

Almont Vineyard Church
Sermon Series: Witnesses of the Risen King
April 11, 2026

Opening Monologue

Welcome to the AVC App. Whether you've been here for a while or you're brand new, I'm glad you're taking advantage of this extra-biblical resource. I know your biblical knowledge will be expanded beyond the sermon itself. So dive in and enjoy!

This Sunday, we are starting a new series titled "Witnesses of the Risen King." We have just celebrated the most powerful event in history: the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without the resurrection, Christianity would have died with Christ... and honestly, you would not be reading this right now.

Dr. Jeremiah Johnston says this about the resurrection: "Jesus returned from death not as a weakened ghost but in a resurrected, glorified, and radiating body. The impact on humanity extends beyond theology into the very fabric of human hope and possibility; hope detonated into history." The event didn't remain confined to the spiritual realm but exploded outward into human experience and continues to reshape how believers understand death, redemption, and their own future. (1)

When Jesus launched His public ministry, He proclaimed the kingdom of God (Luke 4:18-19). After this, Jesus began to demonstrate exactly what He proclaimed. Not long afterward, He called twelve disciples to follow Him, and this quickly grew to seventy-two others (Matthew 10:1-15 and Luke 10:17-20). The bottom line is that the gospel of Jesus Christ could not be stopped. It is the power of God!

It's critical to understand that, in theory, the Great Commission didn't start after the resurrection of Jesus. It started with Jesus Himself as He trained His disciples to follow Him. Now, as Christians, we are supposed to be doing the same things Christ trained His closest followers to do. We are to be witnesses of the Risen King.

So how can we be better witnesses? And are we living up to Christ's expectations for our lives? In this series, we are going to dive deep into this subject. You are going to be challenged, encouraged, and equipped to share the good news of the resurrected Lord.

I encourage you to join us this Sunday as we grow and learn together, opening up God's Word so the fire of Christ continues to burn within us.

In Christ,

Rev. Pastor Brad

To Listen to this week's Sermon: "Witnesses of the Risen King" Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:

Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

Key Sermon Text

Luke 4:18-19

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%204%3A18-19&version=NIV>

Luke 10:17-20

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2010%3A17-20&version=NIV>

Matthew 10:5-15

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2010%3A5-15&version=NIV>

Commentary, Spiritual Applications, and Theological Reflections

The Start of Jesus Ministry

Jesus deliberately chose the words of Isaiah 61 to inaugurate His public ministry. Standing in the synagogue in Nazareth, He read the prophetic passage aloud and then declared with unmistakable authority, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21). This was far more than a dramatic announcement or a clever use of Scripture. It marked the decisive launch of His comprehensive messianic mission—a mission that would unfold not only through powerful words but through concrete, transformative actions that demonstrated the arrival of God’s long-awaited kingdom.

The Content of His Fulfillment

In this pivotal moment, Jesus presented the kingdom of God not as a distant future hope, but as a present reality breaking into human history through His own proclamation and ministry. God was bringing the kingdom near as Jesus brought good news to the poor, healed the blind, and set the oppressed free. The Anointed One promised in Isaiah would give good news to the afflicted, proclaim liberty to captives, restore sight to the blind, liberate the downtrodden, and announce the favorable year of the Lord. These were not abstract spiritual ideals; they served as tangible signs and visible “proofs” that the Messiah had indeed come and that God’s saving rule was now at work in the world.

By claiming that Isaiah’s words were being fulfilled “today” in the hearing of His audience, Jesus boldly identified Himself as the promised Messiah—the Spirit-anointed Servant of the Lord. This declaration set the tone for everything that followed in His ministry. The good news was not merely spoken; it was enacted in real time among real people who were suffering, marginalized, and longing for deliverance.

Miracles as Kingdom Evidence

Jesus' miracles were never random acts of compassion or mere displays of power. They served as powerful evidence that the kingdom of God had become a present reality in and through Him. Time and again, the Gospels record how the blind received sight, the lame began to walk, lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised, and the poor had the good news preached to them. These extraordinary acts were deliberate signs signaling that the promised time of salvation had arrived. They fulfilled Old Testament expectations and confirmed that God's reign was no longer merely anticipated—it was actively breaking in.

Jesus Himself pointed to His healing of the blind, for example, as clear proof of the kingdom's arrival. In a world still marked by brokenness, disease, and death, these miracles demonstrated that God's restorative power was now at work, reversing the effects of the fall and offering a foretaste of the full renewal to come.

Spiritual Liberation Through Exorcism

A particularly striking dimension of Jesus' ministry was His authority over demonic forces. When Jesus expelled demons by the power of God, He was visibly demonstrating that the kingdom had come upon them. Satan's captives were being released as God's sovereign power, focused and embodied in Jesus, confronted and defeated the forces of darkness.

Jesus taught this reality explicitly. He explained that no one can plunder a strong man's house without first binding the strong man—and He was doing exactly that. By casting out demons, Jesus showed that Satan's dominion was being broken and that the end of his tyrannical rule had begun. Each exorcism served as living proof that God's kingdom had arrived with authority, bringing freedom where there had once been bondage.

The Scope of His Mission

The good news of the kingdom was inseparably tied to Jesus' kingship and His royal mission. This mission was deeply rooted in Isaiah's promises concerning Israel's end-time restoration. At its heart was the theme of "release"—the end of Israel's long spiritual exile and the breaking of every form of oppression.

