

LIFE CHURCH SERMON SCRIPTURES FOR JANUARY 27, 2013

Today's teachers: Valerie and Al Copeland

“Harvesting: You Will Be My Witnesses”

Matthew 9:35-10:15 (NIV)

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

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

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; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

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

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

IDEA: There are crowds of suffering people needing the care of a compassionate shepherd. The Father has prepared them to be harvested (or brought into the Kingdom) but there are not enough workers.

PURPOSE: To help listeners to see themselves as laborers in the Father's harvest field by identifying the “crowds” in their lives and understanding that compassion is at the heart of ministry.

ACTS 1:1-9

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, **he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.** He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but **wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.**”

Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**”

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Life Church Mission Statement

To teach people

- to enjoy knowing Jesus without fear, inadequacy, guilt, or shame,
- to follow him together as his family,
- to function together as his body,
- and to work together to expand his kingdom.

Group Activity:

Consider people you have relationships with that do not know the love of Jesus.

Have you ever wanted to share the Good News of Jesus the Christ with them but just didn't know how?

Share with your group who they are and what about them draws your attention.

Spend time in your group praying for them and asking the Father to help you know how to approach them.

Life Church Web Site: <http://www.lifechurchboston.org/>