

Luke 10A

- Jesus heads out of the Galilee, passes through the region of Samaria, and toward Jerusalem
 - Last week we saw Jesus rejected by the Samaritans as He traveled South
 - And today we see Him speak of other regions that also rejected His message

[Luke 10:1](#) ¶ Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.

[Luke 10:2](#) And He was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

[Luke 10:3](#) “Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

[Luke 10:4](#) “Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way.

[Luke 10:5](#) “Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace *be* to this house.’

[Luke 10:6](#) “If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you.

[Luke 10:7](#) “Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.

[Luke 10:8](#) “Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you;

[Luke 10:9](#) and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’

- Jesus, Luke tells us, appointed 70 more men to a mission of going before Him to announce His arrival
 - If you have an NIV version of the Bible, you will find that the Greek word **hebdomekonta** has been translated 72
 - This is a compound word made from two other Greek words, so it’s exact meaning is open to interpretation
 - Of major translations, only the NIV renders it 72...all others choose to translate it 70
 - Seventy makes sense from a historical perspective, since 70 is a common number in the history of Israel, particular when we’re talking about men sent to do the work of the ministry

- But honestly, whether the author meant 70 or 72 doesn't matter to the rest of the account
- Like we saw at both the beginning and the end of Chapter 9, Jesus sends men ahead to announce His coming
 - This group of messengers goes out for a different purpose than those that went at the end of Chapter 9
 - These men are not going out to find Jesus rooms
 - They are going out like the disciples did at the beginning of Chap 9
 - They are going to declare the kingdom and demonstrate its power ahead of Jesus arrival
 - There are some interesting details here
 - First, we here Jesus is sending them in pairs
 - There is an important principle being demonstrated here
 - Messengers are commonly seen in the NT going out in pairs
 - Paul and Barnabas went together
 - Judas and Silas went together
 - Later, Paul and Silas went out together
 - And Barnabas and Mark went together
 - Silas and Timothy are said to minister together
 - And on and on
 - In my own life, I've seen God place other men in my life to partner with me in ministry
 - I had the blessing of Kim's company in my trip to Kenya a couple of years ago
 - That experience showed me the value of a companion

- I have men like Brian Jamison who God paired me with me...
- Even in our church, I have had the benefit of men like Danny and Matt
- So God brings men along side one another to serve in ministry
 - One reason to do so traces back to the Law and Deut, where we hear in chapter 19 that 2 or more witnesses were required to condemn a man for sin
 - In other words, these men were both ambassadors of the gospel to men who received the good news as well as witnesses against those who rejected it
 - We'll see a little more of that in a minute
 - But secondly, there were simple practical reasons to go out in pairs as well
 - Traveling in pairs increased protection and provided some degree of accountability
 - Let's face it, there is safety in numbers and one of the ways numbers give us safety is by protecting us from ourselves
 - We call this accountability, and it's essential in ministry
 - One of the reasons that Paul insists that Timothy appoint elders to assist him in the work of the church in Ephesus is to ensure that there was some form of accountability
 - Jesus sends these men out in pairs for their protection from the elements, from thieves, from adversaries and from their own sinful lusts and desires
- In verse 2 Jesus says that the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few, so the disciples should pray for God to send workers into the field
 - The analogy is fairly simple
 - The field is the world of unbelievers

- The harvest are those within the field who are to be separated out, to be harvested
 - This imagery is common in scripture
 - You can see it in Revelation 14 when God tells His angel to put in his sickle for the hour has come to reap for the harvest of the earth is ripe
 - Therefore harvesting is commonly a metaphor for finding and collecting God's elect – those who will respond to the Gospel message
- In this context, Jesus is remarking that these 70 men as they go out are doing the kind of work Jesus is says is often lacking
 - The work of going out to collect – to reap – the harvest of believers from unbelievers
 - This is such an important principle, and I think we often miss the subtleties of it
 - The work of making believers is truly the work of the Holy Spirit
 - And that work takes place on with or without the contributions of men – God is never dependent on our obedience in ministry in order to bring men to salvation
 - Remember that Saul was converted into Paul on a lonely road without a man to bring the message
- Yet despite the fact that the work itself is relatively light for us, we still hesitate to do it
 - I think we tend to make the process of evangelism much more difficult in our own minds than it really is
 - We assume that we will have to convince, cajole, persuade, argue, people into believing the gospel in order to find success
 - And even when we do find success, it will be fleeting
 - But Jesus says the harvest is plentiful
 - There is a field white for the harvest, He says in John 4:35
 - I'm fond of comparing it to an Easter egg hunt...

