

Attitudes of Effective Evangelism

Scripture: Luke 10:1–4

Code: 42-134

We come now to the 10th chapter of Luke's gospel and you're going to have to sort of put your seatbelts on because I'm going to move rapidly. I have to move basically at warp speed to get through four brief verses because there is so much in the opening part of the 10th chapter of Luke. So hang on, here we go.

Luke chapter 10; let me read the text to you. "Now after this, the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them two and two ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. And He was saying to them, 'The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your ways. Behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no shoes and greet no one on the way.'"

Now that is a very practical, straightforward text, but it is loaded with some wonderful application for us. You'll see that as it unfolds.

Since our Lord Jesus walked on the earth, at the time He was here and since, there have always been people attracted to Jesus. There have always been people curious about Jesus. There have always been people who wanted to show respect and honor to Jesus. There have been people who believed that Jesus was the Savior. But there have always been people unwilling to follow Him on His terms. And you remember what His terms were. Go back to chapter 9 verse 23. He was saying to them all — that is all of the people who were in the crowd that trailed around and heard Him preach and saw Him do His miracles — He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, if you want to really be My disciple, if you want to follow Me seriously, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow Me."

In other words, Jesus was saying to the attracted and the curious and the interested and even the believing, "If you want the salvation that I offer, if you want to enter into the kingdom of God, if you want eternal life, you deny yourself." And we have learned that that means you refuse to associate any longer with the person that you are. You say, "I am done with all my hopes and dreams and ambitions. I am weary of my failures and my sins. I am tired of trying to gain my way into heaven. I abandon everything to follow You and take up the cross daily." That is to say with such resolve and such commitment that if it means death, you're willing to face death on a daily basis and that's the way you follow Him.

Not everybody by any means was willing to do that. Many of the curious, many of the attracted, many of those enthralled by Jesus, many of those who believed in Jesus were not willing to abandon everything. To say it's the end of me and the beginning of You, to confess Him as Lord and follow Him wherever He went whatever it cost, not everyone was willing to do that. John chapter 6 tells us about some disciples who walked no more with Him because the stakes were too high. The price was more than they wanted to pay.

The end of chapter 9, do you remember our last message? We saw there three would-be disciples, three of them. The first one in verse 57 said, "I'll follow wherever You go," but the Lord then said to him, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." I'll tell you this: Don't follow Me if you expect it's going to be easy. Don't follow Me if you expect it's going to be comfortable. This is not about self-fulfillment. I'm not going to guarantee you anything. I'm not going to guarantee you health, wealth, or prosperity. In fact, I'll guarantee you this: I don't have anything to give you in the material sense. And that man disappeared.

Jesus said then to another in verse 59, "Follow Me."

He said, "Permit me first to go and bury my father." And remember, we said that his father wasn't even dead. He wanted to go home and wait till he got his inheritance so he'd be able to live the way he wanted to live while following Jesus. He too wasn't willing to pay the price.

Jesus said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead. As for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." When I've called you, you follow. You come with Me, you proclaim the kingdom of God, you drop the kingdom of men.

Another also said in verse 61, "I'll follow You, Lord. But first, permit to say goodbye to those at home." He wanted to go back and make sure he had sorted out all his relationships and drawn out of all of those, everything he needed for the future. And Jesus said to him, "No one after putting his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Here were three men who were classified as disciples, who were to one degree or another fascinated by Jesus, interested in Him, drawn to Him. They were attracted to who He was, curious about Him, even to the point where they believed in Him and wanted to affirm that belief, but they were not willing to follow on His terms. And so they walked away like those disciples in John chapter 6, verse 66. When the stakes became higher than they were willing to pay, they disappeared into the background.

But, on the other hand, there were some true disciples. In fact, in chapter 10 verse 1 we meet seventy of them. So the numbers here, at least, favor the genuine disciples. We meet seventy who were sent by the Lord to prepare the way for His coming. These are those who were willing to deny themselves. These are those who were willing to take up the cross daily and follow Jesus. These are those who were the genuine and the true disciples who said we are refusing to deal with the person we are any longer, we abandon everything in our own lives, we submit to Your Lordship. Whatever it is You want us to do we gladly do, whatever the price, we gladly pay. Even if it means death, we will follow You. Genuine followers: no excuses with the seventy.

So from among the large group of disciples, learners, students, followers of Jesus, He picks these seventy. He has already picked twelve. This is seventy more. The twelve were chosen uniquely to be the apostles. There were only twelve. Judas fell out, Mathias was added to take his place, and then there was that apostle sort of out of due season by the name of the apostle Paul. But apart from the twelve, and the addition of Mathias and Paul, the twelve were a very unique group. This is in addition to them. This is the seventy; genuine followers, yes, sent by our Lord to be missionaries. And while you might not see yourself as an apostle, and rightly so since theirs was a unique calling and a unique responsibility to proclaim the gospel, to do signs and wonders that attested to the truth

of that gospel, also to be responsible to...to write or to instruct those who did write the New Testament, they are unique. They will in the kingdom reign over the twelve tribes of Israel, they'll have their names embedded on the foundations of the holy city, the New Jerusalem in the eternal state. So they are unique. We cannot aspire to be apostles. But this next group is important because here the Lord just collects some who remain and sends them out really as the first kingdom missionaries. And we can all see ourselves in this group. Like the apostles, these are ordinary people. They don't seem to have any manifest human qualifications. And if we remember 1 Corinthians 1: "There are not many noble, not many mighty" anyway within the kingdom and within the purpose of God. "He chooses the weak and the nobodies and the nothings and the base to do His work so that no man can boast." And the explanation for the advance of the kingdom will never be human because the kind of people that He chooses to do it don't have the human resources, the human power to pull it off, and therefore the credit goes to the Lord.

