



THE GOSPEL OF  
**Luke**

**SESSION OBJECTIVE: LUKE 10:1-16**

To understand more about the missionary efforts of Christ's disciples.

## Going On Mission

The world is in need of missionaries. According to a recent 2022 study, there are currently 3.14 billion people in the world today who are considered “unreached,” meaning they’ve never heard about Jesus. In addition to that, 764 million people are considered “unevangelized,” meaning that a small portion of their population are Christians, but their chance of hearing the Gospel is small. While there are a lot of missionaries today, 75.9% of them are working in the reached world, while 23.7% are working in areas that are unevangelized. That means that only 0.37% of missionaries are going to people groups that have never heard the name Jesus. Of the unreached groups, 97% live in an area that missionaries refer to as “The 10/40 Window.” It’s an area that spans from West Africa to Asia between 10 degrees latitude north of the equator to 40 degrees north. These are hostile environments and require a radical kind of faith to go share the Gospel within them.

The basis of missionary efforts could likely be established in the Old Testament through the efforts of Israel, but they are certainly clarified in Jesus’ ministry and the early church. In Luke 10:1-12, Jesus sends 72 additional disciples out as missionaries or apostles (not the office of Apostle, but the role of apostle) to go and share the message of the kingdom of God. He gives them clear instructions over what to do if they are receptive and what to do if they reject their message. Upon Christ’s resurrection (and right before His ascension), He reiterates this charge to, “Go, make disciples of all the nations.” That includes even the harshest nations in the 10/40 window. The question is, who will go?

## Any Enemy of My Enemy?

In verses 1 through 12, Jesus charges an additional 72 disciples to go and share the message of the kingdom of God. Below is a breakdown of keywords and ideas in this passage.

### **THE SEVENTY TWO**

Verse 1 begins by setting the stage with who Jesus is going to send: “After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.” The inclusion of the word “others” indicates that this did not include the original twelve disciples. Keeping within the tradition of Mosaic law, Jesus sends them out in pairs to provide a double witness to the work of God (Deut. 17:6). This will also allow for added protection and accountability as they go into potentially hostile territory. The reasoning behind the number of disciples is unclear, but perhaps the strongest argument is that it correlates to the so-called “Table of Nations” in Genesis 10. While the Masoretic Text (MT) only names 70 nations in that list, the Septuagint (LXX) names 72! Given Jesus’ propensity to seemingly read and often quote the OT in the LXX form, this makes a lot of sense.

### **THE HARVEST**

Jesus connects missional efforts to that of harvest time, a well-known practice for the ancient world. One would not consider to reap a harvest before it was ready, and thus Jesus makes the connection here for people as well. In the same way that a farmer would pray to God for his harvest to be bountiful, Jesus instructs His disciples to “pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Lk. 10:2). Jesus’ words are still true today, regarding the number of people who need to hear the Gospel in comparison to the number of those who are willing to go: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few” (Lk. 10:2).

### **LAMBS AND WOLVES**

They are also sent out with nothing extra: “Take no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road” (Lk. 10:4). Jesus’ words in this verse embody both faith and wisdom. They will take nothing and thus need to rely by faith on the provision of God the Father as they carry out this mission. They will greet no one on the road because it would be unwise to do so given the number of miscreants and thieves in the ancient world that were waiting to intercept unknowing travelers. This combination of both faith and wisdom makes them like “lambs in the midst of wolves,” again, reaffirming their needed dependence on the Good Shepherd.

### **THE RECEPTIVE**

Jesus tells them that if someone receives them, to “remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide,” and then He qualifies that by saying “for the laborer deserves his wages” (Lk. 10:7). The missionaries are then to rely upon the gifts and charity of strangers as they do the work of the ministry. They are “not to go from house to house,” but stay put. They are also to perform miracles by “healing the sick and saying to them, ‘the kingdom of God has come near to you’” (Lk. 10:9). The communities who are receptive to the Gospel receive not only the spiritual blessing of hearing and believing, but the physical blessings of healing and joy.

