

The Training of the Twelve

Part 1 *

For the carrying on of His work, Christ did not choose the learning or eloquence of the Jewish Sanhedrin or the power of Rome. Passing by the self-righteous Jewish teachers, the Master Worker chose humble, unlearned men to proclaim the truths that were to move the world. These men He purposed to train and educate as the leaders of His church. They in turn were to educate others and send them out with the gospel message. That they might have success in their work they were to be given the power of the Holy Spirit. Not by human might or human wisdom was the gospel to be proclaimed, but by the power of God.

For three years and a half the disciples were under the instruction of the greatest Teacher the world has ever known. By personal contact and association, Christ trained them for His service. Day by day they walked and talked with Him, hearing His words of cheer to the weary and heavy-laden, and seeing the manifestation of His power in behalf of the sick and the afflicted. Sometimes He taught them, sitting among them on the mountainside; sometimes beside the sea or walking by the way, He revealed the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Wherever hearts were open to receive the divine message, He unfolded the truths of the way of salvation. He did not command the disciples to do this or that, but said, "Follow Me." On His journeys through country and cities, He took them with Him, that they might see how He taught the people. They traveled with Him from place to place. They shared His frugal fare, and like Him were sometimes hungry and often weary. On the crowded streets, by the lakeside, in the lonely desert, they were with Him. They saw Him in every phase of life.

It was at the ordination of the Twelve that the first step was taken in the organization of the church that after Christ's departure was to carry on His work on the earth. Of this ordination the record says, "He goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He would: and they came unto Him. And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach."

The disciples were to go forth as Christ's witnesses, to declare to the world what they had seen and heard of Him. Their office was the most important to which human beings had ever been called, second only to that of Christ Himself. They were to be workers together with God for the saving of men. As in the Old Testament the twelve patriarchs stood as representatives of Israel, so the twelve apostles stand as representatives of the gospel church.

During His earthly ministry Christ began to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to all mankind. Though He was a Jew, He mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of the Jews with regard to this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate at their tables, and taught in their streets.

The Saviour longed to unfold to His disciples the truth regarding the breaking down of the "middle wall of partition" between Israel and the other nations--the truth that "the Gentiles should be fellow heirs" with the Jews and "partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." This truth was revealed in part at the time when He rewarded the faith of the centurion at Capernaum, and also when He preached the gospel to the inhabitants of Sychar. Still more plainly was it revealed on the occasion

* Excerpted from Ellen White, Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 2, "The Training of the Twelve".
<http://www.whiteestate.org/books/aa/aa2.html>

of His visit to Phoenicia, when He healed the daughter of the Canaanite woman. These experiences helped the disciples to understand that among those whom many regarded as unworthy of salvation, there were souls hungering for the light of truth.

Thus Christ sought to teach the disciples the truth that in God's kingdom there are no territorial lines, no caste, no aristocracy; that they must go to all nations, bearing to them the message of a Saviour's love. But not until later did they realize in all its fullness that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."

In these first disciples was presented marked diversity. They were to be the world's teachers, and they represented widely varied types of character. In order successfully to carry forward the work to which they had been called, these men, differing in natural characteristics and in habits of life, needed to come into unity of feeling, thought, and action. This unity it was Christ's object to secure. To this end He sought to bring them into unity with Himself. The burden of His labor for them is expressed in His prayer to His Father, "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us;" "that the world may know that Thou has sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." His constant prayer for them was that they might be sanctified through the truth; and He prayed with assurance, knowing that an Almighty decree had been given before the world was made. He knew that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached to all nations for a witness; He knew that truth armed with the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit, would conquer in the battle with evil, and that the bloodstained banner would one day wave triumphantly over His followers.

As Christ's earthly ministry drew to a close, and He realized that He must soon leave His disciples to carry on the work without His personal supervision, He sought to encourage them and to prepare them for the future. He did not deceive them with false hopes. As an open book He read what was to be. He knew He was about to be separated from them, to leave them as sheep among wolves. He knew that they would suffer persecution, that they would be cast out of the synagogues, and would be thrown into prison. He knew that for witnessing to Him as the Messiah, some of them would suffer death. And something of this He told them. In speaking of their future, He was plain and definite, that in their coming trial they might remember His words and be strengthened to believe in Him as the Redeemer.

He spoke to them also words of hope and courage. "Let not your heart be troubled," He said; "ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. For your sake I came into the world; for you I have been working. When I go away I shall still work earnestly for you. I came to the world to reveal Myself to you, that you might believe. I go to My Father and yours to co-operate with Him in your behalf. "

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father." By this, Christ did not mean that the disciples would make more exalted exertions than He had made, but that their work would have greater magnitude. He did not refer merely to miracle working, but to all that would take place under the agency of the Holy Spirit. "When the Comforter is come," He said, "whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning."

Wonderfully were these words fulfilled. After the descent of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were so filled with love for Him and for those for whom He died, that hearts were melted by the words they spoke and the prayers they offered. They spoke in the power of the Spirit; and under the influence of that power, thousands were converted.