So here He moves from that highest rank of spiritual service, the apostles, down to the next level. And here we find what everybody else was commissioned to do and that was to proclaim the same message of Jesus Christ. They are set apart to be the first kingdom missionaries.

Basically if you go down to the end of verse 11, you will see that they are to say at the end of the verse, "The kingdom of God has come near." That was basically their message. We're here to tell you the kingdom of God has come near. What does that mean? Well the King is here, He's on His way. He's coming to your village. He's coming to your town. We want to tell you about Him. We want to tell you why He came. We want to tell you what He's done. And so, they were basically missionaries for the King, for the Lord Jesus Christ, introducing the one who would bring the kingdom of salvation. Special people, as I said, not required. No qualification except being a true self-denying, cross-bearing follower of Jesus Christ. And as we look at this commissioning, it's going to take us all the way down through verse 24. More than half of this chapter is caught up in dealing with these seventy people. This is the account of the ministry of the seventy and it really has five parts. And we'll unfold these as time goes along.

First of all, He starts with the essential attitude necessary for being a kingdom missionary. And then He...that's in verses 1 to 4. And then in verses 5 to 11: the message of the kingdom missionary. And then in the third section, the warning by the kingdom missionaries, verses 12 through 16. Then: the joy of the kingdom missionaries as they see the impact of their work. And finally: the joy of the Lord Himself over these kingdom missionaries.

Now for this morning, we're just going to look at the first four verses, and that's a challenge to get through, as I said. We're going to see the essential attitudes that our Lord requires of these kingdom missionaries. The attitude that is necessary is composed of a number of elements. And they're going to unfold for us in these four verses. And they are transferable, beloved, they really are. They're transferable to us. They...They were unique in that they knew Jesus, they followed Jesus, they saw His miracles. They also were unique in that they were given power to do what is miraculous. Verse 9 says they could heal those that were sick. That was unique to the apostolic era. That is not transferable to us. But all the other components of their ministry, the spiritual dimensions, the attitude, the message, the warning, the joy and the consequent joy of the Lord all applies to us. This is going to be a rich, instructive, and rewarding section of Luke as we work our way through it. But let's take the first four verses, and here we're going to learn the appropriate attitude for a kingdom missionary, the appropriate attitude. And let me tell you this, if you're going to do evangelism, if you're going to be a missionary, if you're going to proclaim the kingdom of God, if

you're going to tell people about the King, the Lord Jesus Christ, it's going to start with an attitude. It's going to start in the heart. You could train people till you're blue in the face, you can give them all kinds of information, you can load their theological gun, you can give them strategies and methodologies, but effective evangelism is done by highly motivated people. Understand that. It's not about training, it's about motivation. It's not about what you know. It's about what you feel. It's about what drives you. And that's what we're going to see in this opening section.

Let's set the stage in verse 1. "Now after this," actually the word "this" is *tauta* in the Greek, these things. And that is to say, this is subsequent to what went on in chapter 9, subsequent to the calling of the twelve and their commissioning in the beginning of chapter 9, subsequent to the instruction that He gave to them, subsequent to the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain, subsequent to the close of the Galilean ministry, subsequent to verse 51 that He was resolutely setting His face to go to Jerusalem, the Galilee ministry is over, He's now going to go down to Jerusalem. He has less than a year left in His ministry. And the move down to Jerusalem is going to be a back and forth movement through Judea and over across the Jordan into Perea as He moves around and ministers in towns and villages proclaiming the kingdom and salvation. There are... just less than a year, I should say, in months left. Subsequent to all of that. So, primarily subsequent to the end of the ministry in Galilee, subsequent to His movement toward Jerusalem which began with a visit in Samaria, as you remember, subsequent to that the Lord appointed seventy others.

The word "appointed," I think is interesting. It's *anadeiknumi*. It's a word used only two times in the New Testament. It is used the other time in Acts 1:24 where it says that the Lord chose the replacement of Judas. As the Lord chose the original twelve, no one can be an apostle by his own will, he can only be chosen by the Lord, so the Lord through the means of drawing of lots chose Mathias to replace Judas. The Lord then sovereignly chose. And here He does the same thing, the Lord divinely selects seventy. Some manuscripts say seventy-two. You may see a little marginal note that says seventy-two or some translations may say seventy-two. The old manuscripts, some have seventy, some have seventy-two. We have no way of being sure that seventy-two is the correct one so most translators are comfortable with seventy. It's certainly not a major issue. We'll assume the seventy is accurate.

