

Harvest Ready, Workers Needed

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Good evening to our Wednesday evening Bible study as we continue our study on discipleship. I'd like to start us off with a time of prayer. So, let us bow our heads.

Father, I thank you for this privilege and honor to teach your word this evening. I pray that you would prepare hearts to be ready to listen from you through your word and to respond accordingly. I pray that your Holy Spirit will be present in each one of our hearts so that he can help us to understand your word and to cultivate it in our day-to-day lives. So, Father, I pray that you would bless this study. It's to your name, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

All right, we're going to continue to study from the book of Luke. So, if you will, please go ahead and turn to Luke chapter 10. Luke chapter 10 and we're going to be reading from verse one. Luke chapter 10 beginning with verse one.

This study is going to be filled with a lot of looking over passages from the Old Testament and New Testament. And there's a purpose for that. For this particular study, I want you to see the consistency in scripture when it is related to these passages that we will be going over tonight to show you our Lord who can be trustworthy. Amen. Who can show us that what we see in the pages of scripture is him being Lord. Him speaking forth things not just for the moment but timeless principles shared from the old all the way to the New Testament.

So we're going to go through a lot of scripture tonight just to prepare your hearts. You don't have to turn to them but just listen on as I read from them. So let's go ahead and start with verse one of chapter 10. Read silently with me. It says after these things the Lord appointed other 70 also and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whether he himself would come.

So we see a clear transition with the beginning of verse 10 with the words after these things. Apostle Luke is signaling here a clear shift a transition from what has happened in the passages that we had read from which is namely Luke chapter 9 verses 57-62 there we saw that the Lord instructed what the nature of true discipleship looks like and the costs of following him. God is showing us through the Lord here that there's a clear deliberate stage in the way discipleship works. God's plan is to unfold it with stages with stages and they're deliberate.

And so we're going to see here after these things and then we're going to see later in the text before him and the idea is that he works step by step in guiding us in discipleship. Order is important to God. We know that he is a god of order not of chaos and he works in stages. He wants to make sure that we understood up to this point what it looks like the call of discipleship and the cost of discipleship. If we don't understand that, then we're not going to be prepared to do what this passage calls us to do.

And let me just again as I mentioned in the beginning work through a passage that we see in Exodus chapter 13 21-22. This is what the word of God says. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them the way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people. Here we see the intentionality of the Lord God in his progression. And we see this phrase coming to mind that he goes before us. He goes before us. That is always the procedure in discipleship. We don't lead at all. It is him that leads before us. So I wanted to share that passage here to show the connection with this part of the phrase after these things.

Then we go on to see here that it says the Lord appointed other 70 also. We see here clearly the Lord that is Christ authority emphasized here calling him in this way. It's not a suggestion. It's the idea that the Lord here is commissioning and he's commissioning a set of a specific number here. We see here 70, right? Where do we see this in other parts of scripture? Well, we see in numbers 11:16-17, we see here that the Lord said unto Moses, "Gather unto me 70 men of the elders of Israel, he calls out and appoints," says 70, specific number. God is precise in his in his authority. And so, that's what I want us to see there in that part of the passage.

And then I want you to notice that further in Matthew 28:18, this is what it says. And Jesus came to speak unto them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." The consistency with God Jehovah in the Old Testament and the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament. All power, all authority. The word appointed here is again a personal selection by the Lord Jesus just like he chose the 12 earlier in Luke 6:13. It says there that he called unto him his disciples and of them he chose 12 whom he also named apostle. God still calls individually specifically for God's advancement of his kingdom.

And then we look at Acts 13:2. It says this, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Lord, the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work where unto I have called them." So there we see that the Holy Spirit is separating Barnabas and Saul for a specific work that he has called them to. God the Father, God the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit consistent in their appointing.

