

The Mission

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Date: 15 January 2012

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[0 : 00] This morning, we continue our study of Luke as we take a look at our mission, what our mission is to share God's message. In just a few minutes, Tobin's going to unpack a little bit for us on Luke chapter 10, verses 1 through 16.

As we continue preparing our hearts to receive that with song and spoken word, I'm going to invite you this morning to read the scripture with me as opposed to just following along. So if you would stand in the honor of reading of God's word.

This morning, the words will be on the screen, so please follow along and read with me now. Go, behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes. And greet no one on the way. Whatever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him. But if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you.

[1 : 27] For the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you.

And heal those in it who are sick. And say to them, The kingdom of God has come near to you. But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you.

Yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near. I say to you, it will be more tolerable in the day for Sodom than for that city. Woe to you, Chorazin.

Woe to you, Bethsaida. For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades.

[2 : 35] The one who listens to you listens to me. And the one who rejects you rejects me. And he who rejects me rejects the one who sent me.

This is the reading of God's word. Just continue to worship with us.

Okay. So the lottery tickets are waiting out back. And, you know, whatever you... We're trying to make one of that more specific to our culture here.

That's definitely... But have you ever been in a me church? That was a joke, right? That's not what we're shooting for. Just to make sure of that, okay?

That was a joke. But sometimes we struggle with whether we know that that's true or not. How you guys doing? Good?

[3 : 31] Good. Okay. That's the most positive response I've ever received. That's very good. We want to welcome you to Watermark Church. We are... We're on a journey.

We're talking about the book of Luke. It seems like we've been in it for at least a year and a half, off and on. And we are only at chapter 10. And so we're going to look at chapter 10.

Now, remember, Luke is one of the four Gospels. And it was written by a physician, a very intelligent man. He probably uses some of the best Greek in writing the language that the New Testament has.

And Luke is basically writing to his friend. His friend's name is Theophilus. We don't know much about Theophilus. We know that he was probably a very wealthy and powerful individual in the Roman government.

And Theophilus came to this struggle in his life. And he wanted to ask Luke, was Jesus real? Was Jesus really who people said he was?

[4 : 31] Did Jesus do everything that the disciples are talking about? Is he God? Is he worth giving my whole life to?

Those are the questions that he was asking Luke. And those are the questions that Luke is trying to answer for him. And as I think about that, those are some of the same questions that you and I ask today, right?

I mean, is Jesus really the only way? I mean, is he really doing all those things? And was that just back then and he doesn't do them now? I mean, is he really worth giving my life to?

My job to? Can I really trust him? Is he good? And those are some of the things that Luke is writing in his Gospel to share with his friend and us about Jesus.

Luke 10 is a very interesting passage. I was going through it this week, the last couple weeks. I felt like if I, to do it justice, I probably would have to talk for about three hours on it.

[5 : 33] Going through, because there's so many stories and pictures and nuances. And the words are very specific. They have a very specific meaning. But I'm not going to do that. So you're kind of going, whew. But I want to talk about this idea of what does it mean to be on mission?

What does it mean for us as a church to exist? As I was praying through this message, I was reminded of this story of Hudson Taylor. Hudson Taylor was one of the great missionaries to China. And the story goes that Taylor was on this boat from Shanghai to Ningpo. And as he was on this boat, this junk, he was sharing with some friends. And he was sharing with this very elegantly dressed Chinese man named Peter.

Peter wasn't a follower of Christ, but Peter was very interested in what Hudson Taylor had to say. And Hudson Taylor could tell that he was being convicted by God's Spirit to ask more and more questions.

And as they were talking and as the boat was going on, it hit a lurch and Peter fell overboard. And he sank like a rock. And Hudson Taylor, to his surprise, looked around and no one jumped in.

[6 : 47] No one threw a life thing. No one stopped anything. And he started yelling, man overboard, man overboard in Chinese, because he could speak Chinese very well. And no one stopped.

