

Going for the Harvest Luke 10:1-24

Remember last week we began this theme of the HARVEST by looking at Psalm 126 where we saw what God does in and through a person who has been saved. We learned a key verse that shows God's program for the HARVEST, Psalm 126:6, **"He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him."**

So we saw that the Lord's program for the HARVEST includes four things:

1. **Going** – "He who continually goes forth".
2. **Weeping** – "Those who sow in tears."
3. **Sowing** – "Bearing seed for sowing."
4. **Reaping** – "Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Today we want to look more closely at the first of these: **GOING**.

Please open your Bibles today to Luke 10. This chapter starts by saying, **"After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go."**

Who were these seventy guys? They were not the apostles, the twelve. Jesus had previously sent the twelve out on a similar mission at the beginning of chapter 9. These seventy were probably just ordinary people who had been following Jesus. They had heard His message. They had seen His miracles. They believed in the coming Kingdom of God. So Jesus sends them out to go ahead of Him into every town and place He Himself was about to go. Jesus did not leave the ministry to just the twelve. Neither does He today leave the ministry only to those who are pastors or staff members. Jesus is still sending people out to GO ahead and tell people that Jesus is coming to them.

We must be a GOING people because Jesus is a SENDING Lord. He sends, we go. Today I want us to see from Luke 10 how we are to GO.

I. WE MUST GO WITH JESUS' VISION (1-3).

Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

"Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. (Luke 10:2,3)

Can you imagine, for a moment, if you had gone to all the work in the spring and summer of preparing the soil, planting the seeds, weeding, watering, and staking – and then, once the produce was ready, just leaving it to fall on the ground and rot? I think that is Jesus' idea here – it's like He is saying, "the harvest is ready! The people need the love and forgiveness and freedom I'm offering, they are prepared, now all I need are some people who will go and work in the harvest fields."

Jesus said in John 4:35, **"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"**

Let me ask you, do you see what Jesus sees? Do we share the Lord's vision of the harvest? If we share the Lord's vision what are we going to do? (PRAY!)

It Takes Prayer. And what are we to pray for? HARVESTERS. Lord commands prayer for harvesters, not harvest!

"Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." (vs 2). The prayer is specific – that God, the Lord of the harvest, would send people to work.

The harvest is plentiful but the harvesters are few! Yes we all know that. We've all heard it before. We all know what's coming next. A call to be more involved. A challenge to be more committed. A prod to serve on one more committee. A nudge to add one more activity to our already overflowing schedules. We know what to expect, after all we've heard it all before. **"Go therefore, and make disciples"** Go, I tell you. go, go, go.

Listen, I know how tough it is. Who's got the time to do more than what we are already doing? We are already running here and there, doing this and that. There is work, family, school, chores to do, errands to run, church to attend. There is no more time in the week. We are all booked up.

So the temptation this morning will be for you to just tune out of this sermon. No need to listen a moment more because we can't do what you expect from us. Now if I was a missionary or if I had received God's call to be a minister, now that would be different. But since I'm not free to go, then this sermon not about me, Right? Wrong! Who did Jesus send, the professional apostles? No, seventy others. We don't even know their names or anything else about them except that they went two by two, obeyed Jesus, fought the forces of darkness and returned rejoicing!

Did you know that the great commission in Matthew 28 does not command actually us to GO? I know we think Jesus command us to GO because we have translated His words as, **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."** But you see, the real commandment that Jesus gives is not "go" but **"teach"** or **"make disciples."** Literally the scripture says, **"While you are going make disciples baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."**

So let me ask you, by a show of hands, how many of you are going somewhere this week? It doesn't matter where, just somewhere? Then that's God's call to you and to me to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Laboring in God's field is not about spending more time doing church work, charitable service, and that dreaded thing called evangelism! We often make the mistake that mission is what we do with those few precious hours of discretionary time, when we are not working, or housekeeping, or caring for our family, or enjoying our sports. It is not. Mission is the center of our life. Mission is what we do with our life. Mission is not the few hours extra you spend doing something good for God or your neighbor. Mission is the whole of your life under the direction of God. Whether it is going to work, or keeping the house and caring for your kids, or even doing evangelism.

"The harvest is plentiful," says Jesus, **"but the laborers are few."** **"Pray therefore,"** he tells us, **"to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into**

His harvest.” And so what happens when we pray? Just what happened here in Luke 10. The seventy caught Jesus’ vision of the harvest. And the pray-ers became the harvesters. It is impossible to pray for the Lord to send harvesters without becoming one ourselves!

This is how God works. We pray, “Lord please send out laborers into your harvest.” “Ah”, says God, “A volunteer.”

And it’s not going to be easy either. Listen to what Jesus says in verse 3, “**Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.**” whoa... that sounds a little dangerous! Lambs among wolves? Jesus is taking a pretty big risk here, don’t you think? And with our lives! This kind of verse really makes us stop and think again about our obedience to Jesus. Is Jesus really our Lord? Will we really obey, even though we know we are lambs being sent among wolves?

So here is the application question: Are you praying? Are you listening for God’s call? In your life, is there regular, quiet time where you come before the God of the Universe, your Father, and say, “*Here am I. Today, I’ll do whatever You ask, I’ll speak to whomever You direct, I’ll serve anyone who comes across my path in Your Name.*” That, my friends, is a prayer that is exciting.