Importantly, this good news was especially oriented toward the marginal and the overlooked: the poor, the blind, the enslaved, and the downtrodden. It extended to women, widows, lepers, and even Gentiles—those often pushed to the edges of society. Jesus' ministry intentionally reached those whom the religious establishment sometimes neglected, revealing the inclusive, compassionate heart of God's reign. The kingdom was not reserved for the powerful or the religiously elite; it was good news precisely for those who needed it most.

In every aspect—proclamation, healing, deliverance, and outreach—Jesus embodied and advanced the kingdom of God. His deliberate choice of Isaiah 61 was not accidental. It revealed both the character and the scope of His mission: to bring God's salvation near, to set captives free in every sense, and to invite all people into the transforming reality of life under the Risen King.

[Sources: 2-4]

The Great Commission started with the Disciples

Jesus's Intentional Training Model and the Great Commission's Roots

From the very beginning of His public ministry, Jesus intentionally gathered a new people for Himself by calling followers to accompany Him as the promised Savior. This was never random recruitment or a loose collection of admirers. Instead, it formed a carefully structured discipleship strategy—one that would ultimately shape the entire Christian movement and echo through the centuries in the life of the Church.

The Twelve: A Symbolic Foundation

By deliberately selecting twelve disciples, Jesus mirrored God's foundational organization of ancient Israel through its twelve tribes. In doing so, He signaled that He Himself embodied true Israel and would lead a renewed people through God's ongoing work of salvation and restoration. These twelve men were not chosen for their exceptional talent, impressive credentials, or flawless faith. Their one shared characteristic was a willingness to obey Jesus and follow Him wholeheartedly.

Jesus invested special time and attention in these twelve, granting them priority access to His teaching. While He spoke in parables to the larger crowds, He explained their deeper meaning privately to the disciples, patiently helping them grasp the full scope of His mission. This close, relational investment laid a strong foundation for what was to come.

From Training to Active Ministry

The disciples' growth unfolded in clear, progressive stages. They began by traveling with Jesus throughout Galilee, observing His healings and miracles firsthand, listening to His teaching, and absorbing His example of compassion, authority, and dependence on the Father. Over time, they transitioned from passive observers to active participants. Jesus sent them out to preach the kingdom of God, giving them delegated authority to proclaim the same message He proclaimed and to minister in His name.

This approach stood in sharp contrast to the typical rabbinical training of the day, where students primarily memorized facts and traditions. Jesus' disciples were trained for action—for a mission. They learned by watching, imitating, and then doing. They were equipped not merely to understand the gospel but to carry it forward with the power and authority Christ entrusted to them.

Expanding the Movement: The Seventy-Two

The momentum continued to build as the mission expanded. Jesus appointed seventy-two others (some ancient manuscripts read seventy) and sent them out in pairs ahead of Him to the towns and villages He planned to visit. This was a planned, organized campaign that previewed the wider reach of the gospel.

The number seventy-two carried rich symbolic weight. In the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, it corresponds to the traditional count of the nations of the world descending from Noah (echoing the "table of nations" in Genesis 10). By

sending out this group, Jesus symbolically demonstrated that the message of the kingdom was ultimately intended for all peoples—not just Israel, but the nations as well. This early sending foreshadowed the global scope of the church’s mission and showed that the good news would burst beyond ethnic and cultural boundaries.

The Commission’s Foundation

What we call the Great Commission in Matthew 28 was not an afterthought or a sudden new directive added at the end of Jesus’ earthly life. It was the natural and inevitable conclusion of everything He had been intentionally building through His discipleship training and the successive waves of believers He sent out.

Jesus created a distinctive pattern of discipleship. He called the Twelve to “be with Him”—to learn through intimate relationship, shared life, and close observation of His words and deeds. Then He sent them out to replicate what they had seen: preaching the kingdom, healing the sick, and casting out demons. In this way, Jesus reproduced His own ministry in them so that they, in turn, could reproduce it in others.

In the Great Commission, He commanded His followers to make more disciples in exactly the same manner—teaching them to obey everything He had commanded. The training model Jesus established during His ministry thus became the enduring blueprint for the Church: relational apprenticeship, hands-on participation, and multiplication through sending.

This beautiful progression—from the symbolic Twelve, to the expanding Seventy-Two, to the final command to reach all nations—reveals that the Great Commission was woven into the fabric of Jesus’ ministry from the start. It calls every generation of believers, including us today, to step into the same pattern: to be with Jesus, to learn from Him, and to go make disciples who will do the same.

[Sources: 5-11]

Being Witnesses of the Risen King

Being a witness to the risen King flows directly from personal transformation through Christ. Because you have experienced salvation in Christ Jesus alone, you possess the same faith as the original apostles. This isn’t abstract theology—it’s a lived reality that shapes how you see the world and engage with the people around you every day.

Start with Your Personal Story

The most natural place to begin witnessing is with your own story. Testify—through both your words and your daily deeds—that your life has been made new. Proclaim that you have been rescued by Jesus, that your sins have been forgiven, and that you now belong to the risen King. When people notice the genuine transformation in your attitude, your relationships, your priorities, or your peace in difficult times, they often ask, “What happened to you?” These everyday moments become powerful opportunities to share your personal encounter with the risen King.

You don’t need to be eloquent or have a polished presentation. What matters most is authenticity. Your changed life becomes your first and most convincing sermon. People may argue with theology, but it is very hard to argue with a life that has been visibly touched by grace.

Combine Personal Witness with Intentional Teaching

While your personal testimony is powerful and relatable, there is even greater value when you intentionally combine it with the clear teaching of Scripture. Your witness should never stop at “Here’s what Jesus did for me.” It should naturally extend to helping others understand the full gospel message—who Jesus is, what He has done, and what it means to follow Him.