Now continuing the strategy that we see in the Lord Jesus Christ is multiplication. He started with 12 now we see here 70. The idea is God is consistent in this approach where he God wants to manage the burden of the work that is set before us. Meaning it's not on one specific person or 12. It's God knows exactly how much the burden is going to be required. And that's the idea is and it's upon even the pastor to to know okay we need this amount of people to go out or we need this amount of people to do this work for this ministry or for this event. There's this consistency that we adopt and again he God told Moses to assign 70 elders. So it's the idea comes from God and it comes and it flows out to the spiritual leader of the work and then we see this word other you see there other sent them sorry the Lord appointed other 70 also notice it's not apostles here signifies that it's ordinary followers these are not the original 12 apostles included here it's it's ordinary followers And it highlights that every single believer is enlisted for the work of advancing the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see this in Ephesians 4:11-12. This is God's word says and he gave some that's the Lord apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers for what? For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. So

there there are specific things within the church body that there are specific leadership or people that are in charge of specific ministries for the purposes of perfecting the saints work of the ministry and edifying the body of Christ. That's an awesome privilege as a pastor to pray and to seek God for these parts to be fleshed out within the body of Christ that this is a healthy church where it has these components within the local church.

Then we see here the phrase he sent them two by two. He sent them two by two. We see this in the Old Testament Ecclesiastes 4:9 and 10 where it says two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him that is alone when he fall, for he hath not another to help him up. So we see their mutual encouragement. I don't know about you, but it's sometimes discouraging. It's hard. It's difficult. Labor is hard. So God wants us to be with somebody else so that we have constant encouragement. You ever do that whenever you're partner up with somebody in any type of ministry? It's so much easier, isn't it? The load is lighter, the burden is a little bit easier to handle. That's just the way God designed ministry.

Another passage is Proverbs 27:17 says, "Iron sharpeneth iron." So a man sharpeneth what? The countenance of his friend. Countenance means someone who is looks discouraged. So it's a physical thing that is happening in a person. And the idea is if you see someone discouraged in their face, go and sharpen them up. Sharpen them up. That's accountability. We are all to be accountable to each other and to help each other out. Not just in encouragement, but also in accountability.

We also see the same pattern in the book of Acts where we see Peter and John in Acts 3:1 where it says, "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer being the ninth hour." So they were praying together. And then we see Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:2 as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work where I have called them." Again, this illustrating a timeless principle for team type involvement in ministry.

Now, let's look at the next phrase where it says before his face. Before his face as current believers and witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ, we serve to prepare hearts for Christ promised return, his second coming. We have an awesome privilege of not only sharing the gospel of his first coming, what he has done on the cross, finished work for our payment of our sins, but we have an awesome privilege to share Christ's promised return. We see we see this in 2 Peter 3:11-12. It says, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, and all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." Wow, that's heavy words, aren't they? But you know, those are those are God's word. Those are God's word and we are to share also on that second coming of Christ and do it with holiness in our conversation with godliness. There is some weight to that. That's the idea.

And let's look at the next phrase where it says he went into every city and place whether he himself would come or if when he was about to visit them in these specific places. See the Lord Jesus ensures that no area is forgotten. That's the idea of every city and every place. That's where the Lord wants to go. And he can he is concerned to extend this not just where he was

currently but to extend it out to everywhere, every city and every place. We see this consistently as a in Acts 1:8 says this. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the world of the earth. So that's the consistent consistency there in looking at that passage.

Now drop down with me to verse two where we will continue in the passage. It says, "Therefore said he unto them, the harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."

He starts off here saying the author Luke saying, "Therefore he said unto them," that is an immediate instruction he's providing to those that are there. And it's a timeless guidance for us as the church that we are to take instructions from him ultimately. And we're going to see that this is the instruction we're going to see in this verse. What is the Lord instructing us? Well, we see here a very intimate tone. It's again speaking intimately to this 70 that are there. And it's a present reminder that Christ continues to speak directly to his followers. We see this in John 10:27 where it says, "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and I and they follow me." It's a reminder for us that there's a lot of other voices going on in the in the world, including our own voice and our own thoughts. And the goal here that intimates in this passage is the idea that we should hear from the Lord how we are to go about following him.

And here's the instructions. Let's just see it with will you says the harvest truly is great. Okay, right there. Our flesh says no, the world's getting worse. Oh, you know, things there's more corruption now than before. You know, our flesh likes to make excuses. But here the instruction is the harvest truly is great. How many times do we say that when we go out and do evangelism? How many of us really truly believe this specific instruction from the Lord Jesus Christ that the harvest truly is great? Because idea the harvest is that God is the one preparing the hearts. We're we're not preparing hearts. He is the one preparing hearts and he's doing it everywhere. And he is the one that's readying people to receive the gospel. That is what that word harvest is entailing.