If we are going to have a harvest we have to see what Jesus sees. We have to GO with Jesus’ vision.

II. WE MUST GO WITH JESUS' INSTRUCTIONS (4-8).

5 strange commands

1. “**Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals;**” (4a).

It Takes Faith:

Jesus sends the seventy out on a journey of faith, so that they might learn that God provides. Without a money bag or a knapsack or even an extra pair of shoes, the seventy would really have to depend on God to supply all their needs. Travel light! This is the element of faith – when God calls, He will equip, He will provide, and He will bless.

Go in faith. Don't plan for every possibility. Don't over-calculate!

2. “**Greet no one along the road.**” (4b).

With the mission that they had to preach the kingdom of God it seems like Jesus would want them to greet strangers! I am told that the Jews of that day had a custom for long-winded, superficial “howdy-doos.” Jesus says, “Don’t be distracted from the mission.” “Don't dilly-dally around!” “The mission is urgent!”

It Takes Focus:

One of the biggest enemies to ministry is distraction. This part of Jesus’ command was not about ignoring people. It was about staying focused and doing what God has sent us to do. In our lives and culture, this is a huge discipline. We are bombarded by options, information, entertainment, all of which scream “pick me and I’ll make you happy” – whether it is clothing or a ring tone or a website or a movie. We are bombarded to such an extent and we are overwhelmed with so many choices that we easily miss the fact that those options are based on a wrong premise. The promise that doing these things for yourself will make you

happy – and then they don't deliver. Certainly not in any lasting way – we get bored, disappointed, and sucked in to trying to find the next things that will make us happy. But joy comes not from seeking our own pleasure but rather from serving others in the name of Jesus. Every other pleasure is worthless compared to being used by God in the life of another. And in the face of our culture, it takes disciplined focus to follow God's voice instead.

What do you think of Jesus' call so far, in the first 4 verses? He's saying, "Go! Urgently, before the crop is spoiled and even though you'll have to work really hard since there aren't many other workers. Go into danger, like a lamb. Don't take anything with you. Be disciplined because the message is urgent."

3. **"But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.'" (5).**

Offer genuine, heart-felt blessing of peace. Pray for peace for those to whom God send you. PEACE: "shalom" – it means more than an absence of strife, it means "well being," completeness, wholeness, harmony, fulfillment. Safety, good relationships, prosperity. PRAY FOR THESE THINGS FOR THOSE YOU MEET.

Their response will tell if they're "ripe" (6). **"And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you."**

4. **"And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house." (7).**

If received, put down some roots--invest yourself in the lives of others.

It Takes Teamwork:

Remember, Jesus sent them two by two, not alone. Verses 5-7 describe teamwork and mutuality. It is about cooperation. One person can't do everything, so let others help – accept their gifts, cooperate. Don't get caught up making demands of each other, but rather stay focused on meeting the needs and fulfilling the mission.

5. **"Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you." (8).**

Jews of Palestine spent much time arguing over dietary matters (food, washings, etc.). Jesus says: "Don't get into all that!!!"

Paul: "Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels" (2 Tim. 2:23).

We must go with Jesus' instructions. Next,

III. WE MUST GO WITH JESUS' MESSAGE (9-12).

It Takes Actions and Words:

"And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'" (vs 9). It isn't enough to just help people with needs, and it isn't enough to just tell them about Jesus. Our actions must be accompanied by words, and our words must be accompanied by action.

We have to help people, and tell them why. We have to show people that God really does make a difference; that God really can help; that there really is a

Savior who died for our sins; that He is the king of our lives and the Lord of glory. We demonstrate that in our actions, and we affirm it with our words.

Content of Jesus' message--"The Kingdom (rule) of God."

Verses 8-12 contrast a good reception to ministry with a bad reception – I just want to point out one thing which brings perspective: the message is the same. Verse 9 tells the town which welcomes the message that "the Kingdom of God is near", and verse 11 says the same thing to the town that rejects the message.

Everyone must come under God's rule. The message remains the same regardless of the audience.

It Takes Perspective:

The other passage that brings perspective is vs 16: "**He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.**" Here is the perspective: ministry, people's responses to it, all the work and struggle, is not about you. It's not about me. It is about Jesus. And it is about God the Father. It is His ministry, His work, His harvest – you and I are workers, participants, but not owners. We aren't responsible for anything other than our complete obedience to our Lord.

If we are going to focus on ministry beyond ourselves, we need this perspective. We need it when things go really well, so that we don't get full of pride and full of ourselves. We need it when things are hard work, so that we don't give up in frustration. And we need it when things are resisted, people reject us, and the results are disappointing. It is about Jesus.

- Robert Louis Stevenson said, "Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant."

Conclusion:

As we are going with the precious seed of the gospel, it will make a difference.

"I recently read about an old man, walking the beach at dawn, who noticed a young man ahead of him picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Catching up with the youth, he asked what he was doing. The answer was that the stranded starfish would die if left in the morning sun. 'But the beach goes on for miles and miles, and there are millions of starfish,' countered the man. 'How can your effort make any difference?'

The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and then threw it to safety in the waves. 'It makes a difference to this one,' he said." [Leadership Journal. From www.bible.org/illustrations/f/f-07.htm]