



Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles

The context for this passage is the pity that Jesus has for his people. Their leaders have not fed them with God's word, so Jesus turns his own students (the disciples) into apostles—ones who are sent with God's teaching. But, he tells them to only go to the people of Israel. This sounds odd to us because we know that the gospel is offered to all nations. Upon further inspection, however, this is actually good strategy. If Jesus can get the “insiders” onboard, then transformation can begin. To effect change, one always needs a core group of people to motivate others. By sending the apostles, the teaching that God's grace is a free gift to all people, can start to revolutionize the world.

Scripture: Matthew 9:36, 10:1-8

Bottom Line: The Kingdom depends on turning discipleship into apostleship.

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus says God's people were without a shepherd. The people didn't know that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. What do you think this means? If we are to follow the apostles lead, how can we preach this today?
2. What responsibility does the leadership of the church have to shepherd the people? What responsibility does the parish council have? What about parents' (and godparents') responsibility toward their children? What about you?
3. Does the church have a responsibility to spread the Good News in the world, to be a shepherd in the community? How can St. George step up and become a shepherd in our area?
4. The reason the disciples had to become apostles was because the current religious leadership had failed to teach about God's free gift of grace to all peoples. When have you failed to be an apostle? How can you be transformed from a student (disciple) of Christ to one who is sent out (an apostle) to preach and heal in God's name? What does such a transformation require of you?

Moving Forward

At the end of today's passage, the newly commissioned apostles are told that they are to “give without pay.” This, of course, is a reference to the gift of grace—the gospel. God gave his grace to them free of charge, and they also are to give it freely. In short, it means they can't “sell” God's message, so they are dependent only on God for their “daily bread.” The real question is whether they are willing to live and die for the gospel. This week, how will you become an apostle, living for God's message, and depending on him for your “daily bread”?

Changing Your Mind

“And preach as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons.” (Matthew 10:7-8)