



“Seventy-Two Sent Ones”

Luke 10:1-16

January 20, 2019

As we get into the pages of Scripture found in Luke Chapter 10, we can expect to be challenged and to experience some conviction by the work of the Holy Spirit as he sends us with Christ in the mission of the Kingdom.

Our study in the Gospel of Luke last week could have been boiled down to two words. Those two words were *follow Me*. That is the command of Christ to every single one who is a believer. It is the call of discipleship.

Jesus says to each one who believes in Him, *Follow Me. Listen to My teaching and walk in My ways. Walk in the pattern of life that I laid before you.* So, as I said, last week’s message could be boiled down to the two words *follow Me*.

I think that what we have before us this morning can even be boiled down to two letters that form one very short, but important word that comes from Christ. Those two letters are G and O—GO! Just go as Jesus sends His people into the world as His ambassadors with His Good News of the cross and the empty grave.

This morning we become mindful of the fact that Jesus sends His people. He sends them into the world that He has created. He sends them into a world that is fallen in sin and is under the just judgment of God. He sends them into a world where there are people everywhere being prepared by the Holy Spirit to believe in Him, and experience transformation by the grace of God through faith.

Jesus desires to send us and He sends us into our spheres of influenced lives, our SOIL, that we might represent Him as one of His ambassadors. This is going to be laid out before us this morning as we consider the seventy-two sent ones. There are more than seventy-two people here. Maybe there will be a hundred and fifty or more sent ones after this morning.

As we enter into the world of the New Testament as laid out before us in the Gospel of Luke, some might be surprised to find that Jesus had more than just the original twelve disciples. In fact, now that we have moved a couple of years into His earthly ministry, what we find is that there was a great company of people that were devoted to Him; that were His close followers and learners.

They were committed to His mission. Now as Jesus proceeded on His tour of duty, moving steadfastly from the region of Galilee toward Jerusalem where He would die for sin, we see that He sent out these seventy-two sent ones; seventy-two ambassadors.

Jesus sent them before Him into the cities that He would visit on His way toward the cross. He sent them to bring the message of the Kingdom, and to bring healing power. He sent them to prepare the way.

In the same way that Jesus sent them to the cities that He would visit, He sends us to people whose heart He will enter into. So, we need to look at and see what Jesus taught and how He propelled them and how He prompted them to go before Him on this mission.

As we look into Luke Chapter 10 and Verses 1 through 16, most of the verses that we are about to read, they are made up of the encouragement and the instruction that Jesus gave to those seventy-two for that mission.

Something that really strikes me as we get into the latter portion of what we are about to read is that it seems that all of a sudden, Jesus was taken somewhere deeper. He was preparing to move them forward in the mission, but suddenly something took Him backward, as He thought about the region where He just was and how so many of the people failed to respond to the message that He preached.

Suddenly there is gravity, and I think that Jesus intended for us to not only take the instruction to heart, but also to see the weightiness of what is at stake in the mission that He sends us all into—that mission of sharing with people the Good News that Jesus saves.

Let's see what it says in Luke Chapter 10 and Verses 1 through 16:

¹After 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. ²And 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. ³Go your way, behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' ⁶And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. ⁷And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. ⁹Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ¹¹'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.' ¹²I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. ¹³"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. ¹⁴But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ¹⁵And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.

16”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.”

I wonder if you see what I am seeing here. There was a shift, not only in the countenance of Jesus but also who it was that He was talking to. In Verses 2 through 12, Jesus was talking to the seventy-two and instructing them, telling them what they were going to do.

Then out of nowhere in Verses 13 through 16, Jesus began talking about cities that were in the rearview mirror. He began talking to Chorazin and Bethsaida, even Capernaum. He spoke to them with words of woe.

So this passage goes from the language of preparation to the language of judgment that is going to fall upon the cities that He was ministering to. Where did that come from? I think what we have here is a glimpse into the heart of our Messiah and the things that would weigh on His heart as He went through the towns of Israel.

As Jesus was sending His disciples into the cities ahead, He knew there would be some places where they would be well received, but there would be other places where they would be rejected. Wherever the message of the Kingdom through the disciples was rejected, the judgement of God would remain upon the sinners of that place—which was all of them.

