

Reliance On The Shepherd

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Well, we're going to continue to study in chapter 10. So, if you will turn to Luke chapter 10, and we will be continuing our study in this great book.

So Luke chapter 10 and we're going to be in verse three. Starting with verse three tonight. Luke chapter 10 verse three.

So I will read the verses and then I will begin providing comments on these verses. Verse three says, "Go your ways. Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves." Verse four, carry neither purse nor script nor shoes and salute no man by the way.

I want us to look at the word lambs. First of all, we're going to do a comparison of what is a lamb described as going back to the Lord Jesus and his time. And even prior to that, we're going to look in the Old Testament as well. And then we're going to look at the wolf that's described here, wolves and the contrasting motif of these two.

So, beginning with the word lamb, it typifies innocence and sacrificial availability. We see this in Genesis 22 beginning in verse 7. I'm just going to read it to you. And it says this, "And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father," and said, "My father." And he said, "Here am I, my son." And he said, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." So they went both of them together. So we see here pictured as a burnt offering again that innocence and sacrificial availability in this verse.

Then look at Isaiah 53:7 which this is the description of the Lord Jesus. He was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. So there we see it again that innocence and that sacrificial availability.

Now, contrasting it, we're going to look at the word wolves which is symbolized as the oppressors those who devour the weak. Ezekiel 22:27 puts it this way. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravaging the prey to shed blood and to destroy souls to get dishonest gain. I'm just going to get it from that verse. And you can kind of clearly see here they are the exact opposite of a lamb to make it very clear here.

So the Lord Jesus and his metaphor that he uses here would have been immediately clear to his audience that he was giving this message to by using these two images. The Lord Jesus deliberately contrasts the gentle nature of his disciples with the hostile environment they are entering into. This opposition is not coincidence but rather purposeful and it's designed exactly the way Christ wanted it to be.

And the purpose here again is you're going to see the gospel nature here described and it's nothing that the Lord Jesus did not himself portray himself right I mentioned to you in Isaiah that that expression led like a lamb to the slaughter. So it's not like he's saying you are lambs and I'm not. It we're signifying just like he is the same description that self-sacrificing posture of all of the Lord Jesus's followers. And our posture is again mimicking his.

And we see this in 1 Peter 2:21 where it says, "For even here unto were ye called a calling because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps." So it's here emulation we're emulating him and it's the idea that we're not going by force to in our evangelism in our making of disciples. That is not Christ's character and it certainly should not be our character.

And so underneath all of this the parallel that we see here with Christ, we also see that Christ names his followers lambs. As I mentioned, he connects this with redemptive suffering. Redemptive suffering. And let's go back to Luke 9 verse 22. We'll see this connection with redemptive suffering beginning in verse 22 says saying the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes and then here we go and be slain and be raised the third day and then verse 23 and he said to them all if any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me and verse 24 for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

So here we're going to see that the mission is patterned after Christ. True victory comes not through human power but through surrendering to the Lord Jesus Christ. That that is the undercurrent as it were, the connection to this redemptive suffering that the Lord Jesus calls us to.

And then we see that this calling, this redemptive suffering also connects to the missional vulnerability of us as lambs in this making of disciples and evangelism. The vulnerability of a lamb is also that if you'll if you ever seen a physical lamb, there's no claws on their four feet. There's no fangs in their mouth. They have no sort of camouflage. They're just pure white. And so the vulnerability the picture of it is physically there's just vulnerability all throughout.

And so the disciples safety here must solely rely on the care of the shepherd. That's the idea. We don't have anything physically capable of protection, but rather it is our sole care is in the shepherd. And we see this found in John 10:11. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. And then verse 28-29, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, nor shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand.

So it's clear it is this is spiritual protection in our lives. That is above everything else, right? Above our physical care. He wants to emphasize this in our lives. And so as a result, think of your own life in your salvation and then also those that God uses us to work in the lives of other people that God is working on for salvation that we didn't we weren't gained by force. It it was not by intimidation, but it was through truth and love.

This posture that we saw in those that God used it was God's word and it was God's love displayed in the lives of those that witnessed to us. I can recall individual by individual that had

that heart posture and lived out that way that were testimonies to me and we are to carry the same testimony to others. This posture of seeing that we're not depending upon anyone except the great shepherd the Lord Jesus Christ.

