

ChristReformationChurch

Tillamook, Oregon

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com

www.lightfordarktimes.com

*The Gospel According to
Matthew*

*The Authority of Christ's
Kingdom and its Evidences*

October 21, 2018

Sermon Text: Matthew 10

Scripture Reading: Acts 19:11-20

We read Matthew chapter 10 two weeks ago in order to better understand what the miracles of Christ in chapter 9 and the preceding chapters were meant to demonstrate. We will look at it in more detail this morning.

Listen to this commentator in his introductory preface to his two volume commentary on the Gospel of Matthew:

“The church is a society of sinners, but Christians have a strange habit of forgetting that. In colonial America,

many towns had just one church building. Whenever the people built a new church, delicate discussions began to determine which families would inhabit which pews. Those who had performed useful public service and those whose wealth granted them influence were entitled to the best pews, at the front of the church. They assumed that some people deserve to sit in the front seat, in the position of honor. But Jesus warned against that very thing, the quest for seats of honor (Matt 23:1-6).

The church is a society of sinners, but we have a hard time remembering that. The Great evangelist George Whitefield once complained that the way people dress their children for baptism suggests that they forget that they present a sinful child to the Lord to appeal for his mercy. Instead, infants are “wrapped up in such fine things, and so much pains taken to dress them, that one would think they were brought there to be initiated into, rather than to renounce, the pomps and vanities” of the world.

The church is a society of sinners.

We do not approach God, bearing our good deeds on a platter, so as to impress him. Left to ourselves, we do not approach God at all, not even to ask for mercy. God comes to us before we ever come to him. He comes despite our sin, not because of our imagined goodness. This is obvious in the case of Jesus' call of Matthew." [Daniel Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary, Vol 1, p. 378]

I want to demonstrate to you this morning that this kind of teaching is absolutely false – that the Church is NOT a society of sinners and the Bible never calls it such. To claim that the church is a society of sinners *negates the kingdom authority Christ has given to His church.* And furthermore I want to show you *that every Christian has been given Christ's kingdom authority as a validation of the message of His kingdom that we announce to the world.*

We will begin with the second thesis first.

Every Christian has been given Christ's kingdom authority as a validation of the message of His kingdom that we are to announce to the world.

Why aren't more people listening to the message? I will show you at least one primary reason:

Mat 10:1-15 And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. (2) The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; (3) Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; (4) Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

(5) These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, (6) but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

(7) And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' (8) Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. (9) Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, (10) no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food.

(11) And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. (12) As you

enter the house, greet it. (13) And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. (14) And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. (15) Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

How do you “give authority”? Think about this. Well in order to give it, you must first have it. Christ had authority and has authority. Over all things. Demons. Diseases. Physical and organic matter. Energy. Every single created thing in this universe and in the heavenlies, He rules over and everything must obey Him.

Without this authority, here is what happens:

Act 19:15 But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?"

Now, ask once more – *how do you give authority?* When I was a police officer, I had authority. I wore a uniform and a badge that evidenced I had such authority. I had the right to arrest people. To enforce the law. Under certain circumstances I could even kill someone. I could turn on my overhead lights and order a driver to pull over. I

could write a traffic citation that said something to the effect, “in the name of the state of Oregon you are required to appear in district court at....”.

But what about this authority that Jesus granted to the 12? Listen to it once more:

Mat 10:1 And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.

Mat 10:7-8 And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' (8) Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.

How did Jesus do this? I think the key is demonstrated in passages like this:

Luk 4:1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness

1Th 1:5 because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

Act 4:7-8 And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what

power or by what name did you do this?" (8) Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders,

Act 6:8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people.

Act 6:9-10 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. (10) But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.

Act 13:9-10 But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him (10) and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?"

Mic 3:8 But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.

Jesus' power was and still is bound up with the Person of the Spirit. Before Jesus began His earthly ministry, He was baptized and the Spirit came upon Him. Then He went out and began to

preach and do His miracles. Look at this direct connection of the two:

Mat 12:22-28 Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. (23) And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" (24) But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons." (25) Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. (26) And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? (27) And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. (28) **But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**

All of these Scriptures and more tell us plainly that the authority of Christ was given to Him by the Father and the *power* of Christ was effected through the Spirit in Him. Think of it. This makes sense. It was the Spirit of the Lord hovering over the chaos at creation, active in creating, proceeding from the Father and the Son.

The source of the power of Christ in His miracles then is the Spirit. And that is what He gave to the twelve so that they had not only authority, but *power* to effect the same mighty works Christ did.