Thinking about what they would experience moving forward, we see what was still on Jesus’ heart in relation to the people behind, and that was that they remained under the judgment of God. Jesus gave expression to that. It was on His heart, so that when He was in the midst of this discourse with His disciples, He broke into something else altogether.

I think about this and I wonder what the countenance of the Lord was like as He was speaking these words. Was He angry? Was He filled with grief and sorrow? Perhaps it was a mixture of them both, because He is a righteous God who is full of mercy at the same time.

I think about these words that were issued forth to those cities. Then I think about what was yet to come when He finally made it to Jerusalem. He was on the Mount of Olives looking over that so-called city of peace. He was about to enter it but was weeping over the capital of Israel because He knew that they had missed the visitation of their very Messiah.

We see this burden that Jesus was carrying with Him as He went. If we are going to be people that are Christ-like, we must talk about the reality of sin and the burden of judgement. We need to pray that the Lord would affect our hearts with these realities, because it is so easy for us to be indifferent.

We need to see the heart of the Messiah and talk about the fact that there is a God in heaven who is holy, and there is an earth filled with people who are sinful and God’s just judgment, even His wrath, is required in response to sin. There are people everywhere who remain under that wrath. Yet, in Christ there is deliverance. Hence, He sends us forth.

In the language of judgment that we read here, especially in Verse 12 going into Verse 15, there is a certain principle that is made evident to us in that teaching—in the judgment people are going to be accountable to according to the level of light that they received.

What we find is that in the teaching of Scripture, yes there is a hell. We have been talking a lot about that over the past weeks. When we follow the teachings of Jesus, we will be talking about hell a lot. Hell is mentioned a lot in the Gospel of Luke.

There are degrees of punishment in hell according to the works of those who will be sent there. We see this in the pages of Scripture. One of the principles is that people will be held accountable according to the clarity of witness that they receive. Look at what it says in Verse 12 speaking of the cities ahead who would reject the Kingdom.

¹²I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

That is interesting. Then looking back, Jesus said in Verse 13 and 14:

¹³”Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida...

¹⁴But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

Here we see the language of the justice of God and the different levels of judgment that will be distributed according to the light that people had and the light that they rejected.

Jesus thought back to that little triangle of towns, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, and all the light that they had received. The Messiah was there, and He performed miracles, and He preached the truth of His Kingdom.

It is very clear and evident that the people in those towns responded to His miracles. They came to Him in mass. He performed His healings and His exorcisms. The people came and were awed, but what comes to us from the teaching of Jesus is that, while they saw the miracles, they did not really hear the message.

They did not repent. They did not take His message to heart. Therefore, they remained under judgement and there would be serious judgments because of the blazing brilliance of the Light that they had received when Jesus was there teaching and preaching to them.

We read this and not only do we see that people will be held accountable by God at the individual level, but it also seems evident that societies will be held accountable as well. I’m not sure exactly how that works, but Jesus was talking to cities. Jesus was talking about how it will be more bearable for some cities than others.

I began thinking this and about our land, the United States of America. Given these principles, how is it going to be for our people? If there are such categories, which do the American people fall under—more light or less light? Therefore, more bearable or less bearable in the judgment?

What about it? What about the United States, this land where the pilgrims came in the 1600s to establish a place where the Christian faith could be practiced? How about the 1700s when the Great Awakening ripped through the colonial United States with men like Johnathan Edwards and George Whitfield and John Wesley, preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, where they even established schools of conservative and pure Biblical divinity like Harvard? Whoa, what happened?

Has there been more light or less light in the United States, where the backbone of our nation, the Constitution itself, provides freedom of worship and where Christians have been practicing that freedom of worship—where they have been preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ in every single state and town, not only in the churches, but on the street corners, in the parks, on the campuses, in the classrooms, in the neighborhoods—everywhere, even when opposed by others.

What about the United States? More light or less light, where we have had decades of faithful Gospel preaching going over the airways like Chuck Swindoll, Chuck Smith, John Piper and John MacArthur—radio preachers who preach the Gospel with clarity. Their messages are proliferating even more on-line, where goofballs like Jeff Saltzmann can even be found on YouTube.

There is so much light here in this land of ours. When we think about this, I think that Jesus speaks forth these things intending for our souls to experience some gravity. We are to be those who rejoice and have broken hearts all at the same time.

Jesus spoke forth these words of woe upon those cities that were then a several miles in the rearview mirror. He was speaking these words in the hearing of His disciples, intending that they be affected by it as He was sending them out to be His witnesses in Israel.

