

# The Kingdom Represented

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## The Kingdom Mandate

If we understand the message of Christ to be about more than simply picketing against our pet-issues.

If we understand the ministry of Christ to be about reconciliation and restoration back to the original design of creation.

Then we have to take seriously the instructions he gave to his followers.

“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. ... These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, ‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.” (Matthew 10:1, 5–8, ESV).

Can you picture that moment? Can you disengage from “Bible mode” and imagine how Jesus’ words must have fallen on the ears of the disciples?

Jesus just told them to go and preach, which might not have been so intimidating if it hadn’t been accompanied by the injunction to also *heal the sick, raise the dead and cleanse the leper!*

Those guys weren’t super-spiritual, right? They were ordinary guys with ordinary lives. The only difference between them and everyone else was their faith in that God-man to be who he seemed (and claimed) to be.

But now, he was instructing them to go and preach, and to heal. They’d obviously seen him do it, but I can imagine their faces as Jesus stood in the center of the disciple-huddle, made them all put their hands in the center, tell them to go heal folks, and then yell, “Now *break!*”

“What just happened?”

“He wants us to do *what*, exactly?!”

Even though he had given them all the authority and power they needed, I’ve got to believe they were a bit overwhelmed by what he’d asked them to do.

They weren’t preachers.

They weren’t scribes or educated rabbis.

They weren’t even the most respected folks in their communities.

They were ordinary men, men with regular jobs and homes and families.

Men who dared to believe Jesus was more than just a man but had very little more than faith to bear them up.

## The Kingdom Messenger

Do you know what it's like to be the last one chosen for a team? Have you ever been in a situation where you hoped and prayed you would be chosen, rather than be someone's last choice by default?

Have you ever felt completely unqualified or completely out of your element? Have you ever felt incapable, completely out-of-place? Which one of these *doesn't* belong?

I've got to believe those disciples felt that way. They were ordinary fishermen, blue-collar workers and tax-collectors. No one likes tax-collectors, then or now!

And yet, those were the very men that Jesus not only chose, but he also empowered to do the work of the kingdom. He wasn't stuck with them because they were the only ones available. Not at all! He *chose them*.

Some of us need to hear that we have been chosen, that we're not the leftovers in the kingdom, but that we've been given a mandate as his messenger.

Listen to how Paul described the Christians in the church at Corinth:

"Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord'" (1 Corinthians 1:20-31).

And then hear Paul in the second letter to the Corinthian church:

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Here's the reality: the kingdom Jesus inaugurated turned the values of this world on its' ear.

The wrong-side-up people in a wrong-side-up world value the *wrong things*. Jesus didn't need their broken paradigms of power and prestige to accomplish his mission on earth! He was reforming and transforming the broken creation, and he made his own tools with people who were willing to follow, not necessarily the movers and shakers of society, but him.

We, weakened and broken by sin, have the treasure of the kingdom within us, and the power to effect real change in this world! And the coolest part of it is when people see us, like the scribes and Pharisees of Acts 4:13 they *must* acknowledge that we have been with Jesus.

Do you hear what a great promise this is?

“But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Corinthians 2:14–16)

What do you smell like?  
Whom do you represent?  
What’s your mandate?