

# A Key In Your Wallet

By Pastor Greg  
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Matthew 9:35-38

Bunkertown COB

A preacher is driving down the road. He notices that he's low on gas so he stops at the gas station. While he's pumping his gas, he notices that he has locked his keys in the car. So when he goes inside to pay, he asks the attendant for a coat hanger so he can attempt to open the door himself. He goes outside and begins to jimmy the lock. Ten minutes later, the attendant goes outside to see how the preacher is faring. He notices the preacher outside the car moving the hanger around and around, while inside the car another preacher is saying, "A little more to the left... a little more to the right!!" You may think that this is just some clever story. Things like this don't really happen. Well, to tell you the truth, there is a reason I carry a spare key with me. I'll let you figure out the rest for yourself. And to think, God has entrusted the work of the kingdom into the hands of people like me. That's scary.

We've committed ourselves to being a Christian; to following the teachings of Jesus. We've counted the cost of discipleship. We've learned to trust Him through peace and trials. We've submitted ourselves to His leading and direction in our lives. And we've developed reverence to His rule and His authority. To come to this point takes a lot of work and a lot of time. And I know many who see this as the Christian goal; the four-fold aim of all who would follow Jesus (Commitment, Trust, Submission, and Reverence). But Jesus is not willing that we should stop there.

After nearly two years of teaching and leading, something different begins to happen with those who have been following Jesus. Soon after Christ gives these four lessons on following, He starts teaching the disciples about doing; Jesus tells them the time has come for sending.

<sup>35</sup>Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And He healed every kind of disease and illness. <sup>36</sup>When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup>He

said to his disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup> So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask Him to send more workers into his fields.”

<sup>1</sup> (Matthew 9:35-38)

Matthew makes an interesting statement that is far more important than most of us realize; Jesus had compassion for those who did not know about the great and glorious things of God’s Kingdom. Please take note of this: Jesus was moved by those who were confused and helpless. His heart wept for the people who were left to wander on their own without any direction or guidance concerning spiritual things. And then, turning to His disciples, He basically says “Someone should do something about this”. What has amazed me though is that He finds His answer in His disciples, as if they were the ones who could do something about the problem.

Knowing what we’ve just seen of these people, you have to wonder if this was really a good idea. It seemed that they had so much more to learn. And yet Jesus sees something else. Instead of seeing them as a group of beloved but dysfunctional disciples, He sees potential and promise in this motley group of men.

I wonder what these men must have thought. Did they feel unworthy? Did they make all sorts of excuses as to why they could never do as Christ commanded? Did they constantly remember the times in the past when they’d messed up? Well, they probably did, but Jesus says something to them that may have changed their minds about themselves. I want you to notice something here in Chapter 10. “Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness. Here are the names of the twelve apostles.” <sup>2</sup> (Matthew 10:1-2). In verse one they are called disciples, but in verse two they are called Apostles.

The word disciple emphasizes learning and following whereas the word apostle emphasizes delegated authority. There is a transition taking place here. Instead of simply following Jesus around watching Him work and teach, the Apostles have now been sent to continue the work Jesus began. And He has granted them

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<sup>1</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>2</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

authority. They did not do the work of Jesus on their own but under the authority of Jesus. He called them and He gave them the help they needed.

One of the steps we must take in our lives as Christians is to realize that following Jesus will eventually lead to doing for Jesus. In other word, there will come a time in your life when Jesus expects you to put your teaching and training into practice; where you become a worker in the field. But like me, maybe you think that if Jesus really did have compassion for people, He should send someone else; someone who is more gifted or skilled; someone who has not made so many mistakes (someone who doesn't lock his keys in his car!). But the truth is that when we do go and serve; when we become workers for the harvest, we go with the authority of Jesus, not our own.

I realize that some are still in the teaching and following stage of their life with Jesus, but there are others here who have been following long enough. The Lord of compassion is weeping for the lost people of this world and is looking for those followers who are ready and willing to become doers. Unfortunately, Christ's assessment back then still rings true today. The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. And still Christ calls; still He looks for those with a heart of compassion and tenderness who would continue His work here on earth. And He still is willing to help us as we work for His harvest ("**But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.**")<sup>3</sup> John 16:7)

Some may look upon us as a beloved but dysfunctional church, but I see otherwise. I see people here who have hearts that are just as tender; a love that is just as compassionate as these Apostles. I see people who have journeyed with Jesus for a good portion of their life and have set underneath His teachings. I see workers for the harvest here. I see people who could make a huge impact on this community if they could just get over their fear and sense of unworthiness. I see people who have made mistakes just like these disciples. And yet Jesus still sent them. I believe He wants to send you as well.

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<sup>3</sup>*New American Standard Bible : 1995 update.* 1995 (Jn 16:7). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.