

# CONCERNING THE WAY

March 13, 2012

## LESSON 131: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE



### Chapter 10

**Luke 10:1-2** After this, the Lord appointed seventy other disciples and sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place that he intended to go. (2) He was telling them, **"The harvest is vast, but the workers are few. So ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers out into his harvest."**

- Some Greek manuscripts have "70" and others have "72." Both readings have strong support.
- On His way to Jerusalem Jesus was sending out messengers to all the towns in order to give people opportunities to accept His message. Only Luke talks about this event.
- This shows us that there were many disciples that were following Jesus. The Lord chose 70 out of this group that would be missionaries to these towns, to prepare the way so that when Jesus came into a town, it would be ready for Him.
- From what Jesus said, you could speculate that Jesus would have liked to choose more for the job, but only these 70 (and the original twelve) were willing or capable of doing the work. So has it always been.
- We hear this verse quoted a lot as an incentive for missionary work. I don't have a problem with that, but we must remember the historical context here. This was before the cross, when Jesus was offering the Kingdom to the Jews. It was the end of an age. At the end of an age there is always judgment, and judgment is the harvest (see Matthew 13:30). We are not harvesting today, but we are sowing. The harvest will come at the end of this Church age, when Christ comes back. Our business today is sowing, that is the responsibility of every Christian, to sow the seed.

**Luke 10:3-9** Get going! See, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. (4) Don't carry a wallet, a traveling bag, or sandals, and don't greet anyone on the way. (5) "Whatever house you go into, first say, 'May there be peace in this house.' (6) If a peaceful person lives there, your greeting of peace will remain with him. But if that's not the case, your greeting will come back to you. (7) Stay with the same family, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the worker deserves his pay. Don't move from house to house. (8) "Whenever you go into a town and the people welcome you, eat whatever they serve you, (9) heal the sick that are there, and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you!'"

- Jesus was warning them that it wouldn't be an easy job; in fact, it would be dangerous ("like lambs among wolves"). The wolves were the religious leaders they would be encountering in these towns that would be against them and their message.
- There was an urgency to this mission, and like when the twelve were sent out, they were to depend on the hospitality of those who would accept their message.

- Notice “the worker deserves his pay”, which tells us that it is God’s will that we support our pastors and missionaries and others in full time ministry.
- We’ve pointed it out before, but this is not the same message that the disciples would preach in Acts after Jesus had gone to heaven. The message is the same as what John the Baptist preached, “Get ready (repent), because The King is coming, and He is bringing in the Kingdom!” The Kingdom is not the Church, but the prophesied Messianic reign of Christ on earth.

**Luke 10:10-16** But whenever you go into a town and people don't welcome you, go out into its streets and say, (11) 'We are wiping off your town's dust that clings to our feet in protest against you! But realize this: the kingdom of God is near!' (12) I tell you, on that day it will be easier for Sodom than for that town!" (13) "How terrible it will be for you, Chorazin! How terrible it will be for you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that happened in you had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. (14) It will be easier for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you! (15) And you, Capernaum! You won't be lifted up to heaven, will you? You'll go down to Hades! (16) The person who listens to you listens to me, and the person who rejects you rejects me. The person who rejects me rejects the one who sent me."

- Jesus warned the surrounding towns against rejecting the 70 because that meant rejecting Jesus and the Father (v. 16). God sent the Messiah and those who did not accept Him would be judged. What do you think Jesus meant in verses 10-11? In verse 12, what did He mean by “on that day”?
- Jesus singled out two cities—Chorazin and Bethsaida, both of which were located in the area of Jesus’ early ministry of miracles on the north side of the Sea of Galilee. He also singled out His adopted hometown, Capernaum, where He had also done many miracles. The message was clear: those cities (and other places like them) would be more severely judged than pagan cities, such as Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, which did not get to see the Lord’s miraculous works and hear His words. How does this relate to us in the United States today?
- To have heard God's word is a great responsibility. A person will be judged according to what he has had the chance to know. We allow things in a child that we condemn in an adult. The privileges we have been given come with great responsibility.
- It is a terrible thing to reject God's invitation. There is a sense in which every promise of God that a man has ever heard can become his condemnation. If he receives these promises they are his greatest glory, but each one that he has rejected will someday be a witness against him.
- We see here that there are degrees of punishment for the lost, and degrees of rewards for the saved. See also Luke 12:47-48 and Matthew 10:15.