Joh 20:21-23 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." (22) And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. (23) If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

Now, every single Christian is commanded by Christ to do this. That command is how this Gospel of Matthew ends in fact:

Mat 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Alright then, is it not obvious that Christ has given His church – that means YOU if you are a Christian – His authority and His power, the power of the Holy Spirit who is in us

(thus the significance of Pentecost and the giving of the Spirit) to not only announce the Kingdom of God, but to show evidence (even proof) that you have been given this authority to command all everywhere to repent and turn to Christ? The key is however, *in what way does the Spirit evidence His presence in our lives? Does He enable us to:*

- *Raise the dead?*
- *Heal the sick?*
- *Cast out demons?*

No. He could, but it appears that these were the “signs of a true apostle” (2 Cor 12:12) in the New Testament era.

So how does the Holy Spirit in us work now to show the world that we have authority of power from Christ? That our message of His kingdom is true? Here, I suggest, is the answer:

The Holy Spirit is at work in every Christian. Having effected the new birth (new creation) in us, He continues to work powerfully to transform us (sanctification) into holiness. This holiness, this practical Christlikeness, this fruit of the Spirit in us, is the demonstration of the power of Christ in us. Without this fruit of holiness in our lives, our message has no power and we can just forget about seeing the lost drawn

to Christ by the witness of His church.

Let me give you a very real example of this that we came across last Wednesday in our reading of the life of George Whitefield. This example concerns one of Whitefields best associates, John Cennick. A man named Matthew Wilks wrote a biography of Cennick and in it he said:

Mr. Cennick was...of a fair countenance, but of a fairer mind. A good understanding, an open temper and tender heart characterized the man. His Christian qualities were not less distinguishable. If unaffected (ie, not fake) humility, deadness to the world, a life of communion with God, and a cheerful reliance on a crucified Savior constitute the real Christian, he was one in an eminent degree.

Nor were the evidences of his call to the ministry less striking. Few ministers have felt a warmer love to Jesus Christ; few were more unwearied in preaching his Gospel...or suffered more patiently in his cause.

‘Tis true, his language was not with the enticing words of man’s wisdom; yet his doctrine and address were powerful, and found access to the hearts of thousands. The Gospel he so diligently...dispensed, was the food of his own soul. He drank deeply of the

cup of religious pleasures. His altar was not to an unknown God... He may not have moved in the circles of the great, he may not have ranked with characters of literary fame...he may not have soared on the wings of philosophic pursuits; but he has pierced the clouds; he has explored the celestial region; he has presented its delicious fruits, and invited us to arise and possess the land.” [George Whitefield, Arnold Dallimore, Vol 2, page 380]

See it? Think of Stephen:

Act 6:7-10 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. (8) And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. (9) Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. (10) But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.

Now, let’s end by coming back to the quote I gave at the beginning and think about it in light of all we have just seen:

The church is a society of sinners, but we have a hard time remembering that. The Great evangelist George Whitefield once complained that the way people dress their children for baptism suggests that they forget that they present a sinful child to the Lord to appeal for his mercy. Instead, infants are “wrapped up in such fine things, and so much pains taken to dress them, that one would think they were brought there to be initiated into, rather than to renounce, the pomps and vanities” of the world.

The church is a society of sinners. We do not approach God, bearing our good deeds on a platter, so as to impress him. Left to ourselves, we do not approach God at all, not even to ask for mercy. God comes to us before we ever come to him. He comes despite our sin, not because of our imagined goodness. This is obvious in the case of Jesus’ call of Matthew.” [Daniel Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary, Vol 1, p. 378]

Is that true? Of course not. If the church is a society of sinners, then we are no different from the world. Where in Scripture does the Lord call His church a “society of sinners”? Nowhere.

And if the church is in practice as well as in name, a society of sinners, then

what of the authority of power of the Spirit which is vital and fundamental to showing the world that our message of Christ and His kingdom is real? I can tell you. It is non-existent. This is not then true in our day:

Act 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

So there it is. We are led by the Spirit. Follow Him! We are not of this present world. Come out from it. Set your eyes on Christ. Obey Him no matter what the cost. Open up His Word and pray that by His Spirit the Lord will change you. Don’t be who you were. That person is dead and buried. Be who you are now in Christ.

And do not let anyone, not even a Bible scholar, tell you that you are a sinner and that you belong to a church that is a society of sinners. That is a lie that is based on embracing the Old Covenant with its circumcision of the flesh performed by a man.

Finally, we as a church simply cannot and will not allow any person who claims to be a Christian but who habitually and characteristically walks in sin to be called one of Christ’s flock. In fact, in obedience to Christ’s

command, such a person will not even be allowed to be here. To fail here is to give up the authority and power Christ has given to us.