John 4:35 says this, "Say not ye, there are yet four months and then cometh the harvest. Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white ready to harvest." So the idea is stop looking inward. Lift up your eyes. Look what Jesus is doing out there in the world. And if we have that heart posture and we truly trust this instruction, he will reveal opportunities after opportunities. But we have to take it upon with faith because it looks dismal, doesn't it? In the physical sense, but we must take our eyes off of the physical appearance and look at the spiritual reality. This is the spiritual reality. The harvest truly is great.

And then he says it's plentiful. The harvest is abundant. There's no shortage of souls needing salvation. Amen. There's souls needing to be saved. Look at what 1 Timothy 2 3-4 says. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our savior who will have all men all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. How many of us are prepared to share the truth to be ready and to know that this is for us to be instructed? How much are we prepared to follow in this kind of footstep? Very important.

Continuing with this passage, we we realize that there is a vast scope of evangelistic opportunity according to this passage. And we have grounds for confidence because it's not our words, not

the world. It's the Lord's word. Amen. It's the Lord that's giving us this confidence to be active in working. Acts 18:9 to 10 says this. Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision. Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city. That was specifically an instruction to Paul and he followed through. Amen. How many of us can we follow through when his words speak to us?

So then continuing it says, "But the laborers are few despite the abundance, despite the harvest, despite the many opportunities we just saw in the previous phrase, he says that there are relatively few believers that will be active in gospel work." And Apostle Paul in Philippians to the Philippians, he shared this with them. He said, "What's the issue?" It says first I'm sorry, Philippians 2:21 says this, for all seek their own. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ. The idea is that we have got too many excuses. I got too many things on my plate as it were. But how many times do we just not think about ourselves, but Jesus Christ and what he is calling us to do and just respond by faith. That that's clear instruction.

So God is ready to save. Another way of putting it, his people are not willing to serve. And so, we see a noticeable gap from the first to the second part of this phrase. And we see a consistency in Ezekiel 22:30. It says this, "And I sought up for a man among them that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land that I should not destroy it, but I found none." So, there's that consistency there in the Old Testament. the gap. Are you willing to fill in the gap? Are you willing to be that laborer for the gospel work? Because each disciple of Christ is called to personally look at their own lives, look at their own readiness, look at their schedule and going, he is priority. Not me, not my family, not my work, not my school. He is the priority. That's another way of looking at this. And when our hearts hurt set that way, somehow our schedule starts to work out. Amen. We just have to trust in the Lord. Don't trust in your schedule. Trust in the Lord and his word and he will provide.

James 1:22, "But be doers of the word and not just hearers only, deceiving yourselves." So then he says here, next phrase, look with me. "Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest. Here's what to do in the gap is pray. That's the instructions. Why is there a gap? Pray. Why is there an issue with my schedule? Pray. Why am I finding myself making so many excuses? Pray. Pray. Pray. Pray. That's the believer's initial action always is to pray. Petition to the owner of the field. Both the who is the owner of the harvest and the field.

Psalms 24:1 says this, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein." You see, he's in control everything just as much as he is in control of your life. He will take care of your needs. Amen. So, call him. Call upon him. Call upon the Lord of the harvest. He is sovereign over your schedule both for your salvation when you were saved and for all the provisions that come thereafter. He will provide. He will help you to spread the message of the gospel. He will. It's a promise. And you know what? He gives us clear instructions, doesn't he? So, how much time do you pray to prepare your heart for action? How much do you pray for your heart to be aligned with his words above everyone else's words? How much do you pray that it would be God's priority in your life than your priorities? So this is the thing that you do before you act is to pray.