**Luke 10:17-20** The seventy came back and joyously reported, "Lord, even the demons are submitting to us in your name!" (18) He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. (19) Look! I have given you the authority to trample snakes and scorpions and to destroy all the enemy's power, and nothing will ever hurt you. (20) However, stop rejoicing because the spirits are submitting to you. Rather, rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

- The disciples were excited about what had been happening. That's the experience we have when we give out the Word of God, and someone comes to Christ as a result! It is such an amazing feeling! What Jesus said is a good lesson for all of us who are in ministry. When we have success, we must remember it is His work, not ours.
- This vision Christ saw was both something that had already occurred, that Satan had already been cast out of heaven (see Ezekiel 28:12-19) and also the promise that he will eventually be cast completely out of any access to God at all (Revelation 12:7-10) and ultimately down to his eternal fate in hell (Isaiah 14:12-15; Revelation 20:10). The power of His disciples over the spirits was proof of this.
- "Serpents and scorpions" - Serpents and scorpions have always symbolized the devil, and God has promised that Christ will ultimately crush him (Genesis 3:15).
- "Stop rejoicing" - The miraculous signs that happened on this mission, as well as on the apostles and others in the early church, were a special and temporary privilege, given for a special purpose (1 Corinthians 13:8), not to be expected to always be available to any believer. However, all believers can trust in the authority we have through Christ over Satan, and the power we are given by the Holy Spirit to live a victorious life in Christ (see Psalm 91; Romans 16:20).
- Jesus gives the disciples a warning against pride and over-confidence. It was true that they were given all power, but their greatest glory was that their names were written in heaven. It will always be true that a man's greatest glory is not what he has done but what God has done for him.

**Luke 10:21-24** In that hour Jesus was extremely joyful in the Holy Spirit and said, **"I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from wise and intelligent people and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this is what was pleasing to you. (22) All things have been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and the person to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." (23) Then turning to the disciples in private, he said to them, "How blessed are the eyes that see what you see! (24) For I tell you, many prophets and kings wanted to see the things you see but didn't see them, and to hear the things you hear but didn't hear them."**

There are three great thoughts in this passage:

- Verse 21 tells us of the wisdom of simplicity. The simple mind could receive truths that learned minds could not take in. Sometimes intellectualism gets in the way. It is possible to be so educated that in the end we cannot see the forest for the trees. Someone has said that the test of a really great scholar is how much he is able to forget. Christianity does not mean knowing all the theories about the New Testament. Christianity does not mean knowing about Christ, it means knowing Christ; and to do that you don't need earthly wisdom but heavenly grace.
- Verse 22 tells of the unique relationship between Jesus and God. This is what John's gospel means when it says, "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14), or when Jesus says, "I and the Father are one," or, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 10:30; 14:9). To the Greeks God was unknowable. But when Jesus came He said, "If you want to know what God is like, look at me." Jesus did not so much tell

men about God as show them God, because in Himself were God's mind and heart.

- Verse 24 tells us that Jesus is the consummation of all history. This is what Matthew means when over and over again in his gospel he wrote, "This was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying . . ." (see Matt 2:15, 17, 23). Jesus was the peak that history had been climbing to. He is in one person the perfect man and the fullness of God. Who were some of the "prophets and kings who wanted to see these things"?

