

Devotional—Tour Week 1

"The Task"

Matthew 10 (The Message)

The Twelve Harvest Hands

1-4 The prayer was no sooner prayed than it was answered. **Jesus called twelve of his followers and sent them into the ripe fields.** He gave them power to kick out the evil spirits and to tenderly care for the bruised and hurt lives. This is the list of the twelve he sent:

Simon (they called him Peter, or "Rock"),
Andrew, his brother,
James, Zebedee's son,
John, his brother,
Philip,
Bartholomew,

Thomas,
Matthew, the tax man,
James, son of Alphaeus,
Thaddeus,
Simon, the Canaanite,
Judas Iscariot (who later turned on him).

5-8 Jesus sent his twelve harvest hands out with this charge:

"Don't begin by traveling to some far-off place to convert unbelievers. And don't try to be dramatic by tackling some public enemy. Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighborhood. **Tell them that the kingdom is here.** Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously.

9-10 "Don't think you have to put on a fund-raising campaign before you start. You don't need a lot of equipment. **You are the equipment, and all you need to keep that going is three meals a day. Travel light.**

11 When you enter a town or village, don't insist on staying in a luxury inn. **Get a modest place with some modest people, and be content there until you leave.**

12-15 When you knock on a door, **be courteous in your greeting.** If they welcome you, **be gentle in your conversation.** If they don't welcome you, quietly withdraw. Don't make a scene. Shrug your shoulders and be on your way. You can be sure that on Judgment Day they'll be mighty sorry—but it's no concern of yours now.

16 **Stay alert. This is hazardous work I'm assigning you.** You're going to be like sheep running through a wolf pack, so don't call attention to yourselves. Be as cunning as a snake, inoffensive as a dove.

17-20 Don't be naive. Some people will impugn your motives, others will smear your reputation—just because you believe in me. Don't be upset when they haul you before the civil authorities. Without knowing it, they've done you—and me—a favor, given you a platform for preaching the kingdom news! **And don't worry about what you'll say or how you'll say it. The right words will be there; the Spirit of your Father will supply the words.**

21-23 When people realize it is the living God you are presenting and not some idol that makes them feel good, they are going to turn on you, even people in your own family. There is a great irony here: proclaiming so much love, experiencing so much hate! **But don't quit. Don't cave in. It is all well worth it in the end.** It is not success you are after in such times but survival. **Be survivors!** Before you've run out of options, the Son of Man will have arrived.

24-25 A student doesn't get a better desk than her teacher. A laborer doesn't make more money than his boss. **Be content—pleased, even—when you, my students, my harvest hands, get the same treatment I get.** If they call me, the Master, 'Dungface,' what can the workers expect?

26-27 Don't be intimidated. Eventually everything is going to be out in the open, and everyone will know how things really are. **So don't hesitate to go public now.**

28 Don't be bluffed into silence by the threats of bullies. There's nothing they can do to your soul, your core being. Save your fear for God, who holds your entire life—body and soul—in his hands.

Forget About Yourself

29-31 What's the price of a pet canary? Some loose change, right? And God cares what happens to it even more than you do. He pays even greater attention to you, down to the last detail—even numbering the hairs on your head! So don't be intimidated by all this bully talk. You're worth more than a million canaries.

32-33 Stand up for me against world opinion and I'll stand up for you before my Father in heaven. If you turn tail and run, do you think I'll cover for you?

34-37 **Don't think I've come to make life cozy.** I've come to cut—make a sharp knife-cut between son and father, daughter and mother, bride and mother-in-law—cut through these cozy domestic arrangements and free you for God. Well-meaning family members can be your worst enemies. If you prefer father or mother over me, you don't deserve me. If you prefer son or daughter over me, you don't deserve me.

38-39 **If you don't go all the way with me, through thick and thin, you don't deserve me. If your first concern is to look after yourself, you'll never find yourself. But if you forget about yourself and look to me, you'll find both yourself and me.**

40-42 **We are intimately linked in this harvest work.** Anyone who accepts what you do, accepts me, the One who sent you. Anyone who accepts what I do accepts my Father, who sent me. Accepting a messenger of God is as good as being God's messenger. **Accepting someone's help is as good as giving someone help. This is a large work I've called you into, but don't be overwhelmed by it. It's best to start small.** Give a cool cup of water to someone who is thirsty, for instance. **The smallest act of giving or receiving makes you a true apprentice. You won't lose out on a thing."**

Matthew 11

1 When Jesus finished placing this charge before his twelve disciples, he went on to teach and preach in their villages.

Time for personal reflection (Tour Week 1):

In reading Matthew 10, what similarities are there between the disciples and this *Godspell* ensemble?

What task did Jesus give the disciples? What task has Jesus given me to perform through this *Godspell* tour?

Jesus gives the disciples quite a bit of advice before He sends them off to begin the task he has given them. How can I apply some of this advice to my life on tour this summer?

What one piece of advice to do I really need to stay focused on throughout the summer to really accomplish the task He has set before me to the best of my ability?

What "joy" verse did I say I was going to commit to memory back on Day 2? Have I committed it to memory? If so, has it helped? If not, why not?