

## **Between Promise and the Cross: *Sent with Promise***

### **Luke 10:1–2**

#### **Here am I...Send Me...(If its something I'm really interested in)**

Over the years—almost three decades now—I've had a version of the same conversation more times than I can count. Someone will come up to me and say, "*Pastor, I really want to serve. I want to get involved.*"

And honestly, that's one of my favorite things to hear.

So I'll respond with real enthusiasm: "*That's wonderful. That's great.*" And then I'll start sharing possibilities—places where help is needed, ministries that are quietly faithful, opportunities that really matter.

And sometimes, as we talk through them, I can see it on their face. Each option is met with a polite nod, maybe a thoughtful pause... and then a gentle no. Not because the needs aren't real. Not because the work isn't important. It's just that none of them quite match what they had imagined.

When I ask what they were hoping for instead, the answer is often something like, "*I'm not really sure yet.*"

And I want to be clear—this isn't a criticism. It's something I recognize in myself, too.

Because more often than not, there really *are* meaningful ways to serve—within the church, in the community, in places where the gospel is needed and lived out. But then the questions start to rise up in us.

This one feels a little risky.

That one feels too close to home.

This one doesn't quite fit my passion.

That one sounds good... but it's on a Saturday, and life is already full.

What I've learned is this: many of us genuinely love the *idea* of serving. And we're drawn to the *language* of being sent.

But when we begin to see what it actually asks of us—our time, our comfort, our sense of control—we hesitate.

And that's exactly where today's text meets us.

We like purpose. We like calling. We like knowing our lives matter.

But we'd also prefer:

- A detailed map
- A backup plan
- Enough resources to feel safe

Jesus, in Luke 10, offers none of that. Instead, He sends His followers out with **promise instead of protection, community instead of control, and belonging instead of bravado.**

And the anchoring truth of this passage is simple but unsettling:

**The kingdom moves forward not through strength, but through trust in the One who sends.**

**Scripture is making it clear to us:** Those who are sent by Jesus are sustained not by their resources, but by His promise—and their joy flows from belonging to Him.

### **Sent Together, Not Alone (Luke 10:1)**

“The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two...”

Notice what Jesus does *first*. He doesn't send apostles. He doesn't send experts. He sends **ordinary disciples**—and He sends them **together**.

This is important. Calling doesn't begin with competence. It follows commitment.

Last week was about following Jesus on the road. This week is about discovering that following eventually leads to being sent.

But never alone. **In Scripture, mission is communal, not heroic.**

Here's Hope Buffalo Project: Knocking on doors. Trying to do something “for God” alone—and how isolation made it harder, not holier. Having something that was “just mine” ended up being “just hard.”

Here Scripture reminds us:

- We confess together
- We pray together
- We are sent together

No lone rangers. No spiritual freelancers. No one man bands.

### **Vulnerable Dependence on the Sender (Luke 10:2–4)**

Jesus continues:

“The harvest is plentiful... I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.”

That escalated quickly. Jesus reminds us of the great opportunity—*harvest is plentiful*. There are so many people, so many conversations, so many chances to go and share the good news of Jesus Christ.

However, there is also great vulnerability—*lambs among wolves*. There are a lot of obstacles. There will be significant opposition. People are not waiting by the door in hopes that you knock on it for Jesus. In fact, people who we are supposed to share this message with may in fact be hostile and belligerent and mean.

Then Jesus makes it worse:

- Carry no purse
- No bag
- No sandals
- No backup plans

Jesus strips away every illusion of self-sufficiency. No reserves. No rainy-day funds. We see complete dependence on Christ alone. Mission is where God lovingly dismantles our independence so trust can grow.

This is how a season like Lent is helpful, as it teaches us to travel light:

- Letting go of excess
- Naming our dependence

- Discovering God is enough

When our children were still toddling and babying, Christmas Eve was the longest and hardest day of the year! As soon as our Christmas Eve service was over, we would pack up the kids and then load all of the Christmas presents for everyone and all the stuff you need to pack with two under the age of three. We had to pack for several days – it was as if we were moving, not retreating.

Here Jesus sends his followers out with the understanding that the only thing required on the packing list is trust that what is needed will be provided. Jesus sends them vulnerable—not to harm them, but to free them.

### **Peace Offered, Not Forced (Luke 10:5–16)**

They are sent with a posture, not a strategy.

They are told to:

- Offer peace
- Receive hospitality
- Accept rejection without retaliation

Jesus makes this clear: The kingdom advances through **presence**, not **pressure**.

They are not told to argue people into the kingdom. They are not told to dominate or manipulate. They are told to *show up* with peace.

And when peace is rejected? They move on—without bitterness.

Just like Jesus last week, they learn to keep moving—even when misunderstood.

### **Authority Without Ego (Luke 10:17–20)**

And the result of this mission project? The disciples return *thrilled*.

“Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name!” And Jesus doesn’t shut them down.

His power is real. His authority is real. And God truly works through His people. But then Jesus gently redirects their joy:

“Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but that your names are written in heaven.” This is the heart of everything.

**Joy rooted in outcomes will always rise and fall. But joy rooted in belonging is unshakable.** And this is where the gospel shines.

### **Gospel Presentation**

Why can our names be written in heaven?

Not because we were strong. Not because we were successful. Not because we got it right.

But because Jesus—the One who sends—first **came for us**.

He entered our vulnerability. He walked without control. He was rejected, crucified, and buried. And yet—God raised Him. Through His life, death, and resurrection:

- Our sins are forgiven
- Our identities are secured
- Our belonging is sealed

The greatest miracle is not what God does *through* us—but what God has done *for* us. If you are in Christ, your name is written in heaven. And nothing can erase it.

### **Jesus’ Joy and the Gift of Revelation (Luke 10:21–24)**

Then something beautiful happens. Jesus rejoices. Not over numbers. Not over influence. But because the Father is revealing grace to the humble.

This is one of the rare glimpses we get of Jesus delighting. And what brings Him joy?

- Faithfulness
- Trust
- Ordinary people saying yes

God is not impressed by flash. He delights in faith.

### **Mission as Trustful Obedience**

Week 1 asked: *Will you follow?*

Week 2 asks: *Will you trust the One who sends you?*

Scripture teaches us:

- We are sent, not stranded
- Vulnerability is not failure
- Joy flows from belonging

You may feel unprepared. You may feel small. You may feel exposed.

But you are sent with promise.

### **Conclusion**

Church, the kingdom does not advance because we are impressive. It doesn't advance because it is flashy. It advances because Jesus is faithful.

We go together. We go dependent. We go offering peace. We go grounded in joy—not in success, but in belonging. And we trust the One who sends us.