This combination fulfills the heart of the Great Commission: making disciples of all nations by sharing both the story of grace and the truth of Scripture. Personal experience opens the door, while biblical truth provides the solid foundation that leads people into a genuine relationship with Christ.

Understand Witnessing Broadly

Witnessing is much broader than simply talking about faith. What we believe must find expression in both speech and life. True witnessing incarnates the reality of the gospel so that the message and the messenger cannot be easily separated. People should see and hear the gospel through us at the same time.

Preaching the gospel is not limited to formal pulpit ministry. The manner may change depending on the situation—whether it’s a quiet conversation over coffee, a compassionate act of service, or a bold public declaration—but the goal remains the same: that the truth of Christ reaches every person. Every believer is called to serve as a herald of the risen King, faithfully representing Him in whatever context God places us.

Practical Actions

Here are concrete ways to live as a faithful witness to the risen King:

- Grow in your relationship with Christ daily. Spend consistent time in prayer, worship, and Scripture so that He fills you with His presence, gives you fresh opportunities to speak, and supplies the inner strength and courage you need. Whether the opportunity is next door with a neighbor or across the ocean on a mission trip, a deepening walk with Jesus naturally overflows into bold, Spirit-led witness.
- Share specific moments when Christ’s power changed you. Don’t just say “Jesus changed my life”—tell real stories. Share how He brought peace during anxiety, forgiveness in a broken relationship, freedom from addiction or shame, or hope when everything seemed hopeless. Specific testimonies make the gospel come alive and help others see that Jesus still transforms lives today.
- Study Scripture so you can articulate the gospel clearly. Become familiar with key passages that explain salvation, the resurrection, and what it means to follow Jesus. You don’t need to be a theologian, but being able to walk someone through the good news in a simple, biblical way builds confidence and clarity in your witness.
- Live visibly transformed. Let the difference Christ makes be obvious in your everyday life—through honesty at work, patience with your family, generosity with your resources, kindness to strangers, and integrity in small things. When people see consistency

between what you say you believe and how you actually live, your witness carries greater weight and credibility.

- Use your unique gifts and circumstances to point others toward Jesus. God has placed you in specific roles, relationships, and situations for a reason. A teacher can witness through compassionate mentoring, a businessperson through ethical practices and generous giving, a parent through modeling faith at home, or an artist through creative expression that reflects beauty and truth. Look for natural ways your daily life can become a bridge to the gospel.
- Lead by example with skillful hands and integrity of heart. Like King David (described in Psalm 78:72 as shepherding with skillful hands and integrity of heart), live with both competence and character. Articulate the full gospel clearly while demonstrating it through a life of humility, service, and love. Your example becomes a powerful invitation for others to consider following the risen King.

[Sources: 12-14]

Theological Commentary on Main Passages

Jesus' Ministry in Galilee (Luke 4:18-18)

This major part of Luke's Gospel focuses on Jesus' work in the region of Galilee. Luke organizes his story carefully (he calls it an "orderly account" in Luke 1:3), and he sets the stage for this section with Jesus' powerful sermon in His hometown of Nazareth. That sermon acts like a mission statement—it shows us right from the start what kind of Messiah Jesus is and what His ministry is all about.

In this part of the story, Jesus is the One anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Everything He does demonstrates the kingly power of God breaking into the world. The spotlight is on power—power to heal, to teach, to set people free, and to bring God's kingdom near.

1. The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry

Luke follows the events in Mark pretty closely here, giving us clear examples of Jesus' teaching and His amazing healing power. But he starts with that important sermon in Nazareth, which helps us understand the true nature of Jesus' messiahship and why it would eventually cause such strong reactions from the religious leaders.

Jesus' Sermon in Nazareth—A Clear Picture of His Mission

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for

the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'" "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian." All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

What's happening here?

Luke intentionally places this sermon right at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee, even though Jesus had already done some miracles in Capernaum. Luke cares more about helping us understand the meaning of what Jesus did and taught than about strict timeline order.

This sermon is like a program statement or mission declaration. It tells us exactly why Jesus came. Later in the chapter (Luke 4:43–44), Jesus summarizes His work as preaching the "good news of the kingdom of God"—and that good news points straight back to the words He read from Isaiah.

When Jesus stood up to read, everyone's eyes were fixed on Him. He deliberately chose this passage from Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1–2, with a phrase from Isaiah 58). Then He made the bold claim: "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." In other words, "I am the One Isaiah was talking about. The time of God's salvation has arrived—right now, in Me."

At first, the people were impressed. They marveled at His gracious words. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they said—probably with a mix of pride and surprise that the local carpenter's boy could speak so powerfully.

But Jesus knew their hearts. He anticipated their challenge: "If You're so great, do some miracles here in Your hometown like You did in Capernaum!" So He reminded them of a hard truth from the Old Testament: "No prophet is accepted in his hometown."

He gave two powerful examples:

- In the days of the prophet Elijah, there were many widows in Israel suffering during a long famine, but God sent Elijah to help a widow in Zarephath—a Gentile town outside Israel.
- In the days of Elisha, there were many lepers in Israel, but only Naaman the Syrian (again, a Gentile) was healed.

The message was clear: God's mercy and power are not limited to Israel. He reaches out to outsiders and to anyone who will respond in faith. This was not what the people

wanted to hear. They became furious, dragged Jesus out of town, and tried to throw Him off a cliff. But He simply walked through the crowd and went on His way.

Why does this matter for us today?

