

## It's Still All About the Message

When I was asked to begin writing these articles over four years ago, I didn't feel prepared or qualified. Then I remembered when Jesus sent out His disciples, two by two, to preach in His name (Mark 6, Luke 9). His followers hadn't yet absorbed all He had to teach them, and they didn't have the indwelling Holy Spirit to guide them either. Don't you suppose they felt unprepared and underqualified too? And yet, Jesus told them to go, taking nothing with them – no bag, no food, no money, no extra clothes – nothing to fall back on. All the disciples took was Jesus' message of salvation and His authority to share it. But that was enough, because it was about the message, not the messengers.

The same was true in my situation. The good news about Jesus is the important thing, and He can use anyone He chooses to deliver it – you, me, or even the “son of perdition.” Yes, Jesus sent out “the twelve,” which included Judas Iscariot. So if God chose to use someone as flawed as Judas to deliver His message, not one of us has grounds to claim, “I'm not worthy. I'm not ready. I'm not wise or good enough.” Jesus' disciples were obedient and went. Since then, countless others have answered His call to...

*“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)*

In that first article of September, 2021, I wrote, *“God hasn't called me to do anything as difficult as setting out on a mission trip without a suitcase; He's only asked me to write a few articles in the local paper. So, with His enabling, I will.”*

God is good. He has indeed faithfully enabled me, and those “few articles” became more than 100. Now, though, the door to this particular opportunity is closing, and this piece will be my last for the paper. Nevertheless, God will see that the gospel continues to be shared through other venues and by thousands of voices, because it's still all about the message. If you are a believer, you are called to share God's love and message too, and He promises it will not be in vain.

*So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)*

S. Johnson