- But instead we tend to imagine the worst,
 - We Imagine that people will never respond positively, and we're almost surprised when they do
- And that thinking actually drives us to poor results
 - And here's what I mean
 - When we assume that the power to save souls lies with us – with our abilities or with our technique or methods – then we let the impossibility of it discourage us from even trying
 - Because it truly IS impossible for us to bring anyone to salvation in our own power
 - On the other hand, if we see it more like an Easter egg hunt then we'll have the proper perspective and a reason to be motivated
 - We'll see each person as a potential convert and we'll approach them with an expectation that they will be one appointed to salvation

[Acts 13:48](#) ¶ When the Gentiles heard this, they *began* rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been **appointed** to eternal life believed.

- If we see a positive response, we give thanks to God for being the one through whom God worked to bring the good news
- If not, we move on, continuing to look for the easter egg
- Jesus calls us all to pray that God will stir the hearts of men to want to get up go out and become the ones through whom God will call new believers
- Then in the rest of these verse, we see Jesus giving instructions similar to those He gave the disciples when He sent them out earlier in Chap 9

[Luke 10:3](#) “Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

- Listen to Jesus words...He isn't saying be careful otherwise you will be like lambs in the midst of wolves
 - Protect yourselves and watch out for the wolves

- No, He's saying that it is Jesus' purpose to send the messengers out in an intentionally vulnerable posture
 - Look at the following verses
 - They carry no money, no bag, no shoes – without even basic preparations for such a trip
 - Jesus also tells them to take what you are given, accept what you receive, expect those who minister to care for your needs
 - Eat what's put before you
 - In other words, depend upon God, as we said in Chap 9
 - Don't seek after the better things in this world, accept that whatever you get, whether it is what you want or not,, is coming according to God's grace,
 - So it is what God wants you to have – so be content with it and focus instead on your ministry – stay focused
 - Heal those who are sick – to demonstrate proof of your message
 - And by doing all these things, be able to declare the kingdom
- The point here is much like it was at the beginning of Chap 9
 - God will do the work of calling men to Him, but when He works, He doesn't want His work to be mistaken as the work of men
 - So He chooses to work through men in such a way that His strength is made evident

[1Cor. 1:25](#) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

[1Cor. 1:26](#) ¶ For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;

[1Cor. 1:27](#) but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,

[1Cor. 1:28](#) and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,

[1Cor. 1:29](#) so that no man may boast before God.

- Here, Jesus has set these men up, in a sense, to be like sheep among wolves

- To be vulnerable and 100% dependent on Him
- So that their success is rightly attributed to Him
- Interestingly, Jesus also says they should greet no one along the way in verse 4
 - What He means by this is probably not what you think He means
 - A greeting of a stranger in the custom of the east was not a casual hello
 - It could extend for days on end and involve feasting and lodging with someone
 - Jesus doesn't want these men to get sidetracked in this way as they go about their work of the ministry

[Judg. 19:4](#) His father-in-law, the girl's father, detained him; and he remained with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there.

[Judg. 19:5](#) Now on the fourth day they got up early in the morning, and he prepared to go; and the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Sustain yourself with a piece of bread, and afterward you may go."

[Judg. 19:6](#) So both of them sat down and ate and drank together; and the girl's father said to the man, "Please be willing to spend the night, and let your heart be merry."

[Judg. 19:7](#) Then the man arose to go, but his father-in-law urged him so that he spent the night there again.

[Judg. 19:8](#) On the fifth day he arose to go early in the morning, and the girl's father said, "Please sustain yourself, and wait until afternoon"; so both of them ate.

- When they declare the kingdom, Jesus tells them to approach the people they visit in a specific pattern
 - When they enter a house, they are to declare that peace has arrived and has come upon this house
 - If the man inside receives the disciple's message, then the peace of God will be evident in His life
 - This man, if he is a man of peace, he will be seen to be living in the fullness of the spirit, demonstrating the love and peace of God outwardly
 - And by so doing, he is blessed all the more by the visit of the disciple and to hear the disciple's message

- But if that peace is not evident, the disciple's declaration of peace will return to him, meaning it will not have found a sympathetic audience, and it return to the disciple, like a gift that's been rejected

[Luke 10:10](#) "But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say,

[Luke 10:11](#) 'Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off *in protest* against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'

[Luke 10:12](#) "I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

[Luke 10:13](#) ¶ "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

[Luke 10:14](#) "But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you.