Why seventy? Why did He choose seventy? It doesn't tell us why. Perhaps this is sort of a parallel to Moses in Numbers chapter 11 when Moses had to get God's message to the people and lead the people, you'll remember, he chose seventy elders as his representatives. So maybe Jesus is following a kind of Mosaic pattern to give testimony to the Jewish people that this is in fact a fulfillment of all that Moses had anticipated. But out of the people, out of the crowd of disciples who were with Jesus as He moved down away from Galilee, some of them would have gone back to their homes, they were just, you know, sort of day trippers who would come and see Him when He was in their area. But of that crowd that moved with Him and still remained as He left Galilee down into Samaria headed toward Jerusalem, out of that group He chooses seventy. They are selected. That's what the word "appointed" means.

For what? It says, "And sent." Sent, and they were sent two by two. Thirty-five pairs of them were sent out, for what? "To every city and place where He Himself was going to come." They were the advance, the forward scout brigade who would go into a town and announce the arrival of the coming king. This was pretty much a traditional way to do that. In ancient days whenever the king was going to come to a town or a village, heralds would go ahead of him and they would blow horns, call the town into the city square and make the announcement of the monarch that was going to arrive, or

whatever the message from the...the monarch or the ruler was. And so this was a pretty standard approach. Jesus was going to spend the remaining months of His life going from town to town and village to village and He wanted them to be prepared for Him when He arrived.

And by the way, Mark 6:7 tells us that when Jesus first sent out the twelve, He sent them two by two as well. And why would the Lord dilute the force by sending them two by two? Well there really are a couple of reasons. There's a wonderful little passage in Ecclesiastes chapter 4, the wisdom of the preacher, and it's this, Ecclesiastes 4:9, "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor." In other words, you multiply the work. "If either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion, but woe to the one who falls when there's not another to lift him up. Furthermore if two lie down together, they keep warm. How can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart." So the more you have, the stronger you are. That's just that simple principle that you provide strength and support and encouragement and assistance and help by going in twos.

But it was more than that. It wasn't just that. There was a law in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 19:15 is where that law appears, and elsewhere, and it said that any testimony to be validated as true must be confirmed in the mouth of at least two witnesses. And so when reports were made as to what happened, when messages were given to the towns and the villages about Jesus, somebody is going to say, "Well how do we know this is true?" Well here we are two witnesses, to tell you this is true. We will tell you this is the Messiah, this is the one who speaks for God, this is the one who raises the dead, casts out demons, heals the sick, walks on water, etc., etc. So having two of them was having confirming testimony to make the message about Jesus believable to those in the town. And so they are sent ahead of Him, it says, to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. They are much like John the Baptist back in the 7th chapter of Luke in the 27th verse it says, "John the Baptist was the one who was heralding the coming of Jesus Christ. He was the one about whom it was written, 'I send My messenger before your face who will prepare your way before you.'"

Here are seventy messengers going out two by two into towns and giving the message that Jesus, the Messiah, the Lord, the Savior, the King is coming. And they would be saying who He was and why He had come, to get the people ready. They are then advance missionaries to proclaim the good news of the gospel of salvation through the King, the Messiah, the Savior. So they are not unlike us. This is our responsibility as well. We are the force of kingdom missionaries in our day. We're not telling people about a Messiah who is coming, we're telling people about a Messiah who has come but the ministry is the very same and the Messiah, of course, is also the same. We are among that force who go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. We are among that force that goes and makes disciples of all nations. We are among those who go in Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth.

And so the instruction and the inner action that Jesus has with the seventy is very helpful for us because we are virtually called to the same responsibility. We are witnesses to Christ in the world. That's really the reason we're here. As I've said on many occasions, we've been saved and...and that's partly to enjoy fellowship with God and with each other, but the fellowship is imperfect here, it's not satisfying to us or God. We are saved to be obedient, but the obedience is limited, it's neither satisfying to us or God. We are saved to worship, but the worship isn't all it should be, it's not perfect. Neither does it satisfy our hearts or His. Why does He leave us here? Why not perfect fellowship, perfect obedience, perfect obedience? Because there's one thing you'll never do in heaven and that's evangelize lost people. The primary task of the church then is that. That's why

we're here. And so we are, as it were, an extension of the seventy. We can't be apostles, but we can be at this level. The apostles were all men. There's no sex in terms of designation here. The apostles were all preachers, they were called to preach. There's no indication here of preachers. These are people who simply give testimony of the coming of Jesus Christ. So this is...this is all of us. We're all sort of in this group of the seventy. It sort of wraps its arms around us all.

Now, if we're going to do evangelism, we're going to have to start with the motives. And let's go the heart of the deal right now. The first necessary motive, the first transferable element of the Lord's preparation for these people is compassion, compassion. And I said this before, I'll say it again, the basis of all effective evangelism is compassion. It isn't training. It is compassion. It is a deep profound sense of sympathy because of the desperate condition of the unconverted. It is a heart-wrenching concern over the lost. And that's what comes out in our Lord's words. Let's look at verse 2.