Colossians 4:2 to 4 says this, "Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving with all praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of

Christ for which I am also in bonds that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak." So the idea is you pray also for what you're going to say. So it's not enough that you pray that it will be his priority. he'll be in his time and that you will treat him as above all in his word. But also pray that you would know what to say when the time comes when when you're walking or riding a bike or you're on the bus or you're driving a car you're in sitting in a line somewhere that God will give you the very utterance that you'll be able to speak the manifold things of God. So you see how prayer plays a part in so many aspects to fill in the gap. These are some of the ways to do that.

Continuing on in the passage, it says that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. This call is urgent. This call is much much needed. Just like it was back then, it is much needed today. And it's the idea that we are to be actively sent out and that we be willing to labor and that the fields are ready for harvest. That we would have this heart set that we will be willing to labor how however difficult it may be with our schedule. how however difficult it might be with managing our our responsibilities that God will give us the wisdom that he will give us the provision that he will give us all the things that we need to to be good witnesses for the Lord. That's the idea of that that he would send forth laborers. He will send you when you are willing to labor. That's the idea you have that willingness to to labor.

And it says there it's his harvest. Again, emphasizing it's God's ownership. It's his field and the results are his, it frees us, by the way, when we know this from the worry about the outcomes. We're not think about the outcomes. 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 says, "As I have planted Apollos water, but God gave the increase." So then, neither is he that planted anything, neither he that waters, but God that giveth the increase. Do you trust God enough that you're sewing seed, you're you're you're watering, watering is intentionality, you want that whatever word of God to grow and and that someone's life and that only God can add the increase to that growth. But do you have that understanding that I want to see the word of God being firmly planted watered and then anticipating that there will be growth? Do we anticipate that growth in the people that we speak into their lives? Such an important verse verse is there.

So the people who are praying frequently are simp are typically typically can be the very solution that God provides that he would use you. He would use you when you're praying that he would call you to be the very person to speak to someone that is ready. That's the idea. Do you pray that way? God, God, use me. God, use me in a way that I can provide to someone that you have prepared that I will be that gap to that person.

Isaiah 6:8 familiar verse also I heard the voice of the Lord saying whom shall I send and who will go for us? then said, "I here am I. Send me." He was praying to the Lord and and he said, "I will go. I will go. I I will go. However difficult it is, however challenging it will be, I I will go. I will trust you."

And then Acts 13:2 to3 says, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work where until I have called them." I bring up this passage over and over again because it's again it's it's depending on him to help us to be called and to be ministering to the Lord. We we depend upon him to do this in our lives, but we want to be part of that solution. Amen.

And so let's continue with the passage. It's a with some closing thoughts. And here it is. Let me just kind of highlight some of the stuff that we just went over. The idea is that we see stark contrast here in verse two. And we see here the boundless opportunities for evangelism exists. And we see here the contrast, the workers are few. And consequently, the Lord Jesus instructs believers to pray to the Lord of the harvest to raise and send out laborers. And then we see that every believer is called both to participate in this essential work of prayer. It is a work of prayer and to be prepared to become the answer to be God's answer and that trusting that he has already prepared people's hearts that you will trust him in that and that you will know that he supplies everything necessary to reap the harvest to gather the harvest that he would use you to do that.

And so as as a as a pastor of Calvary Road Baptist Church, let me just share with you that I'm committed to creating an environment beginning next year that will equip you as a labor in God's harvest. I'm actively praying and working through something next year for that to happen. And my prayer is that you will be strengthened and that you will be prepared to take part more part in fully working out this in your life. That you will be able to see truly what this passage says. That I would be able to equip you in such a way that you will be ready. That you will be ready to go before the Lord for the work of the ministry that is set before you. That's my prayer for you this evening.

So let us go to let's let us let us pray that this will happen. I believe it can because I believe in the word of God. Amen. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for this opportunity to come before you. Thank you for the instructions, clear instructions from the Lord Jesus. Father, Father, I pray that we would truly be prepared when the time comes. I plan Lord as you know early next year to make greater opportunities for us to go out in evangelism and outreach and that we would be able to share the gospel to more people not just in Monrovia but cities beyond Monrovia. Help us, help me, Father, help the leaders here as we plan to and and to create an environment that would be resourceful in this for each and every believer here. And I will thank you, Father, for all the wisdom and the grace and the the the resources that you will provide. And we'll thank you in Jesus name. Amen.