The Five Ministry Gifts
Lesson 6: The Apostle

1. Scriptures about the apostle

Ephesians 4:8-16

Ephesians 2:19, 20

1 Corinthians 12:28

2. What is an apostle?

The office of the apostle is one of the most misunderstood and controversial offices in the Bible.

We need to understand this word was not first a Biblical word, it was a secular word.

Definition of APOSTLE:

- The Greek word "apostolos" is a compound word made up of two words.
- It comes from another Greek word "apostello" which is made up of "apo" which means "away" and "stello" which means "to send".
- Together it means one who is sent away, a messenger, and a delegate who is commissioned to represent another person.
- "Stello" comes from another word which means a military expedition or campaign; an army or navy; it brings the idea of a military assault.
- The word gives the picture of a military expedition sent to the front line to crush the enemy and take new territory.

Apostolic ministry is a frontline ministry.

Apostles are sent into new territory to crush the enemy and take new territory for the Kingdom of God.

The word “apostolos” appears in the New Testament seventy-nine times.

The word “apostello” is used one hundred thirty-one times in the New Testament.

This word is not a mystery. It is very clearly defined in the Bible.

It describes a person who is dispatched.

Other things the word implies:

- One who is sent away in great power.
- One who is sent away in great honor.
- One who is empowered.
- One who is dispatched to the frontlines to carry out a military campaign.

The word “apostle” depicts a person who was personally selected and dispatched by a very high-ranking military dignitary to accomplish a specific task.

3. The word “apostolos” is used four different ways within context of the culture of the New Testament church.

- The word “apostolos” was used in the Bible times as a word to describe the commander of a fleet of military ships.

The fleet of ships that travelled with him carried a specialized crew that accompanied him and assisted him.

Their fleets were usually sent on missions to locate territories where civilization was nonexistent. Once a territory was located, the commander with all his crew and their belongings would disembark and settle in. They would work as a team to establish a new community in the region. They would educate the natives on the civilized lifestyle. The “apostolos “would become the architect of the new community. They would construct roads and new buildings. Their purpose was to recreate their culture and language in a new location. Their fleet of boats carried everything they needed to complete the job.

Once the job was complete the commander would not stay. He would get back on his fleet. He would take certain members of his fleet, and they would sail in search of a new uncharted territory where they would start over again.

- The word “apostolos” was so attached to traveling that it became the New Testament word for “a passport.”

It was the name given to a travel document. If they wanted to leave the country, they needed an "apostolos". It gave them the right of passage to travel.

- The word "apostolos" was also the New Testament word for an ambassador.

Definition of AMBASSADOR: A high-ranking representative; a person who has the authority to act in the place of the one who sent him; diplomat

When an ambassador speaks, he has the authority to speak on behalf of his sender.

- The word was used to describe a supernatural leader – one who has been endowed by the gods with supernatural insights and revelation.

If you had an "apostolos" in your life, you had someone who would take you into new spiritual territory.

Galatians 1:1 *Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)*

Galatians 1:12 *For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

4. Summary of the apostle

The word "apostle" carried all these meanings. So, when the people of the early church heard or read the word "apostle" they understood the meaning of the word.

An apostle was specially selected, specially commissioned, and specially sent to represent the Lord in a variety of ways.

An apostle was a spiritual commander, a spiritual architect, an overseer, a coordinator, and the chief leader responsible for "colonizing" new territories with the Word of God and New Testament church culture.

An apostle provided passage from one spiritual dimension to another, and his anointing would enable a church to journey into levels of spiritual growth that would be impossible to reach without the apostles anointing.

An apostle was authorized to speak and act on the Lord's behalf. Like an ambassador, he represented Jesus Christ and had the backing of God's Kingdom behind him. As the envoy of Christ, he had the anointing, spiritual backing, and authority to get things accomplished.

An apostle possesses supernatural insights into the building up and growth of the church.

5. The office of the apostle

Ephesians 4:11. 12

There are many misconceptions about the office of the apostle.