We want to show that as we are clearly given here by Christ's mandate to us and that perception of humility and self-sacrifice builds trust and acceptance right look I want you to trust in someone that I am trusting in and so it leaves you as not a stumbling block as someone that's preventing someone from coming to Christ right the whole purpose is that you're a channel you're a means of grace to somebody and that's what builds trust and acceptance for others.

And we see here again the description of a lamb, it's harmless and another way of putting it nonviolent witness and there's purity. A lamb is pure in its walk. You can see that it's the lamb is truly depending upon the shepherd. If you see a lamb by itself, it's directionless as well. And so we see the importance of not only being non-intimidating and with truth and love non violent but also it is of purity that we show the pure connection of the Lord Jesus Christ in areas of dependence as well. And he is the one that directs us.

And in Matthew, the book of Matthew, he supplements this text verse 10 verse 16. He says in the text here, not only says be sent forth as lambs among wolves. Matthew as a supplement, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. And this is important because it prevents negativity. Meaning we don't lapse into aggression. So the idea of a serpent is there strategy behind it. And our strategy is prayer of course it is all spiritual. We are to pray to the Lord unto the harvest which was the previous verse. That is still consistent through this part of the verse.

But it says there purity I mean the the dove is signified as purity. So we see there the connection between the lamb and the dove analogy illustration. And then now we're going to move further along and seeing even of a bigger picture of going back to verse two of the urgency in the harvest. Referring back to verse two in chapter 10 of Luke. And it's the idea that in this word go in verse three, it's it's simply this command that's saying it's imperative. The harvest is plenteous. So it's ready now. Just go. With the active imperative signifying the urgency in this part of the text when it says go your ways.

He's you know they're going to be directed to all sorts of homes and towns and they're to go separately too so we see here that the danger of going as lambs amongst wolves there's no excuse for delay here right the idea is we're going by what Jesus is saying right we're denying ourselves we're taking a cross daily and following the Lord Jesus Christ. So, we're also dying to our self-dependence. We're denying ourselves of trusting in our own instincts and what we think is right and how to go. But rather we're just continuing to listen to the Lord Jesus and following him in his word.

So, we see that consistently here and it it does conflict right with with our flesh. It doesn't make sense through the flesh but again God is showing depending on me you can do this right he he makes that clear you can go with even this understanding you can trust in him and so again it's that active word voice of the word go in the imperative and we see in the early church so just kind of fast forwarding to the book of acts we see the challenges that the early Christians faced. We see imprisonments in Acts 5:18. We see the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7:58-60. And then we even see the Christians in exile in first Peter which we just finished in that study.

So yes, there were definite challenges and still are challenges today that still follow a similar persecution. But yet in within just three centuries within three centuries Christians managed to overtake the Roman Empire just three centuries. So you know in the grand scheme of things God truly promised this will work itself out. And it's amazing when you look even further that Christianity impacted people during the times of the plague and people were being saved there as well. And this is the again the idea that when there's this contrast of the lamb and the wolves God works miraculously and profoundly in actually this text being true.

And so something to think about to meditate on is this motif this lamb and the wolf is that how we are today? Are we truly like lambs amongst wolves or are we almost like wolves attacking people? I see that so much a lot of Christians just so much time I don't know if so-called Christians right just commenting on social media and just causing arguments for argument's sake and that's not what we see here. We see this motif. You're going to go as lambs. You're not going to go attack. It's a posture of let me do the work and let me speak through you.

And so it's usually not usually, it is always in this context of the lamb and the wolf motif. And it's something to just meditate on when you have a time to think about it. You know, how much of real Christianity is real Christianity today? Where do you really see Christianity spreading? It's when you see this motif. Just think of the third world countries today, right? You're seeing people being lambs before the slaughter. You're seeing people being persecuted. You're seeing people stoned. But yet Christianity is spreading, being widespread. I'm talking about Iran and Afghanistan and Africa and China to name a few. Right? If you look and dig deep in in that the context there, you'll see this motif all along in those countries.

And so, you know, despite of what we hear and see visibly, spiritual work, good spiritual work is being done following faithfully this text in the countries I mentioned to you. So continuing we see the present danger is actually it's actually a temporary thing. One day as Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 11:6 there will be a day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb. He actually uses those two illustrations. So, it's not going to be forever, but while in we're in this time in which you call the church age, this is it's going to stay consistent in this kind of motif in our evangelism and our discipleship.

