

### Commentary on Luke 10:1-24

Luke 10 begins with another commissioning of Jesus' disciples out into the mission field. We saw a similar scene at the beginning of Luke 9 where Jesus sent out the Twelve in His full power and authority to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. Here, as in Luke 9, Jesus commissions and instructs the missionaries. He sends out seventy-two others to every place He was about to go with some instructions that have similarities and differences to those of the Twelve.

He tells the seventy-two to pray earnestly as He sets their expectations – the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. They are commanded to pray for the laborers the Lord will send out. Jesus then gives them a warning – again setting their expectations. “I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.” Eek! When I think of a lamb, I think of a defenseless, docile animal. In contrast, the wolf strikes me as aggressive and predatory. What a pep talk, Jesus! He warns them and us that the work is going to not only be hard because they're short-handed, but it will also be dangerous.

Jesus then instructs the seventy-two as He did the Twelve to travel with little to no material hindrance. They don't need a wallet, a purse, nor even an extra pair of sandals. Oh, and don't stop along the way and chit chat with fellow travelers, He tells them, emphasizing that the work ahead is too pressing, too urgent.

Jesus continues instructing them about hospitality and what to do when they enter a house emphasizing relationships. “The mission of the seventy-two is not a mission to streets and marketplaces, but to homes. The instruction to greet homes in peace, sit at table, eating and drinking what is offered by hosts, and not move from place to place depicts a mission of relationships rather than programs.”<sup>1</sup> Jesus invokes here the role and presence of “peace” in the development of relationships. The Greek word for peace (*eirēnē*) points to the Hebrew word for peace (*shalom*) which both have a much more substantial meaning than simply an absence of conflict or turmoil. The true peace of Christ denotes a positive blessing – a total sense of wellness and wholeness that is only found through Him and the salvation that He gives us.

Jesus then tells them what they are going to do. “Heal the sick and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’” The work of the seventy-two gives us a picture of the life and calling of a disciple of Jesus.<sup>2</sup> The phrase “heal the sick” may carry the literal meaning of a full restoration of health, but it can also mean a sense of serving those with weakness or inability. The “kingdom of God” is a phrase depicting the reality of the in-breaking reign of God in the here and now. “The kingdom is not of human origin, for it does not depend on human calculation, enablement, or activity... The kingdom is a state

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<sup>1</sup> Edwards, James, The Gospel According to Luke Commentary (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 2015), 307.

<sup>2</sup> Edwards, 308.

inaugurated by divine activity, 'the great transformation of the world, the promised coming of God's redemptive reign that breaks as a miracle of God into the human present.'"<sup>3</sup>

The commission and instructions end with Jesus warning them as he did the Twelve that rejection will come. He tells them to go into the streets and say: "even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you." Regardless of the rejection, Jesus instructs them to speak the truth, telling them to say again that "kingdom of God has come near."

Jesus then describes multiple cities who exhibited unrepentant behavior when confronted with the kingdom of God. Sodom is mentioned first as it is a city well known for its overt sinfulness and for rejecting God's messengers. He next mentions woes to Chorazin and Bethsaida which were towns in the Galilean region where Jesus had been traveling and healing and preaching. (Bethsaida, by way of reminder, is where the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 took place.) Tyre and Sidon were cities in Phoenicia, largely Gentile and pagan, but when exposed to the truth were known to be repentant.<sup>4</sup> See 1 Kings 17:9-24. And finally, Capernaum which receives the most strident woe, has been Jesus' base of ministry. It has been a place where multiple miracles were performed and where Jesus had called 5 of the apostles (Peter, Andrew, James, John and Matthew). Thus, it received the harshest woe because of its lack of repentance and acknowledgement of God's kingdom.

Jesus' final warning to the seventy-two reminds them straight-up that they (and we) are His emissaries. Even though He doesn't say this explicitly, I think He's reminding them (and us!) to not take it personally when rejection comes, saying: If someone hears you, they hear me; if someone rejects you, they reject me; and if they reject me, they reject the one who sent me.

In verse 10:17, we find the seventy-two returning to Jesus and their excitement is almost palpable despite the difficult and dangerous mission. They return with joy telling Jesus, "even the demons are subject to us in your name!" Jesus interprets their accomplishments by pointing to the fall of Satan from heaven acknowledging His victory over evil through their work. He continues reminding them of the authority He has bestowed upon them and that nothing will hurt them. He concludes by telling them to not be full of themselves and teaching them the proper way to rejoice. True rejoicing comes not that the spirits are subject to them, but that their names are written in heaven. The true celebration comes in knowing and experiencing the gift of eternal salvation.