This story shows both the beauty and the challenge of Jesus' message. He came to bring good news—freedom, healing, sight, and God's favor—to the poor, the broken, the captive, and the oppressed. That includes spiritual freedom from sin and spiritual blindness.

Yet from the very beginning, the shadow of rejection (and eventually the cross) hangs over His ministry. Even in His hometown, among people who knew Him, Jesus faced unbelief. The same thing can happen today. Sometimes the people closest to the truth—those raised in church or familiar with the Bible—can miss Jesus when He doesn't fit their expectations.

Jesus' mission is still the same: He proclaims the year of the Lord's favor—a time of grace and salvation offered to everyone who will receive Him. He left out the part of Isaiah about "the day of vengeance" because, in His first coming, He came to save, not to judge. But that day of judgment will come later. Right now is the time to respond to His gracious invitation.

This Nazareth sermon sets the tone for everything that follows in Luke. Jesus is the Spirit-anointed Messiah who brings God's kingdom near. He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. And His message is for all people—Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, insider and outsider—who humble themselves and trust in Him.

As everyday followers of Jesus, let's ask ourselves: Are we amazed by His words like the people in the synagogue at first? Or do we resist when He challenges our expectations, our prejudices, or our sense of who "deserves" God's blessing? May we have hearts that welcome Him, not reject Him, when He speaks truth into our lives.

JESUS SENDS OUT THE TWELVE DISCIPLES - Matthew 10:1-15

This chapter continues Jesus' second discourse recorded by Matthew. This second discourse began at 9:35 and ends at 10:42. Matthew 10:1–16, closely parallel to Mark 3:13–19 and 6:7–13, describes Jesus' appointment of the Twelve for their first apostolic mission. Though this was the first time they went out on their own, they had been given authority from Jesus to carry on the work of preaching and healing.

10:1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. Jesus had many disciples (learners), but he appointed twelve to whom he gave authority and special training. The twelve disciples had already joined Jesus (Mark 3:14–19, see also the Harmony of the Gospels at the back of this commentary), but Matthew waited until writing his missionary discourse to introduce these twelve disciples. This records the first time Jesus sent them out on their own. These men were his inner circle. Many people followed and listened to Jesus, but these twelve received the most intense training. We see the impact of these men throughout the rest of the New Testament. They started the Christian church. The Gospels call these men the "disciples" or the "Twelve"; the book of Acts calls them apostles. The choice of twelve men is highly symbolic. The number

twelve corresponds to the twelve tribes of Israel (19:28), showing the continuity between the old religious system and the new one based on Jesus' message. Jesus looked upon his mission as the gathering of the true people of God. These men were the righteous remnant (the faithful believers throughout the Old Testament who never abandoned God or his law) who would carry on the work the twelve tribes were chosen to do—to build the community of God. These were the righteous remnant chosen out of the apostate nation and given a twofold responsibility: (1) to represent the nation before God; (2) to reach the nation for God. The Gospels and Epistles stressed the ministry of the twelve men together and its significance. The number was so important that when Judas Iscariot killed himself, the disciples chose another man to replace him (see Acts 1:15–26).

These twelve men had Jesus' authority over the forces of evil. Jesus empowered his disciples to drive out evil spirits. The disciples could speak the word, and God's power would cast out the demons. Jesus also gave these disciples power to heal every disease and sickness. It was important that they have these powers because Jesus was extending his mission through them. Jesus directly confronted demons and sicknesses. The disciples carried Jesus' purpose and his power.

CALLED AND CHOSEN

Jesus "called" his twelve disciples. He didn't draft them, force them, or ask them to volunteer; he chose them to serve him in a special way. Jesus did not choose these twelve to be his disciples because of their faith—it often faltered. He didn't choose them because of their talent and ability—no one stood out with unusual ability. The disciples represented a wide range of backgrounds and life experiences, but apparently they may have had no more leadership potential than those who were not chosen. The one characteristic they all shared was their willingness to obey Jesus. Christ calls us today. He doesn't twist our arms and make us do something we don't want to do. We can choose to join him or remain behind. When Christ calls you to follow him, how do you respond? Have you given him only a halfhearted commitment or your whole heart?

10:2–4 These are the names of the twelve apostles:

First, **Simon (who is called Peter)**. In verse 1, these men are called "disciples"; here, the word "apostles" is used to stress their role as messengers, "sent ones."

The first name recorded was Simon, to whom Jesus had given the name Peter (see John 1:42). Jesus "surnamed" him Peter, meaning that he had given him a name in addition to the one he already had—he did not change Simon's name. Peter was also called Cephas. "Peter" is the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic Cephas—a word meaning "stone" or "rock." Peter had been a fisherman (4:18). He became one of three in Jesus' core group among the disciples. He also confessed that Jesus was the Messiah (16:16). Although, later, Peter would deny ever knowing Jesus, he eventually would become a leader in the Jerusalem church, write two letters that appear in the Bible (1 and 2 Peter), and be crucified for his faith.

His brother Andrew. Andrew was Peter's brother and also a fisherman (4:18). Andrew had been a disciple of John the Baptist and had accepted John the Baptist's testimony that Jesus was "the Lamb of God." He had left John to follow Jesus and then had brought his brother Simon Peter to Jesus (John 1:35–42). Andrew and John were

Jesus' first disciples (John 1:35–40); Andrew then had brought Peter to Jesus (John 1:41–42).

