

Luke Chapter 10 – John Karmelich

1. Let me start with the good news Chapter 10. It's only 41 verses long, which is a lot less than the last few chapters. Therefore, the number of stories given in this chapter is notably less. It would probably be best for me to summarize those stories, and then I'll explain how they all tie together and why we should study them. Here goes:
 - a) The first story is about Jesus appointing 72 disciples (some manuscripts say 70, to which I say "whatever") to go ahead of Jesus from town to town to preach the Gospel Message. In this sending of the 72 (or 70), Jesus says that they'll each have the power to do miracles as a sign of proof that Jesus is who He claims to be. Jesus then warns them to be content as they travel on their journeys and don't demand much of their hosts. When they travel, if a town rejects their message of repentance, they are to reject that town. The point of this exercise is that it shows them and us what's the high cost of rejecting the Gospel message. It also teaches us about trusting God as we make a difference for Him.
 - b) As an example of that danger, Jesus will literally curse three cities that have seen many of His miracles yet rejected His message of fully trusting God for one's sin payment and not trying to prove one's worth to God by our good works. What's interesting is that the three cities that Jesus cursed do not exist in Israel today other than as ancient ruins.
 - c) When the disciples return from this short term mission trip (they were sent in pairs), they marveled not only at the miracles that were done, but that they were even able to cast out demons which is not something Jesus said they could do before they left. After He makes a comment about Satan's fall, we get the only gospel reference to Jesus' rejoicing. What is interesting is that Jesus says we should rejoice not in the miracles we get to witness or any other thing that happens during our lifetime, but simply based on the fact we are saved.
 - d) During this period of joy, Jesus uses that opportunity to try to explain again to all of those men who Jesus is and what's going to happen to Him. The point of the little sermon given in the middle of this chapter is for us to be grateful for the fact that God's chosen to reveal Himself to them and us. The fact that we take the time to study His word and think about what it says is how He has chosen to reveal Himself to us. For that fact alone we should be grateful for our salvation and join Jesus as He has joy over us just as He showed joy to these 70 or so men.
 - e) Then the text switches to tell of a non-believing expert in the Jewish law who asks Jesus to name the greatest commandment. Jesus asks this man what's his opinion? This unnamed man then responds with a standard Old Testament reference to "Love God as much as we can and love our neighbor as ourselves" (My paraphrase.) This man then wanted to test Jesus on the question of who is my neighbor? Jesus' responds by given the classic story of the "Good Samaritan" that is the next portion of this chapter.
 - i) The short version of that story is it's about a man who was robbed and beaten up. Two religious Jewish men at separate times ignored the suffering man. However, a Samaritan, which at that time was the lowest-of-lows to a religious Jew, helped the suffering man. Jesus' point of this made up story is that if we want to act like God wants us to act, we care about others no matter who they are, or what is their background.
 - f) The final story is about two sisters who live in the same town. When Jesus is staying with them, one's doing all the housework and the other listening to Him speak. Luke tells this story to show us the importance of both types of action: Sometimes we are called to be of service to others. Other times, God wants us in effect to be alone with Him by studying His word or praying to Him. That's how the chapter ends.
 - g) My big question is how do all of these stories tie together? Read on and I'll explain.

2. My answer to that question is also the title of this lesson: It is the single word "who". My point is this chapter in effect asks and answers the question of who Jesus is and who are His disciples. If one ever goes through doubts about whether or not one is a Christian, these stories give us some good tests to answer that question. Let me start with the disclaimer: To be a Christian just means that we believe Jesus is in charge of our lives and God the Father raised Jesus from the dead. If we believe that, our behavior should naturally follow that belief. That concept of wanting to do something about it, leads me back to the "who" question: As in "Who are His disciples"? Let me answer by quickly going over these stories again with that "who" perspective.
 - a) The first story is about 70 (or so) people picked by Jesus for a short-term mission trip. The point of this exercise is to show that we can trust Jesus in times where we didn't bring on such a trip any supplies. The "who" is us. It's about learning to trust Jesus when there's in effect nothing to rely upon but Him. It doesn't mean we always travel empty handed. It just means we learn to depend upon Him when we're trying to make a difference for Him and desire that He work through us if we are desiring to do His will.
