

Sending the 72

Today's passage is one of those that on **one level doesn't make sense**. If you were to **take the names out of the story** and hand this over to a group of revolutionaries, let them read it and say, **"this is the pattern used to start the biggest movement in mankind,"** the response would be less than enthusiastic. **This is no pattern for a world changing movement...**if you remove Jesus from it.

**What did we say a few weeks ago about the kingdom of God?** It's **upside down** from how the world would do things. It's **hiding in plain sight**. What I'm going to read is the **point when this fledgling Jesus movement started moving out** from the center. This was **not about what Jesus was doing** that was to expand the Jesus movement, **but what He was doing through his people**. And it's not how any "expert" would choose to start a movement.

**Turn to Luke 10:1-20 in your Bibles or pull it up on your phone.** It's on **page 1043** in your chronological Bible if you have one. **It's not too late** to join us, you've missed Lamentations and a lot of blood and bad behavior. Read with us **through the end of the year**. The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit. <sup>2</sup>These were his instructions to them: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields. <sup>3</sup>Now go, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup>Don't take any money with you, nor a traveler's bag, nor an extra pair of sandals. And don't stop to greet anyone on the road.

<sup>5</sup>"Whenever you enter someone's home, first say, 'May God's peace be on this house.' <sup>6</sup>If those who live there are peaceful, the blessing will stand; if they are not, the blessing will return to you. <sup>7</sup>Don't move around from home to home. Stay in one place, eating and drinking what they provide. Don't hesitate to accept hospitality, because those who work deserve their pay.

<sup>8</sup>"If you enter a town and it welcomes you, eat whatever is set before you. <sup>9</sup>Heal the sick, and tell them, '**The Kingdom of God is near you now.**' <sup>10</sup>But if a town refuses to welcome you, go out into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup>'We wipe even the dust of your town from our feet to show that we have abandoned you to your fate. And know this—**the Kingdom of God is near!**' <sup>12</sup>I assure you, even wicked Sodom will be better off than such a town on judgment day.

<sup>13</sup>"What sorrow awaits you, Korazin and Bethsaida! For if the miracles I did in you had been done in wicked Tyre and Sidon, their people would have repented of their sins long ago, clothing themselves in burlap and throwing ashes on their heads to show their remorse. <sup>14</sup>Yes, Tyre and Sidon will be better off on judgment day than you. <sup>15</sup>And you people of Capernaum, will you be honored in heaven? No, you will go down to the place of the dead."

<sup>16</sup>Then he said to the disciples, "Anyone who accepts your message is also accepting me. And anyone who rejects you is rejecting me. And anyone who rejects me is rejecting God, who sent me."

<sup>17</sup>When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, "Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!"

<sup>18</sup>“Yes,” he told them, “I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! <sup>19</sup>Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. <sup>20</sup>But don’t rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven.” Luke 10:1-20

This is where Jesus gives **instructions as he sends his followers** out to spread the news of Jesus and what he has come to do. **But look at who he’s giving his instructions to.** Instructions before sending lambs.

Have you ever heard of a **football team** having lambs for a mascot? It’s kind of like calling a high school football team **the fighting butterflies**. Those two words don’t go together. You want a **lion, a tiger, or a bear**. Or something that isn’t menacing, but is **majestic and big, powerful** like **white caps, buffaloes, eagles, lightning, hurricanes**.

**I can’t see Jesus pumping his team** up to go out there and take the world by storm and then calling them lambs. **Not soldiers with power and weapons**, but a helpless animal that is gentle. **“You are lambs now go out and take the day, lambs on 3, 1-2-3 LAMBS!”**

**If you are going to send lambs into the world to move Jesus’ message forward, then you need to prepare them.** When you need to **toughen** them up, get them in the **weight room, bulk up, cardio, Human growth hormone...**

**Here’s how Jesus prepares his lambs to begin a movement in Palestine that would move across the world.** It’s his kingdom and **he’s establishing it through lambs**. 1. Act like you’ve been chosen for something.

**Why, because they were chosen.** The messiah chose you **not someone else**. They wouldn’t have **chosen themselves** for something this big. **You may not have chosen you, but Jesus did. Lamb, that sounds about right.** When it comes to **announcing that the kingdom** has come in Jesus and **healing people, there’s no way.**

This reminds me of **Barry Sanders**, hall of fame running back for the Lions. When he got into the end zone, he tossed the ball to the ref without spiking it or antics. **He acted like he had been there before** and would be there again. **It wasn’t arrogance at all.** It was about **the rest of the team** who allowed him to be the one who carried the ball over the goal line by blocking, handing him the ball, calling the right play.