The final verses conclude with a blatant expressive show of emotion by Jesus (which frankly, is super fun to see!). Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit praying to God, the Father. He begins with a prayer of thanksgiving and acknowledgement of God's work. He then continues with teaching us truth about God through His prayer and revealing Himself to his

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<sup>3</sup> Edwards, 308.

<sup>4</sup> Keener, Craig. IVP Bible Background Commentary New Testament (InterVarsity Press: Chicago, 1993) entry for v. 10:13.

disciples and to us more fully. He prays acknowledging that all things have been handed over to Him by His Father and no one knows who the Son is except the Father and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal. The Greek word for reveal here is *apokalyptō* which means literally to un-cover. It also means to cause something to be fully known, reveal, disclose, bring to light, or make fully known. Jesus through this prayer uncovers for us an intimate picture of the divine relationship of the Trinity – between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Jesus concludes with a statement reminding them and us just how blessed we are – that we are blessed to see what we see because there are many who have come before – prophets and kings – who wanted to see and hear about God's full glory but did not see it or hear it.

So what do we learn about Jesus' upside-down Kingdom?

1. We are reminded again, as we were in Luke 9, that Jesus sends out His disciples into the mission field with no literal baggage or supplies to take with them. They are equipped with His commission, instructions and trust and faith in Him. Jesus sets their expectations of both a difficult and dangerous mission. Yet, the outcome is pure joy and that joy comes because they and we get to participate in Jesus' mission of proclaiming the kingdom of God! "The experience of discipleship is *more*, not less, than what Jesus promised."<sup>5</sup>
2. Jesus sends them and us out encouraging deep prayer – prayer that needed laborers would be raised up for the harvest. We then see a beautiful glimpse of the eternal Father-Spirit-Son relationship as we see and experience just how Jesus prays. We are reminded here of the importance of prayer to our divine connection with Jesus. What a gift that we have direct access to the Savior and Lover of our souls!!
3. Jesus warns us what it is like to follow Him. As we follow Him and live into the mission He has called us to live out, we will suffer rejection. He encourages us to not take it personally, because it is ultimately about Him – those that reject us in His name are really rejecting Him. We also see Him warn those who lack repentance – those communities that witnessed Him perform miracles in their midst. These warnings are a gift because they give us the full picture of discipleship including the potential damaging pitfalls of sin.
4. And finally... JOY! The seventy-two return to Jesus rejoicing and in return we see Jesus praying with joy in the Spirit. "No story in the Gospels emphasizes the disciples' joy and Jesus' participation in their joy as expressly as does this story."<sup>6</sup> What a gift we have in knowing the source and blessing of joy in Jesus Christ!

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<sup>5</sup> Edwards, 311.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



### **Discussion Questions for Luke 10:25-11:13**

We have a lot of text to cover this week, so we are going to study it in three sections.

#### **10:25-37 Good Samaritan**

##### Observation

1. Name and describe the different characters in these verses. Jot down some things you know or learn about each of them.
  
2. How does Jesus answer the lawyer's first question?
  
3. How does Jesus answer the lawyer's second question?

##### Interpretation

4. Who is your neighbor?
  
5. What does it mean to show mercy? How would you define mercy to a non-believer?

##### Application

6. What does this passage teach us about loving our neighbors? What do you find challenging and what do you find comforting?
  
7. Describe a time when you have seen or experienced mercy. In what ways is God inviting you to show mercy to others?

**10:38-42 Mary & Martha**

Observation

8. Describe what Martha is doing in these verses?

9. What is Mary doing?

10. What is Jesus doing?

Interpretation

11. In what ways do you think Jesus valued Martha's actions?

12. In what ways did He value Mary's actions?

Application

13. In what situations or in what ways are you more of a Martha? What about a Mary?

14. What is Jesus teaching you here about drawing closer to Him?

**11:1-13 Prayer**

Observation

15. Where was Jesus when these verses begin?

16. Who was Jesus with in these verses?

17. Jesus gives two illustrations to make His point about prayer. What do you notice in 11:5-8? What about 11:11-12?

Interpretation

18. Why do you think the disciples wanted Jesus to teach them how to pray?

19. Look at each line of the prayer Jesus teaches His disciples (and us!) to pray (in v.11:2-4). What do each of these line mean?

20. What does Jesus teach us about how to pray through 11:5-10? What about 11:11-13?

21. What assurances or promises does He give in these two sets of verses with regard to prayer?

Application

22. Take each line of the Lord's Prayer and say them out loud, pausing between them to reflect on their meaning. What is Jesus saying to you as your slow down and pray His prayer more deliberately?

23. How do these verses shape and affect how you pray? What is the same and what is different in your prayer life after pondering these verses?