

When Jesus commissioned His twelve disciples to go out and preach the kingdom of God, He gave them a unique set of instructions. These included not accepting payment for their ministry, nor carrying extra provisions. Yet, in the same breath, He concluded with a powerful statement: “The worker is worth his keep.” (Matthew 10:10b)

This statement might seem contradictory at first glance. If the disciples were to “freely give” as they had “freely received” (Matthew 10:8), what exactly was the “wage” they were to receive?

1. Understanding the Context

In Matthew 10:5-15, Jesus sends the twelve on a mission, instructing them to rely entirely on God’s provision rather than human planning or resources. He tells them not to take money, a travel bag, or even extra clothes:

“Matthew 10:9-10 “Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts— no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep.”

The point was clear: God would provide for their needs through those who received their message.

2. Theological Insight: God’s Provision Through His People

Though they weren’t to charge for their ministry (since the power and message were gifts from God), Jesus affirmed their right to be cared for. This principle is echoed throughout Scripture:

Matthew 10:41 “Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward...”

And later, Paul reinforces the same principle:

1 Corinthians 9:13-14, “Dont you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple... In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.”

Jesus was not endorsing the commercialization of ministry but

affirming the idea that those who labor in the service of God are entitled to material support — not as a payment, but as provision for their faithful work.

3. Jesus as the Ultimate Provider

When Jesus later asked His disciples:

*Luke 22:35, “When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?”
“Nothing,” they answered.*

It confirmed His faithfulness. He had provided everything they needed through the generosity and hospitality of others. This illustrates a deeper truth: those who serve God in trust and obedience will never be abandoned (Matthew 6:31–33).

4. Practical Balance in Ministry

While the initial instruction was to take nothing, we later see Jesus adjusting His directions based on context:

Mark 6:8-9, “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra shirt.”

This shows that while faith is the foundation, wisdom and preparedness also have their place, depending on the mission.

5. Conclusion: Faithful Service, Faithful Provision

Jesus’ statement that “the worker deserves his wages” is a reminder that ministry should be done with faith, not fear, and that God honors and sustains those who serve Him faithfully. Whether through miraculous provision or human generosity, the Lord ensures His servants lack nothing.

So, if you are called to serve — go boldly. Trust that your “wages” are not in human hands, but in God’s — and He is always faithful.

Shalom.

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