As Christ's representatives the apostles were to make a decided impression on the world. The fact that they were humble men would not diminish their influence, but increase it; for the minds of their hearers would be carried from them to the Saviour, who, though unseen, was still working with them. The wonderful teaching of the apostles, their words of courage and trust, would assure all that it was not in their own power that they worked, but in the power of Christ. Humbling themselves, they would declare that He whom the Jews had crucified was the Prince of life, the Son of the living God, and that in His name they did the works that He had done.

In His parting conversation with His disciples on the night before the crucifixion the Saviour made no reference to the suffering that He had endured and must yet endure. He did not speak of the humiliation that was before Him, but sought to bring to their minds that which would strengthen their faith, leading them to look forward to the joys that await the overcomer. He rejoiced in the consciousness that He could and would do more for His followers than He had promised; that from Him would flow forth love and compassion, cleansing the soul temple, and making men like Him in character; that His truth, armed with the power of the Spirit, would go forth conquering and to conquer.

"These things I have spoken unto you," He said, "that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Christ did not fail, neither was He discouraged; and the disciples were to show a faith of the same enduring nature. They were to work as He had worked, depending on Him for strength. Though their way would be obstructed by apparent impossibilities, yet by His grace they were to go forward, despairing of nothing and hoping for everything.

Christ had finished the work that was given Him to do. He had gathered out those who were to continue His work among men. And He said: "I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are." "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; . . . I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me."

[Kimmie Witzel sings "So Send I You" accompanied by JoAn Witzel on the piano.]

Part 2

Peer pressure can be a great temptation to do bad things. Unfortunately many people succumb to that pressure; but Peer Power can give you the strength to resist that temptation.

The Word With Us radio program gives your Christian friends and neighbors and opportunity to share their faith with you. You can receive Peer Power from ordinary people, just like you, who have personally experienced the power of God and want to share that power with you through these six ways.

1. Personal Experience

We are all individuals, living different lives. Nobody has had exactly the same experience as you have had. Although you are not exactly like anyone else, you aren't completely different from everyone else, either. There is no situation you are facing that isn't similar, in some way, to situations other people have successfully overcome by God's power. You can gain strength and confidence hearing their stories.

2. Prayers Answered

God does answer prayers. On *The Word With Us* you will hear people share how God has worked miracles in their lives. If you would like us to pray for you, or share prayers God has answered in your life, please contact us through our website, KRSF.NET.

3. Prophecy Fulfilled

Skeptics who have not had personal experience with God, and have never had prayers answered, don't give much credibility to personal testimonies. They just chalk up other people's stories to coincidence or wishful thinking. But the amazing Biblical prophecies are convincing proof that the Bible is not of human origin. These prophecies are so specific, and have been so perfectly fulfilled, no reasonable person can escape the conclusion that God foretold all these things in advance.

Every single prophecy about world history, except for the one that happens immediately before Jesus returns, has been fulfilled. That one remaining prophecy, *The Last Egyptian Prophecy*, could be perfectly fulfilled by events beginning to take place in the Middle East right now. If these events do unfold as prophecy predicts, then we can be sure that Jesus is just about to return.

4. Present Truth

Truth never changes. What was true in the past is still true now, and will continue to be true in the future. But the relevance of truth changes from place to place and time to time.

Paul wrote letters to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and others. Each of those letters contained different (but not contradictory) truths because they were written to people in different situations. All of those truths are important to us in proportion to the degree that our situation is similar to theirs.

"Present Truth" is truth that is especially relevant, right here, right now. *The Word With Us* addresses, frankly and honestly, the practical implications of Present Truth in our daily lives.

5. Protestant Doctrines

Sadly, it is a historical fact that God's people have wandered away from the truth from time to time in the past. Fortunately, lost Bible truths were rediscovered during the Protestant Reformation. Unfortunately, those truths are slipping away from modern society again. To bring about revival in our churches today we need to rediscover those truths. Reviewing Protestant history, and following the example of the great Protestant reformers, will lead us back to a closer relationship with God and strengthen our local churches.

6. Performing Musically

There are some things that can be expressed musically that can't be expressed any other way. The Word With Us gives local musicians the opportunity to express their faith and love for God through music.

We hope you will be strengthened and encouraged as your Christian friends and neighbors share their faith with you, and we encourage you to share your faith with others. If you have something you would like to share with our listeners, please contact us through our website, KRSF.NET, to tell us about it.

[Music – Ordinary People]

Part 3

Ordinary people, working together, can do extraordinary things. Apparently it is God's intention that extraordinary things be by groups. Paul tells us in First Corinthians, chapter 12,

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

You can't do everything, but you can do something. Often the something you can do is something that few other people can do. Often the something you can do is something that anybody can do, but few are willing to do.

God put you on this world for a purpose. He wants to mold you into something beautiful or useful. You are like clay in a potter's hand. But unlike clay, you can choose to be cooperative or uncooperative. We pray that you will be receptive to whatever it is that God has in mind for you, and that you will use whatever gifts He has given you so that He can fashion you into something wonderful.

[Music – The Potter's Hand]