

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy

Luke 10:1-24

As Jesus has returned to the Judean area, He now seeks to travel through many of the cities and villages. We find Him sending out thirty-five teams of two seeking to prepare the people's hearts before His arrival. His message to the seventy was for their preparation and instruction, the denunciation of those who reject, and lastly, we find all their jubilation. These points are an example for us and our ministries in the 21st century!

Questions to ask:

- Who are these seventy men? Let this soak in – this is pretty amazing, and foreign to the minds of most casual students of Jesus. We read here that Jesus had many more than twelve followers and a few facilitating moms! This passage tells us that seventy anonymous men were fit to represent Him with power and message. These men would have sat at His feet and heard Him teach, asked Him questions, observed the debates with the Religious Leadership, and seen the innumerable miracles. Here, Jesus selected them as messengers to go before Him into these cities and areas. They were men prepared, willing, and sent! Now, there are hints in the Scripture that many more than twelve traveled with Jesus extensively during His ministry. In Acts 2:15, it tells us that when the disciples came together shortly after Jesus' ascension, "the number of names together was about a hundred and twenty." It is likely that they were some of the very seventy chosen here and divided two by two to minister to Judea. Some of these would have traveled with Jesus from John the Baptist until the ascension.
- Why seventy? Seventy is a significant number to the Jews, representing leadership: Moses called 70 elders to help and represent him (Num. 11); there were 70 members in the Sanhedrin. It was also the Jewish number assigned to the nations of the world (Gen. 10). Luke is the only gospel book that records this event, and interestingly, he wrote to primarily Gentiles. Many Bible teachers believe this number was a wonderful picture of the Gospel of Jesus going out to the nations of the world!

With that said, I need to add the textual divide found concerning the number 70. The Greek manuscripts used to translate the Bible are roughly evenly divided on whether the number should be 70 or 72! That is seen when looking at the English translations on Bible Gateway. Don't let that spin your head. This is not doctrine, and numbers are difficult to maintain in copying. So, if 70 or 72, this is a significant number, and Jesus had very specific instructions and lessons for them that are applicable to us today!

- Where was this mission? Most Bible teachers believe Jesus is sending them into the cities and towns in Judea and probably Perea. He had not been in this area for 18 months, and now He was going to blitz the area with His person and message, but first He would send in His messengers.
- Isn't this like the mission of the twelve? Yes, it is much like the mission of the twelve disciples, which occurred about a year earlier. (Matthew 10; Luke 9) In this passage, we see the words, "the Lord appointed other seventy also." This would relate back to the sending of the disciples. The biggest

difference between the two was the location. The twelve were sent out only to Jewish towns in Galilee. But here, His mission was in Judea, and the stipulation removed that it be strictly Jewish.

I. Their Preparation

“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come .²Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. ³Go your ways: behold (Lit. – “look,” “realize”), I send you forth as lambs among wolves.” Luke 10:1-3

“before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.” – Jesus was coming to these specific cities and areas! The seventy were to go and prepare the people. Now, it doesn’t seem that this was the same situation when the twelve were sent; Jesus didn’t tell them to prepare for His coming, but He did have a longer, more extensive ministry in Galilee. Great crowds swarmed Him in Galilee; the twelve had been very effective.

Preparatory Prayer of the Laborer: This is a pretty amazing yet sobering thought – Jesus didn’t send them immediately to begin the mission; first, they were told to pray. Now you say, what’s so amazing and sobering about that? Sounds logical! But look at the request they were to ask God, not safety, not ease, not results, not provision along the way, for these would have been my requests. But from the heart of Jesus, they were told to **pray for more laborers!** Seventy men weren’t enough; the work was so great and so needy. Jesus had said something similar earlier in His ministry, found in John 4 during the incident of the woman at the well. While waiting for the men of the city to come to Him, Jesus said to His disciples, “Say not ye There are yet four months and then cometh harvest, behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.” There were certainly many Jewish teachers, but they were not prepared for His harvest! Jesus first said there was a great need and then He urged them to beg God for more workers for the harvest! This is the exact prayer request Jesus gave in Matthew 9:36-38, shortly before sending out the twelve, “Pray for more laborers in the harvest field!” And that is certainly the request we should pray for today. As we go to give the truth of Jesus, we should be praying for more people to join us in the work of evangelism! The giving of the gospel is not a sideline, spectator sport, but instead an active, all-inclusive job for every believer! God has work for everyone, oh, how we should be praying and seeking to get into the harvest!