And so finally he ran up and he cut the rope on the sails of the junk. So the sails collapsed and the boat effectively stopped. And he jumped in the water and he dove and he dove trying to find Peter. And he came up and he was yelling for help, yelling for help, help, help, help. There's a person drowning here. I need help. He looks over to the side of the shore and there's some fishermen in their boat fishing over there. And he yells to them, can you come help me, my friends, in the water? He's drowning. I need your help. Bring your nets right now. We can save him. And the fishermen looked at him and go, we're busy. We're too busy. We're working. We're catching fish.

We can't do this. And Taylor was screaming at them and finally said, how can I get you over here? And the guys go, pay us. And so after a couple seconds of bartering, Taylor empties his pocket and he says, if you could have all of this, if you come right now to help me with my friend.

[7 : 50] And immediately the fishermen lifted up their nets and they came over and they dragged their net. And within less than a minute, they pulled up Peter's body. But it was too late. Peter had drowned.

And Taylor stood there in disbelief. And he couldn't believe how people kept working. And were more concerned about their money and their livelihood than the drowning man.

How do you feel when you hear that story? When I first heard it, I was so angry. I was so frustrated. I had experiences like that before. And I was so condemning. I wanted to condemn those men. But I realized that as I condemned them, I condemned myself.

Because often I am just like them. I'm busy at work. I'm busy doing stuff. I'm busy living life. And all around me, people are drowning.

[9 : 14] And I think it's all about me. And I don't want to help them. I don't know if you guys ever felt that way, but I have. Especially as I started preparing for this sermon.

The hard things about sermons sometimes is God really uses them in the pastor's life to really hit us over the head and ask us hard questions. And so if today you feel like there's a finger pointing at you, realize that there's about a billion of them pointing back at me and at my heart.

As I pray for us as a church, why are we here and what are we doing? The passage in Luke 10 is a very interesting passage. It says in verse 1, now after this, what after this?

You look back in verse chapter 9 and you see that Jesus has done miracles. He's healed people. But at this point, he basically turns his face towards Jerusalem and he's going to go to the cross.

And so whenever you see in the New Testament his faces towards Jerusalem, what you automatically understand is it means sacrifice and the cross and death and pain and separation for us.

[10:23] And it says that the Lord appointed, and basically he gives them a task in Greek, 70 others. And this is a very interesting word. It's 70 is a very specific, some of you might say 72. We're not going to get in a discussion over that.

But we'll talk about it later. But 70 was the number of nations that when you read Genesis 10 and 11, when they were building this big tower called Babel and God came down to confuse their language and they separated it, that the scripture says it's 70.

70 nations went out from there. And so Christ appoints one evangelist or one lay person because these aren't professional people. They're just you and me. And he appoints one person per nation and it says he sends them out in pairs, which is also very important, I think for a couple reasons. One is that it's scary doing it by yourself. But two, the scripture says that wherever two testify to something, then it is true.

And in a court of law, one person's testimony could not stand, but two had to be done. And so Jesus pairs up these people, these 70 you and me.

[11:24] And as he's about to send them out, he looks out over the fields and he says these words. He says, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Now he's using farming language. And we've already established it. I think I'm one of the only farmers around here. But he's talking about this huge field of grain and the grain heads are so heavy that the grain is drooping.

And he looks out there and he sees this amazing harvest. And what he's talking about is spiritually. He's talking about people's lives. He's talking about people who don't know Christ, but they need to know Christ. He's talking about people who don't know Christ, but they're asking questions.

And he's looking out at all these places. And he's saying there's people everywhere. It's ripe. And I'm the Lord of the harvest.

It's interesting when you look at harvest time in a farm that there's just, in harvest time, you only do one thing and you harvest. I mean, everything else stops.

[12:26] It's like, it's a week, two weeks, depends what your crop is, how big your fields are. But everyone comes together and they harvest and they harvest because if you wait too long, the crop is ruined.

That if the grain stays on the stalk too long, that it starts to mildew. Or the animals start to gather it. Or the hail comes out and it hails out your crop.

And so if you wait too long, everything is destroyed. And so when he uses his words, the harvest is plentiful, he's talking about it's the right time, it's the right time, it's the right time. And so he's about to send them out and the first thing he says to them, and I'm only gonna share with you a couple things that stick out here.