 - b) The second story shows Jesus' joy over our salvation. It reminds us that Jesus' appreciates the fact that we're willing to use our time for His sake. We don't get what these disciples got of Jesus rejoicing over them personally, but in effect that is part of our eternal reward knowing that Jesus has already paid the price for whatever mistakes we do make in our lives and knowing that He appreciates whatever effort we make on His behalf for Him.
 - c) The third story is about a Jewish bible scholar who wants to know who is the neighbor that God wants us to help, is another clue of who is a true disciple of Jesus. The point is a way to tell if we're Jesus' disciples is that we have a heart to help people that normally, we would not even care about in the first place. The underlying point is how impossible it is for us to completely put others before ourselves. It's an example of how God's laws teach us to trust in Him alone for salvation as we can't do it based on our efforts.
 - d) The final story was about the two sisters. One was busy doing all the serving duties when Jesus was the guest of honor at her house, and her sister just sat and listened to Jesus. Of course both are part of life, but Jesus used that point to illustration that if someone wants to be a follower of Him, then we would just want to make the time to think about what it is He wants to say to us. The point is the "who are His disciples" becomes obvious as such disciples want to take the time to listen to Him through His word.
 - e) In summary, this chapter is one big lesson on who are His disciples and what it is we're to do as His disciples. With those issues stated, let's get started on the details of Chapter 10.
3. Chapter 10, Verse 1: After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ² He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. ³ Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴ Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.
 - a) Here we read of Jesus sending out not just the 12 disciples but 70 or 72, depending upon which translation one reads. Jesus sends them in pairs. Why pairs? That way they could still do team work. I'm reminded of a passage in the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes, 4:9-12, that essentially says that two working together is better than one, as they can each help each other if one's in trouble the other can help. Also by working in pairs, each of us can be accountable to someone else for our actions. One of the classical principals about Christianity is that it is never designed to be say, one billion solo efforts for Jesus. We are called to work in teams for accountability reasons as well as the idea of their being more than one witness to a situation adds to it's credibility.
 - b) With the idea of "pairs" being established, the point is all of these men are to sent to go to whatever towns are in the area and essentially to preach the Gospel (meaning good news) that the long promised Messiah is here and we need to repent of our sins.

- c) With that said, the text doesn't focus much on what powers they have or what they are to say. Instead it focuses on the 70 or so disciples and what they can expect to happen.
- d) Before I begin, it's probably important to learn the difference between what an apostle is versus a disciple. A disciple can refer to anyone sent to do a particular job. If we teach in a small group about Jesus, we're acting as a disciple at that moment. To be an apostle is a formal title, like an ambassador to a country. The short version is that Jesus only called 12 specific apostles. Jesus called at 70 or 72 disciples here. Like these men, when we choose to do something for Jesus, we too at that moment are acting as a disciple.
- e) With that said, I want to discuss for a quick moment the topic of Jesus asking us to pray for specific things. If you study the gospels carefully, there are only a handful of things that Jesus tells us to pray for. Don't get me wrong, I think we should bring all things to God in prayer. My point is in Gospels there are only a handful of things that Jesus does specifically ask us to pray for and one of them is here in this text. The point is that here in this text Jesus calls on us to pray for God to send out more workers to call others to hear and accept the Gospel message. Jesus point is that there are lots of people in the world who would accept the message that Jesus is God and died for our sins, but there are never enough people to spread that message. In order to increase the number of "missionaries" the first step for all of us is to pray for God to increase the number of people who want to spread that message to others and take the bold step to share Jesus with others.
 - i) While I'm asking that question, what else does Jesus want us to pray for? It has to do with His Second Coming: Part of the answer is the peace of Jerusalem as that is where Jesus will reign from. Along that same line, whenever the final tribulation period begins, Jesus asks the Jewish people to pray it doesn't occur in winter (it is difficult to travel in bad weather) or on the Sabbath where they would be scared to travel in fear of violating God's laws for that day of the week.
 - ii) Another prayer is for those who hurt us so that we develop an attitude of caring about others and not seeing them as enemies. Another prayer is that we don't fall into temptation, which is a self-explanatory prayer. Then there is the prayer that Jesus taught all of us to pray, which I'll get to in the next chapter.
 - iii) My point here is that if you study the word prayer in the Gospels, there is really not a lot of things Jesus asks us to pray for. Of course there are our own requests but that is a separate issue of what Jesus specifically asks us to pray for.
 - iv) All of that leads me back to these opening verses. The point here is simply that among the things we should pray about is getting more people to get saved and more people to spread the Gospel so that even more can be saved. If we don't want to take the time to go do missionary work, we can at the least, pray to God for more people willing to spread that message to others and that's what Jesus is asking all of us to do in these verses.
