

Shake the Dust Off Your Feet

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Matthew 10:5-15

In our text, Jesus gave His apostles a “limited commission.” If people did not receive them, they were to shake the dust off their feet – a symbolic gesture indicating that the apostles were not responsible (they did what they could) and the people were accountable for their rejection of the message. This was also done in carrying out the Great commission (Acts 13:49-51) when Paul’s preaching was rejected, so he left to teach others elsewhere. In our efforts to teach others, we may have times when we need to shake the dust off our feet and move on. When do we do this?

When They Refuse to Listen

- The first step that someone must take to obtain salvation is hearing (Romans 10:17) – the gospel is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16); we are called by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14)
- Until one is willing to listen, we have no hope of saving them – move on to find other willing hearers

When They Ignore What They Have Heard

- Some people listen, but do not want to accept what they have been taught, so they ignore it (John 10:24-26) – Jesus provided ample evidence to convince the Jews, but they refused to accept it
- If one refuses to accept the word, we have nothing else to appeal to in order to convince them (Hebrews 6:4-6)

When Discussions Turn to Quarrels

- There is nothing wrong with discussions and debates (Acts 15:1-2; Titus 1:9-11) – as long as we are teaching and defending the truth and leading people to understand it
- But we must avoid speculation and fruitless discussions (1 Timothy 1:3-7) – these produce quarrels and we “must not be quarrelsome” (2 Timothy 2:23-26)

When They Blaspheme and Speak Evil

- Blasphemy led Paul to stop teaching those in Antioch (Acts 14:45) – they were speaking against God
- Speaking evil led Paul to stop teaching in the synagogue in Ephesus (Acts 19:8-9) – they were speaking against the church
- One who has reached this state cannot be helped – they are engaged in unreasonable opposition to God and the church

When They Stir Up Persecution

- When persecution arose in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas shook off the dust from their feet and left (Acts 13:51) – this was also the point in which the disciples left Jerusalem and preached elsewhere (Acts 8:1, 4)
- We must be willing to face persecution (1 Peter 4:16; Hebrews 10:39) – but if we can escape and go elsewhere to find others we may be able to teach, we should do it

Conclusion

- Are we being unfair for shaking the dust off our feet and moving on? – Jesus told His apostles to do this and they did (were they being unfair?); Paul said the ones he was leaving “repudiate [the gospel] and judge [themselves] unworthy of eternal life” (Acts 13:46)
- They may later have a change of heart – in that case, we should be willing to help them; until then, we should find others who might listen instead of spending all of our time on those who will not