"He was saying to them." He was saying, this is only a part of what He said, believe me. This is not all of what He said. In fact, as you read the sermons that are recorded of Jesus in the New Testament, you're just getting little snippets, little bits, sound bites, if you were, out of those sermons. I read an article yesterday, a silly article written by a man who doesn't understand the point of the New Testament record who said, "Well we shouldn't have half-hour sermons, we shouldn't even have 15-minute sermons because Jesus only preached three- to five-minute sermons because that's all the time it takes to read them." How silly. For all we know, Jesus preached for hours. We know Paul preached for hours, he preached till midnight. A guy fell out of the window and died, Paul still didn't stop, they raised him from the dead, brought him back up to hear the rest of the sermon. You can't unpack and unfold and explain the Word of God in three- to five-minute sound bites. What you're getting here is representative of what Jesus said, not all that He said by any means. And by the way, as a footnote, you can't read the Sermon on the Mount in three to five minutes anyway.

But you start here with the Lord saying to them, and this is among the things He said, this is the salient representation of what He said, "The harvest is plentiful, or great, but the laborers are few." The harvest is huge, it is huge. The laborers are few. Now if that sounds familiar to you, it's because it's not the first time the Lord said it. Go back to Matthew chapter 9 of necessity and in Matthew 9 you have Matthew's record of the Lord commissioning the twelve. We move back some months from the commissioning of the seventy, back to the official commissioning of the twelve, and that occurs in the 9th and 10th chapters of Matthew. And as He moves toward the commissioning of the twelve, I want you to pick up 9:37 and 38. Commissioning the twelve comes immediately in chapter 10. But verse 37 of chapter 9, "Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, or great, or huge, but the workers are few.'" Exact same words; this is then something that is on the mind of Jesus. The harvest is huge, the laborers are few, which is to say we don't have enough people to go into the harvest and do what needs to be done.

Now what spawned this statement? Go back to verse 35, Matthew 9:35. Jesus was going about all the cities, all the villages, and this is in Galilee. And He was teaching in their synagogues. He was proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, healing every kind of disease, every kind of sickness. "And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.'" That statement was born of His compassion. It was born of His compassion. Everywhere the Lord went in His ministry, and particular in Galilee, but everywhere else the Lord

went in His ministry, He was moved with compassion.

For example, if you go through Matthew, you see Matthew 14:14 in addition to this, Matthew 15:32, Matthew 18:27, Matthew 20 verse 34, and it will say, "The Lord was moved with compassion, the Lord felt compassion." Luke 7:13, "The Lord was moved with compassion." And again other places in Luke; this is just a sampling. The Lord moved through His ministry literally overcome with compassion.

Now this word is the strongest word for "compassion" in the language, the Greek language. It refers to a deeply felt sympathy. It refers to a deep pain that comes from empathy or affection. You feel this one. It actually comes from a root word that has to do with abdominal pain. You feel it in the pit of your stomach where suffering emotions are felt even by folks like us. What it's saying is the Lord felt an aching in His stomach. It is to say the Lord was nauseated physically. You see Him, for example, at the tomb of Lazarus in the 11th chapter of John and the picture of Him there is first He's sobbing and then He's groaning, and then He bursts out into tears and then He shudders over the plight of sinners when He sees the reality of a dead Lazarus and a weeping Mary and Martha. And it's not all this agony simply over Lazarus and Mary and Martha because He was going to raise him from the dead and stop all the pain, but it's the agony of seeing that as an illustration of the horrendous suffering in the world. Lazarus was an illustration of what all of humanity goes through. And Jesus literally sobbed, groaned, burst into tears, and shuddered with agony. Isaiah said about Him, "He would be a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief." And Matthew, as I said, uses the strongest word for "compassion," one that indicates that the Lord had a deep ache, a pain, a nauseating churning in His stomach over the future condition of the unregenerate, as well as their present state. Look back at that passage in Matthew. It says He saw them as distressed and downcast, *eskylmenoi* and *errimmenoi*. Those two words mean worn out, exhausted, or literally flayed, skinned, like sheep whose shepherds had not only exhausted them, not fed them, but then flayed them, as it were, injured them, wounded them. The second word, *errimmenoi*, means thrown down, lying prostrate, totally helpless. He looked at the sheep of the shepherds of Israel, the scribes and the Pharisees and religious leaders and their sheep were not healthy, they were not well fed, they were not well watered, they were not well cared for, they were literally wounded and injured, they had been attacked and assaulted and left for near dead by their evil false shepherds. And these people would have some kind of vague craving for satisfaction and not have any idea how to find it. As Psalm 111:4 says, "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion." That's describing God, and here is God in human flesh and His heart is literally aching. On another occasion He wept over the city of Jerusalem, the ache was so profound. He looks at the people of Israel and He sees them like flayed, mangled corpses. They're sort of like road kill sheep who have been totally destroyed by their own shepherds. And there they lie bewildered and desolate. They have been treated mercilessly. They have been devoured by their own shepherds, as Jesus said of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:13. And so He is so overwhelmed with sympathy for them that He says to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few."