**Jesus chose them and he chose us. Are you saying he made a mistake?**

**What would it be like to act like we’ve been chosen** for something of eternal consequence? It’s God’s **family business**.

**You remember what it felt like to be chosen for kick ball** on the playground or to receive a **birthday party invitation**. You were chosen, **invited to be a part of something. We’ve lost that wonder of being chosen.** Jesus said, **“come follow me”** and 72 people took him up on his offer. They believed he was from God.

The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit. Luke 10:1

**A friend I respect in ministry**, at just the right time when I needed it most, told me, **“The only way I would ever work for a church is if it was with you.”** My heart soared. Have you **lost that?** Are you **ignoring that?** Are you really going to say that Jesus made a **mistake?**

**Then he asked them all to pray that this very important day** in his movement would **go well**, that **people would listen**, and that we would be up to the challenge. **No, he asked them to ...** 2. Pray for workers.

Jesus is using an **agricultural image** for the expansion of his Kingdom, his message going out. <sup>2</sup>These were his instructions to them: “The harvest is great, (again, they **don’t need to pray for their efforts to be successful** as harvesters. **There’s more than enough ready** to cut, pick, or harvest. That is a given.) but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields. Luke 10:2

**Seventy-two for some things might be a lot of people**, but to kick start a movement it’s not a lot. Put it in our day, **72 votes aren’t going to change any election outcome.**

**The harvest is a given.** There are **people ready to enter the kingdom**, but we need harvesters.

Weren’t the 72 harvested **recently added** to the team? **So, we are looking for people to join us, not just receive what Jesus is giving.** Workers are **givers, not just takers.** They aren’t saying, **“wow, I thought this was just about Jesus taking the throne** in Jerusalem and kicking out the Romans. Or **“I didn’t think I was signing on to do anything, I was just trying to get into heaven** after I die. This sounds like a horrible idea, so I’m out.”

**Anyone can point out the obvious problem, “there are only 72 of us and we are lambs.”** Some of us literally **just started following Jesus.”** But Jesus is saying **pray for someone who will pull in our direction** alongside you.

Jesus didn’t say, **“pray for conversions.”** Remember what he said about **the harvest. That will take care of itself.**

**Here’s what we have so far...**Act like you’ve been **chosen by Jesus**, who is messiah, king. Then **pray for other workers** to pick, cut, harvest, alongside you. God has already **done the heavy lifting** by preparing people to be harvested, people who are ripe. The next thing Jesus does is **get their heads right.** Ok, lambs, here’s what I need you to do and not do. 3. Focus on God, not your resources or level of preparation.

**Remember they are lambs, helpless, needing someone to feed, protect, and guide them.** It’s not that they have been painstakingly trained by Jesus **for years**, like a **doctoral degree in harvesting, starting a movement.** Some of them may have just recently joined them. **They might not even be clear on what it means to tell people about the kingdom** coming in Jesus. <sup>3</sup>Now go, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup>Don’t take any money with you, nor a traveler’s bag, nor an extra pair of sandals. And don’t stop to greet anyone on the road.

**Do they have enough resources to sustain this mission?** Jesus did the **exact opposite**; he told them to **pack light.** They didn’t have enough gear, money, or food. **Don’t stop to greet anyone**

along the way means you **can't stop by home on the way and tell mom to come and get you in an hour**, so you have **an excuse to leave** because you know this is going to be a trainwreck.

**Their focus isn't on resources, but The One has everything they need.** The one that **made this harvest** so epic. They **must trust God to provide**...He knows where to harvest. **I am the one who tells if it's ripe, ready to pick, or not.**

Notice, this is not just **Jesus' inner circle** Peter, James and John. **It's not just the 12**, who he called by name. **Today it's not just pastors**, elders, people who teach or lead groups, people who know the Bible well, or even adults. **It's not only the people who have the right resources or preparation.**

**Here's a good summary** of what Jesus sent them to do from the **NIV Application Commentary**. "Interestingly, Jesus says little about method, nor does he give his followers a developed message. Their ministry is to minister to needs, to reveal God's power, and to share where it has come from." NIV App. Pg.

