



It's time to move on

May 22, 2017

MATTHEW 10:11-15 NKJV – (11) “Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. (12) And when you go into a household, greet it. (13) If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. (14) And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. (15) Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city!

The command to “shake the dust off your feet” appears only four times in the New Testament. In each case the command is spoken by Jesus to His disciples when He sent them out two by two ([Matthew 10:14](#); [Luke 9:5](#)). In [Mark 6:11](#) Jesus says, “And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” In the [Matthew 10](#) account, Jesus clarifies His meaning: “Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of Judgment than for that town” ([verse 15](#)).

Shaking the dust off one's feet expresses the same idea as our modern phrase “I wash my hands of it.” Shaking the dust off the feet is a symbolic indication that one has done all that can be done in a situation and, therefore, carries no further responsibility. In the scriptural examples, Jesus was telling His disciples they were to preach the gospel to everyone. When received with joy, they should stay and teach. However, where their message was rejected, they had no further responsibility. They were free to walk away with a clear conscience, knowing they had done all they could do. Shaking the dust off their feet was in effect saying that those who rejected God's truth would not hinder the furtherance of the gospel. Even the dust of those cities that rejected the Lord became an abomination and was unworthy to cling to the feet of God's messengers.

There are situations in our lives where God calls us to stand firm, proclaim truth, and give patient testimony. Sometimes we need to continue until we see the results of that testimony. Other times God gives us the freedom to move on. We figuratively “shake the dust off our feet” when, under the Holy Spirit's direction, we surrender those people to the Lord and emotionally let go. We have the freedom then to move into the next phase of ministry. Jesus' instruction to “shake the dust off our feet” reminds us that we are only responsible for our obedience to God, not for the results of that obedience or disobedience.

SCRIPTURE READING

EZRA 8:22

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

“If you believe what you like in the Gospel, and reject what you don't like, it is not the Gospel you believe, but yourself.”