You know I just have to kind of say at this point, Jesus was fully reformed in His theology. He understood the sovereignty of God. He understood the doctrine of election and the doctrine of predestination. He understood that the names of those who were chosen by God were written in a book before the foundation of the world and that all of them would be redeemed. He understood that. He understood that God's plan would come to its fulfillment. He believed and understood perfectly the doctrine of predestination. He understood that the Father was collecting a bride for His Son and that the Father had predetermined who it would be. He understood that. But I want you to

get the picture here, folks. As well as He understood that, that had no negative impact on His grief over those that were lost. You always balance out the doctrine of predestination with the doctrine of volition, human volition. Jesus says, "You will not come to Me, you will not come, how often I've tried to gather you." If your doctrine of sovereignty robs your evangelistic zeal, then you have a sinful reaction to that truth. Here is our Lord Jesus literally in gut-wrenching agony over these lost people. He is not indifferent. He is not so fully resigned to the plan of His Father working itself out that He has no compassion. He has compassion and He knows that the means by which the Father will gather them is human, human because they can't hear without a preacher. And so as He looks and feels compassion. He says the harvest is plentiful, the workers are few and He switches metaphors from the sheep metaphor to the harvest metaphor.

Now what are we talking about when we talk about harvest here? What does He have in mind? You can go back to Luke chapter 10 now because we're down to that same phrase. What does He mean the harvest is big, the harvest is great, the harvest is plentiful? This is not the field of John 4:35, Jesus and the field with the Samaritan woman. That's a different picture all together. What is this harvest that He is talking about?

The Jews knew about a harvest. They knew about a harvest. The prophets had talked about a harvest. In fact, Joel chapter 3 verse 12, "Let the nations be aroused and come to the valley of Jehoshaphat. I'll sit to judge and all the surrounding nations, put in the sickle for the harvest is ripe. Come tread, for the winepress is full, the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, for the Day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon grew dark. The stars lost their brightness as the Lord roars from Zion." That...That's the harvest. It's the harvest of the final judgment. And that's why the compassion of the Lord is excited because He sees these people on a path to devastation. He sees them not only in their stricken condition, but in their disastrous future. He looks ahead, down human history, as it were, and He sees many who will be literally devastated, depressed and destroyed by false leaders, false shepherds. And His heart aches over them because they're headed for the final harvest and it is a harvest of judgment. The New Testament follows that imagery. The Lord Himself in Matthew 13 verse 30 talks about the wheat and the tares growing together and He says they will grow together until the harvest. And the time of harvest will come, I'll say to the reapers, "Gather up the tares. Bind them in bundles to burn them. But gather the wheat into My barn." Again, the harvest is the end of the age when the angels gather together God's people and put them in His kingdom, that's the barn, and gathers together the ungodly and they burn forever in hell. That is clearly explained later in Matthew 13 verse 39. "The enemy who sowed the tares is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age and the reapers are angels. Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, they'll gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, all those who commit lawlessness, cast them into the furnace of fire. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." That's the harvest. It's a har...it's not a... It's not a harvest that we often think about like there are all those souls that need to be harvested for the gospel. That's not the imagery. The imagery is this, these unredeemed, unconverted people, deceived and left destitute by their false religious leaders and fake shepherds, are headed toward a harvest of judgment and it is a massive harvest. It is a worldwide harvest. It reminds us again that few there be that find the narrow way. The mass of humanity are headed toward a divine harvest.

And in verse 14 of chapter 14 of Revelation, we read further and more specifically about that harvest. Listen to these gripping words, "I looked and behold, a white cloud. Sitting on the cloud was one like a Son of Man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand." That

was the tool of harvest. "And another angel came out of the temple crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, 'Put in your sickle and reap because the hour to reap has come because the harvest of the earth is ripe.' And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth and the earth was reaped." The next few verses carry the imagery. "Another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven. He also had a sharp sickle and another angel, one who had the power over fire came out of the altar and called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle and said, 'Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth because the grapes are ripe.' And the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth and threw them into the great winepress of the wrath of God."

The harvest is associated with wrath. Wrath at the end of the tribulation, wrath at any point at the coming of Jesus Christ, it is the wrath of God at the end of time. And so the Lord looks at the people and His heart is just overturned. He is literally sick in His stomach because He sees the future all the way out to the great, horrific wrath of the final harvest. And to compound the matter, back to verse 2, the laborers are few. You've got this mass of humanity moving toward judgment and only a few laborers, only a few.