The first thing he says is pray. Pray. Pray. He says it here in verse two and he's 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 field.

That word beseech is very specific. It means to pray. It means to beg. It means to ask. And when you read scripture, I don't think we get this right because I'm still on this journey too about prayer and talking and things like that.

[13:32] But when we read scripture, you never see a person praying and they're just like this. But in Hebrew and in the culture, prayer was always like this.

And whenever you saw prayer in the Father, Abba was always connected and it was a sense that there was a child and a reaching up to his dad. And so when he's talking about prayer here, I think it's something different than we think because he's talking about beseeching, screaming, yelling, like a kid yells for his dad.

I remember when we had this agreement. Okay, so guys, you have to have an disagreement with your wives. We had Caitlin, our last child. And the agreement was that I would wake up in the morning and bring Caitlin to Christina so Christina could stay in bed and breastfeed Caitlin.

I know maybe it's too much information or whatever. But I would wake up and I would just hear our kid, It's like there's a snake in your bed, right?

You're like, Cat, what's going on here? There's somebody in there or there's a dog biting them or there's something going on. And the kid's just screaming and the kid has his hand up in the air and he's crying out. And that's the imagery that he has here of prayer.

[14:46] He says, Pray, cry out for the Lord of the harvest because we need him. Because if he doesn't come through for us, everything is lost. I'll never forget our last time is that we finally made this decision to wean Caitlin.

And I walked in there and she was just screaming, ah! It was going crazy. I mean, it was amazing. This is a true story. Amazing. So I picked her up. I tried to comfort her. I changed her diapers. And she was out of control. And I brought her in to Christina and she was sucking her thumbs. She always sucked her thumbs like this. For some reason, she was two. So she was crying and screaming in comfort, sucking her thumbs.

And I laid her down. And right as I laid her down, she's about to get to Christina's arms. She sees Christina's feeding mechanism. And she turns around and looks at me and she goes, Thank you. I was freaking out. Thank you. But here, this is this imagery here. The imagery is that we scream out, that we cry, we pray, we ask God for the harvest. And the question we have to ask ourselves is do we do that?

[15:55] Do we cry out? Do we pray? Do we ask God for the harvest? How do we pray? Do we pray for the harvest? I mean, we pray for our jobs when our jobs are in trouble. And we pray for our money when our money's low.

We pray for our family when our wives are out of control. We pray for our spouse. We pray for our future spouse when we don't have one. But here he says, pray for the harvest. Do we pray? Do we pray for the harvest? Do we cry out for lost people all around us?

I mean, do we pray for Bel Air and Cyberport and Citibank and Belchers and ISF and ESF and Hong Kong U and Wafu and Baguio and Kennedy Town?

Do we pray for those people? It's one of the reasons we felt like God was calling us to start this church is we didn't want to be a church that collected Christians from other churches but we wanted to be a church that was reaching out and praying for people and being on a mission and being about saving them and being God allowing us to use God allowing us to be used by God and his power to flow through us to reach people who are lost.

Do we pray for our workplace? Do we pray for the lost people there? Do we pray for Baguio? Do we pray for Rebecca and Clement and Grandma Kwok and Charles and Philly and Kevin and Dad and Estelle and Donald Jocelyn Danis Vincent Howie Haiyi Kevin Chan Do we pray for those people?

[17:40] Jesus said I'm sending you out and the first thing you got to do the first thing you have to do the first thing that you must do is you must pray because if you don't pray I can't work and it's all about God doing it and you realize here in chapter verse 2 that it's God God's the one who sends the laborer it's not the pastor getting up giving you a guilt trip but it's God sending you out it's God working in your heart it's you realizing what God has done for us and then trusting him to be good the second thing that sticks out here is verses 3 through 8 and it's about the mission the mission that we're sent on the mission in verse 3 is really clear he says go in Greek it's an imperative it's a present imperative it means always be going it means stop do not stop always be doing this go behold I send you in the imagery there is really clear it's of an ambassador so the minute Jesus people heard this they would have think you're asking us to be ambassadors and in that culture ambassadors were very well known that whenever an ambassador came he was always preceded by the banner of the country or the king or whatever he represented and when people heard him talk they realized that it wasn't him talking but it was the king talking or the nation talking and Jesus commissions the 70 people like you and me and he says go

I send you and there's this huge sense that we are ambassadors as we go have you ever thought about that? now before Christina and I got married she always wanted to marry an ambassador she said it was because of the parties they would have and I think she had this romantic view of this but I thought it would be very interesting to be an ambassador because you walk into any place and you don't even really represent yourself you represent the country that sends you right?