As we think about these things, we ought to have a sense of gravity. May the Spirit do this work in our lives and may we be responsive to the work of the Holy Spirit, giving us an actual burden for the people that we live amongst every single day.

Not only do we have all this gravity in this language of judgement, but we also see that Jesus spoke very optimistically as well. He was sending the seventy-two forth expecting that they understood that there was a field of harvest out there and there was opportunity.

The Holy Spirit is at work preparing people for Christ. Jesus was instructing and preparing those men. So, I want to take the time that we have left to see four ways Christ helped those seventy-two sent ones, and how we can glean from what Jesus said to them to encourage our hearts today.

We must understand that the instructions that Jesus gave to the seventy-two were specific to that particular outreach that He did. Even later when we get into about Luke Chapter 22, Jesus reissued this reminder that they needed to go out. However, He then changed some of the language telling them then it would be good to take their knapsacks and to have a little money in their bags. Jesus changed things.

So, what we have here is not prescriptive of every outreach that will ever take place, but it is descriptive of what happened at that point in time as Jesus was approaching Jerusalem. Yet, there are timeless principles for us to hear and receive as Jesus was giving His instruction to help.

I want us to see four things that Jesus was providing to those sent ones.

To help the sent ones on their mission, Jesus provides:

1. Compelling Vision (10:2-3)

We see this laid in Verses 2 and 3. Jesus gave them a vision. He gave them imagery to help them go out to the work that He had called them to do. In Verse 2, Jesus said:

²And 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.

There are so many who are going to come into this faith! The harvest is plentiful, even so that there are not enough workers to get out there and get it done.

There was an earlier mission of twelve. Then there was a mission of an additional seventy-two. Jesus was saying that that was not enough either, and there needs to be more to go and spread the message because the harvest is plentiful.

We Californians, we might think of an orchard. That is kind of familiar to us. There are lots of trees here that grow and produce fruit. We might think of an orange orchard or an avocado orchard. We can look at these trees, and they are full of fruit that is ripe, and the avocados are falling off the branches. We need people to get out there and gather it all in.

Jesus was telling us to go out and gather them in. There are going to be people who respond when we bring the message of the Kingdom. Do you see the optimism that is here in the heart of the Messiah?

This is what we must be thinking about. What if there were people in our world that we are interacting with everyday that if they were approached, they would be oh so very responsive? That is something for us to think about and to take to heart and ask the Lord to increase our boldness.

Why is it that when it comes to evangelism even the most extroverted Christians suddenly become introverts? Jesus tells us to pray. Pray, and ask that the Lord would send people out because there are barriers within us in our flesh and our fallenness and our sin that needs to be overcome by the power of God.

Jesus is providing us with some compelling visions. Who is the Holy Spirit laying on your heart? I pray that He is putting faces in your mind. Just think about the possibilities if we would open up with this Good News of the Kingdom.

We continue. Here in this section on vision, Jesus also gave us some sobriety. It is not all going to peachy. There is going to be more than peaches in that orchard, there are going to be wolves as well.

There is some sobriety to this as we look at what it says in Verse 3:

³Go your way, behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

Wherever we find Christians that have the boldness to reach out and speak up to people about the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, we will also find satanic opposition. The devil does not want us moving in on his territory.

When Christians do, he prompts opposition. This opposition is referred to as wolves. They are intense and mean. They have sharp teeth. But we are to go out and we are to be as gentle as lambs.

We are not to go out and find wolves then suddenly start ripping people to shreds ourselves. Rather, there is to be a graciousness and a gentleness about our demeanor that indicates that we trust God to be the ones changing hearts.

We go forth understanding that there will be wolves, but it is the Good Shepherd that is sending us out and the Good Shepherd knows each one of us by name. He is attentive to us and He will be close to us. He will be guiding us. He will be the One carrying us through all the dangers that we face.

Jesus gives us this mission. He gives us this vision of what He calls us to do. I pray that we would have eyes to see the fruit that can be brought in, and I pray that we would have eyes to see the Shepherd and how much greater He is than the wolves around us in this world.

Jesus sends us forth with compelling vision. We continue, and we see that Jesus also gives:

2. Practical Instruction (10:4-7)

Once again, let me state that this was not prescriptive of all evangelism that would ever be done. This is telling us what was ordered on that occasion. Even later in the Gospel of Luke, some of these instructions were altered by the Messiah.