So this is where evangelism begins. You understand the massive issue. How can you be content to do nothing? How can you be content to sit idly by? Evangelism begins with a compassion born of a proper assessment of the massive character of the problem. Unbelievers flayed and stripped and depressed and destitute and made so by false religions all over the face of the earth, lying as it were on the highways and byways of the earth destitute, desolate, bewildered, confused, and headed toward divine wrath, destroyed by false shepherds and on their way to a fiery hell. You know, you have people in evangelicalism today who don't even want to talk about hell. But that's where all evangelism starts as to its motivation. I heard a sermon on the TV yesterday and the guy was saying, "Would you like to be delivered from stress? Would you like to be delivered from anxiety? Would you like to be delivered from the issues of life that trouble you and that rankle you and that steal your peace?" And I wanted to say, "Well don't come to Christ because you may not be. We all have stress, we all have anxiety, and life can rankle us and be very, very difficult. But if you would like to be delivered from hell, come to Jesus." Now I mention hell on television and it makes people shudder and shake, as some of you saw. But that...if you don't...you know, R.C. Sproul wrote a little book, *Saved from What?* a very helpful book. And the bottom line, you've got to think of it this way, folks, the bottom line, "Salvation saves you from hell." It saves you from the God who will send you there. And I'll say more about that in a moment.

We have to understand the eternal plight. Instead of evangelicalism owning up to that and proclaiming that in its seeker-friendly new environment, it wants to eliminate the doctrine of hell and invent a new doctrine that says, "Well, just about everybody on the planet is going to heaven." It's just the opposite of what responsibility we should have. The Lord was wrenching in His stomach, feeling physical agony over the hell that the mass of humanity was headed toward.

That leads to a second essential motive and that is prayer. You stand there and say, "Well how are we going to do anything about it?" And the Lord says in verse 2, "Therefore," in consequence, "beseech," beg, plead with "the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." You don't just pray for the salvation of people. You do that, 1 Timothy 2 makes it clear. "Pray for all men, for kings and those in authority, and everybody else to be saved." You don't just do that though. You pray that the Lord will raise up more missionaries, that the Lord will save more and send more. By the way, the Lord of the harvest, isn't that an interesting phrase? Who is the Lord of the harvest?

The judge. John 5:22 to 29 says, "The Father has committed all judgment to Christ." So Christ is going to be the judge. Christ is the executioner. This is amazing. The Lord Himself, the Lord of the harvest says, "Pray to Me and ask Me to send laborers to go out to deliver people from Me." It's amazing. It is the Lord Himself in 2 Thessalonians 1, the Lord Jesus, who is "revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God, to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus." It is Jesus who is the Lord of the harvest. It is Jesus who is the one who comes back with the sword in his mouth. It is Jesus who brings the sickle along with the angels who attend His return. It is Jesus who is the judge. It is Jesus who is the executioner. And it is also Jesus who is the one who hears your prayer and sends the people to deliver those who are perishing from His execution. You can put it this way. Pray to Jesus to send somebody to deliver people from Jesus. Pray to the Son of God and ask Him to send more messengers to reach this great harvest to deliver them from the Son of God. Saved from what? Saved from hell, yes. But saved primarily from the God who sends you there and the God who sends you there has delegated that authority to His Son, so the Son says, "Pray to Me and ask Me to send messengers to preach a gospel so sinners can be delivered from Me." Amazing. Amazing depth and profundity.

Our compassionate Lord seeks to rescue people from His own wrath through the prayers of believers who beseech Him for more messengers to work in rescuing souls from Him. The executioner becomes the source of messengers to deliver people from His execution. I'll even go beyond that. The executioner is Himself executed to save people from His execution. This is the wonder of the gospel. Pray for laborers.

How often do you do that? How often are you on your knees saying, "God send more, send more"? You say, "Why doesn't He just say, you know, 'You go and you pray for the unsaved'?" Because you skip that point and you get to this point and the backup effect on this is profound. You can't get on your knees and be beseeching the Lord to raise up more messengers without having a strongly influencing conscience if you're not doing that, right? And then the prayer becomes exponential. It pulls you into it and it also responds to the command of the Lord which assumes that He will hear and answer. If the Lord asks you to pray for something, pray for it, right? You say, "Well how do I know if it's His will?" If He says it's His will, it's His will. You don't have to worry about it. Just pray the Lord will raise up more messengers because He said He wanted you to pray that; more believers who will be faithful to go, to go, and to go, and to go, to save those doomed to execution from their executioner. And it is their executioner who seeks that they be delivered from Him. The executioner dies for the ones He was to execute. Take them that message. And they can't do...They can't hear it without a preacher; Romans 10, very clear. So compassion and prayer are essential.

Third attitude: urgency. Third attitude is urgency. Wow, that time goes fast. I don't know what the deal is, time seems to go faster and faster. Maybe it's because I like hearing myself so much, I don't know. I hope you're...I hope you're OK with it. I don't know what to do about it. Anyway, verse 3, beginning of the verse, urgency, I like this, "Go your ways." He says...He says, "Look, pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers in His harvest. OK, on your way," *hypagete*, present imperative, go and keep going, urgency, no time for delay, no time to go gather anything, no time for training. You say, "Well wait a minute, how trained were they?" If they knew enough to be converted themselves, they knew enough to tell somebody else how, right? I've said that through the years. You say, "Well why do you have all the evangelistic training?" Well because it's helpful to know certain cults and world religions and how certain people think and the philosophies of our time to find entry points to the gospel. But eventually it all comes down to the fact that if you knew how to

be saved, you know how to tell somebody else how. So don't shirk the duty because you don't feel you have specific training. No training takes place here. The Lord just collects seventy who have denied themselves, taken up their cross, followed Him. They are genuine and true believers. They have entered into His kingdom. That's enough, go your way and tell them I'm coming. The mission is immediate. It is urgent. The time is short. The cross is only months away. There are many, many, many villages and towns all across Judea and Perea, across the Jordan, that need to be ready for His coming and they need a full explanation of who He is so that when He gets there they'll be ready to receive what He has to say. Evangelism is immediate. And I say this, if you are a Christian, I don't care if you were saved five years ago or you were saved yesterday, start today with your ministry of evangelism. It's urgent. Today is the day of salvation, 2 Corinthians 6. This is the time, don't wait.

