

NOTES FOR VISITATION

Matthew 10:40-42 Text vs. 40a *“Anyone who welcomes you welcomes Me.”*

The *Second Great Awakening* in America had exciting and emotional preaching. It appealed to the supernatural. During this period, revivals and camp meetings were the most effective method of evangelizing. They were the main attractions of that religious movement which attracted thousands of converts. The outpouring of religious fervor began in the early 1800's among Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists in Kentucky and Tennessee.

The Methodist Church used circuit riders to reach people in frontier locations. Peter Cartwright was a Methodist preacher and a circuit rider known for his straightforward preaching. He personally baptized over 10,000 converts and preached almost 15,000 sermons in Kentucky, Illinois, Tennessee, Indiana, and Ohio. And because of his dislike for slavery, in 1824 he left the preaching circuit in Kentucky and Tennessee and transferred to Illinois. Soon he was elected to the lower house of the Illinois General Assembly. And in 1846 he ran for a seat in the United States Congress. But lost to Abraham Lincoln.

One day, *“Old Rough and Ready”* Andrew Jackson, the President, visited Cartwright's church. The elders warned the Pastor, *“Don't offend the President!”* In those days the President had great power to be an influence for good or bad. So, satisfied their Pastor wouldn't say anything to embarrass their church, the elders sat on the back pew of the sanctuary and waited for Reverend Cartwright to get up and speak. The first words out of his mouth were - *“I understand that President Andrew Jackson is here this morning. I have been requested to be very guarded in my remarks. Let me say this. Andrew Jackson will go to hell if he doesn't repent of his sin!”* The congregation gasped! How could this preacher dare offend the tough old general? And he's the President! Well, after the service, everyone wondered how the President would respond to what Reverend Cartwright had just said. Andrew Jackson met the preacher at the door, looked him straight in the eye, held out his hand, and said *“Sir, if I had a regiment of men like you, I could conquer the world!”*

And that should tell you something. When you realize the power of God's Word is within you when you speak to someone about God, and that the Holy Spirit will speak through your lips, you *can* make a difference in peoples' lives. Jesus said, *“anyone who welcomes you welcomes me.”* That should make you confident when you speak about the Lord. Make a note of that! Be confident!

Now, in our lesson today, the disciples were being taught by Jesus. They were being personally trained by Him. And He was sending them out on their first mission with at least 20 things for them to remember. It was a training mission. They were being prepared for the time when Jesus would give His *Great Commission* to them to go out and preach to the whole world.

Now, take your Bible. Turn to Matthew chapter 10, verse 5 on page 1510 in your pew Bible. I'll wait until you find it! . . . Now, Jesus gave these suggestions for their visitation. They're kinda' like crib notes. You know, notes you write on a little piece of paper so you will remember them later. Let's look at Jesus' crib notes for His disciples.

In (5-6) He suggested - here's where you are to go first. *“Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.”* (7) And here's what you are to preach. *“The kingdom of heaven has come near.”* (8) Here's what you do. *“Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.”* (9-10) And here's what you don't do. *“Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts—no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep.”* (11) Here's who you are to stay with. *“Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave.”* (12-15) And here's how you treat them. *“As you enter the home, give it your greeting. ¹³ If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town, and shake the dust off your feet. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you; it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.”* (16) Here's what you are to be like. *“Be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.”* (17) And here's what to watch out for. *“Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues.”* (18) Here's how the opposition will treat you. *“You will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles.”* (19-20) Here's how to answer them. *“When they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time, you will be given what to say, ²⁰ for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”* (21-22) Here's how bad it's going to get. *“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. ²² You will be hated by everyone because of Me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.”* (23) And here's how to respond when it gets bad. *“When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”* (24-25) This is why they'll treat you like this. *“The student is not above the teacher,*

nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ *It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!*” Beelzebul is a name from a Philistine god, later adopted by some Jewish religions as a major demon. (26-27) And here’s what not to be afraid of. *“Do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed or hidden that will not be made known. 27 What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.”* (28) Here’s who to really be afraid of. *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”* (29-31) And here’s why you will have nothing to fear. *“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care.”* ³⁰ *And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.* ³¹ *So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”* (32-33) And here’s what I’ll do for you. *“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.”* (34-36) Because this is what I came for. *“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.”* (37-38) Here’s how to **not** be worthy of me. *“Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”* ³⁸ *Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.”* (39) Here’s how to find your life. *“Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.”* (40-42) And here’s what will happen when you are received. *“Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹ Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. ⁴² And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly **not** lose their reward.”*

Jesus shared those ideas, those crib notes, with the disciples. He knew they would soon be preaching the kingdom of God to the whole world. Some Bible commentators have called this tenth chapter of Matthew “*the limited commission*” meaning this was a short mission trip on which Jesus sent those 12 men just to the nation of Israel. But it was the start. It was the beginning.

And Jesus continued to give them instructions as His worldwide vision came to light. In verses 18-19 Jesus told them about testifying before governors and kings. Even Gentiles. Was that the prediction found at the conclusion of Matthew’s gospel? Yes! After Jesus finished the work of redemption by His death and resurrection, He sent these men, without Judas who betrayed Him, out with the *Good News* into all the world. It was the *Great Commission*.

So, what’s in this lesson for you? What can you take away from it? What notes should you be taking? Well, answer this question first. Is America a Christian nation? The obvious answer is, NO! Somewhere along the line we’ve stopped being good people. Maybe we ceased being good when abortion was legalized. Or when Evolution was taken as fact. Maybe it happened when we began telling God to get out of certain areas of our lives. Leave our schools alone. Keep prayer, Bible reading, and the Ten Commandments out of our schools.

A girl had her microphone cut off when she thanked Jesus and referred to God during her high school Valedictorian speech. God’s no longer part of our politics. We’ve stopped letting Him guide our morals and our ethics. Anne Graham, Billy Graham’s wife said, *“I believe God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are. But for years we’ve been telling God to get out of our schools. Get out of our government. Get out of our lives. And being the gentleman He is, I believe God has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection, if we demand He leave us alone?”*

And **that’s** our lesson today! Jesus was teaching His disciples that *“anyone who welcomes you welcomes Me.”* And because of that, God wants *you* to tell someone about *Him*. You have a role to play in all of this. I hope you’re taking notes, because if God puts an opportunity in front of you and it’s missed, it may be the last time someone may ever hear about God! You are His messenger. You’re like John the Baptist. You’re to tell about His Kingdom. It doesn’t matter what your personality is. It doesn’t matter how outgoing you are. It doesn’t matter how smart you are. It only matters that you will *do it!* That you will watch for those opportunities where you can share God with someone, because you are faithful to the call of God in your life.

Jesus said *the Kingdom is near*. And it’s in your hands to tell someone about it. *“Anyone who welcomes you welcomes Me.”* When are you going to start doing it? AMEN