However, there are things for us to see and appreciate here as they relate to mission in our day and age as well. In Verses 4 through 7, we see practical instructions:

⁴Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.

⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' ⁶And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. ⁷And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer

deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.

We have all these instructions that Jesus gave to His seventy-two. I think that at the heart of what is given here is that Jesus wants His people walking by faith. He was telling these men not to pack a bag, not to take extra sandals, and not to try and raise money for the mission—just go and trust Him.

They might have told the Lord then that they were not ready to go. Suddenly just go? They were not ready for that. Walk by faith! I don't know that I have ever felt ready for ministry ever!

From the very beginning, it felt like I was being pressed through doors, asking the Lord if He wanted me to do that? You want me to enter into that ministry? What!?! No, no, I needed another five years. No!

My first youth pastor, Bill March, he was supposed to be here while I was studying in seminary. I was not supposed to be the high school director. But others said that I was and there I was, even though I did not feel ready. That happened repeatedly in my life.

The Lord likes to keep us walking by faith, trusting in Him in the various ministries that He gives us. Yes, we are to sharpen our tools. We are to be reading and studying and showing ourselves approved, but there is always going to be that sense that we are not quite ready. That keeps us close to the Lord. Who *is* up to these tasks? But Jesus says to go and go now

In Verse 4, Jesus said to go and:

⁴...greet no one on the road.

I think it means that Jesus had specific cities that He was calling them to go and reach, and they were not to get sidetracked going elsewhere, engaging in the characteristic long greetings that they had in the First Century Middle East. They were to have focus. They were to go where the Lord called them to go.

Jesus told them that as soon as they went into a home, be the one to set the tone. Tell them you come in peace. Peace be with you. The first words to be said are that you are an agent of peace in that place. There may very well be a son of peace in that place, and the two would have a connection, that sense of connection that is characteristic between believers.

If that is not experience, there could still be a cordial and friendly relationship. However, Jesus was talking about the bond that occurs between people that are children of the Kingdom. There would be refreshing people along the way where that peace would be experienced.

Did you notice in this text that Jesus made a big deal about food as well? Jesus said twice to eat whatever is put before you, just eat that food! Why did Jesus say that? Some have suggested that perhaps that means to be content with their accommodations, not going from place to place

based on the quality of what they detected. If the food smells better two doors down, don't go there because you think the menu is going to be better. Just stay put.

Another possibility is this: Jesus was sending them to the Trans-Jordan region, the region east of the Jordan where there would be a lot of nationalities and a lot of Gentiles. So perhaps Jesus was telling them to go to the houses where they would give them room and board, and whatever they put before them, just eat it without qualm of conscience and being picky.

Jesus told them to just eat it! Perhaps Jesus was starting to put within His disciples a taste for foreign food. He is a multinational Messiah in saying to eat whatever is put in front of us, not asking any questions.

As we follow the mission of Jesus, Jesus might send us in the midst of people that are culturally different from us. We are to be gracious at all times. There is the possibility that this might be descriptive of the diversity that the seventy-two would find in their mission, and they needed to be appreciative of that.

I pray that Bethel Grace would be as colorful as it could be. That is such a beautiful thing. We continue, to help sent ones, Jesus provides:

3. The Basic Message (10:8-12)

Going into Verses 8 through 12, Jesus laid out two scenarios and told His disciples what to do and what to say, based on the response that they received. While their physical response would be different in each one, the basic message would stay the same. Verse 8 through 12:

⁸Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. ⁹Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ¹¹'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.' ¹²I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

Some towns would be receptive, others would reject them. Jesus gave them instruction based on the response that they would receive. But He gave them the basic message in both places. The disciples were to assure them that the Kingdom of God had come near—there is a God. He has a Kingdom. That Kingdom is authoritative. Jesus is the Messiah, and the Kingdom of God has come near.

For those who received healing grace in that First Century mission, they would know that it was a work of the Kingdom. For those who rejected the message, the disciples gave a visual and cultural display that they were no longer accountable for their response by wiping off the dust from their sandals, the message is the same—the Kingdom of God had come there.