Attitudes: compassion, prayer, urgency. Number four: vigilance, vigilance, be on the alert, verse 3, "Behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves." You're going to be like a lamb in a wolf pack. I just want to let you know that. That is really not a very good recruiting speech. I mean, if you want to figure out a way to get people to sign up, that probably wouldn't be it. I love the honesty of Jesus. He never lowered the standard, did He? He said, "Well, deny yourself, take up your cross, follow Me, be a lamb in the midst of a wolf pack." Told it exactly the way it was and as we all know, the apostles, the twelve apostles, they all had a fate related to persecution, didn't they? They were martyred. John was exiled on the isle of Patmos and it's very likely that these seventy, well it's likely that all of them because Jesus predicted they be persecuted, but I'm sure there were a number of them that suffered martyrdom, maybe most of them suffered martyrdom because in the 8th chapter of Acts, Saul, who witnessed the execution of Stephen, was breathing out all kinds of havoc against the church. Slaughter was going on in the church in Jerusalem so it very well would have involved those who were the most loyal and dutiful preachers. So He says, "Look, you've got to realize it's not going to be a bed of roses here, not going to be easy. It is going to be a cross and you're going to have to take that cross up."

But that shouldn't have surprised them because that is exactly what Jesus told the twelve. If you go back to Matthew 10 He said the same thing to them, just exactly the same thing. "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves," Matthew 10:16, "be as shrewd as serpents, as innocent as doves, beware of men, they're going to deliver you up to the courts. They're going to scourge you in the synagogues." So you've got to watch out for the...for the civil government, the justice systems are going to get you, the religious systems are going to get you, you're going to be brought before governors and kings. The civil system is going to get you. And not only that, if they don't get you, your brother will deliver up brother to death, father will deliver up his child, children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death, and you'll be hated by all on account of My name. Just expect it.

He says to them, "It can happen." It doesn't happen to everybody, it doesn't happen all the time, but it happens and it's still happening even today. We are lambs in the midst of wolves. Where...In countries there has been historic, pervasive influence by Christianity, persecution is...is to some degree mitigated. In countries that are non-Christian and blatantly so, Christians are suffering and dying at a rate higher than ever in the history of the church, today, tens of thousands a year. I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. You have no strength in yourself. So keep your eyes open. Be aware, be vigilant. Be careful. There's nothing wrong with being careful, nothing wrong with being thoughtful, nothing wrong with making wise choices, nothing wrong with avoiding unnecessary persecution and hostility. But you will continue to be hated by all. Matthew

10:22...continue to be hated by all. The Lord looks all the way down to the end of time and says it's going to continue to be this way. All kinds of people in all kinds of situations are going to express their hatred toward the gospel. You will be roughly treated, to borrow the language of 1 Corinthians 4. You will be considered scum and dregs, the lowest of the low. And they will hate you because of their hatred of Christ and their love of sin. You will be brought before courts. You will be brought before religious leaders. You will be brought before governments. And you will even be hated by your own family members. On some occasions they will go so far as to take your life.

So this kind of call demands the greatest level of commitment possible. Take up your cross. Evangelism that is effective: being a kingdom missionary, compassion, prayer, urgency, danger, or vigilance. One more, number five: trust, trust. I want you to learn to trust Me because if you're going to go out like a lamb in a wolf pack, if you're going to go out with this massive issue facing a huge harvest and few laborers, if you're going to realize the urgency of this, you're going to sense that you don't have the resources. And that's OK. You're going to have to trust Me for everything. And this is sort of boot camp, as it was for the twelve when He sent them out.

Look at verse 4, "Carry no purse, no bag, no shoes, and greet no one on the way." Talk about being Spartan in the approach, this is real simplicity, a very hard battle in our complicated world. It's exactly...exactly what we learned back in chapter 9 verse 3. The Lord said it when He sent the twelve out, "Take nothing for your journey, neither a staff nor a bag nor bread nor money and do not even have two tunics apiece." Don't take an extra coat. Why? Why is this necessary? Are we supposed to be like the homeless? Bouncing from handout to handout?

No, but for this time, this was boot camp. This is where you learn that you can trust God. And if you never are placed in a position to have to learn that, you might question that. So you can learn it real fast on this mission and we'll get the lesson over with. You go and you take nothing. Carry no purse. *Ballantion* is the Greek word. It means a bag to carry money in. You carry no bag for money. You carry no money. And you carry no bag, secondly, that's a travel bag, you know, with your extra stuff and whatever junk you want to carry along. Don't carry that. No shoes, you wear the shoes, you don't carry any extras. You just go out with nothing.