James son of Zebedee, and his brother John. James and John had also been fishermen (4:21). James would become the first apostle to be martyred (Acts 12:2). John would write the Gospel of John, the letters of 1, 2, and 3 John, and the book of Revelation. The brothers may have been related to Jesus (distant cousins); thus, at one point their mother requested special places for them in Christ's kingdom (20:20–28).

Philip. Philip was the fourth to meet Jesus. John 1:43 states, "The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, 'Follow me' " (NIV). Philip then brought Nathanael (also called Bartholomew)—see John 1:45. Philip probably knew Andrew and Peter because they were from the same town, Bethsaida (John 1:44).

Bartholomew. Scholars think that Bartholomew is the same person as Nathanael. In the list of disciples here and in Mark, Philip and Bartholomew are listed together (Mark 3:18); in John's Gospel, Philip and Nathanael are paired up (John 1:45). Thus, it stands to reason that since John does not mention Bartholomew and the other Gospels do not mention Nathanael, then Nathanael and Bartholomew must be the same person. Bartholomew was an honest man; indeed, Jesus' first words to him were, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false" (John 1:47 NIV). Bartholomew at first rejected Jesus because Jesus was from Nazareth. But upon meeting Jesus, his attitude changed, and he exclaimed, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (John 1:49 NRSV).

Thomas. We often remember this disciple as "Doubting Thomas" because he doubted Jesus' resurrection (John 20:24–25). But he also loved the Lord and was a man of great courage. When Jesus determined to return to Judea and enemy territory, Thomas said to the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John 11:16 NIV). Thomas was tough and committed, even if he tended to be pessimistic. Thus, when the other disciples said that Jesus was alive, Thomas did not believe them. However, when Thomas saw and touched the living Christ, doubting Thomas became believing Thomas.

Matthew the tax collector. Matthew, author of this Gospel, described himself by his former profession, probably to show the change that Jesus had made in his life. Also known as Levi, he had been a tax collector (9:9). Thus, he had been a despised outcast, but he had abandoned that corrupt (though lucrative) way of life to follow Jesus.

James son of Alphaeus. This disciple is designated as son of Alphaeus to differentiate him from James the son of Zebedee (and brother of John) in 10:2. He is also called "James the younger" (Mark 15:40). Matthew is also called "son of Alphaeus" in Mark 2:14, but James and Matthew were probably not related.

Thaddaeus. Thaddaeus is also called "Judas son of James" (see Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). Simon the Zealot. Some versions of Scripture call this disciple Simon the Canaanite. Simon was probably not a member of the party of Zealots, for that political party did not appear until A.D. 68. Most likely the word "Zealot" that is used here indicates zeal for God's honor and not extreme nationalism; it was an affectionate nickname.

Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. The name “Iscariot” is probably a compound word meaning “the man from Kerioth.” Thus, Judas’s hometown was Kerioth in southern Judea (see Joshua 15:25), making him the only one of the Twelve who was not from Galilee. It was Judas, son of Simon Iscariot (John 6:71), who would betray Jesus to his enemies and then commit suicide (27:3–5; Luke 22:47–48).

10:5–6 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.” Jesus sent out the twelve disciples on a mission to preach the coming of the kingdom (10:7) and exercise the authority over demons and sickness that Jesus gave them (10:1). Jesus gave specific instructions, however, regarding the focus of their ministry: “Do not go among the Gentiles or ... Samaritans.” A “Gentile” was anyone who was not a Jew. The “Samaritans” were a race that resulted from intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles after the Old Testament captivities (see 2 Kings 17:24). When the Jews returned from exile, they refused to allow the Samaritans to help them rebuild the temple (Ezra 4). As a result, the Samaritans developed their own religion, accepting only the Pentateuch as God’s authoritative word. In 109 B.C., the Jews burned the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim.

This did not mean that Jesus opposed evangelizing Gentiles and Samaritans; in fact, Matthew had already described Jesus’ encounter with Gentiles (8:28–34), and John 4 recounts his conversation with a Samaritan woman. Jesus’ command to go rather to the lost sheep of Israel means that the disciples should spend their time among the Jews (see also 15:24). These words restricted the disciples’ “short-term” mission to Galilee. Gentile territory lay to the north and Samaritan territory to the south. Jesus came not to the Jews only, but to the Jews “first” (Romans 1:16). God chose them to tell the rest of the world about him. Later, these disciples would receive the commission to “go and make disciples of all nations” (28:19 NIV). Jewish disciples and apostles preached the gospel of the risen Christ all around the Roman empire, and soon Gentiles were pouring into the church. The Bible clearly teaches that God’s message of salvation is for all people, regardless of race, sex, or national origin (Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 25:6; 56:3–7; Malachi 1:11; Acts 10:34, 35; Romans 3:29, 30; Galatians 3:28).

“Sheep” was an affectionate term used often of God’s people in the Old Testament, as in Isaiah 53:6; Jeremiah 50:6; Ezekiel 34. We can see their “lostness” in the thoughtless rituals and man-made laws commanded by their religious leaders. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came to regather the lost sheep.

10:7–8 “And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.” The disciples went out as Jesus’ representatives, spreading his message. John the Baptist and Jesus had preached “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (3:2; 4:17 NKJV), so he sent his disciples out to also preach that the kingdom of heaven was near. The Jews were waiting for the Messiah to usher in his kingdom. They were hoping for a political and military kingdom that would free them from Roman rule and bring back the days of glory under David and Solomon. But Jesus was talking about a spiritual kingdom. The gospel today is that the kingdom is still “near.” Jesus, the

Messiah, has already begun his kingdom on earth in the hearts of his followers. One day the kingdom will be fully realized. The disciples were also to use the authority and power he had given them (10:1) to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons, just as they had seen Jesus do. These four miracles were exactly the miracles Jesus had done and would demonstrate that the disciples had Jesus' power.