**Luke 10:25-29** Just then an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. He asked, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (26) Jesus answered him, "**What is written in the law? What do you read there?**" (27) He answered, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind. And you must love your neighbor as yourself." (28) Jesus told him, "**You have answered correctly. Do this, and you will live.**" (29) But the man wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

- This Jewish lawyer was a scribe, a copier and keeper of the Old Testament manuscripts. In that day they were seen as the only ones who could properly interpret the Law. Was this a sincere question? How do you know?
- Was Jesus saying you can be saved by keeping the Law? Remember this was before the cross.
- Whenever an "expert in the Law" tried to trap Jesus, He answered right back with the Law. They thought they could be saved by law-keeping, and Jesus knew they would never admit that they could not keep it, and ask God for mercy and grace.
- The man's response should have been to ask, "How can I do this? I need help." Instead, he tried "to justify himself," that is, to defend himself against the implications of Jesus' words. So he tried to move the focus off himself by asking, and who is my neighbor?
- You see, the Pharisees had become real good at modifying the meaning of the Law so that they could be able to obey it more easily. They defined "neighbor" as their fellow Jews. For instance, some of them said that it was illegal to help a gentile woman in her time of childbirth, because that would only have been to bring another gentile into the world. Jesus had already blown away these misconceptions about who your "neighbor" was in Matthew 5:

**Matthew 5:43-47** "You have heard that it was said, 'You must love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. (44) But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, (45) so that you will become children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and he lets rain fall on the righteous and the unrighteous. (46) For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Even the tax collectors do the same, don't they? (47) And if you greet only your brothers, what great thing are you doing? Even the gentiles do the same, don't they?"

So Jesus goes on to explain this concept by telling them a parable, probably his most famous and beloved story:

**Luke 10:30-37** After careful consideration, Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell into the hands of bandits. They stripped him, beat

**him, and went away, leaving him half dead. (31) By chance, a priest was traveling along that road. When he saw the man, he went by on the other side. (32) Similarly, a Levite came to that place. When he saw the man, he also went by on the other side. (33) But as he was traveling along, a Samaritan came across the man. When the Samaritan saw him, he was moved with compassion. (34) He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. (35) The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take good care of him. If you spend more than that, I'll repay you when I come back.' (36) "Of these three men, who do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the bandits?" (37) He said, "The one who showed mercy to him." Jesus told him, "Go and do what he did."**

- First, let's look at the scene of this story. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was a notoriously dangerous road. Jerusalem is 2,300 feet above sea-level; the Dead Sea, near where Jericho was, is 1,300 feet below sea-level. So in about 17 miles this road dropped 3,600 feet. It was a road with narrow, rocky gorges, and sudden turnings and switchbacks which made it a favorite of bandits and outlaws. In the fifth century Jerome tells us that it was called "The Red, or Bloody Way." In the 19th century you still had to pay safety money to the local Arab Sheiks before you could travel on it. When Jesus told this story, he was telling about the kind of thing that was constantly happening on the Jerusalem to Jericho road.
- The traveler was obviously either arrogant or a very foolish person. You just didn't travel that road alone, especially if you were carrying anything valuable. People normally travelled in convoys or caravans. This man really had no one to blame but himself for what happened.
- The priest and the Levite, both of whom are the ones you would have expected to help this man, hurried past the man, keeping as far away from him as he could. One or both could have been going to Jerusalem to serve at the temple. They may have been remembering that he who touched a dead man was unclean for seven days (Numbers 19:11). They may have thought the man was dead; to touch him would mean losing their turn of duty in the Temple; and they refused to risk that. They didn't want to get involved. And, it was always a risk to stop and try to help someone there. The bandits would sometimes use decoys. One of them would act like the wounded man; and when some unsuspecting traveler stopped to see if they could help, the others would attack him.
- Many sermons have been preached on this parable. The bandits have been said to represent Satan. The priest is said to represent ritualism and ceremonialism, neither of which can save anyone. The Levite is said to represent legalism, which also has no power to save. The Samaritan, of course, represents Christ. When ritualism, ceremonialism, and legalism couldn't do anything to help mankind, Christ came, to bind up the broken hearted, and take the person who has been robbed and beat up by the devil, dead to God, lost in their sins, and save and restore them.
- We must remember the political situation of the time to understand this story. The listeners would expect that the Samaritan in the story was the bad guy. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans because they were considered half-breeds and apostate. The Samaritan may have been a heretic, but the love of God was in his heart. He saw the injured man as a neighbor even though he was a stranger and even an enemy.