Some churches teach there are no modern-day apostles. They believe that they died and passed away with the apostolic age.

On the other hand, some groups make the other mistake, and they call every leader an apostle. For example, there have been some labeled the apostle of faith or the apostle of worship.

There is no such thing as an apostle of faith or worship. What is really meant by this is that this person is a pioneer. They are a leader or in the forefront in their particular ministry.

6. Jesus – The Chief Apostle

Hebrews 3:1

Jesus was sent on an apostolic mission to bring salvation to the world.

God, the Father, sent His only son Jesus to the world.

John 3:16, 17

Jesus was sent by the Father.

He represented the Father here on earth.

Jesus knew exactly why His Father sent Him into the world.

He aligned Himself with His mission.

Everything He did, taught, and everything recorded about His life, was focused on accomplishing the mission for which He was sent.

John 5:30

He did not act on His own authority, but on the Father's authority.

John 12:49, 50

Jesus' mission was to destroy the works of the devil.

1 John 3:8
At the end of His life, Jesus made a statement in John 17:4.

John 17:4

7. The Twelve Apostles

- "The Twelve" were chosen by Christ after a night of prayer.

Luke 6:12, 13

- Paul spoke about these twelve men.

1 Corinthians 15:5 *. . . and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. "The Twelve" were special because they saw Jesus with their own eyes.*

- They were "witnesses of His resurrection".

Acts 1:21, 22

8. The Apostle Paul

He was named an apostle.

Romans 1:1

1 Corinthians 15:9

Galatians 1:1

He went to the ends of the known world to bring the Gospel message to all the lost people groups of the earth.

He wrote thirteen books of the New Testament.

He persevered through some of the toughest persecution recorded.

Paul wrote about what he went through:

2 Corinthians 11:24-27

What did Paul go through?

- Prison
- Beat a with a whip and rods until he almost died several times
- Stoned
- Shipwrecked

- Lost in the ocean
- Robbed
- Hunger
- Thirsty
- Sleepless nights
- Cold
- Nakedness

We complain when we have a bad day in the ministry. We have petty problems like someone calling us a bad name or working hard and not having time for lunch.

In thirteen years, Paul went on three missionary journeys traveling more than seven thousand miles and planting at least fourteen new churches (without cars, motorcycles, airplanes, taxis, trains, buses, etc.).

While Paul had a passion to reach His own people (the Jewish nation) with the Gospel, God sent him to reach the Gentiles.
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Acts 9:15

Acts 14:27

His apostleship was confirmed by signs and wonders

There are ten recorded miracles in the Bible attributed to Paul.

Acts 19:11

9. Other apostles mentioned in the New Testament

The Greek Word "apostle" is used to describe the original twelve another group of seventy, Matthias, Paul, and eleven others.

If you include the list of those sent out in an apostolic manner, there were about eighty-three people in the New Testament who fit the description of an apostle.

- The seventy

In Luke chapter ten, Jesus sent out the seventy. He gave them instructions.

- He told them to go.

Luke 10:3

- He told them to be careful.

Luke 10:3

- He told them to live by faith.

Luke 10:4

- He told them to be focused.

Luke 10:4

- He told them to extend their blessing.

Luke 10:5, 6

- He told them to be content, receive blessings from others, and to be flexible

Luke 10:7, 8

- He told them to heal the sick and proclaim the kingdom.

Luke 10:9

- Matthias

After Judas betrayed Jesus and committed suicide, Matthias was chosen to take his place.

Acts 1:26

- Barnabas

Acts 14:14.

- Adronicus and Junia

Romans 16:7

10. An apostle has a pioneering spirit.

Apostles always have a pioneering spirit.

Apostles are always sent ones who go into uncharted territories for the sake of the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

Definition PIONEER: One who leads the way, a trailblazer, one who ventures into unknown territory

A pioneer is someone who sees potential and is willing to try new things.

A pioneer pushes boundaries to advance a cause or idea or break a record. These men and women have experienced success in their field, sometimes by overcoming great challenges.