Preparatory Mindset of the Laborer: In his New Testament commentary, Warren Wiersbe included a quote from the preacher and evangelist Vance Havener: “Any man who takes Jesus Christ seriously becomes the target of the Devil.” Wiersbe went on to say, “Most church members do not give Satan enough trouble to arouse his opposition.” p. 169 Ouch! But that shouldn’t be. When instructing His disciples, Jesus told His ministers that the mission was dangerous. He was sending them into enemy territory; they should expect trouble – wolf-size trouble! I did a little research on wolves and their hunting techniques. Everything you read about wolves starts out by telling how intelligent they are. By working as a pack, they separate the weak from the herd, exhaust them by biting at their flanks and rump to slow them and further weaken them by blood loss, and lastly charge for the killing bite to the throat. Smaller animals are jumped on, crushed, or strangled. They are relentless hunting opportunists. With that backdrop, Jesus tells His followers that they need to be lambs! Wow! Lambs are completely helpless beside the ferocious wolf, but that is our calling: gentle, peaceable, patient, innocent. In

Matthew 10:16, Jesus described how they should react to the wolves his way, "...be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." What a contrast between Jesus' followers and the Jewish Leadership. But that should also be our poise as believers in the 21st century. Not a heart of aggression, retaliation, or a need to be understood or heard; instead, gentle and peaceable, in the middle of perils. Evangelism is a dangerous mission that requires sincere commitment both then and now!

II. Their Instruction

"Carry neither purse (Lit. – money), nor scrip (Lit. – luggage), nor shoes (Lit. – sandals): and salute (Lit. – greet) no man by the way. ⁵And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. ⁶And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it (Lit. – him): if not, it shall turn to you again. ⁷And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. ⁸And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: ⁹And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." Luke 10:4-9

Urgency of the Mission: Verses 4-8 highlight the mission's urgency! They were not to be physically weighed down or encumbered with extra baggage or shoes, or to waste time on chit-chat. Guess that type of packing and plan would take most of us ladies out!! I've gotten pretty good at packing these last few years since working online. John and I have the flexibility to go help at our kids' homes, travel to our cabin, or schedule speaking events. But I have to tell you, luggage, shoes, and chit-chat are definitely not left out on my part!! But that is exactly what Jesus told the seventy to eliminate from their travel plans. They had an urgency to their ministry! Leaving these things behind was all about time constraints! "Go as men of business, not of leisure." Now, not greeting someone along the way wasn't necessarily rude; in their culture, salutations could be lengthy, ending with an invitation to the home. The bypassing of social graces was excused when the traveler was on a pressing journey or trip. And this was exactly what Jesus was calling them to.

Even their lodging was to be viewed as sufficient headquarters, not a lovely Airbnb. They were not to be constantly looking for a better situation with nicer accommodations. Once they were settled, they were to minister Jesus' plan, not waste time moving from house to house!

Jesus gave them very detailed instructions concerning their needs during their mission. He told them that God would provide for them through the generosity of others.

Provision for the Laborers:

"Peace be to this house"/"son of peace" – The phrase "son of peace" is a Jewish cliché reflecting the characteristics of someone. It was much like saying "son of Jonas" – that man would reflect the characteristics and even the inheritance of their father Jonas. Here we have "son of peace," a man who reflects the characteristics of peace. The members of Jesus' ministry team were to seek out those who were "peaceful" toward them and their message. If invited to stay, they were to remain and enjoy the food and drink provided. If not received, then they were to look elsewhere.

"for the laborer is worthy of his hire" – This all rested on the principle already established for God's priests in the Old Testament. They were permitted to eat portions of specific sacrifices. (Lev. 7; Num. 18; Deut.

18) Here, Jesus is saying that the seventy needed to realize their work was going to be rewarded by those they ministered to. They were to accept the hospitality graciously because their work entitled them to it. They were neither beggars nor opportunists; as ministers of the gospel, Jesus said they deserved support.

“In the same house remain, eating and drinking”/”Go not from house to house” – Their food and lodging were payment for their ministry to the people, and twice they were told that they were to be satisfied with it, not looking for a better situation or nicer accommodations. (v. 7-8) Staying in one place would save time and the possibility of offending a fellow believer.

Before we move on, we must also mention the spiritual resolve the laborers must have on this dangerous mission, with no personal provisions and being totally dependent on others. **Faith in God would be required!** These seventy followers of Jesus were learning that God would provide their needs, and this is certainly true for us today. When Paul was writing to the Philippian church, he thanked them for their generosity toward him while he was with them. But as the Philippians gave to him, he had to say, “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” God is the Provider! How we must remember this!

Two-fold Mission: And here is their mission as ambassadors of peace!

“heal the sick” – Jesus gave them the power to heal the sick! Just as the twelve had received power to heal, now this large group of seventy also received power to heal illnesses and cast out demons. But this power was just an open door, an authentication to their message, the message that...

“The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” – Jesus, the Messiah, was coming to their town! Oh, that would be their opening line... and then they might have continued with something like. “Repent, ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” Acts 3:19 See, they were looking for a military kingdom, but in reality, Jesus’ Kingdom was spiritual, in the hearts of men, so they may have said, “Come to (Jesus), all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and (He) will give you rest. Take (His) yoke upon you, and learn of (Him), for (He) is meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls!” Matthew 11:28-29 Or perhaps they went on to say, “(Jesus) came unto His own...and as many as receive him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name.” John 1:11-12. Their message might have been, “Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of Jesus, the water of life freely.” However it was put, these seventy preached that the kingdom of God had come nigh to those people, that Jesus is coming! What a wonderful message! And we still have that same message today!! We don’t have the authenticating sign of miracles, but we proclaim the same message with Holy Spirit power!