- f) Besides sending these works out on their own, Jesus also warns them that they are going out as "Lambs among wolves". For us non-sheep herders, let me explain that: Sheep and young sheep (lambs) have no defensive measures against raiding animals like wolves. In order to protect lambs, they have to be watched and collected against raiders. For Jesus to say that the disciples are to travel as lambs, means that there is danger everywhere and to be careful as one never knows where the "wolves" are located.
 - i) Think about the mission this way: If you went around telling people that they are not good enough for God, odds are good you'll get yelled at or something worse. Here are these people going out to preach that being religious "doesn't cut it" with God and that Jesus is the only payment God will accept for our sins. That doesn't mean we shouldn't turn from our sins. It just means we accept Jesus payment for what we have done or even will do in our future. Anyway, Jesus is trying to warn them that is tough sledding is ahead of them as they go and preach that message.

- g) The final things that Jesus says in these verses is not to take any supplies with them and not to greet anyone along the road. Let me explain both here:
 - i) First, the idea of no supplies is that the disciples are now dependant upon others to be generous to them in order to survive. It teaches us that when we go about to make a difference for Jesus, yes we'll encounter "wolves", but we'll also encounter fellow "sheep" who will help us along the way. We may not be happy about the accommodations or food we receive, but we will have enough to survive as we do what Jesus calls us to do. One of the reasons Jesus called me to write this without charging anyone is to show me my dependence upon God for my own survival.
 - ii) The point is if we're willing to take a step in faith to do something for God, He'll make a way for us to survive during that missionary venture although we may not be crazy about what we get to survive upon.
 - iii) Now let me talk about greetings in the road. The issue is not the two-second wave to a stranger as one passes one on the road. It's about being distracted from what it is God is calling us to do to spend a long time with someone we aren't called to witness to at that moment. Let me explain: If we believe we're called to witness to a specific group of people, don't waste the time that we are given for that mission to do something else. If we've volunteered to help on any given project, don't be distracted by non-emergencies to do what we volunteer to do in the first place. In summary Jesus is warning against the issue of distractions from what we're called to do.
 - iv) With all that said, believe it or not, we're ready to get back to Jesus preparing these men for this missionary trip:
- 4. Verse 5: "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' ⁶ If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.
 - a) John's loose translation: Be grateful for what you have when you're doing God's work. It is the idea of not trying to seek something better when we're doing that job. The point is if we believe God is calling us to do some sort of work for Him, be content with what we get on that trip and don't demand more stuff for us. For example, when people make the decision to go to bible college, they are usually barely surviving financially while they're in that environment. When we volunteer to travel somewhere as part of a mission group, we have to accept whatever food and accommodations we get and not ask for more.
 - b) Coming back to the "who" question, the answer is us. The point is God has called each of us to be a witness for Him. That doesn't mean all of us have to travel to foreign lands in order to do mission work. It does mean that when we do volunteer to do something for Him, we have to accept what we do receive and not expect more.
 - c) Now let me come back to Verse 5 where it says, "peace to this house". It is not that those are some magic words to make the homeowners like us. It just means that if those who help us are "fellow sheep", it will become obvious to us. In other words if we ask for help and they offer it to us, God will reward them for their help just as He will reward us for making the opportunity to serve Him in that capacity for that moment in time. To sum it up, when we take the time to make a difference for others, be willing to accept hospitality from others and don't be greedy enough to demand more because of our service to God.
- 5. Verse 8: "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'
 - a) In this verse, we get the only instructions given to all of these disciples. Verse 9 tells the to heal whoever is sick and then preach to that town that the "Kingdom of God" is near.
 - b) Before we get into all of that, Verse 8 gives another plea to accept the accommodations of wherever they go and not complain about it. It's to not complain about the type of food we get or the amount of food, but to be grateful and trust in God for future provisions.

- c) With that said, notice Jesus doesn't say anything about casting out demons. That will be significant in a few verses. It just says to "heal the sick". It shows that Jesus' power to do miracles was given at this moment to more than just the 12 apostles. If one ever wants to see more miracles done, go spend time with missionaries in foreign lands. I'm convinced that God does His best work to convince nonbelievers to turn to Him than He does with long term believers as God is interested in drawing as many as possible to Him. I've seen many a believer suffer horrible things in their lifetime. I've also seen unexplainable things occur such as people getting help in ways that are beyond explanation.