**Jesus is saying, "Give the message you aren't prepared to give and meet people's needs that you can't meet when you don't see how your needs will be met."**

Does Jesus tell them **to demand that people listen** to this important message? Does he ask them to **shout slogans like, "turn or burn?"** Does he say to **go to the leaders in these towns and villages, the influencers** so that they can convince the people to listen. 4. Follow the peace to person(s) of peace.

<sup>5</sup>"Whenever you enter someone's home, first say, 'May God's peace be on this house.' <sup>6</sup>If those who live there are peaceful, the blessing will stand; if they are not, the blessing will return to you. **Remember the ripeness of what they are to pick has already been accomplished.** You just need to **look for those who are ready to listen because God has already been speaking to them.**

<sup>44</sup>For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. <sup>45</sup>As it is written in the Scriptures, 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. **John 6:44-45**

**Who do they encounter who are open and receptive to them and to God?** They don't **immediately put up a stop sign. When they learn that you bring God as a part of your story, they remain open to you.**

**It's not about looking for like-minded people.** I'll know they are open, because we agree on some **social or political issues.** Ugh.

**I have a friend** who, at one point, I thought might be a person of peace. He was open to me praying for him and sharing my life. He is still cordial to me, and we talk, but he isn't interested in going any deeper. He's not a person of peace...I don't ask him if I can pray for him anymore.

**Look at how he is preparing these lambs to go out amongst wolves and start a revolution, the kingdom of God breaking into this world in the form of Jesus.**

1. He's telling them to act like they've been chosen, because they have.

2. They must immediately begin praying for more harvesters.
3. They must get their focus in the right place on Jesus, not their own resources or preparation.
4. They need to follow the peace to the people whom God has already prepared; they are ripe.

All of this is so that they can...5. Bring The Kingdom of God to their front door.

**I'm going to say it again.** The kingdom of God/heaven that Jesus came to introduce **is not just about getting out of this life into eternity in heaven.** It's a **present reality** and a **future hope**.

**It begins when someone steps over the line and puts their trust in King Jesus and He starts to make that person new.** Then that **new person's restoration is completed in eternity**, the new heaven and earth where all the effects of sin are gone. **We experience walking with Jesus in the garden. Everything is put right.**

<sup>9</sup> Heal the sick, and tell them, '**The Kingdom of God is near you now.**' <sup>10</sup> But if a town refuses to welcome you, go out into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup> 'We wipe even the dust of your town from our feet to show that we have abandoned you to your fate. And know this—**the Kingdom of God is near!**' <sup>12</sup> I assure you, even wicked Sodom will be better off than such a town on judgment day.

Definition of the kingdom of God...The Kingdom of God is the restoration of God's loving rule over all things!

**When Jesus says the kingdom is "near you now"** really means **"the kingdom of God is upon you."** You are now **experiencing** it. **Can you see it? It's hiding in plain sight.**

That means two things. First...The kingdom is brought as a message. **Gospel, and announcement of good news.** They would tell people who were ready to hear that **God was near to them**, he was **doing something**, and they **didn't need to wait** for a new King on the throne in Jerusalem.

**Then these lambs experience the "loving authority" of Jesus restoring and renewing.** Verses 17-18 speak about Jesus' authority that he is passing on to them to proclaim. <sup>17</sup> When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, "Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!" <sup>18</sup> "Yes," he told them, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! <sup>19</sup> Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. <sup>20</sup> But don't rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven." Luke 10:17-19

After the message, there is evidence that the message is true. The kingdom is brought as evidence of renewal. **The evidence is people's sight, mobility and connection with God is being restored.**

<sup>5</sup> And the one sitting on the throne said, "**Look, I am making everything new!**" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true." <sup>6</sup> And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. Revelations 21:5-6

**Amid everything deteriorating and getting worse** when you see **signs of restoration, things being put right** with Jesus on the throne, **that is what we call a sign of the kingdom.** It is coming because **things that are a reality in heaven** are starting to happen here on earth.

How can we obey this passage even in small ways?....Steps of Obedience

1. Pray for workers who are ambassadors.

This may meet someone who **begins to view themselves as an ambassador.** We need more here in Beaverton because we don't have enough.

- At Eagle Ridge Midland...Children, worship, youth
- At Eagle ridge Beaverton...an outreach into the community.
- Cultivate, Mall and Sanford
- United for Uganda

1. Proclaim the Good News! Let's read responsively this definition of what the Bible calls the Gospel, or Good News.

(Gospel Definition)