[Luke 10:15](#) "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!

[Luke 10:16](#) ¶ "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."

- Jesus gives instructions, even more detailed than we saw in Chap 9, regarding how the messengers were to when they're message is rejected
 - Beyond repeating His instructions regarding dusting off their feet and moving on, Jesus adds some rather harsh comparisons
 - He says that any town that rejects this message would find their judgment even less tolerable than that merited out upon Sodom
 - And He says woe to Chorazin and Bethsaida, towns on the Galilee
 - He compares them to Tyre and Sidon, Phoenician cities on the Med coast, saying if the same miracles had been done there, they would have repented
 - Which implies that the miracles didn't have the same effect in Chorazin and Bethsaida
 - The comparison here is more damning than even it sounds
 - Jesus isn't just comparing two different cities – He's comparing two different cultures

- He's comparing how these Jewish cities responded to the arrival of their Jewish Messiah next to how Gentile cities would have responded to the same declaration
 - The Jews rejected the truth of a Messiah while the Gentiles would be willing to accept it
 - And the Jews had full knowledge of their Messiah
 - They had been taught and should have recognized Him when He came
 - The Gentile cities would have had none of those insights or advantages, yet Jesus says they would have responded positively to His miracles had He gone there
 - Like the way Gentile city Nineveh responded to the preaching of the Jewish prophet Jonah
- Why would Jesus suggest these Gentile should respond positively when Jewish cities wouldn't?
 - Perhaps because the Gentiles had no preconceived ideas when it came to a Messiah – they hadn't even heard of such a thing
 - There was no established religious power structure that should see the declaration of the kingdom of God as an automatic threat in the same way that the Jewish authorities saw Jesus
 - And Jesus says that these cities – meaning the people in the cities – would receive an even greater punishment than those who were in Sodom – a difficult thing to imagine but true none the less
 - This concept of greater punishment can be explored further, but we'll wait until Chapter 11&12 of Luke to explore it further
- I find it especially interesting that Capernaum is mentioned as headed to Hades – Hell
 - Remember Capernaum? This was Jesus home base of operations in the Galilee
 - And it was the city that Jesus credited with responding positively to His miracles and teaching while His hometown Nazareth wouldn't accept them

- But apparently they didn't do enough
 - It seems they never really saw Jesus for who He said He was
 - They loved the miracles, they admired the teaching, but they never accepted Him as the Messiah
 - You see the fine line here between being saved and simply looking like someone who's saved
 - You can acknowledge Jesus lived, that He had supernatural power to perform miracles, and that His teaching came from the mouth of God
 - You can have all those things...but unless you're willing to acknowledge Him as God, as the Messiah, who's death paid for your sin – then you are no better than those in Capernaum who are destined for Hades
 - It's such a fine line
- And Jesus has commissioned these 70 men to go out among the Jewish cities He will travel through on the way to Jerusalem and find people willing to cross that line
 - When they find them, they declare peace
 - And when they find someone unwilling to cross over, they declare judgment
 - It's no different today...we are each potential workers in God's field and are called to go out to collect the harvest
 - This is not just the role for an evangelist like Brian Jamison
 - This is not a role restricted to a teacher like me
 - This is not something that only happens during revival meetings or evangelism trips to Mexico on Spring Break
 - Or when you have a visitor in church
- We are all supposed to leave this building this morning with an expectation that God will send men and women into our life everyday who we can harvest, like looking for Easter eggs
 - And we are supposed to persuade them in our own ability

- We aren't supposed to trick them into coming to church
- We are supposed to cloak the gospel message in feel good double speak or conceal it under so much pop culture that it looks like an elaborate case of bait and switch
 - We are to go simply, in a vulnerable way, dependent on God to bring success
 - We lay it out on the line in simple terms, declaring peace
 - And where that declaration of peace in Christ finds a receptive audience, we find our success in God's power
 - And where it doesn't, that declaration of peace returns to us and we become a witness against that person for their rejection – should they never embrace the truth
- But in either case, we have done as God commanded and we are blessed for doing so
 - For as Jesus says in verse 16, the one who accepts the message that men bring concerning Jesus, are accepting Jesus Himself
 - And when we are rejected, they are rejecting Jesus Himself
 - We have nothing to lose, we are not the ones being rejected, and we have nothing to keep us from trying