 - d) That leads me to a key phrase in Verse 9: "The kingdom of God is near you". As most of us veteran Christians know, the "kingdom of God" does not refer to any physical piece of real estate. One can't walk into that kingdom by traveling anywhere. The idea is that if we consider ourselves followers of Jesus and believe that He is in charge of our lives and He did die for our sins, we are part of that kingdom. The point is the disciples were called to go preach that message to Israelites. Imagine telling a bunch of people that they are not going to heaven for being a good person or say for being Jewish. That's the obstacle that the disciples had to deal with as they preach that message. That's why Jesus gave them the power to do miracles to convince others what Jesus is saying is true.
 - i) OK, then, why don't we get that same power in order to convince people that the gospel message is true? A big part of that answer is we have the complete word of God that is greater evidence to what He did far more than any miracle we can do. As I stated earlier, that's why I'm convinced God does His best miracles in places where the bible is not readily available to study. That also tells me that those of us who are born and raised in places where the bible is readily available to study can not use any excuse of "I didn't know" when we are judged by God.
 - ii) Now that we know what Jesus told the disciples to preach, let's get back to Him:
6. Verse 10: But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ¹¹ 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.' ¹² I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.
- a) There was a Jewish custom back then that when they walked outside of the land of Israel and then returned, they would clean their sandals as if to say, "we don't want to bring any foreign dirt on our soil". It was a way of showing nationalistic pride by saying that to be a non-Jewish person wasn't a preferable lifestyle to being Jewish. I state that custom here as Jesus wanted the disciples to use that well known custom back then, if a town refused to accept Jesus' message about trusting in Him as the Promised Messiah.
 - b) Believe it or not, this concept leads to the question of, are there different degrees of eternal punishment in eternity? Do some people suffer more than others for eternity and exactly how does that work? I state that here because Jesus says that the eternal punishment for those who lived in Sodom, (a city judged by God in Genesis for being wicked) will suffer less of an eternal punishment than those that got to hear directly about Jesus?
 - c) To answer, first we have to remember that if God created our world, then it is His job and not ours to decide who gets to spend eternity with Him or without Him. I'm also equally as convinced that all people live forever. There is no reincarnation, or soul sleep or just the end of our existence. I can disprove reincarnation simply by the fact the number of people that exist today is greater than it was say a thousand years ago. As far as the idea of us just stop existing, that gets into the false theory that we were created out of random luck and that no God exists, which I truly refuse to believe. That idea of God's existence can be proven simply by the fact the bible predicts so much world history centuries and millenniums before it actually occurred.
 - i) My whole point here is simply that if God exists, He created us individually with the purpose of being either with Him or without Him for all of eternity.

- d) That leads me back to the issue of some suffering more than others. As I said, if we accept the idea of God being in charge, then He can create an eternity where some will suffer to degrees greater than others. Personally, I don't know how that will work, but if Jesus says some will suffer more than others and if I'm convinced Jesus is God, I accept that fact.
 - e) This also leads me back to my one word lesson title, the word "who": If we believe Jesus is God then we accept what He says as true, including the idea that eternal life will have different levels of suffering just as I'm sure heaven has different levels of rewards based on loyalty to trust in Jesus over our lives.
 - f) Coming back to the text, these towns where Jesus preached in effect had a greater witness to who He was than Sodom, as that town was destroyed in Genesis 19 for being wicked. Just as we have no excuse if we live in a land where the bible is easily available to study, so the towns where Jesus preached had a greater witness than the one's where Jesus did not personally visit. Jesus used what the Jewish people considered the most wicked city in world history as an example of lesser eternal punishment than places in Israel where the Gospel was preached. If that doesn't scare us, nothing will.
 - g) While I hopefully just frightened all of us to use our lives to make a difference for Jesus, He is getting on a roll making that same point:
7. Verse 13: "Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴ But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. ¹⁵ And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.
- a) Speaking of ancient Jewish customs, when they wanted to express sorrow, they would wear an uncomfortable garment called "sackcloth" and then sit among ashes. The only thing I can give as a comparison is when we choose to wear black for a funeral. It doesn't give the same idea of sorrow, but the idea is still there.