I mean some of us fake it sometimes when we wear shirts with our schools and other things and wow you're from this school or you're from that school you're not really representing yourself you're representing the school and here he's saying you're ambassadors and you're going out and you're representing God and so the question I have to ask myself which I've been asking all week is what kind of ambassador am I?

am I a good ambassador? do I take the message to the father and relay it just like he wants me to? I mean no ambassador would get a message from his government and say you know I really want but you know I'm just really busy right now I can't present that to the other government or you know it's going to be really difficult for me to share these things to them and maybe I'll just wait for a better time or you know maybe they're going to not like me but the scripture is really clear that we're ambassadors and we're invested with God's power and his strength in the kingdom and we're called to go out and to share the word now in this mission we're given two warnings which I think are very intense the first warning he tells us and it's in verse 3 he says behold I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves have you ever seen lambs in the midst of wolves?

it's not good I mean it's ugly and the scripture says that you and I are sheep and Christ is sending you and I out as lambs in the midst of all these wolves and the message is clear the message is the people that we go to won't like us and they won't like the message we send and I always struggled with that because I just thought maybe if people's lives were terrible they would love to hear the message of God who loves them who cares for them who has a plan for them who died for them that has to be incredibly good news but the scripture says no they're going to hate that what he's saying here is what they would rather hear you say they would rather hear you say something sexy like hey you know Christianity is about a bunch of rules and if you do all these rules you're okay and if you follow these steps you're good and if you work hard you're okay and you know God helps those who helps himself doesn't he and at the end of the sermon if I give you five points everything's going to be perfect if you complete all those points and if we preach that message people would love us

[22 : 11] I mean the church would be packed out with people more than we have now we'd have a mega church I mean that's what every other religion preaches do this do that don't do this do this don't do that if you do these things you're okay you pray this way you're okay God is there you do what you need to do God does what he does to do everything's great but Jesus says that's not the message of the kingdom of God he says we preach a gospel that's full of grace and helplessness Jesus says we preach about lostness and darkness and people walking blindly we talk a message about if they don't go through Christ they have no hope at all the gospel and Luke says that Jesus says to his disciples to you and I that when we go out and we share that message to people they're not going to like it they're going to hate it and chances are they might hate us he gives us another warning in verse verse 4 he goes on he says carry no money belt no bag no shoes and greet no one on the way circle greet no one on the way

I think it's amazing it's a story and the minute Jesus listeners heard it they would understand exactly what happened it's from 2 Kings 4 so tonight when you go back read 2 Kings 4 it's an amazing passage Elijah is the prophet of God he's wandering he has no place to stay and God sends this woman to take care of him but this woman has no kid her husband and her are barren and so Elijah prays for this woman and God allows them to have a kid and she has a kid and this boy grows up and one day Elijah is no longer with them and she sends message to Elijah my son is dead my son was working in the fields his head got too hot he had this overstroke heat whatever and he's dead and Elijah takes his staff and he hands it to his assistant and he says take the staff you're going to dead people you're going to a mom who's grieving take the staff and run as fast as you can get to that woman's house because her son is dead and she needs you and when you walk in that house you put that staff on that boy's forehead and when you do that the kid's going to come back to life and oh by the way don't greet anyone on the way what he was saying to his servant is the message that I'm sending you on is so important that you don't want to get sidetracked that the greetings in the Middle Eastern culture can become so elaborate that you talk to somebody and you just have to talk to them and sometimes a greeting can last a whole day and Elijah was saying to his servant the message and the mission that I'm sending you on is so important you don't have time to waste because there's a dead person there and Jesus says the same to us he says be careful because as you go on this journey you're going to be distracted and it's going to be easy to become distracted and you don't want to be distracted because there's dead people all around you and they need to hear the word of God you ever been distracted

