jesus as their Savior and Lord, too.

Our loving God doesn't take the death of His children lightly.

*Psalm 116:15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.*

The believers of the Great Tribulation that will start after the rapture will have a time of opportunity, opposition, and obligation:

They will have opportunities to witness from common people to those who will be in authority to punish or kill them as they face persecution. The Holy Spirit will give them courage to stand and speak through them, much like Stephen did boldly in front of the Jewish religious leaders in Acts 7.

They will also have opposition from every direction. Many of them will be killed. Their own family members will betray them and turn them over to the authority to have them arrested. It will be much like the time of emperor Nero in Roman Empire, if not worse.

I am speaking to those who are not born-again Christians here now. If you are not making that important decision of receiving Jesus into your heart while there is no full blown persecution, what makes you think that you will during the Tribulation time? To save your life, you will have to make an allegiance to the devil like the rest of the population on earth. Come to the Lord while you can now.

They will also have an obligation. As the ambassadors for Christ, they must endure to the end and faithfully perform their ministry, even if it costs them their lives.

#### **D. JESUS' INSTRUCTIONS TO PRESENT DISCIPLES**

*Matthew 10:24-42 A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a ser-*

vant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household! 26 Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. 27 "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. 28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. 32 "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. 34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 36 and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' 37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. 40 "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. 41 He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

Our God has no "Secret Service agents." The public confession of faith in Christ is a part of the evidences of true salvation through Him. Our enemy, the devil uses secrets and deceptions to oppose the Lord and to trap us. But our lives should be an open book for anyone to see so that we can witness to others with our lives more than words.

Our life should be not to please men or ourselves over the Lord, but to proclaim His Word. What men can do to us may frighten us, but our Lord holds our eternal future and He will judge our enemies' future and send them to hell.

Confessing the Lord Jesus as your Savior and Lord takes more than lip service. It also means to back it up with our life. Anyone can say, "Jesus is my Savior," but it is a completely different thing for a person to surrender to Him and obey His will over one's own. Our walk and talk must go together.

Once we become born-again Christians, we are part of a war that God declared on satan in Genesis 3 after he deceived Eve. If a believer wants to escape conflicts from the devil and the people who blindly follow, he can deny Christ and compromise his witness. But that would be a sin. It means that the believer would be at war with God. I guarantee you that he ain't gonna win against God, PERIOD!

We can compromise and spare ourselves from the conflict of the devil because he will leave you alone and become the enemy of God. Or deny what our carnal desires want and take up our cross and follow Christ and have peace with the Lord. There is no middle ground.

## **E. APPLICATIONS**

**1) No matter how difficult our circumstances may be, we can turn opposition into opportunities to witness about Jesus Christ.**

We can trust the Holy Spirit to help us remember what the Lord has taught us.

**2) Without the Word of God in our hearts, we won't be able to withstand the persecution against our faith in Christ.**

Let's memorize the Word of God as much as we can. It is our spiritual bread and water to our soul.

**3) You decide which side you are going to stay with once and for all: God or the devil. There is no middle ground.**

Don't play games with God. You lose.