Some examples of pioneers throughout history:

- The Wright Brothers pioneered aviation.

They never graduated from high School, went to college, or got married.

They were bicycle salesmen.

They failed two times before they were airborne.

- Alexander Graham Bell pioneered global communications.

He was homeschooled.

He faced more than 600 lawsuits over his telephone patent.

- Henry Ford pioneered transportation.

He had more than one hundred sixty inventions and patents.

He worked until two years before his death.

- Alexander Dowie was a pioneer of faith.

He brought to the church the message of healing and deliverance that had been obscured for hundreds of years.

The church's lack of practice and faith in this area bothered him.

Most other clergy opposed him and called him a fraud for practicing divine healing.

He was arrested more than one hundred times in 1895 in an attempt to stop his healing ministry.

The more he was persecuted the more successful his ministry became.

Hundreds were healed and thousands came to hear him preach.

Facts about pioneers:

- Pioneers are often misunderstood, mistreated, and misquoted.

The benefits of their life's work are only seen and appreciated afterwards.

- Pioneers help expand and breakthrough barriers that keep us from moving forward.

Every generation needs pioneers.

Human nature is to remain the same, but the pioneers of society push us forward.

- Pioneers shake us from complacency.
- Pioneers motivate us to reach our goals.
- Pioneers advance, progress, gain, grow, and conquer territory.
- Pioneers have extraordinary courage, talent, vision, and ability.
- Pioneers can succeed in the face of overwhelming odds.
- Pioneers are pathfinders, trailblazers, and innovators.

  They are the first to enter and open the way for others.

- Pioneers are the catalyst that causes things to happen.
- Pioneers penetrate new territories.
- Pioneers initiate new movements.
- Pioneers are frontiersmen.

They live to expand the horizon. They live on the edge.

The Apostles of the Early church were pioneers:

- They laid the foundations for the church by writing the New Testament.
- They were persecuted.

- They overcame obstacles that would have stopped most ordinary people.
- They invaded new territory and new nations with the Gospel.
- They helped establish the church and started new works.

William Carey - The Father of Modern Missions

Englishman William Carey (1761–1834) is probably the most well-known missionary in history. Had there been no William Carey, it is uncertain whether there would have ever been an Adoniram Judson, Lottie Moon, or Bill Wallace. Carey has been called the father of the modern mission's movement in the English-speaking world because of his forty-plus years as a missionary in India and the role he played as a mission's apologist.

Carey was converted while working as a blacksmith's apprentice as a teenager and then baptized by a Baptist pastor named John Ryland Jr. in 1783. Carey pastored a village church in Moulton, Northamptonshire, but because the church was unable to financially support the Carey family, he also worked as a grammar schoolteacher and a shoe cobbler.

Although Carey was mostly uneducated, he was a reader who became very interested in literature about foreign lands, especially Captain James Cook's journals of his travels. This curiosity about other lands slowly became a spiritual concern for the salvation of foreign peoples. Carey increasingly mentioned unevangelized nations in his sermons and wept when he discussed those with little access to the gospel.

Carey had come to believe that the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18–20 was a binding command on every generation of Christians.

In 1793, William Carey, his wife Dorothy, their four children and Dorothy's sister Kitty. arrived in the British colony of India, where he would serve the rest of his life. He was a trailblazer. Before Carey obeyed God's call to a foreign land, there was very little outreach abroad. Most people ignored the work of Ludwig Zinzendorf and the Moravians. Carey's passion to bring the gospel to the lost in foreign lands birthed a missionary revolution

Carey and his friend, Thomas, became managers of indigo factories to support their families, but Thomas squandered all of the missionaries' money. Within a few short years, Carey's young son, Peter, died, Kitty left the mission to marry a British soldier, and Dorothy began to show signs of mental illness—a condition that ultimately took her life in 1807.

In 1800, Carey finally baptized his first convert, Krishna Pal, who soon became an evangelist. Carey served in India for seven years before he saw his first convert. Despite these early years of minimal fruit in terms of conversions, by 1821, Carey and his associates had baptized 1,407 converts.