 - b) Jesus point is back in Genesis 19, the towns of Tyre and Sidon were destroyed for being wicked. Jesus is saying the people who lived there back then will have less of an eternal punishment than the three Jewish cities that existed at the time Jesus was preaching. You may find it interesting that the ruins of Capernaum exist to this day, but that location was never rebuilt as a city even though it is on the edge of the Sea of Galilee and would be a good place for a town to exist. If you don't remember, Capernaum was Jesus base of His operations and the people there saw many miracles. What is interesting is that the bible never records any miracles in Korazin (also spelled Chorazin). My point is the Gospels do not record every single miracle that Jesus did, as some occurred in that town that are not mentioned in the bible.
 - c) In summary, the issue isn't physical towns but people. The problem with knowing one's bible is now we are accountable for what we know. Yes the benefits of knowing more of Jesus' life far outweigh the risks of that accountability, but know that just as Jesus held all of these places accountable for what they saw Him do, so Jesus holds us accountable for what we learn about Him and more importantly, what we're doing about that knowledge. Of course we are saved only by believing Jesus is who He says He is, but if we have that belief, how we live our lives should be evidence of that faith. That's the point here. Yes I admit this is all scary stuff to consider, but if we believe Jesus is God, then we must accept the idea of eternal judgment and condemnation based not only on what we know about Him but based on what we should know based on the knowledge available to us.
8. Verse 16: "He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."
- a) Remember that the disciples are sent out in pairs and they haven't started this journey yet. Jesus is saying that if people reject their message, don't blame yourself for say, not being a good enough preacher. They're rejecting Jesus and not their ability to preach.

- b) Stop and think how tough this message is to preach. Imagine telling anyone that they are not good enough to be pleasing to God based on how they live their lives. That's a hard message to sell, especially to people who know they are "God's chosen people" and they have a Temple where sacrifices are made on their behalf. To preach that Jesus is not only the Messiah, but that people need to look to Him for the forgiveness of sins, would be a tough thing to preach, let alone to Jewish people. Personally, I'm not amazed that most people reject that message, I'm more amazed that some people accept it as true. That's why we give God the credit for anyone willing to accept the message and not our ability to say, be a great presenter of that message.
 - c) Do you ever think, why don't I get more miracles in my life? The fact that you are saved for all of eternity and believe the Gospel message is the greatest miracle we'll ever need. Anything we get over and above that is a bonus. We need to remember that Jesus didn't come to earth to make us more comfortable and have a better life. As I once heard on the radio, "Jesus didn't come here to give me a better golf score" (Hank Hanegraaff). He came so that we can know we can live in God's presence forever by trusting in His sin payment.
 - d) Now for the good news:
9. Verse 17: The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."
- a) Remember that these men went out to different towns in pairs. I don't think they all came back at one time. I suspect they all returned within a few weeks of each other and then they all compared notes about what happened. They each know that Jesus gave them the power to do miracles and they were probably amazed by that alone. The text says here in this verse that even demons would submit to them. If you read again Jesus' comments of this trip, He never promised that demons would be in submission to them. Think of that idea as a "bonus" they got. By the way, that's a bonus I believe you and I get as well. We don't have to live in fear of demons as they fear being around those preaching the Gospel message. Remember that demon's goal is to discourage people from becoming believers or discouraging believers from being effective witnesses for Jesus. When we being a good witness for Jesus, I'm convinced demons do run away in fear of what we preach.
 - b) With that said, let's read Jesus response to their statement:
10. Verse 18: He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."
- a) One can find a lot of scholars arguing over what Jesus meant by Verse 18: Is it a specific event in the past? There are a handful of reference in the Old Testament to the fact that Satan has access to heaven and he is the accuser of believers. (See Job 1:6 or Zechariah 3:1 as examples.) Since the cross hasn't happened yet, I believe Jesus is referring to the future when Satan is placed in a lake of fire permanently as described in Revelation 20:10. My point here is that God exists outside of time as we know it. The way I view eternity is that God created time and therefore He exists outside of time. Therefore, with Jesus as God, He knows the end from the beginning (See Isaiah 46:10). If Jesus is God, He knows the end from the beginning and therefore, Jesus can state the future as if it has already occurred because from His all knowing perspective, it has already occurred. Bottom line, Jesus as God can make the statement that Satan has fallen and will be eternally punished.