And so that's the paradigm of the mission. It's not of this world. It is completely supernatural. And we have to look at through the lens of scripture spirit empowered and really do what the word of God says ultimately the Lord Jesus commands and when we live out this way God will empower us and he'll use us in mighty ways. Amen.

So, the Christian mission here it's clearly stated how we're to live. Just a few more points on this before we jump into verse four. You know, visibly we're going to look weak. Without going to say, visibly we're going to look weak, but consciously, spiritually we're going to look so dependent, right? Internally you can just feel you got to depend on the Lord on everything, right? And and so visibly it might not look like that, but spiritually you will be whole. You'll be sound with the Lord and that reliance on the shepherd rather than anything that the world can offer in its strength, right?

And it's whatever it looks like that is contrary to being a follower of Christ, right? You can name them all. Nothing in the world can give you this kind of strength that God gives us. That's the

idea when we have this visible weakness but again spiritual dependence. And then it also helps us to live out again that illustration of a dove. Because because we're so dependent on the Lord and so spirit-filled, God allows us to be pure in our character, be pure in our words and our deeds.

So and visibly this is what looks to the person that we're talking with. And so there is a visible aspect to it and it looks like that in purity and it's the word integrity right you will be integral when you are spirit dependent and full of his spirit amen and and so that's the kind of thrust that we should be dependent on and relying on on him.

And other things is to think about some other things in this verse is the power that's given to us is will will not manifest in brutality like a wolf but it will be actually this word gentleness I've used it before it's power under control right so wolves are it just it it just goes without control right but when it's power that's spirit driven it is power under control and it looks like meekness it looks like the Lord Jesus Christ, right? And so that should also give you that confidence that you will appear as like the Lord Jesus Christ, not only in the figurative illustration of a lamb, but also in Christ himself in the way he talked with people and shared his life to other people.

So we see just multiple instances of how this looks practically in our lives and we're going to see that this is countercultural always. It will always go against what the how the world is. It doesn't change from first century Christianity to during the reformation through all the periods that of persecution that will are going on now and continually going on when the gospel is on display. This will just continue to be in similar kind of tension with how Christians will look like lambs and wolves.

So, kind of ending on this verse is that instead of going with this instance of being strategic humanly speaking, we're being strategic with empowered grace. God is going to give and give and give. We just need to depend upon him and he will give us everything that we need for equipping to be equipped to go as lamb before wolves.

And we're going to see in verse four how that looks like as well. So reading again verse four what's the strategy here we're going to see it the strategy of grace says carry neither purse nor script nor shoes and salute no man by the way so let's just look at that word carry neither purse right because we don't want to get the wrong illustration right these are men right they're not carrying Louisa baton bags here It's a purse is actually just a simply a money bag. It's a small little bag that men used to carry during those times.

So it's it's a picture of them carrying no money with you when you go cuz the sustenance should be provided by the Lord Jesus himself that he will provide his people the sustenance the provision. We can see this in Luke 22:35. He says, "And he said unto them, when I sent you without purse and script and shoes, lacked ye anything?" And the disciples all said nothing. So, we see that confirmation here in when we get to Luke chapter 22.

So just wanted to set the stage, right? Like what's going on here? Well, it truly was fulfilled within the the context of Luke. So we see that and then the visible dependence models the teaching of Matthew 6:25-33 that we see there in that part of the text that the father who feeds the birds and clothes the lilies will surely meet the needs of all of his disciples.

And then the idea of traveling light also underscores the weight on the gospel message. So so so we're not you know even visibly the Lord Jesus Christ is very intentional in how we're supposed to carry ourselves. And so the message of the gospel is carry is supposed to carry the weight not the material resources that he wants us to not have.

And in Luke 12, we're going to see in verse 33 he talks about selling all that you have, giving alms, providing yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupteth. And in verse 34, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. So what he's what he's driving at if you follow with the context here is that he wants them to treasure the message more than our material possessions. And so he prepares him for that and so this is clear there.

And then we see in 1 Timothy 6:6 to 8 even further into the now the church age context but godliness with contentment is great gain for we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out and having so the idea is that we have great gain and content with contentment when we're not possessing ourselves things of this world. Because in that age that was you know resource and it still is today right so this is timeless.