Carey's great gift was linguistics, so he translated the Bible and various other works into Bengali and several other dialects. Carey's commitment to Bible translation proved his most important

legacy. He translated and printed the entire Bible into 6 languages and helped translate portions of the Bible into approximately twenty-nine other languages. They are still used in India today.

He helped plant twenty-six churches and one hundred twenty-six schools.

Carey also labored for social reform. Most famously, he was a fierce critic of the practice of widows burning themselves upon their late husbands' funeral pyres—a horrific practice that was often forced upon widows who had little voice in Indian culture. It is called "sati". They were taught if they do this that they would rescue their husbands from misery and take him and fourteen generations of his and her family to heaven with her where she will enjoy happiness forever.

He also spoke out against the practice of baby sacrifice. Hindus would offer their newborn babies as a sacrifice in the Ganges River to bring good luck and appease the god's anger.

William Carey introduced the steam engine to India and the production of paper

William Carey had three wives and three children die while serving on the mission field in India. He served in India for more than forty years without a furlough. He died on the mission field at the age of seventy-two years.

William Carey quotes:

"Expect great things from God. Attempt great things from God."

"I am not afraid of failure. I am afraid of succeeding at things that don't matter."

"It is the duty of those who are entrusted with the Gospel to make it known among all nations."

"To know the will of God we need an open Bible and an open map."

<u>Hudson Taylor- Founder of the China Inland Mission</u>

Hudson Taylor was the most widely known missionary in China's history. During his fifty-one years of service there, his China Inland Mission established twenty mission stations, brought 849 missionaries to the field, trained seven hundred Chinese workers, raised four million dollars by faith (following George Mueller's example), and developed a witnessing Chinese church of 125,000. It has been said at least 35,000 were his own converts and that he baptized some 50,000. His gift for inspiring people to give themselves and their possessions to Christ was amazing.

Taylor was born into a Christian home. Once at age four, Hudson piped up, "When I am a man, I mean to be a missionary and go to China." His father's faith and mother's prayers meant much. Before he was born, they had prayed about him going to China someday.

When he was seventeen years of age, he went into his father's library in search of a book to read. He picked up a Gospel tract entitled, "It is Finished," and decided to read the story on the front. He came upon the expression, "The finished work of Christ," Remembering the words, "It is finished," he raised the question — "What was finished?" The answers seemed to fall in place, and he received Christ as his Savior.

In November 1851, Hudson moved his lodging to a neighborhood on the edge of town. Here he began a rigorous regime of saving and self-denial, spending spare time as a self-appointed medical missionary in cheerless streets where low wages, ever large families and alcohol produced brutalized husbands and wives and sickly children.

One day in a poor home with evidently starving children, he prayed for them but had no peace until he gave the family all he had even down to his last coin. He went home happy in heart and the next day the postman brought a letter with enough money to make a 400% profit for only a twelve-hour investment. He was convinced that money given in Christ's name was a loan which God would repay...and He did! One night about 10:00 p.m. on the day his rent was due (and his pockets were empty), his employer came by with his back wages. Experiences like these prepared him for his future life of faith.

On September 19, 1853, Hudson Taylor left for China. He was the only passenger in the sailing vessel. He arrived in China when he was 21 years old and 10 months. He was not prepared for the civil war on his doorstep. He was forlorn, miserable, and homesick. His eyes were inflamed, he suffered headaches and was simply cold in the climate. His leisure time was consumed with long letters home to parents and sister.

During his first year in China, he was appalled at the idleness of many missionaries and their critical, sarcastic remarks. Taylor believed they were "worldly" and spent too much time with English businessmen and diplomats who needed their services as translators. Instead, Taylor wanted the Christian faith taken to the interior of China. So, within months of arriving, and the native language still a challenge, Taylor, along with Joseph Edkins, set off for the interior, setting sail down the Huangpu River distributing Chinese Bibles and tracts.

