

Dear Heavenly Father,

### *Praise*

Jesus said, “Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matt 10:39). I praise you today as the God who is worth giving up everything for, even my life. You proved your love, in that while I was yet a sinner, you sent your Son to die for me. How can I do anything less than give you my all in return! All glory and honor and power be to you, the King of kings!

### *Today in Your Word*

Today you told me about Jesus’ final visit to Nazareth, the commissioning of the twelve disciples, and the death of John the Baptist. It had been about a year since the people of Nazareth tried to murder Jesus. In love and mercy, he returned one last time to preach the gospel. This shows me that you are longsuffering, not willing that any should perish. Grant me such love for the lost! Sadly, the people took offense and refused to believe. Jesus couldn’t do any miracles there except for healing a few sick people. This teaches me several important lessons. First, pride can keep me from accepting the ministry of others. I need to be careful lest I be offended when someone who was no different than me yesterday becomes something more today (Mark 6:3). Second, false expectations can be my downfall. I need to make sure my assumptions and beliefs about you are grounded in your Word. If they’re not, I can be staring truth in the face and never see it. Third, unbelief can frustrate your grace. If my heart is not humble and submissive to your will, I can prevent the Spirit from accomplishing what you want for my life. After leaving Nazareth, Jesus called the twelve disciples and gave them authority to cast out demons and heal diseases. Then he sent them out to preach the gospel and minister to “the lost sheep of Israel.” This story has much to teach me about ministry. First, my ministry must be motivated by compassion. When Jesus saw the multitudes, “he had compassion for them” (Matt 9:36). His love then motivated him to send his disciples into the harvest fields. This teaches me that if I don’t have love and compassion for people, I will not be successful in ministry. Second, my ministry will involve suffering. Jesus said, “You will be hated by all for my name’s sake” (Matt 10:22). This teaches me that I shouldn’t be surprised when I experience persecution and mistreatment, even by those who claim to be disciples. Third, my ministry must be not controlled by fear. Jesus said, “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt 10:28). This teaches me to stand boldly for the truth and not to be intimidated into saying only what people want to hear.

### *Reflection*

Jesus said, “Whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven” (Matt 10:33). Am I living in such a way that my life acknowledges that Jesus is my Lord and Master?

### *Request*

Father, my desire is to be a faithful servant in your kingdom. Help me to love others with a sacrificial love and labor with all my strength to seek and save the lost.

### *Thanksgiving*

Thank you for being with me to the end. Sometimes that means being martyred like John the Baptist, and if that is my lot, I know that you will enable me to be faithful even unto death. Praise the Lord!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: “[Go, Labor On](#)” – Horatius Bonar.*

*Meditation Verse: Matthew 10:16.*