- Some practical things we can learn from this story:
  - We must help a person even when they have brought their trouble on themselves, as the traveler had done, even at risk to ourselves.
  - Any person of any nation or race or creed who is in need is our neighbor.
  - The help must be practical and not just feeling sorry. I'm sure the priest and the Levite felt pity for the wounded man, but they did nothing. Compassion, to be real, must result in action.

**Luke 10:38-42** Now as they were traveling along, Jesus went into a village. A woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. (39) She had a sister named Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet and kept listening to what he was saying. (40) But Martha was worrying about all the things she had to do, so she came to him and asked, "Lord, you do care that my sister has left me to do the work all by myself, don't you? Then tell her to help me." (41) The Lord answered her, "**Martha, Martha! You worry and fuss about a lot of things. (42) But there's only one thing you need. Mary has chosen what is better, and it is not to be taken away from her.**"

- The focus of this passage is not that people shouldn't care about housework, and I'm sure Martha meant well and prepared a great dinner for them. But the proper attitude toward Jesus is to listen to Him and obey His words. The village where Martha lived was Bethany (John 11:1-12:8), a few miles east of Jerusalem. Jesus stayed in Bethany during His final week on earth.
- Before you read on, what else can we learn from this passage?
- There's a sharp contrast between the two sisters. Mary sat and listened to Jesus, while Martha made preparations for a meal. The phrase, only one thing you need (verse 42), means listening to His words, which Mary had chosen to do. He really didn't want anyone fussing over Him.
- We see very different personalities here. Some people are naturally dynamos of activity; others are naturally quiet. It is hard for the active person to understand the person who sits and contemplates. And the person who is devoted to quiet time and meditation tends to look down on the person who would rather be active.
- These verses also show us that sometimes you may intend kindness to someone, but it is the wrong or inappropriate time. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem--to die. His whole being was taken up with focusing on submitting His will to the will of God. When Jesus came to that home in Bethany it was a great day; and Martha wanted to honor Jesus by presenting that house the best it could be. So she rushed and fussed and cooked; and that was just what Jesus did not want. All he wanted was quiet. With the cross before him and with the inner tension in his heart, he had stopped in Bethany to find an oasis of calm away from the demanding crowds if only for a little while; and that is what Mary gave him and what Martha, in her kindness, did her best to upset. Martha didn't mean to do this, but it was simply that Mary understood and that Martha did not.
- Here is one of the great difficulties in life. So often we want to be kind to people--but we want to be kind to them in our way; and if our way is not the way that is needed, we sometimes get offended and think that we are not appreciated. If we are trying to be kind the first thing we have to do is to try to see into the heart of the person we want to help--and then to forget all our own plans and to think only of

what he or she needs. Jesus loved Martha and Martha loved him, but when Martha set out to be kind, it had to be her way of being kind which was really being unkind to him.

- You can read more about Mary and Martha in the story about the raising of their brother Lazarus in John 11.
- Most of us have been in Martha's shoes. She was really trying to do something special for Jesus, and then things started going wrong. Maybe something was burning on the stove, or some other disaster occurred in the kitchen. She was frustrated, and said something she normally wouldn't say. The lesson for us is when we get frustrated, confused, or exhausted; we need to just sit down. Sit at Jesus' feet. Look in His word to see what He has to say. Everything in your life will work better. Just take the time to sit at Jesus feet. Remember that Mary chose what was better.