 - b) With all of that theology out of my system, let me now discuss why Jesus stated Verse 18 in the first place. In the previous verse, the 70 or so disciples were amazed that demons were subject to them as witnesses for Jesus. Jesus point in effect is that Satan has already lost the war so don't be surprised that his demons are subject to us. So if Satan knows he loses in the end, why does he bother? Because he doesn't want God to rule over him so he's stalling as long as possible before that eventual event does occur.

- c) Believe it or not, all that theology leads perfectly to verse 19. That verse says Jesus gives us the authority to trample over snakes and scorpions. First the bad news: Jesus is not being that literal. If you attempt to step on a snake or scorpion, odds are good we could be bitten if we don't kill it. Since the previous verse refers to demons, I suspect that Jesus is using a common idiom of that day to refer to Satan and his demons. In the Garden of Eden story, Satan entered a snake. Scorpions are deadly insects. I believe Jesus is just making the point that we as believer have power over demonic entitles.
 - d) Let me explain this concept another way. When my daughters were little, they asked me why did God create Satan in the first place? My answer was for us to understand that by God's power we can overcome anything Satan throws at us. I can't explain all the evil in our world. I just know that through prayer and trust in God to guide us, we can make a great difference for Him despite whatever pressure demons throw at us. As I also like to say, if you don't believe Satan is real, try opposing him and watch what happens.
 - e) That leads to Verse 20. Anybody who's been in the ministry for a while will tell you that there are good and bad days. Not every day in the ministry do we see great things occur or people get saved. Even if we're doing God's will, we won't see positive results every single day. That's why Jesus makes the statement in Verse 20 that we should not rejoice about demons being subject to us, but rejoice that we are saved. Jesus' point is no matter what we are called to do in life, we won't see great results of our work every day. That's why when it comes to gratitude, first and foremost, be grateful for our salvation over and above whatever works we do for God in our lives.
 - f) Bottom line here is that Jesus is joyful at this moment and He's trying to teach us how to have joy through the good and bad moments of our lives. This is the only time in Luke's gospel where we see Jesus express joy. I should mention that the Hebrew concept of joy literally means to jump and down with excitement. Think of the expression, jump for joy and you get the idea. Speaking of that joy, it continues in the next verse.
11. Verse 21: At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.
- a) It's sort of amazing to consider that Jesus didn't pick any of the religious leaders to be His followers. We do read a reference in Acts that some Pharisee's who believed in Jesus after the resurrection (Acts 15:5). Still, consider the fact that Jesus basically picked a bunch of fisherman and a despised tax collector to be his apostles.
 - b) One of the secrets to be used greatly by God is to realize that we are "nobodies" that have been chosen by Him to make a difference for Him. The more we realize we have nothing to offer Him is the more we realize how dependent we are upon Him to make a difference for Him in the world around us. That in effect is the point here. That God chooses people from all backgrounds who are willing to step out in faith and make a difference for Him not because we are something special, but only because we are dependant upon Him so we can make that difference for Jesus in the world.
 - c) So how do we know God has chosen us? Easy. Believe in Him and go make a difference for Him. Then we'll know that He has chosen us. So where does free will come into play? The answer is from our not-all-knowing perspective, we don't know who God has chosen. From His all- knowing perspective He already knows who is chosen. The point is Jesus is full of joy over those of us who have chosen to live our lives not only with the belief that He is God and has died for our sins but have chosen to use our lives to make a difference for Him in the world around us. God gives each of us the free will to choose to be with Him forever. The fact that some of us make that choice to follow Him, brings joy to God.
 - i) Let me put all of this another way: Do you think you are having problems right now? Consider the fact that the God who created everything is full of joy that you have chosen to follow Him and serve Him with your life.

12. Verse 22: "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." ²³ Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. ²⁴ For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."
- a) All of that discussion about the joy God wants us to have over our salvation from the last few verses, does lead us well into these few verses. To warn you in advance, I'm about to give another brief theology lesson as that's the only way to explain these verses.
 - b) The first point here is that no one is saved unless God chose him or her in the first place. As I stated a few lessons ago, Charles Spurgeon said that he wishes those who were saved had a big mark on their bodies so he wouldn't waste time preaching to those people who aren't saved. Unfortunately God doesn't give us that visible mark, so He calls us to go make a difference for all people. So why aren't the saved visibly marked? I suppose so that others won't be jealous. I suppose so we can witness to all. So why did God create people whom He knew would spend eternity in hell? Free will. God does not desire that anyone turn from Him, but since many do, they suffer the eternal consequences.
