

Title: BLESSED BY ASSOCIATION, MATTHEW 10:40-42  
(Chatham, NJ; 06/26/11, AM) [Pc – Unfolding Telescope Outline]

Theme: By associating with the disciples on their first missionary journey people who accepted them and demonstrated hospitality to them had thus attached themselves to Christ and to God.

Purpose: To demonstrate the link between the message of the apostles and Christ, and to encourage us to continue forging a strong personal link to it and to Him.

Introduction:

1. Read C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* on maps.
2. Jesus' message mediated through the Apostolic witness provides the map; the destination is God.
3. Jesus makes it clear that association with them lead to him and ultimately to God.
4. Here's how Jesus describes the process.

#### I. The First Mission of the Apostles, Matthew 10.

- A. The Kingdom has come.
  1. The role of the Apostles was to announce the coming of the Kingdom, 8.
  2. They healed the sick, accepted the hospitality of those who welcomed them, and rejected those who rejected them, 9-15.
  3. It was a grassroots effort done by foot soldiers going into every town and neighborhood.
- B. He gave them other warnings and instructions.
  1. First, like Jesus, in some places, they were to experience rejection and persecution, but they had to endure, 22.
  2. Second, don't be afraid of them; be afraid of God, 28.
  3. Third, you are more valuable than many sparrows, 31.
  4. Acknowledging Jesus and the Father rewards us with a similar recognition from God, 32. This previews what he says in 40-42.
  5. Jesus came to stir the pot, 34-39. His ways cause great consternation and division among many people.

#### II. Receiving the Apostles, 40-42.

- A. Apostles
  1. "Whoever receives you, receives me."
  2. The message and the man cannot be separated.
  3. A man's emissary is like the man himself.
  4. They were his witnesses and form a direct line back to Christ.
- B. Christ
  1. His is the first witness, Revelation 1:5.
  2. His life testifies to God and the message of eternal life.
  3. Jesus said that no one comes to the Father except through him.
  4. 1 Timothy 2:5-6 teaches that Jesus is the one mediator between God and man.
- C. God
  1. Jesus speaks of God as "him who sent me."
  2. The destination is clarified.
  3. Only by following the trail from the Apostles to Christ do we get to God.
  4. Some don't know they need this, however, Israel had been taught to expect God to come in his Kingdom.

D. Elaboration.

1. Receiving (showing hospitality) a prophet, righteous person, and "little one" warrants receiving the appropriate reward.
2. "Little ones" refers to the inexperienced, humble worker for God, not the poor and downtrodden.
3. Anyone who is received "because he is a disciple...will not lose his reward."
4. A blessing is bestowed by association with the one doing Kingdom work.

III. Implications for Today

A. God is with you.

1. Because we accept the witness of the Apostles and believe the Gospel, God is with us through Christ.
2. Remember that Christ and the Father make their home with all who keep his word, John 14:22-23.
3. It is not mystical experiences that confirm this; it is confirmed because we follow the road map of the Gospel.
4. That and that alone is sufficient to put us in communion with God.

B. Those who respect your witness may not be far from the Kingdom.

1. Our witness may be more effective than we think.
2. We may not see it bear fruit, but we take heart that people are drawn to God.
3. Of course, the full welcome into the Kingdom comes when those same people accept by faith the Gospel and are received into full communion by their confession of faith and baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

C. The larger context.

1. By extension we become those who are today's witnesses.
2. Saving faith comes through those who minister the Gospel, Rom. 10:14-17.
3. Humans come by truth only when it is mediated to them through the words of the Gospel, that is, the road map given by God and passed along by the church.

Conclusion:

1. The Apostles learned the map from Jesus and passed it along to us.
2. Experience by itself is not sufficient; we must experience God through their witness and through the Gospel, the object of their witness.
3. Through us and our proclamation that witness is carried on.
4. Let's us continue to pray and that more and more people will be attracted to us for that reason. In so doing they and we will be blessed.