### **THE HOSTILE**

Jesus also warns them that if they are not well-received, to essentially publicly issue judgment on them: “Go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your own town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you’” (Lk. 10:11). However, there is still the charge to share the Gospel: “Nevertheless, know this, that the kingdom of God has come near” (Lk. 10:11). However, the judgment motif is to be seen as the primary operating factor: “I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town” (Lk. 10:12). To reject the missionaries of God (and by extension, God’s message) is worse than the sin of Sodom, the judgment more unbearable as well.

## Woe!

In verses 13 through 15, there is a series of “woes” and judgments that Jesus pronounces on particular cities who had rejected Him: “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!” These are cities that were roughly 3 miles away from Capernaum, their sister city. Jesus’ point is pointed - If the same things that had been done in those cities had been done in the nemesis cities of Israel, “Tyre and Sidon,” they would have repented! That Chorazin and Bethsaida (and seemingly by extension, Capernaum) have not repented suggests they are even more wicked than some of Israel’s actual enemies. This is a massive indictment on the faithlessness of the people in these cities.

## Proxy

Verse 16 ends with Jesus essentially giving His proxy to His disciples: “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.” To hear the message of a missionary commissioned by Christ is to hear the message of Christ Himself. To reject one of His missionaries then means to reject Him. While missionaries today are not commissioned in exactly the same manner, the point still remains - if they bear the biblical message of the Gospel and the people they are ministering to reject them, they are by extension rejecting Jesus and judgment is upon them.

## What About Now?

One major takeaway is the fact that missions matter to the heart of Christ. That He spends intentional time training them and sending them out suggests that these missionary efforts matter to Him. He is giving them full authority to proclaim the kingdom and establishing proxy in them because He believes in the importance of missional efforts. That means that the church would do well to carry the same kind of passion as Christ does for the lost. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are sadly still few.

## Study Questions

### Day One

1. Read Luke 10:1. How many “others” did the Lord appoint to be sent out? Where were they to go?

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2. Read Luke 10:2. To what did Jesus compare the mission field? What were they to do in light of this?

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### Day Two

1. Read Luke 10:3-4. What was Jesus sending them out as? What were they not to take or do? Why? (Hint: See above notes)

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- 2. Read Luke 10:5-7. Whenever they come to a house, what were they to say? What kind of response were they to look for? What were they to do if they were welcomed?

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### Day Three

- 1. Read Luke 10:8-9. In addition to eating and drinking, what were they commanded to do in the receptive places?

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- 2. Read Luke 10:10-12. What were they to do in the unreceptive places?

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### Day Four

- 1. Read Luke 10:13-15. Who does Jesus speak “Woes” against? What is the significance of this passage? (Hint: See above notes)

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- 2. Read Luke 10:16. In your own words, summarize this verse.

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## Week 38 Discussion: Missions

The major theme of this passage is the importance of missions to the heart of God. Talk as a group about why missions matter, how you can support missions, and whether or not you might be led by the Spirit of God to go on mission at some point in your life.

- 1. Icebreaker: Have you ever been on a mission trip? If so, share with the group your experience.
- 2. Of the different groups of people mentioned in the introduction (reached, unevangelized, and unreached), which are you most personally burdened for?
- 3. Why do you think so many missionaries stay away from unreached people groups?
- 4. Do you support any missionaries currently? Why or why not?
- 5. Do you believe missions matter?
- 6. If the church were to organize a short-term mission trip, would you be interested in going? (If so, email Chris Cunnington at [chris.cunnington@cityonahilldfw.com](mailto:chris.cunnington@cityonahilldfw.com))

## Takeaways:

- 1. Jesus sends out an additional 72 disciples to go on mission.
- 2. Jesus gives them practical instruction on what to do in both scenarios they would likely face.