

The Life and Ministry of Christ, Part 19

After the year of popularity, the Lord entered into a year of opposition. Although the Pharisees, Sadducees and legalists had opposed Him during the previous year, their opposition grew to the point that lead to His crucifixion. During the year of Christ's popularity, numerous miraculous events transpired, leading to a surge in the number of individuals seeking healing and relief from various ailments, including physical illnesses, diseases, and spiritual afflictions. The final year of Jesus Christ's ministry was characterized by significant events that encompassed a substantial portion of the Gospel narrative.

Rejected at Nazareth - Matthew 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6

Matthew 13:54 NKJV When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this *Man* get this wisdom and *these* mighty works?

Notice that they saw His mighty works and heard His wisdom but those things were not enough to convince them that He was the Messiah. The next verses give some indication to why the people of Nazareth did not believe.

Matthew 13:55-56 NKJV Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?"

Matthew 13:57-58 NKJV So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Unbelief always has this same result. Throughout Christ's ministry, unbelief hindered His ability to perform miracles and the reception of His messages. Jesus also told His disciples that unbelief would hinder their doing greater things.

Charge to His Disciples - Matthew 10:5-42; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6

This commission to the disciples is an extension of their call.

Mark 6:7-9 NKJV And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts— but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.

Mark 6:10 NKJV Also He said to them, "In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place.

Mark 6:11 NKJV And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!"

Mark 6:12-13 NKJV So they went out and preached that people should repent.

And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.

They were sent out to minister with Christ's authority and power and as a result, they performed the same kind of miracles that Jesus accomplished. Matthew gives more detail of their commission and charge and Jesus disclosed what they should expect to happen. He said they would receive the same treatment He had received. Some would receive them and others would reject them. When they were received, Jesus said *"Stay in that house and let your peace come on it."*

Matthew 10:13-14 NKJV If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

"If the household is worthy," seems to imply that they were hospitable and open to their message. Jesus did not want them to enter into a house that was full of debate and discord over their mission and ministry. If they were not received and their words were not heard, the disciples were to leave and not pronounce blessings on them. What Christ has sent them to do would not be realized by those people. Jesus sent them out and commissioned them with His authority and power as an extension of His ministry. By going out in the name of the Lord, they could expect the same outcomes just as if He were present and actively engaged in the work. In Matthew 28:18-19, Jesus said *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go then and make disciples..."* They will not be above their Master, but should expect to be like their Master and receive the same honor. (Matthew 10:24-26).

What message were they supposed to declare?

Matthew 10:27 NKJV "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops."

It is apparent that they were to declare openly the secret and hidden things of God that He had been telling them privately. What they heard in secret they were to declare on the housetops. They were to do this without fear of those who could destroy their body but cannot kill the soul. He said, "Fear God."

Then Jesus spoke words of encouragement and strength.

Matthew 10:29-31 NKJV Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

He knew that they would face persecution and rejection for the Word's sake. Jesus was teaching them how to use the authority He was giving. These are principles for using the authority of the Name of Jesus. When we take a stand in the name of Jesus, we should know that the Father in heaven is watching

over us.

Matthew 10:32 NKJV Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

In Matthew 10:34-39, Jesus indicated that no earthy connection, regardless of what it may be, should distract them from loyalty to Him. Jesus must take the primary position in our lives. By placing Christ at the forefront, one can attain all the blessings of the kingdom.

Matthew 10:40 NKJV He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

Under the covering of Christ's authority and power, they were commissioned to use His name and authority to do His works.

Mark 6:12-13 NKJV So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.

This is the first mention of anointing the sick with oil.

James 5:14 NKJV Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

The anointing with oil references the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This *epi chrio* (upon anointing) was practiced throughout the Old Testament to indicate that the person being anointed was set apart by God for a special purpose, ministry or work of God.

Third Tour of Galilee - Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 6:6

Matthew 9:35 NKJV Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Matthew 9:36 NKJV But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

Matthew 9:37-38 NKJV Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

This trip through Galilee demonstrated the depth of their need. Even after Jesus had already done so many miracles throughout the region, the need of the people was still very great. The Lord was deeply moved with compassion because the people were like sheep without a shepherd and were vulnerable to every kind of attack of the enemy. For that reason, Jesus said, "*Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.*" During these events, John the Baptist was beheaded at the command of King Herod. John's disciples took his body and buried it and went and told Jesus, (Matthew 14:1-12).

Matthew 14:13-14 NKJV When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

The Five Thousand Fed - Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14

Luke tells us that Jesus was withdrawing from Bethsaida when this occurred. After spending much time ministering to the sick, the hour had grown late. The disciples came to Jesus and said: “*Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.*” (Matthew 14:15) Jesus was functioning in a higher level of authority and power than His disciples. He had the commission from the Father and He was activated by the full power of the Holy Spirit. From the time He was baptized in water, the Holy Spirit dwelt on Him in full power, without measure. They were thinking like any normal human would think.

Matthew 14:16–17 NKJV But Jesus said to them, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” And they said to Him, “We have here only five loaves and two fish.”

Obviously, they had already been thinking about something to eat and had determined that there was not have enough for the twelve to have a sufficient meal. What could they do with the multitudes? It was obvious that there was not enough for the need before them. Who would have thought of bringing what they had to Jesus?

Matthew 14:18–19 NKJV He said, “Bring them here to Me.” Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

Matthew 14:20–21 NKJV So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

What was left over was more than what they started with.

Matthew 14:22 NKJV Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

Then He sent the multitudes away and He went up on the mountain alone to pray.

John 6:16–17 NKJV Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them.

Jesus Walks on the Sea - Matthew 14:22-23; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21

The scene and conditions quickly changed for the disciples. It was dark and a great wind was blowing. They were about three or four miles out in the sea

and were straining at rowing. They were being tossed and driven by the waves.

Remember that it was not many weeks before when Jesus asked them why they had no faith and He spoke “Peace, be still?”

Jesus just told them, “Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” (Matthew 10:29–31) Why are His words important in the storm? When contrary winds and storms come, what are we to do? Jesus has been in the process of developing their faith in every situation. We should also know that God is watching over us even when the winds of adversity and waves of trouble arise.

Matthew 14:25 NKJV Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

About three in the morning Jesus walked to them on the sea. Jesus does not appear to be disturbed by the wind or waves.

Matthew 14:26–27 NKJV And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”

How can Jesus have such faith that the storms of life do not bother Him?

How could He walk on the water?

Luke 4 gives us the answer.

- Luke 4:1 – Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit.
- Luke 4:14 – Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit.
- Luke 4:18 – The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.

In the power of the Spirit, Jesus confronted the powers of Satan and his kingdom. Philippians 2:5-8 tells us that Jesus humbled Himself taking on the form of a bondservant and the likeness of men. Being in the form and appearance of a man, He humbled Himself to the point of death on a cross. If Jesus was not truly human, then He would not be able to save us. By doing what He did through the power of the Spirit rather than by the independent exercise of His deity, Jesus was demonstrating the Spirit empowered life.

Matthew 14:28-29 NKJV And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

Jesus was saying, “*You can also walk on the water.*” Since Jesus said that, why was the boat not emptied and everyone jump out and start walking? Only Peter came down out of the boat and walked on the water to go to Jesus.