



In the 18<sup>th</sup> century November 1<sup>st</sup> became *All Saints Day* or *All Hallow's (holy person's) Day* to honour all the saints and martyrs of the church throughout the ages. The night before was observed as a vigil of prayer and fasting. In 2026 we will not be remembering dead saints but dressing up in costumes to collect sweets from our neighbours. A day

that was to be a poignant day to honour Christian martyrs has become a day of experimenting with evil: ouija boards, horror films, tarot cards and darkness. It is common to get caught up in the traditions and forget the original purpose. Christmas was once about Emmanuel but is now about Father Christmas. We enjoy the spectacle but we miss the Saviour. As we look at verse 1 let us ask the Holy Spirit to teach us and train us in righteousness.

**Why Jesus has power and authority.** In the previous chapters we have seen Jesus in full throttle proclaiming the Kingdom of Heaven to the poor, the rich, the wicked, the demons, the Jew, the Gentile, the military leaders and spiritual leaders. He forgives the sins of those who believe in him. He heals the bleeding, the leprosy, the paralyzed, the possessed and raises the dead. He is doing what only God can do. After forgiving the sins of the man lowered through the roof, the teachers of the law say "Who can forgive sins but God alone." They meant this as a criticism, but they proclaimed truth. Jesus is God. Who else at the age of 12 was teaching in a synagogue and saying to his parents "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" Jesus has the power and authority of God because he is God. Jesus has been carrying out God's purpose and mission with his disciples as eyewitnesses, apprentices, students of God himself. He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and cure diseases. In order that they too would go out on his mission to save a people for himself and renew the world for that people. Although they had been with Jesus they had not reached a place of complete understanding. They'd simply been with Jesus and now were empowered by Jesus. Have you been with Jesus; spent time with him in his word and in prayer. All those who are followers of Jesus have the Holy Spirit living within, to equip and empower. So let this passage encourage us when we feel ill-equipped and ill-trained. Let us continue growing and training, but let its lack never be a barrier to good gospel conversations.

**Proclaiming who Jesus is, in his power and authority.** Jesus told them: "Take nothing for the journey, no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." (v3) People have used these directions as a template for mission over the years. In one sense, there is no issue with doing so but sometimes they miss the One it is all about. When sharing the gospel, holding evangelistic events and meetings, we must take care that people do not miss the One it is all about. If we're on a mission but they miss Jesus, then we're not on mission for Jesus. Jesus sends his disciples on a holistic mission: engaging with people on a spiritual level by proclaiming the kingdom of God and engaging with people on a physical level by healing the sick. Jesus never separates the two! Jesus teaches and then feeds people. He heals people and he forgives people yet, he says, go and do physical and spiritual things, but only gives them what they need spiritually! They are to be dependant on God for their physical needs. They are to practice what they preach. The people hear Jesus from the disciples' mouths, and they see Jesus in their lives. Going out like this means it will be harder for people to miss the One it is all about.

They are to stay in the same house until they leave that town and not move to a bigger with better food. It may convey a greater interest in personal comfort than their mission. The disciples were not selling the gospel for profit. Sadly, we see the opposite in some churches, or some worship tours or online, with expensive sets, carefully curated performances, those up front making hundreds of thousands of pounds. They are touring the world in God's name sure enough, but it is their own mission and not God's. There is great spectacle but there is no Saviour. Beware of such people.

We are not beggars. We are God's children and he provides for us, often through the ordinary means of the provision of his people. As a church we support several different missionaries. You can find out details of them on the back board and you can also sign up to their prayer and newsletters. Many people also support other missionaries and mission organisations on top of their giving to church. We do this as we recognise that we have a part to play in God's mission by supporting those who give all their time to minister the gospel. Jesus also says, "If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." (v5) This is a warning of the reality of rejecting Jesus. It is like a symbolic abandoning a place to its impending doom. It is a call to repentance, to help them see the reality of what they are rejecting.

**Three principles for the mission.** 1. Dependence upon God 2. Not seeking luxury or poverty 3. The reality of rejection as an encouragement to repentance. The goal is people seeing and savouring Jesus, not simply enjoying the spectacle, but enjoying Jesus. Depend on God. Pray each morning for opportunities to speak to people about Jesus. Pray for friends, colleagues and neighbours that they would hear the truth and believe, for soft hearts that will receive the gospel and for boldness to tell them the gospel. Recognise that this is God's work, his mission. Jesus saves. In our lives, let us not seek luxury or poverty; use what God has given us, whether much or little, for his kingdom purposes. Do not hinder the advancement of the gospel with what we have. I've heard it said by someone more eloquent than me, "God has made us to be conduits of his grace. The danger is in thinking the conduit should be lined with gold. It shouldn't. Copper will do." Equally, let us not make what we don't have a reason for not living missionally.

**Misunderstanding Jesus is and resisting His power and authority.** "So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere." (6) The mission is successful, the good news is proclaimed, people are healed. The kingdom of God is advanced. But all is not sunshine and rainbows. "Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was going on. And he was perplexed because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead, others that Elijah had appeared, and still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life." (v7-8) Herod and others enjoyed the spectacle but they missed the Saviour. How many of us can be guilty of this? Chatting about 'who Jesus is to me,' instead of who Jesus really is. Have we made little personal Jesuses that are simply idols. If our understanding of Jesus is based upon what other people have told us, or what we've watched online, or on The Chosen, then we don't know Jesus ourselves. If how we think of Jesus, is not the Jesus of the Bible, then we're not thinking of Jesus at all. We're missing him. Come to know Jesus for yourself whilst it is today. He is better than you could possibly imagine. He satisfies like nothing or no one else can because we were made by him and for him. These onlookers saw what was going on but missed the One it was all about. Perhaps with a friend, or your son or daughter you've shared the good news as faithfully as you could and tried to live in accordance with the teaching you profess. But, despite this, they miss Jesus. This passage shows us that sometimes people hear what is going on but still miss the One it is all about.

Yet that isn't the end of the story, praise God. Jesus sends His disciples back out on mission after His resurrection. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." The disciples came back through these towns and many of those who missed Jesus this time around, heard and believed after Pentecost. So we keep praying, proclaiming, sharing, teaching, loving and warning. Those who are misunderstanding and resisting Jesus now, might very well come to know and love him if we press on in faith. If you know that you've been resisting Jesus I want to invite you to come to him now and ask him to forgive you and help you believe and trust. Speak to me after the service.

Herod eventually got to see Jesus but despite being together in the same room, Herod did not really see him. He loved the spectacle too much. The spectacle of great miracles, the spectacle at Jesus' death, ridiculing and mocking him and nailing him to a tree. He enjoyed the spectacle but missed the Saviour. Don't just enjoy the spectacle of church this morning. The songs, the coffee, the social. Enjoy Jesus. The glorious King who left his throne in Heaven and exchanged it for a cross of wood. Who died to atone for our sin so we could know him. See what is going on, but please, see the One it is all about.