Jesus gave the disciples a principle to guide their actions as they ministered to others: Freely you have received, freely give. The disciples had received salvation and the kingdom without cost; they should give their time under the same principle. Because God has showered us with his blessings, we should give generously to others of our time, love, and possessions.

10:9–10 “Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep.” These instructions seem, at first, to be contrary to normal travel plans, but they simply reveal the urgency of the task and its temporary nature. Jesus sent the disciples in pairs (Mark 6:7), expecting them to return with a full report. This was a training mission; they were to leave immediately and travel light, taking along only minimal supplies. They were to depend on God and on the people to whom they ministered (10:11). Most people leaving on a journey would carry money in their belts. Normally each one would carry a bag for the journey to carry supplies, an extra tunic for added warmth at night, sandals to protect feet on rough terrain, and a staff for help in walking. But Jesus forbade them to take along any of these things.

Mark recorded that Jesus instructed the disciples to take nothing with them except staffs, while the accounts in Matthew and Luke say that Jesus told them not to take staffs. One explanation for this difference is that Matthew and Luke were referring to a club used for protection, whereas Mark was talking about a shepherd's crook used for walking. Another explanation is that according to Matthew and Luke, Jesus was forbidding them to acquire an additional staff or sandals, but instead to use what they already had. The point in all three accounts is the same: The disciples were to leave at once, without extensive preparation, trusting in God's care rather than in their own resources. Jesus' instructions pertained only to this particular mission. Indeed, just after Jesus and the disciples ate the Last Supper, Jesus would ask them: “When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?” ‘Nothing,’ they answered. He said to them, ‘But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one’ ” (Luke 22:35–36 NIV). Different times and situations would call for different measures, but Christian workers still can reveal the simplicity of Christ when they carry out ministry without excessive worldly entanglements.

Jesus said “the worker is worth his keep,” meaning that those who minister are to receive care from those to whom they minister. The disciples could expect food and shelter in return for the spiritual service they provided. These words are paralleled in Luke 10:17 and were quoted by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:18, where they are given the ascription, “the Scripture”—alongside a quotation of Deuteronomy 25:4. Thus, this

Scripture was used by Paul to urge the churches to financially support the workers among them.

10:11 “Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave.” Each pair of disciples would enter a town or village and stay in a worthy person’s house (that is, the home of a believer who had invited them to lodge there during their ministry). The command to stay there until they left the city cautioned them never to offend their hosts by looking for “better” lodging in a home that was more comfortable or socially prominent. To remain in one home would not be a burden for the home owner because the disciples’ stay in each community would be brief. The “worthy” were those who would respond to and believe the gospel message.

Jesus instructed the disciples to depend on others while they went from town to town preaching the gospel. Their purpose was to blanket Galilee with Jesus’ message, and by traveling light they could move quickly. Their dependence on others had three other good effects: (1) It clearly showed that the Messiah had not come to offer wealth to his followers; (2) it forced the disciples to rely on God’s power and not on their own provision; and (3) it involved the villagers, making them more eager to hear the message. Staying in homes was an excellent approach for the disciples’ short-term mission; this was not to be a permanent way of life for them. Yet the faith and simplicity that this way of life portrayed would serve them well in the future.

10:12–13 “And when you go into a household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.” As the disciples entered a household, they were to greet it. The actual words of this greeting are recorded in Luke 10:5, “When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house’ ” (NIV). At this time, people believed that blessings could be given as well as taken back. The disciples would bless the household upon entering. If the household is worthy (that is, had accepted them and their message), then the blessing of peace would remain upon that house. But if the household is not worthy (that is, did not accept their message), then the blessing of peace would return to the disciples, who would then leave that house. The peace returning from that house also indicated judgment to come (10:15). The words of blessing that the disciples had given would not be fulfilled there. These words mean that those who would receive the disciples also would receive the Messiah. Those who cared for God’s emissaries would receive blessing in return: “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me” (10:40 NRSV).

10:14 “If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town.” The disciples should also expect rejection, such as Jesus had faced in Decapolis (8:34). So Jesus further instructed that if anyone did not welcome them (that is, take them in and offer hospitality) and refused even to listen to them, then they should shake off the dust from their feet as they left.

Shaking off dust that accumulated on one’s sandals showed extreme contempt for an area and its people, as well as the determination not to have any further involvement with them. “Dust” was so common on highways that it came to signify that which clings to one’s life (such as sin). To shake the dust off one’s feet was a gesture of total repudiation. Pious Jews shook dust from their feet after passing through Gentile cities or

territory to show their separation from Gentile influences and practices. When the disciples shook the dust from their feet after leaving a Jewish town, it would be a vivid sign that they wished to remain separate from people who had rejected Jesus.

Shaking off the dust of a place, Jesus said, would be a testimony against the people. Its implications were clear and had eternal consequences. The act showed the people that the disciples had discharged their duty, had nothing further to say, and would leave the people to answer to God. We should not take this verse to mean that if one member of a family refuses to accept Christ, we should abandon effort to the other members. Nor should we stop ministry to others in a community if there are some who reject our words. Jesus was saying that if non-believing Jews rejected the disciples, they should treat those Jews the same as nonbelieving Gentiles. By this statement, Jesus was making it clear that the listeners were responsible for what they did with the gospel. As long as the disciples had faithfully and carefully presented the message, they were not to blame if the townspeople rejected it. Likewise, we are not responsible when others reject Christ's message of salvation, but we do have the responsibility to share the gospel clearly and faithfully.