Taylor became convinced that a special organization was needed to evangelize the interior of China. He made plans to recruit twenty-four missionaries: two for each of the eleven unreached inland provinces and two for Mongolia. It was a visionary plan that would have left veteran recruiters breathless: it would increase the number of China missionaries by twenty-five percent.

In his new mission, which he called the China Inland Mission (CIM), had a number of distinctive features, including this: its missionaries would have no guaranteed salaries, nor could they appeal for funds; they would simply trust God to supply their needs; furthermore, its missionaries would adopt Chinese dress and then take the gospel into the China interior.

Because there continued to be so many Chinese to reach, Taylor instituted another radical policy: he sent unmarried women into the interior, a move criticized by many veterans. But Taylor's boldness knew no bounds. In 1881, he asked God for another seventy missionaries by the close of 1884: he got seventy-six. In late 1886, Taylor prayed for another one hundred within a year: by November 1887, he announced one hundred two candidates had been accepted for service.

The personal cost of Taylor's vision was high on his family: his wife Maria died at age thirty-three, and four of eight of their children died before they reached the age of ten. Hudson suffered from bouts of depression due to his loss, but he kept on going.

Between his work ethic and his absolute trust in God (despite never soliciting funds, his CIM grew and prospered), he inspired thousands to forsake the comforts of the West to bring the Christian message to the vast and unknown interior of China. Though mission work in China was interrupted by the communist takeover in 1949, the CIM continues to this day under the name Overseas Missionary Fellowship (International).

11. Paul's list of the characteristics of an apostle

2 Corinthians 12:12 – King James Version
Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

- Patience

First, we need to understand that being an apostle does not take place in a comfortable place. You are on the frontlines. You are on a military expedition. You are pushing back the powers of darkness.

Paul says one of the signs that a person is a real apostle is patience.

Definition of PATIENCE: To stay, abide, remain in one's spot, to keep one's position, to resolve to maintain territory, to hang in, staying power, refusing to surrender, turning down every opportunity to quit

It pictures a soldier who maintains their position even in the face of opposition.

The word describes one who is under a heavy load but refuses to break, bend, or surrender because he is convinced that the territory, promise, or principle under assault is rightfully his.

- Signs

This word describes supernatural and miraculous activity.

Paul had miraculous activities at key pivotal moments when he came into new territory.

An example of this can be seen when he came to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 2:1

1 Corinthians 2:4

- Wonders

Definition of WONDERS: Refers to an event that leaves one baffled, bewildered, or astonished; an event that leaves one at a loss of words.

It depicts a shock or surprise felt by bystanders who observed the event that was contrary to the normal course of nature.

An example of this is in Acts 16 when the earthquake shook the prison and the chains on Paul and Silas came off.

- Mighty Deeds

Definition of MIGHTY DEEDS: Explosive, superhuman power that comes with enormous energy and produces phenomenal, extraordinary, and unparalleled results that are impressive, incomparable, and beyond the human ability to perform

Mighty deeds are a flood of God's power is released through a person to drive back the powers of darkness.

12. Other characteristics of an apostle

- A servant's heart (bondservant to Christ)

Titus 1:1

Romans 1:1

Definition of BONDSERVANT: One who gives himself up to another's will

A bondservant is one whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men.

A bondservant is devoted to another to the disregard of his own interests.

- Proven record of fruit or success in ministry

1 Corinthians 9:1, 2

Paul was speaking to the church at Corinth – You are my work. Your church is my work. Your church is the seal of my apostleship.

In the New Testament the word apostle is never used except when talking about a person who starts “churches” plural.

2 Corinthians 3:1, 2

- Under spiritual authority

2 Corinthians 10:8

- A spiritual father / mother

1 Corinthians 4:15-17

13. Summary / Conclusion

The title of apostle is something that we should never give ourselves.

It is given by God, proven through our character, and shown in the effectiveness of our ministry.

True apostles are also recognized by the church and community of believers.

The title, given by presbyters and witnessed by others, comes after many years of fruitful labor.