

Article of the Month – June 2014

Missionary Aspects in the Gospels – John (2)

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John the Baptist pointed two of his disciples to Jesus, who started following Him. What a great example of Kingdom-mentality versus building one's own empire: sending your personnel to somebody with a greater ministry than your own.¹

Jesus started His ministry by going to a wedding party and participated with His disciples in the success of the celebration. Even during a party He could reveal His glory and thus inspire His disciples to faith.²

Missionaries often face the discouragement of not seeing results after years of sowing. Jesus comforts them, saying that sower and reaper will rejoice together.³ The sower's hard work will not be forgotten.⁴

Ever since Jesus accused a crowd that they followed Him with wrong motives ('you are looking for Me... because you ate the loaves...'),⁵ the world has seen 'rice-Christians': people who profess Christ because of material advantages this would bring. As missionaries we must guard against insincere followers, who only pursue gain.

Jesus had known from the beginning who would betray Him⁶ and yet he put up with Judas Iscariot patiently for three years.

It is remarkable that the story of the man born blind seems to be placed in a missions-context.⁷ Is it often not also true, that no one whose eyes have not been opened for missions can be sent on a mission? Is it coincidence that the man was sent to the pool of Siloam, a name that also means 'sent'?⁸ Receiving vision for missions may be as miraculous a revelation, as receiving eye-sight was a miracle of healing.

Dying to self and bearing fruit for the Kingdom are inextricably linked.⁹ The investment of temporal life in this world will reap the much greater benefit of eternal life.

We may sometimes think that Jesus was sharp in His words, but He said that the Father told Him *what* to say and *how* to say it.¹⁰ Let that be our prayer also.

¹ John 1:35-37

² 2:11

³ 4:31-38

⁴ 1 Cor. 15:58b

⁵ John 6:26

⁶ 6:64,70,71

⁷ Ch. 9

⁸ See 9:7. Greek: *απεσταλμενος* (*apestalmenos*), root of our word apostle

⁹ 12:24,25

¹⁰ 12:49

In the presence of the Master, Who had cast out demons from many people, the prince of demons, Satan, now entered His disciple Judas Iscariot. People's deepest heart-choices are eventually granted. Judas, who had even known and experienced the ministry of deliverance, ultimately made the choice for Mammon rather than God. He hardened his heart until the point of no return.¹¹ Not even apostles (missionaries) can play with sin endlessly. Outside it was night;¹² inside Judas, eternal night had begun.

Twice, before He suffered, Jesus said 'I'm telling you this before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe in Me'.¹³ He knows the end from the beginning.¹⁴

A *relationship with* the Lord is more important than *working for* Him. The latter is even impossible without the former, and should have priority in all we do.¹⁵ This love relationship, proven by obedience, is the condition under which the Kingdom flourishes.¹⁶ This quality of ministry will meet the same hate and opposition Jesus met in His ministry. We may suffer, but He suffered first. We may be rejected, but in fact *He* is rejected. As missionaries we must count with suffering¹⁷ lest we become disappointed if He does not protect us against struggle and inconvenience.¹⁸

Jesus reminds us that persecution, sometimes resulting in death, is part and parcel of the life of a true disciple.¹⁹

At the end of His walk on earth as Sent One, Jesus became Sender like many great Bible characters before Him.²⁰ A true sender, like Jesus, should live in holiness and sanctify himself for the sake of the sent ones.²¹

The unity between the Father and the Son should also be seen among the apostles as indispensable condition for reaching the world.²² These three verses are the biblical definition of partnership. Private empire building and chief-mentality do more damage than good to the Kingdom of God.

Disciples should pray for continual revelation by Jesus of Who the Father is. This conforms to Jesus' prayer and His will.²³ Growth in intimacy with God should be an ongoing process in our lives. Intimacy with Him is the heart of world missions.

¹¹ 13:27

¹² 13:20

¹³ 13:19; 14:29

¹⁴ Is. 46:10

¹⁵ John 15:4,5

¹⁶ 15:7-17

¹⁷ E.g. Col. 1:24

¹⁸ John 15:18-25

¹⁹ 16:1-4

²⁰ 17:18

²¹ 17:19

²² 17:21-23

²³ 17:26