10:15 “Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” God had destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven because of their wickedness (Genesis 19:24–25). To Jews, the judgment of these cities was a lesson not only in punishment of great evil, but also in the finality of divine judgment. Those who reject the gospel will be worse off in the day of judgment than the wicked people of these destroyed cities who never had heard the gospel at all.

Luke 10:17–20: The Disciples' Joy and Jesus's Redirection

The passage centers on a threefold repetition of joy language: the disciples “returned with joy,” Jesus tells them to “stop rejoicing in this [alone],” then redirects them to “rejoice that” their names are written in heaven. This isn't a rebuke of their excitement—it's a profound reorientation of where their deepest satisfaction should rest.

The Nature of Their Rejoicing

The disciples rejoice because even demons submit to them in Jesus's name, recognizing that their authority derives from Jesus himself. Joy characterizes salvation throughout Luke's Gospel, appearing more frequently here than in other accounts. Their celebration is legitimate—they've witnessed spiritual power at work through them. Yet Jesus perceives something crucial they're missing.

Jesus's Prophetic Response and Cosmic Significance

During their mission, Jesus experienced a prophetic vision of their success in his absence, declaring “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning,” and he “rejoiced in the Holy Spirit” in that very hour when they returned. The reversal of sin and death that Satan introduced is portrayed as Satan's defeat, demonstrating that Jesus's ministry and what flows from it represents the defeat of Satan, sin, and death. Jesus isn't diminishing their accomplishment—he's revealing its cosmic scope.

The Redirection: From Power to Identity

Jesus makes clear that authority wasn't the most important thing the disciples received; more important was their position as God's children, with their names written in God's book—their greatest blessing.[2] Their true identity transcends their temporary spiritual authority.

Jesus's Ongoing Renovation of Lives

This passage reveals Jesus as actively present and aware—not distant from his followers' work but intimately engaged with it. The Lord reveals himself only through Jesus, and to know God, one must know his Son.[2] Jesus continues this work today by redirecting our focus from external accomplishments to our fundamental identity as beloved children of God. His joy in the Holy Spirit invites us into deeper communion with him, transforming not just what we do but who we fundamentally are—renovating our hearts from the inside out, so that our greatest joy becomes belonging to him rather than achieving through him.

[Sources: 15-17]

Resources:

Rev. Brad Standfest, (1) Logos Bible Commentaries: [1] Jeremiah J. Johnston, *The Jesus Discoveries: 10 Historic Finds That Bring Us Face-to-Face with Jesus* (Bethany House, 2026), 28–29. [2] Jeffrey Kirby, *Thy Kingdom Come: Living the Lord's Prayer in Everyday Life* (Ashland, OH: TAN Books, 2020). [3] Eckhard J. Schnabel, *New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2023), 203–204. [4] J. B. Green, "Kingdom of God/Heaven," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, Second Edition*, ed. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 477. [5] Jon Nielson, *Tracing God's Story: An Introduction to Biblical Theology, Theology Basics* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024), 231–233. [6] Bruce Barton et al., *Life Application New Testament Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2001), 153. [7] Bruce B. Barton et al., *Luke, Life Application Bible Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997), 228–229, 266–267. [8] Bruce B. Barton, *Mark, Life Application Bible Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1994), [9] Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Africa Bible Commentary* (Nairobi, Kenya; Grand Rapids, MI: WordAlive Publishers; Zondervan, 2006), 1250–1251. [10] Michael J. Wilkins, *A Theology of Matthew's Gospel: Jesus Immanuel; Messiah of the Kingdom of Heaven, Israel, and the Church*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2025), 459. [11] Justin A. Irving and Mark L. Strauss, *Leadership in Christian Perspective: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Practices for Servant Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 21–22. [12] Galen Wendell Jones, *Leadership by the Book: Cultivating Spirit-Led Kingdom Leaders*, ed. Heath A. Thomas, *Hobbs College Library* (Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2023), 54–56. [13] Robert E. Coleman, *The Great Commission Lifestyle: Conforming Your Life to Kingdom Priorities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1992), 17–18. [14] Bruce B. Barton, *Mark, Life Application Bible Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1994), 487. Stein, Robert H. 1992. *Luke*. Vol. 24. *The New American Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers. Barton, Bruce B. 1996. *Matthew. Life Application Bible Commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. [15] Lyle Story, "If This Man Were a Prophet He Would Have Known ... (Luke 7:39)," *Journal of Biblical and*

Pneumatological Research (2013), 5:79–80. [16] Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House, Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1999), 1271–1272. [17] Robert H. Stein, Luke, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 24:309.

Sermon Notes: Witnesses of the Risen King

Happy Sunday, everyone! And a warm welcome to those of you joining us online.

Today we are starting a brand-new series called “Witnesses of the Risen King.”

Before we dive into God's Word, let me quickly share our AVC Connections:

You can find us on YouTube, the Church App, and on Facebook and our website.

Let's pray.

We have just finished celebrating the most powerful event ever recorded in history — the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

When Jesus began His public ministry, He stood up in the synagogue and proclaimed the Kingdom of God announcement from the Gospel of Luke. He said: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” (Luke 4:18-19)

After Jesus proclaimed that this prophecy was now being fulfilled, He immediately began doing exactly what He said He would do.

What did Jesus start doing?

He cast out demons, healed the sick, preached the good news, and brought freedom to those enslaved by sin.