And then he says in verse continuing the verse that carry neither script so what is a script before I understood this part of the text way back I thought it was like a message that you carry a gospel tract maybe but it's actually not that a script was actually a food bag so you carry your money bag and then you carry your food bag.

So that that's the idea of a script. So most travelers would carry their money bag, their food bag for possessions and because remember they're not they don't have a car they're walking and so they needed to carry things with them some because money their distance was it would take the whole day to accomplish what they needed to do. So this is a reason so we need to understand the context here right and then see that.

So the idea was the Lord Jesus wanted to remove any temptation to even have a just in case bag, a food bag with them, reinforcing again trusting in the Lord Jesus for provision. So this is radical because all travelers back then were carrying a money bag and then a food bag and yet all the disciples were called to not to do any of that. So again that paradox that well what what is this? This is different, right? and in a good way.

And and so and Jesus gave the the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6:11, give us this day our daily bread. So they're they understood that they understood that he that God was going to provide for their for their daily needs even while they were going to house to house.

So traveling light ensured also mobility and availability for service and they were free from all distractions and and and it it could not hinder them to obey the Lord as well. So the instructions to limit baggage emphasized again dependence on God and it was again a visible trust serving as their testimony that it was an actually an opportunity to tell them yeah I'm we are depending on the Lord in their testimony time when talking with individuals and and it's a confidence in God's care that was part of the message that they were going to share was what they were not holding possession of that that was part of the message of the gospel.

So we see here again the purse and then the script and then now we see there were not to carry no sandals. Now here it's it's not the idea of they're not supposed to walk with any sandals. This is they would carry extra sandals because back in those days there would be unpaved roads, right? And there would be people that would try to stop individuals. You know today we have the way I can explain it when police try to stop a car someone who stole a car they put the strip right to puncture the tires. Well, there would be thieves that would put potentially stakes of nails on the road to stop them on their track and then steal their money bag and food if they had a script with them.

And so they were not to even carry an extra sandal cuz just in case they had to take it off and put new ones, it's like don't don't even carry that. Don't even be concerned about the danger in that regards. So this is a big drastic completely different to these disciples who are just normally doing carrying these things in their normal travels.

And all of these things if we were to call them what they were was symbols of security supply and self-reliance and saying no I will take care of your security. I will take care of your supplies and I will take care of your reliance. So physically they were supposed to manifest that way too. And this is part of the mission. This is not an optional. this is included in the mission that they were to go is to leave these provisions behind because their needs were met by the Lord's preparation and that we're going to see later on that when people they visit offered up their homes they will God will use those individuals.

So we're going to get there in the text when we get there but just this is the preparation time. This is the part where they need to be obedient. We need to be obedient when it comes to these things that we we're we're relying on. What are some material possessions you rely on? You know think about that for yourselves regarding this part of the text.

So continuing on in the verse the Lord Jesus Christ is want to leave no room for overpreparation. When it comes to this again that urgency the sense of going is there. So this also prevents them from going and being urgent by all these concerns of material resources. It says nope just go depend upon me. So we see that as well.

And so everything we can see here is can slow the gospel advance. That that's what he's saying like this is the way to not slow the gospel advance is just trust the Lord in what he says. Because the weight will be on the gospel if it's done this way. Romans 10:15 puts it this way. How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things. So, we see that in Romans 10:15 providing this analogy of the feet and of the gospel message the connection there.

And then he continues on. He says, in verse four and salute no man. And by the way, this is where we're going to close the study. So the Lord Jesus is not banning here at all common courtesy. That's not what he's saying here. But rather the emphasis here is again the urgency that we see in verse four with the word go of the mission guarding the basically first century greetings. Okay.

So, I don't know how in-depth your greetings are, but let me just showcase to you what a first century greeting looks like and what the Lord Jesus Christ is referring to here. And so the idea is

actually going back to Elisha's instruction to Gehazi in 2 Kings 4:29 where he said, if you meet anyone, do not greet them. It's the idea is it will slow down the the mission that in this context Elisha instructed Gehazi like you have an instruction don't don't stop and do anything else even including greeting somebody so focus on the mission so that's number one some old testament reference.