"Well what about eating?" I'll take care of it. "Well what about...where am I going to sleep?" Don't worry about that. I'll take care of all of that. What I'm asking out of you is that you go empty-handed in absolute trust. And, you know, it transcends just the physical elements of it, you're going to go out and trust that when you get to town in the midst of wolves, you're going to actually have a meal and a place to stay and we'll see about that next week. You're going to have to trust the Lord for the reaction, the response, the way people treat you and how they receive the message. This is how you learn trust. I kind of think this is a little bit like coming to seminary here. You pack up your family, you come to California, you live in a tiny little apartment and maybe in an undesirable place. You squeak out your education, trying to feed your wife and your kids. You do some jobs when you can. Some people help you here and there. And finally you make it through and at the end of the time you say, "You know what? We came here with nothing and we finished the program and God proved that He can be trusted when we're in His will." And that's a great lesson. Now you go to a church, maybe they give you a house to live in, they give you a salary, but if ever again in the life ahead there's a time when you don't have anything, you've already learned the boot camp lesson that God can be trusted when every resource is gone. And that's foundational to your life because that day may come and you can trust God in it because you've learned to trust Him.

And so, this is boot camp. It's not always going to be that way. Turn to the 22nd chapter of Luke. And here He makes that clear to them. This is something we looked at when we were considering this same idea in Luke 9:3, but I'll refresh your memory. Peter, verse 33, says to Him, "Lord, with You I'm ready to go to prison and death." He understood what it meant to be self-denying, take up your cross. He knew that was...that was Jesus' standard requirement. And then He said to him, "Well, it's a nice gesture, Peter, but you're going to cave in. Peter, the cock's not going to crow today you've denied Me three times," and that led to Peter's profound remorse.

But then in verse 35 He said to the disciples, "When I sent you out without purse and bag and sandals, you didn't lack anything, did you? Did you?" They said, "No, nothing." You see, He proved Himself when they had nothing. He came through, provided all they needed, all the food they needed, the housing they needed, whatever they needed. And He said to them, verse 36, "Now, let him who has a purse, let him take it along, likewise a bag. Let him who has no sword sell his robe and buy one." If you have an extra robe, get a sword so you can use it for self-defense and protection. And what He was saying was, boot camp's over, now take a bag, take some money. But you now know that if you ever run out, if you're ever plundered by a robber, or if people don't support you, or if you run out of resources, you're going to know that I'm going to be there to sustain you because you've already learned that lesson.

"And by the way," He says, "greet no one on the way." What does that mean? He's saying I don't want you to even stop. Greet is not just "Hi, how are you?" Greet is sit down, make a meal, stay with somebody, build a friendship, thinking you're going to thereby get support. Don't be distracted. You know, greeting in the ancient Near East was a big event, kind of thing. You stayed and you got involved. Don't depend on friendships to sustain you. Don't depend on making relationships with people so that they provide for you. Don't...don't go the human route. Just go, don't stop to make relationships, and know this, I will provide even if you have no human relationships to depend on. That's the great lesson of trust. You're going to have to be cared for by strangers you don't even know, people you haven't even cultivated a relationship with. This is just trust. You go, you trust, wherever God sends you, you go, you preach the gospel, you leave the results to the Lord. If you have nothing, you go, He provides. If you have everything, you go, you use what you have and if you ever come to a point where you have need, you know He's going to step in and make provision. Don't worry about the friendship side of it. Keep the message clear. We'll learn about the message next time. But it is interesting that this was not friendship evangelism which may be...some people may overrate. I think friendship evangelism is good, you should evangelize your friends, but I don't think you should wait to evangelize someone until after you've made a friendship. I don't think that's necessary. People are saved by the power of the gospel, not by the power of a friendship.

And here they were going to have to reject the message or accept the message regardless of any relationship with the messenger. That's not the critical thing in the proclamation of the gospel. It is the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation, isn't it? You evangelize your friends but I've heard through the years, "Well, you shouldn't evangelize somebody until you've made a friend." That doesn't make any sense to me. I can't make friends with everybody. I've been yelling at crowds for years. I would like to be able to go one by one, but I'm not sure I'd be as effective.

You want to be a kingdom missionary, you want to join the seventy, it starts with your attitude, compassion, prayer, urgency, vigilance, trust. I'm out of breath. We'll have to stop there. We got through it. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for this reminder of our need to have a heart of compassion, the heart that Christ had toward the lost headed for the harvest; that we need to pray, plead with you to send out messengers; that we need to have a sense of urgency that dispatches us immediately to evangelize; that we need to be vigilant, knowing that we are like lambs in a wolf pack and be wise and not say things that exacerbate our enemies. And we...we certainly need to trust You to meet all our needs and to give us favor and blessing as we go. I pray that You'll make out of this church a great force of laborers unto the harvest. Give us all the joy of serving You in this most important way. What a privilege. We thank You in our Savior's name. Amen.

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