Here's another important truth about the life and ministry of Christ: He called and trained disciples to do the very same things He was doing. After the disciples received some hands-on training, He sent them out to put into practice what they had been taught. This is super important.

The good news was never meant to be a solo act done only by Jesus.

Let me get personal for a moment. Have you ever tried to do something all by yourself and then regretted it? You stand there thinking, “What did I just get myself into?”

[Solo Story]

Jesus is the Rock and the Foundation, but as Christians we are commanded to be involved. I'm praying that this message lights a Holy Spirit fire in some of you today.

Jesus was very strategic in how He trained His followers. Scripture says: Jesus sent out the twelve with these instructions... (Matthew 10:5-15)

In that passage we see three key things:

- Jesus is deeply concerned about the lost sheep.
- The disciples were sent to do what Jesus Himself was doing.
- They were told not to worry about the outcome — if people rejected them, they were to shake the dust off their feet and move on.

Theologian Doriani comments on Jesus' words in that passage:

“Jesus makes a staggering claim: towns that reject the message of his disciples will face a worse judgement than Sodom and Gomorrah. When people refuse the messengers of Christ, they are not merely rejecting men — they are rejecting the kingdom of God itself. There is no neutral ground; how one responds to the message of Jesus determines their standing on the day of judgment.”

How many Christians do we have in the room today? Go ahead and raise your hands!

If you are a follower of Jesus, then proclaiming Christianity means this:

We are Witnesses of the Risen King.

If we truly are witnesses of the Risen King, then there are three things from Jesus' words in Matthew 10 that should move our hearts to action:

1) There are lost people out there going to hell.

There are people in your family, at your workplace, and in your community who desperately need Jesus.

Here's my real and raw challenge to you today:

What are you doing to witness to them?

2) Jesus sent the disciples out to do supernatural things — to heal, raise the dead, and drive out demons.

Whoa! Wait a minute — not me! No way!

Let me make it simple for you: You should be praying for people.

3) We should be telling people about Jesus and not worrying about the outcome.

You might say, “There is no way I can do that.” Let me help you.

Just tell people what Jesus has done for you.

I want to close today by looking at the rejoicing disciples. After Jesus sent out the twelve, He later sent out seventy-two other disciples — and they did the same thing.

Let's read what happened when they returned:

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:17-20)

Friends, the good news is still great news for us and for the world. We should be rejoicing! We should be ready to witness for what Christ has done for us.

Listen to me in closing:

Jesus is still in the life-transformation business. Maybe you need a renovation to take place in your own life... or in your family's life.

The altar is open for prayer

Devotional Questions:

1. Jesus' Mission Becomes Our Mission

In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus declared that the Spirit of the Lord had anointed Him “to proclaim good news to the poor... freedom for the prisoners... recovery of sight for the blind... to set the oppressed free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” How does this description of Jesus’ ministry shape the way you understand your own calling as a Christian today? In what specific areas of your life (family, work, community) is God inviting you to bring His good news, freedom, or healing—whether through prayer, words, or acts of kindness?

2. From Observer to Participant

Jesus not only proclaimed the kingdom of God—He trained His disciples to do the same works He was doing (Matthew 10:1, 7-8). He called the Twelve, then sent out seventy-two others, showing that the gospel was never meant to be a “solo act.” Reflect on your own walk with Christ: Are you mostly observing Jesus’ work (through church, Bible reading, or listening to sermons), or are you actively participating by sharing the good news and serving others? What one step can you take this week to move from watching to doing, just as the disciples did?

3. The Urgent and Simple Call to Go

When Jesus sent out the Twelve, He told them to travel light, depend on God and the hospitality of others, preach that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” and shake the dust off their feet when rejected (Matthew 10:9-14). What does “traveling light” and trusting God look like for you in your witness for Christ? Are there worries, excuses, or extra “baggage” (fear of rejection, desire for comfort, or concern about outcomes) that keep you from sharing your faith more freely?

4. The Seriousness of Rejection

Jesus gave a sobering warning: towns that reject the message of His disciples will face a worse judgment than Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 10:15). As theologian Doriani noted, rejecting the messengers of Christ is rejecting the kingdom of God itself. How does this truth affect the way you pray for your family members, coworkers, neighbors, or friends who do not yet know Jesus? What responsibility do you feel to share the gospel clearly and compassionately, knowing there is no neutral ground?

5. Praying with Kingdom Authority

Jesus empowered the disciples to heal the sick, cleanse lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons (Matthew 10:8), and the seventy-two returned amazed that even demons submitted to them in Jesus' name (Luke 10:17).

While we may not perform the exact same miracles today, the sermon reminds us that we are still called to pray for people with boldness. Who in your life needs prayer right now—for physical healing, freedom from addiction or oppression, or spiritual sight? Will you commit to praying for them this week in the name and authority of the Risen King?

6. Rejoice in the Right Thing

When the seventy-two returned with joy because demons submitted to them, Jesus redirected their joy: “Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you but rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). Where do you tend to find your greatest joy in your Christian life— in seeing results, in spiritual power, or in accomplishments? How can you shift your deepest rejoicing to the eternal reality that your name is written in heaven because of what Jesus has done for you?

7. Living as a Transformed Witness

The resurrection of Jesus is the most powerful event in history, and because we belong to the Risen King, our lives should visibly reflect His transforming power. As the commentary encourages, our witness combines personal story (“what Jesus did for me”) with clear biblical truth.

Think about your own story of transformation: What specific ways has Jesus brought freedom, peace, forgiveness, or new life to you? How can you share that story this week with someone who needs hope? Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to open a natural door for you to be a faithful witness of the Risen King.