 - c) All of that theology leads me back to the verses. Jesus is still expressing joy here, tells His disciples they are blessed for what they get to see. To explain that, let me explain Verse 24 here: There was an expression among Old Testament scholars that the authors who wrote the Old Testament would study what they wrote to learn the significance of their writing. The point is the prophets and kings who wrote the Old Testament didn't get the full idea about Jesus dying for our sins. To give an example, in Genesis Chapter 22 when Abraham was about to offer up his only son Isaac (through his wife Sarah) as a sacrificial offering, Abraham understood that God now had a problem. God promised Abraham he'd have descendants through Isaac. That means Abraham believed God had to resurrect Isaac. Did Abraham know that sacrifice was the exact location was where Jesus was crucified? I don't think so and that's my point. That leads me back to Luke: the point is the major Old Testament characters didn't grasp what they did tied to what Jesus is about to do.
 - d) All of that leads me back to Jesus' joy. He was joyful that the disciples would get to see all these events that the Old Testament writers didn't realize were prophetic acts that will tie to what Jesus did at this time. As I like to put it, I'm convinced that everything we read of Jesus in the New Testament is hinted at somewhere in the Old Testament. That's a reason why I enjoy studying the Old Testament so much is to learn of Jesus from those books.
 - e) Bottom line, be full of joy that we're saved as God's full of joy that we're saved as well.
 - f) From this point we transition to a story about an Old Testament bible expert trying to test Jesus about the law. I'll explain why this transition is here as I get into this next story:
13. Verse 25: On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" ²⁷ He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "
- a) The first thing to catch about these verses is the word "test" in Verse 25. In other words, the expert in the bible already knew the answer to the question; he was only motivated to test Jesus in His bible expertise. Notice that Jesus flips the question back on to this bible expert by asking him effectively "What do you think the answer is?" Most of us have been in situations where someone asking us a question is dying to tell us the answer, so to ask a person like that to answer it themselves is giving people what they want.
 - b) In terms of testing Jesus, the important point is not the first question, but the second one, which I'll get to in a second. First the unnamed bible expert needed to give the answer to the first question. Know that in Judaism, these two bible verses are called the "Shema". They are repeated twice a day to remind the reader that they are the summary of the law.

- c) Let me expand upon the "Shema": The two bible verses stated in Verse 27 are it. Those 2 verses are taken from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. To this day, religious Jews state the Shema twice a day. They can state as easily as devout Roman Catholic can recite say a "Hail Mary" prayer without even thinking about it.
14. Verse 28: "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." ²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
- a) The point of this text is not for the lawyer to state how smart he is by stating those verses by memory, but to test Jesus with the next question: Who is one's neighbor? One cannot find an answer in the Old Testament, so the lawyer is asking Jesus for his interpretation. I suspect the lawyer is trying to trip up Jesus here by hoping for a limited answer.
 - b) At this point Jesus commends the lawyer for stating the Shema and then we get the real purpose of this line of questioning. The point is Jesus is saying in Verse 28 that if we had the ability to obey the Shema perfectly, Jesus would not have to die for our sins. With that said, let me pause for a moment to discuss the Shema. The first part effectively says that we are to love God as much as we can and the second part says effectively we should care about others more than we care about ourselves. Our problem of course is that we don't always love God as much as possible and we usually put our own interests before other's in our life.
 - c) Before I get into Jesus' response, let me ask, why are these verses here? We just had Jesus expressing joy over disciples growing in their faith over what they accomplished. So why does Luke quickly switch scenes to tell this story? While this parable is well known, most of us miss the purpose of it: It teaches us how impossible it is keep the law (be pleasing to God based on our works). To put this story another way, the Old Testament laws aren't bad things. They teach how to live a good life. The problem is our human nature makes it is impossible to keep the law all the time. That is what drives us to God, the realization that we can never be perfect enough for Him by keeping the law and therefore we depend on His payment for our sins and not our ability to obey the concepts taught in the law.
 - d) With that strange introduction given, time for the next set of verses:
15. Verse 30: In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'
- a) Most of us know these verses as the story of the "Good Samaritan". To most of us this is a story about how to be a helpful to strangers. While this story does teach that concept, the underlying important point of this story is to show impossible it is to be pleasing to God based on our works. Let me discuss that story and hopefully you'll see that to be true.
 - b) First a little background on where this is. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is about 17 miles and has a 4,000-foot decline in elevation. It's been known since ancient times as the bloody road as there are lots of spots for robbers to hang out on that pathway. As Jesus is telling this story to an Israelite, he would be familiar with someone being robbed there.