Jesus was providing the disciples with the basic message. As we represent Jesus in this world, we don't go around diffusing our opinions. We are ambassadors of the King! So, we are those

who study and show ourselves approved, getting the core Gospel message down that we might rightly represent the One who sends us. We don't go with our teaching, we go with His teaching.

Before the cross and the empty grave, the word that was going into all of Israel was: The Kingdom of God is at hand. Now, we are living on the other side of the resurrection. While the message we proclaim is the message of the Kingdom, Jesus provides us more specificity on the basic message that we provide.

This message can be boiled down and condensed. The bottom line, basic message that we are to spread is contained I Corinthians 15:15 and Verses 3 through 5, where Paul said to Corinth:

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. ⁵and that he appeared...

There we have the basic message. Jesus died as a substitute. It is cross-centered. Jesus died for sinners. Substitution is at the very heart of what we cherish and hold dear—that Jesus paid the price that we deserve for sin when He was hung on that cross.

But there on that cross, He did not remain! On the third day, He rose again conquering death. He is risen, brothers and sisters! And this is the message that we are to proclaim. Those are the historical facts and with that, we do well to take to heart and commit to memory different passages of Scripture that appeal to a person's faith.

Maybe you can dig into Ephesians 2: 8 and 9, where we are reminded:

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

This appeals to people for faith. I also love John 5:24, where Jesus said:

²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

What? Living people are actually dead? Yes, they are dead in their sin. But the one who takes the message of the Messiah to heart, understanding that they are sinners accountable to the throne of God, and turn to Jesus in contrite and humble faith, they pass from spiritual death to spiritual life. They become joined to God by grace.

Jesus gives us the message. We are not to be people who become clever and come up with teachings of our own. We must be those who dig into the Good Book. We must bring the Book, as my good old brother, John Brown, now in the presence of Jesus, always used to say to me.

How I wish all of you could have known Deacon John Brown. He was one of the best friends that I will ever have. I would be walking to church and John would give me the eagle eye and

ask me, *Did you bring the Book?* He was telling me very kindly and graciously that the church is not interested in what I have to say, but want to hear what God is saying through me as I express the truth in Scripture. Bring the Book!

Jesus gives the message. In closing, to help the sent ones Jesus provides compelling vision—the harvest, including the wolves that we will face. Jesus also provides practical instruction which is the basic message. Jesus also gives us some:

4. Personal Perspective (10:16)

Jesus gives us some personal perspective to help us out as we go, especially as people do not respond in kind to the message that is proclaimed. There is some perspective in Verse 16 that Jesus finished with.

¹⁶”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.”

Here in this awesome verse, we have the language of the solidarity that occurs between the disciple and the Lord. When people hear our voice, they hear His voice. If people reject us, they are really rejecting Jesus.

In this verse, the emphasis does, in fact, fall on rejection. That word is used four times in this verse. If people reject us, they reject Me. If people reject Me, they reject the one who sent Me, namely the Father.

In this verse, Jesus is acknowledging the fact that the experience of rejection is a painful experience. It is like getting stung. It really does hurt when people deny us and are not interested. People reject us and it stings.

Here in this verse, Jesus is removing the stinger from us and He plunges it into Himself. He tells us that we are His representatives, and the One who is being rejected is Him—even further, the One who is being rejected is the One who sent Me.

With that, we might go back to the song that we sang earlier in the service about just being satisfied in Christ, about being joined in Christ, and about what Jesus said about us, *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now abide in me.*

How do you measure the Father’s love for the Son of God? That is vast and deep and unsearchable. Jesus said, *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.* We must carefully reflect on such truths and allow the Holy Spirit to minister these living words into our hearts that we might know that when we have Jesus, we have all that we need.

Jesus, Your love is enough. It is sufficient for me. Oh, let it be the case, because in this world we are going face rejection. But I pray that here in the church of God, we might grow and practice understanding, and that we might be received into close fellowship in Jesus’ Name.

Rejection should be occurring out there, not in here. So, let us have hearts of love toward one another and understanding and patience, because we have not been perfected yet, brothers and sisters. Yet, we are to love one another with the love of Jesus Christ.

As we close in prayer, I will give you a moment to silently say, *Lord, apply these things to my heart*. I will give you five or ten seconds to quietly pray and ask the Lord to help you discern who it is that He has you living amongst, who it is that wants you to reach with grace and truth. Who is in your life that Jesus sends you to?

Let's take that moment of silence, then I will close in prayer.