I think it's really easy in our world to be distracted isn't it there's just so many things around us that call and cry out for us and ask us to say put your attention here and before you know it you've forgotten your mission and you're about building your own kingdom and making your lives comfortable and worrying about your next vacation I'm talking about myself but Jesus tells his

disciples that when you go be on track be on mission because what you're doing is you're bringing dead people to life and it's easy to be distracted and you don't want to be distracted because people need to hear and they need you beside them the next thing that sticks out to me really quickly here is in verse 9 and it's the message he says whatever city you enter into you've received you eat what is set before you and we can come back and talk about that there's a lot of cultural issues going on there because they're going into non-Jewish cities they're going to all the cities that Jesus is going to visit before he hits Jerusalem and there's pagan cities there's Jewish cities and the guys are worried about what they're going to eat and Jesus says don't worry about that he says when you go in heal those who are in it and those who are sick and say to them that the kingdom of God has come near you the kingdom of God has come near you what he's saying is that when you go and you meet people you tell them that God's presence

God's spirit God's grace God's mercy God's salvation has come into your midst and the minute someone heard that they knew they had to make a choice the minute someone in Jesus' day heard the kingdom of God has come near to you the first thing that would come into their mind is okay here's this line what side of this line am I going to step on am I going to be with the kingdom of God or am I going to be with myself over here and Jesus sends them out and he says hey you're going to go into these places and you're going to share this word and this word is that God's presence is with you he also says you're going to do something amazing that you're going to heal people that you're going to take care of people and healing took place and miracles happen and miracles happen and God still does miracles and he says I'm going to do miracles through you and in you as you walk in my name and it's important to remember that these miracles always validate the message of God that whenever you read the Bible and you see miracles happen they're almost always right beside God's word being preached and God's messenger going out and what these miracles do is say

God is real and he's there and this word is true and there's power in God I remember in 1989 I spent some time in Thailand and I was with a Thai staff for a whole summer with Campus Crusade and we saw just weird weird things happening people people doing just demon possessed people people who were doing things that were irrational and unexplainable and people who were healing people but through the power of the devil they would say that and one night I got together with the staff and this guy was just telling the story about how his parents who were animists put a spirit in his house and the spirit was wrestling with him physically every time he walked into this house and I asked the guy I said how do you survive here what do you do how do you fight this type of spiritual warfare and the guy told me he said he didn't even blink he said first we heal their sick then we cast out their demons then they see that our God is greater than their God first we heal their sick then we cast out their demons then they see that our God is greater than their God

[29 : 27] Jesus says as you go out on this mission remember the message and remember what you're supposed to do and what you're supposed to share and it's about your life and what God has done in your life and I think sometimes we just struggle with this we have a hard time with this but the message of salvation is really clear in this passage Jesus isn't saying get a PhD Jesus isn't saying learn all your apologetics Jesus isn't saying you need to have these classes and be this mature before you share the faith Jesus is saying you walk into this world you see needs you see people's lives who are in distress you meet those needs you serve other people you share with them and when the people ask why do you do that you say it's because of my faith in Jesus Christ and I'd like to share with that to you someday it's just that easy but sometimes

I think that I just become so confused and I make sharing my faith such a difficult thing and the passage here says basically you go into people's house you heal their sick you meet their needs that word heal actually also means to serve you serve other people you serve them around you you serve them you serve the sick you heal the sick and you tell them that God is near that God is in you that God has changed you and that they need the gospel to change their lives the message is really clear and the message is that the kingdom of God is near and God does that and shows that and changes people's lives all around us as we would just talk about it the last section of this passage is harsh I mean I've been in churches where people don't even talk about it I mean I've been in churches where they deleted these verses out of this passage because it was not sexy it was too hard for people to hear look at what he says there but whatever city you enter in and they do not receive you go out into the streets and say even the dust of your city which clings to your feet you wipe off and protest against them yet be sure of this the kingdom of God has come near and I

