

Sunday, November 5, 2023 | The Road to Redemption

Week 3 | Luke 10:1-16 | “Seventy-Two Disciples Sent”

Last week, we saw what it takes to *prioritize* Jesus. Too often, western Christianity is sold as an attachment, as if following Jesus is nothing more than an add-on to one's already loaded list of responsibilities. But discipleship cannot be an accessory. Though we might have our excuses, the Lord will not accept them if we delay our discipleship. Jesus is Lord of our life, or he isn't our Lord at all. Thus, would-be disciples, beware: following Jesus will cost you *everything*. Even **good** excuses are **bad** excuses if they keep you from following Jesus.

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Today, we'll be talking about the methodology of ministry—i.e., a *how-to* guide to church work. Did you know that the Lord has very specific instructions for gospel ministry? He hasn't left us to figure everything out on our own or to fend for ourselves. God's word lays out nonnegotiable guidelines regarding a Christian's conduct. As such, it is the responsibility of the disciples to know how they ought to act when they're on a mission for Jesus Christ. Since we carry his name, the Son of God has much to say about our mannerisms.

Failing to do ministry *how* God wants us to do ministry has *dire* consequences. Jesus Christ ushered in the messianic age, after all. The stakes could not be any higher. We do ourselves and the world a disservice if we don't go by the book. Though our *methods* may change, may we be faithful stewards of the message.

Jesus prepared the seventy-two by answering three questions:

**i. What does it look like when the disciple is serving (vs. 1-4)?**

**READ:** Luke 10:1-4 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, **two by two**, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. <sup>2</sup> And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to **send out** laborers into his harvest. <sup>3</sup> Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. <sup>4</sup> Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.

The phrase “**two by two**” indicates a sensitivity to truth. Jesus wanted their mission to be above reproach. It was through the testimony of two witnesses that every word was established in a court of law. Two witnesses were especially important when it came to cases

involving capital punishment. This connection becomes obvious later when those cities which reject Jesus' disciples are condemned.

As any farmer would tell you, harvest time is exceedingly short compared to the planting and growing phase. As such, it was essential to harvest quickly to avoid losing any produce. Hence, when the Lord says, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few... pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest," he talks about how the Messianic age would not last forever. The need for harvesters, laborers, and workers was great. The issue was not whether there was a harvest; it was whether there were ministers to work the harvest. God had done his part; it was time for his followers to step up and go to work.

What does the Lord mean when he says, "I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves"? As indicated by what Jesus says immediately following, they were to be entirely dependent on others. He will say, "Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road." As a lamb is dependent on the provision and protection of the shepherd, they were to depend on the provision and protection of God. They weren't supposed to take money, supplies, or extra footwear. They weren't even supposed to "greet" someone while they journeyed, which wasn't an injunction against hospitality but a restriction on lengthy discussions. It was common in the East for greetings to be long, and so a lengthy conversation would risk delaying the mission.

Hence, the Lord would have his disciples be like hasty little lambs focused on proclaiming the gospel. They were not allowed to rely upon their own ingenuity, and they weren't allowed to get distracted.

## ii. What does it look like when the disciple is accepted (vs. 3-9)?

**READ:** Luke 10:5-9 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup>Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' <sup>6</sup>And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup>And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. <sup>8</sup>Whenever you enter a town, and they receive you, eat what is set before you. <sup>9</sup>Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

In the Jewish world, peace was more than just the absence of conflict. It was a state of blessedness. Thus, to say, "peace be to this house," is to call down God's favor. This peace would, quite literally, "rest upon" those who accept Jesus' messengers. They will prove they

are a "son of peace" by welcoming Jesus' followers. But, if they refuse the disciples, more than the disciples will leave. Peace itself will be taken from that house.

But, should the disciple be welcomed and allowed to stay, they were to accept whatever was given to them for their service, "for the laborer deserves his wages." In this case, "wages" refer to housing, food, and drink. But though the minister was worthy of his hire, he was not allowed to take advantage of a city's hospitality. They weren't allowed to "go from house to house," and whatever food was set, they were to eat.

In return for such welcoming hospitality, the disciple was to "Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'" Jesus' followers were not vacationing. They weren't sightseeing. They came to heal the sick and to proclaim the gospel. The kingdom of God was not some far-off reality but was a very present one. It was closer to them than they might've thought.

### iii. What does it look like when the disciple is rejected (vs. 10-16)?

**READ:** Luke 10:10-16 (ESV)

<sup>10</sup> But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup> 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' <sup>12</sup> I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

<sup>13</sup> "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>14</sup> But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. <sup>15</sup> And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.

<sup>16</sup> "The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

Should the disciples be rejected, they were to testify against unwelcoming cities. Jesus instructed them to "wipe off" the dust of those towns. This was a first-century Middle Eastern way of indicating that the follower is to leave the city to its own devices. Whatever happens to it, they will only have themselves to blame. The disciples did what they could. But since the city won't listen, the disciple will have no part of them. Even the dust clinging to their feet will be wiped off in disgust.

But just because they have rejected Jesus does not mean they have hindered God's kingdom. "Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near." Just as the kingdom of God drew near to those who accepted the gospel, it drew near to those who rejected it. Jesus is coming whether the towns and cities want him or not. And it will not be a happy ending for those who reject Jesus. In fact, Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon will fare better on "that day"—i.e., the day of judgment—than Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. Wicked Sodom and cities like it won't be judged as harshly as Jesus' hometown, Capernaum. Why? Because as great as their sins were and as deserving of destruction, they did not snub the Messiah. Rejecting Jesus is of more significant consequence than any other sin.

You might say, "Technically, the cities didn't reject Jesus. They rejected Jesus' *disciples*." This is true. However, as Jesus points out, "The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me." When one hears a preacher of the good news, and they are indeed proclaiming the gospel, it is as if they were to hear Jesus himself.

### **So, what's the takeaway?**

A good disciple labors in God's harvest God's way.

The instructions given to the seventy-two disciples are almost identical to those given to the twelve in chapter nine. What can we surmise from this? The disciple is a *steward* of the gospel. His methods may change, but the message remains the same. When he/she is accepted, he/she is supposed to proclaim, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." When he/she is rejected, he/she is supposed to proclaim, "The kingdom of God has come near." The message did not change.

In the modern church of the West, we have a severe problem with changing the message. Because Christians have been met with resistance and rejection, they're starting to compromise on the scriptures. They seek to change the message. But this ought not to be. Good disciples know that their work is not their own but God's. As such, they ought to work their job the way God would have them work. They ought to conduct themselves according to his instructions. And whether they be accepted or rejected, they ought to follow the guidelines set down for them by Jesus.

### **READ: 2 Timothy 3:14-17 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it <sup>15</sup> and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in

Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> **All Scripture** is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

## Video Description

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SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

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**Pastor's manuscript can be found here:**

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