And then the lord Jesus and the way he's in in the context in in the first century is that going back to the text, the harvest is ready, the crops are harvested. He's saying it's it's ready. Go with urgency and don't so don't stop along the way. So, going back to the old the previous text, it the fruit is ready. Go. And he's saying don't compromise this mission. This is that important.

He so he doesn't want to dilute the focus of the mission here. He wants to deplete any supplies here and he doesn't want to delay the arrival into the time into the towns. Just think about this, right? Like what if you didn't go with this understanding and there was somebody that God had prepared for you to visit with and you missed him because you got sidetracked and you talked to somebody else, right? that could actually happen in in in in our modern times.

And so this is again timeless lesson here of how we are to be prepared and and go to those that are waiting to hear the gospel message. So going back, okay, first century, Middle Eastern greetings, what were they? They were not a quick handshake. They were not a hi hello but rather it involved a lot of commitment and time in your greeting. It went it would go often from minutes to hours a greeting. Think about this. It would go from minutes to hours.

So travelers would stop and the first thing they would do is bow and then exchange peace signals with their hands. I don't think it was this. I think it was something else. But that's what they would do. And then they will inquire after their family. They will talk about how's your family now? And then you know in that in in the Middle East families are important not just your family but like hey how's your relatives and they had many relatives right a lot of big families. So they would just go family after family after family after family inquiring about them.

And then they would go okay we've talked a lot let's go and have a meal. I'm kind of tired of this greeting. Let's continue this greeting and have a meal. So, so, so we'll go from minutes to hours sitting down. This is what the Lord Jesus Christ was saying. Don't stop in your mission in doing this. And so it was well, you know, and this was again culturally it was highly respected, highly honorable to do this.

So, so the Lord, what the Lord Jesus is saying here is like, you know, this is going against the grain as well, right? So, everything he's here is going against the cultural context and social etiquette and all this. He's saying what you need to focus yourself on again is the urgency of the mission. And there was speed that was required of it.

And and we see this right with the prior verse where we saw would be followers that they would ask to bury a father or bid farewell to commitments and the Lord Jesus said no one who puts his hand to the plow looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. And so this was another way of to remove all excuses, right? But I want to say hi to them. No, just keep going. there's he's saying just trust me there is a greater more important mission than than even that and so this is the singleness of the Lord Jesus Christ's purpose in in our discipleship and evangelism.

So some modern things that we can eliminate ourselves of these distractions that we have today think of all the small talk that we could have so this is when you are focused in evangelism in discipleship. Think how many times you think about what you're going to do after you meet, right? Think about what you need to take care of all these things. Small talk and looking at your phones and steering the conversation without being intentional. We need to be mindful of that.

What are some of the things that are distracting basically could be our phones, it can be small talk. And what we're seeing the Lord Jesus Christ is simplicity is key. Simplicity is key in discipleship. And to be content with this the gospel message and that should be our main conversation when it comes down to things of importance in our conversation.

And so I think today it's it's no longer the means of our travel that's the issue. It's really all the digital noise that we are constantly bombarded with with our intention right that's with those the spiritual sensitivity that we all know about and Mark 4:18 and 19 right the warning of the parable of talent and these are they which are sown among thorns such as hear the word and and the cares of this world is the one that's you you know deceitfulness of riches, the lust of other things that chokes the word, it becomes unfruitful. What is the thing that's choking the word, right? So you know yourself what that is that is preventing again choking the word because of the cares of this world.

And so he wants to link us to the simplicity the importance to wait on the gospel and also to continue to understand the theme that we are pilgrims and not to be settlers in this world. And pilgrims are to live their lives with simplicity. So those are a couple of things just wanted to share with you regarding this these two verses and I hope it you know hope opens your eyes to some of what the Lord Jesus Christ says here and whatever you are struggling with in in your discipleship or in your evangelism.

It could be these things your dependence where your dependence on you know where you are with thinking about you know how you plan out things are are you spending too much time on the material resources or are you depending on the spirit and the lord Jesus in his word. So may may these words may the Lord Jesus have greater weight and greater priority than how we might desire what discipleship and evangelism looks like.

And with that said may God be glorified in it and may Christ be exalted. Amen. All right, let's pray. Father, thank you for this message. I pray that you would bless it to our hearts and use it to again glorify thee and exalt thy son Jesus Christ for us in his name in Jesus name. Amen.