say that you be more tolerable for the city of

Sodom we put that reference in your bulletin for you to read than for this city woe to you Chorazin woe to you Bethsaida we have some pictures of that up here I don't know if we have them but they're basically just ruins now almost immediately after Jesus said these pronouncements these cities were destroyed and they disappeared and then one day some monks were hanging out in the hills and they started digging and they found this city but the cities that refused to listen to Christ's message the cities that refused to accept Jesus' messengers the city that refused to accept the word of life they were destroyed and they disappeared if all the miracles that had performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you if they had done these things they would have repented they would have come to faith they would have been sitting in sackcloth and ashes but it would be more tolerable for these cities these Tyre and Sidon which are pagan cities in the judgment than for you for you Capernaum you will not be exalted to heaven this is the base where

Jesus did all his miracles and ministry it was the Jewish town and they thought they had a special right because Christ was there and Christ says no because I was there and you didn't listen to me I spoke and I did miracles and it didn't change your heart I did all of these things and still I was not lord of your life and you chose to say maybe tomorrow maybe tomorrow what he's saying here is there's people in our church right now and you don't know Christ and you're saying you hear these messages and you go that sounds really cool maybe some other time or this religious thing is kind of cool well I'll think about it but the passage says that by rejecting the message you're not rejecting me or the people who share it with you you're rejecting Christ and you're not really rejecting Christ but you're rejecting God and if you reject God things are going to be bad have you ever amen have you ever heard someone say that to you have you ever told somebody they're in trouble have you ever told somebody hey if you keep going down this path you're mocking God the creator of the universe and I don't need to do anything because

God can take care of himself have you ever heard that said something like that to somebody Christ says it very carefully and very concisely the one who rejects the one who listens to you listens to me and the one who rejects you rejects me and he rejects the one who sent me sent me and what he's saying here is as ambassadors the message that we have is eternal the message that we hold on and we're afraid to share the message that we share with people and they mock us the message that we know is the only message that people need to have to hear and to change and to enter into eternal life that the repercussions for not following that message are bad bad and that's why God has us here as his church God has us here as his church as ambassadors to this part of

[35 : 10] Hong Kong Island and beyond and as we walk every day in the proudness and the strength of knowing that you're God's ambassador and that you have the only thing that people have and need to change your life his word and that you have the ability to step into people's lives that are out of control and to serve them and to take care of them and to help them and to heal them and to tell them that the kingdom of God is near and Jesus says if you do that God does everything else God opens eyes God opens ears God changes hearts not our words last year when we started off we brought this stretcher out when we were talking about the story of the men being brought to Jesus to be healed and we had a challenge and we wrote down all the names of people up here that we felt like needed to know about Christ people that were in our world that didn't know God people that we were praying for and we wrote these names down there and this stretcher basically has stayed in our storeroom for six months to a year when it came time to find this stretcher and to bring it out as an object lesson and to use it we couldn't find it last night we were texting where is that thing we didn't know where it was it's easy to get distracted isn't it it's easy to forget about the names we put on there it's easy to forget about the people that we walk and we touch and move and rub shoulders with them wherever we are it's easy to forget that they they need the message that we have it's easy to forget that we're ambassadors who's praying for the harvest what I would like to do is ask Katie to come up with the worship team and we're just going to have a couple minutes of reflection want you to pray about the message you heard we're going to ask Charles and Josh they're going to hold this banner right here and what we would like to do is we want to continue this and as you pray and as you think and as you think of the harvest and people that you pray for we have markers here and we would like for you to come up and we would like for you to write these people's names on it as a testimony that you're an ambassador and God has sent you to these people and we're going to pray for them this year the Lord of the harvest would send people into their lives maybe us who meet their needs who share God's word who encourage them where they're at so spend a couple minutes reflecting and then when you're ready

if you want to you don't have to there's somebody on your heart we want you to come up and just write their name down here and we'll bring this out and continue to pray for those people and I'll come up in a little while and I'll close this to

Exactly