“But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you enter, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, ¹¹Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” Luke 10:10-11

How to React to Rejection:

“go your ways out into the streets” – In a very public manner, the seventy were to pronounce judgment on those who rejected their message.

Say – “dust of your city...we do wipe off against you” – Originally, this was a Jewish act of rejection against Gentile cities. But Jesus instructed His disciples to use this sign as a picture of judgment on those who would reject Him. When the twelve were commissioned earlier, they received the same instruction: “And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.” Matthew 10:14 We find Paul and Barnabas do this very thing against the city of Antioch in Pisidia. They had rejected the message of Jesus Christ, and Paul and Barnabas “shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.” Acts 13:51. This was not a statement of anger or despising but sorrow, coming judgment, and truth.

Say – “the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you” – The rejectors were bringing ruin upon themselves! “notwithstanding be ye sure of this” the message had come to them, and they were now responsible. Even if they did not receive it, that doesn’t prevent the kingdom’s progress! It only prevents their participation in it!! How sad!

III. The Denunciation

“But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day (Lit. _____) for Sodom, than for that city. ¹³Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works (Lit. - _____) had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes (Lit. - _____). ¹⁴But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. ¹⁵And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. ¹⁶He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that _____ me.” Luke 10:12-16

“Sodom” vs. “that city” –

“Chorazin...Bethsaida” vs. “Tyre and Sidon” –

“Capernaum...exalted to heaven” vs. “thrust down to hell” –

Ultimate Truth → “heareth”/”despiseth” –

IV. The Jubilations

“And the seventy returned again with _____, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us _____ thy name. ¹⁸And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning _____ from heaven. ¹⁹Behold, I give unto you _____ to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means _____ you. ²⁰Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but _____ rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” Luke 10:17-20

➤ **The Seventy’s Joy:**

“Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name” –

Jesus’ Reaction:

“I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” –

“I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you” –

“rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” –

“In that hour Jesus _____ in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast _____ these things from the wise and prudent, and hast _____ them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed _____ in thy sight. ²²All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will _____ him.” Luke 10:21-22

➤ **Jesus’ Joy:**

“O Father....that thou hast hid things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” –

The Great Equation of Knowledge:

“knoweth who the Son is” → “but the Father” = “[knoweth] who the Father is” → “but the Son”

+

(Believers are the beneficiaries here – the GREAT PLUS!)

“he to whom the Son will reveal him”

“And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: ²⁴ For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” Luke 10:23-24

➤ **Disciples’ Joy:**

“Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see” –

“many prophets and kings have desired to see those things...and to hear those things” –

Believers’ Application:

1. Jesus’ first instruction to the seventy was to pray for more laborers. How are we doing as harvesters? Do we pray for workers?

Jesus saw people as needy sheep without a shepherd; like in our Jesus event here, a harvest ready to be brought in; and also like weary and heavy burden souls....and He called us to go and be the shepherds full of care, He called us to bring in the harvest, and He called us to relieve the suffering with hope. How are you doing with such a call? If Jesus called His followers, and we claim to be followers, then we have a job to do! No statement or thought like, “I’m too old” or “I’m too young.” Or “I’m too tired” or “I’m too inexperienced” or “I whatever...” Doesn’t work! No excuses are valid! If you are a willing worker, God has a place for you! The problem is that many of us are unwilling! What stands in the way---fear – which is the basis of unbelief – unbelief in the power of God; unbelief that God desires to us – instead of standing on the truths of God, we side on the lies that fill our heads from the Devil – we can’t speak; they won’t believe; God doesn’t need me! We have all heard of the dear souls who witness to the nurses and doctors, or their dear ones, right up until God takes them home. We have a job in the harvest...just as Jesus said and it’s urgent just as when Jesus sent out the seventy! This was a principle Jesus taught, and this was taken into the Epistles! Read Romans 10:1-4; 8-14

2. Jesus taught that those who minister are to be supported by those who are ministered to! That was true in the Old Testament when the priests ate of the sacrifices brought by the people. How can we support those who minister to us?

Financially –

Adequate salary, generosity

Emotionally –

Grateful congregation, supported, cheerful,

Spiritually – encourage time for study and refreshment, the tools to do their job

3. Do we cause Jesus to rejoice? Do you utilize His power in our lives? Let's think about it.

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The need for laborers stems from the vast potential for evangelism. This requires Christians to act as workers in the field, be proactive and obedient, and rely on the power of God! The prayer for laborers was the request from the heart of Jesus, taught to His workers before they went out! It is the same prayer we should be praying, but also fulfilling its call!