 - c) In this made up story, a man traveling alone is beaten up and left dying. The story then has two Jewish religious men separately seeing the hurting man and ignoring him. There are lots of commentaries on why they ignored him. Some say it was to avoid touching a dead body and others say out of fear of a trap. I'm grateful to John MacArthur here, as he tells us, this is a made up story, so it is irrelevant why the religious Jews chose to ignore him. The point is they didn't show any kindness to this man and turned the other way.

- d) Before I continue, it is important to understand how much hatred there was between the Jewish nation and their "half-breed" cousins the Samaritans. The Samaritan nation was a mixture of Jewish people taken into captivity many centuries' earlier and other races. The point is the Samaritans had their own religion of a mixture of Judaism and idolatry. At that time, when a Jewish person wanted to travel from the Sea of Galilee area to Jerusalem they would usually cross the Jordan river and go around the Samaritan territory because of the hatred the Jewish people had for that culture. In fact, about 128 BC if my memory is correct, some religious Jews destroyed the Samaritan temple which increased the hatred between these two groups.
 - e) I tell that story here as to understand that when this religious Jewish person asked Jesus about who is my neighbor? That religious person probably thought it would only refer to fellow Jewish people or fellow religious Jewish people and not the hated Samaritans. Yet in this made up story, it was a Samaritan who helped the dying man.
 - f) With that said, let's return to the verses and notice how much the Samaritan helped him. This man poured oil (a soothing substance to put on wounds) and wine (which works as a disinfectant) on this stranger's wounds. The Samaritan paid an innkeeper to take care of this man. Know that "hotels" in those days were notoriously evil places. They were more known as brothels than as safe places to stay. Still the Samaritan gave the innkeeper two silver coins which is probably two days income and a lot more than the price of a room. The good Samaritan in this story also told the innkeeper to "start a tab" to take care of the sick man and any other expense needed to take care of him, the Samaritan would cover.
 - g) One more thing to notice and then I'll talk about the key point of this story. Notice that the Samaritan spent the night with this stranger. Whatever purpose this Samaritan had to travel on this journey, he put on hold for at least a day to help a stranger that was dying.
 - h) Now stop and think how much we have helped strangers. We might give a few dollars to someone begging from us. We might do a little more for a family member or someone we care about. The truth is the only person that each of us cares about that much is our self. Jesus point of telling this made up story, is that God wants us to care about others more than we care about ourselves. That's God's definition of "neighborly".
 - i) The point is none of us are that good all the time and that's the point of the story. The great secret to understanding God's law is to realize how impossible it is for us to keep it on a regular basis. That's why in the Old Testament there was a set of rituals for the forgiveness of sin, which point to Jesus. That's why Jesus had to die for our sins. To put this concept another way, God never let's justice go undone. He just pays "Himself" for our sins. Every time we sin, Jesus is paying for it. That doesn't mean we should sin on purpose, it just means that if we have decided that God is charge of our lives, then we would want to please Him and turn from sin as much as possible with our lives out of gratitude for what He's done for us.
 - i) To sum this whole story up, the purpose of it was that a religious Jewish person did ask Jesus what was the definition of a neighbor based on the Jewish principal of loving our neighbor as much as ourselves. Jesus responds with a made up story of someone giving of themselves to an enemy far more than any of us would ever do. While the story does show us how to be neighborly it also shows us how short all of us are in God's standards of how it is He wants us to live. To borrow a classic joke, there are two ways to get into heaven, one is to trust Jesus' payment for our sins, and the other is to live a perfect life and never sin once. This parable teaches us how impossible it is to live life based on trying to be perfect all the time. With that said, now let's read the epilogue to the story:
16. Verse 36: "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" ³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."
- a) Since the convicted religious man hopefully got the point, I can move on to the next story.

17. Verse 38: As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"
- a) With the point of the parable of the last set of verses being completed, the text moves to a story of Jesus visiting a town of two sisters named Martha and Mary. Remember Jesus is still traveling from town to town preaching about who He is. We assume the apostles are traveling with Jesus. We also know from John's gospel that this town is called Bethany. It is a few miles east of Jerusalem. Most of us know the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. (See John Chapter 11.) He was the brother of these two sisters. Speaking of the two sisters, let me comment upon what the text says here:
 - i) As Jesus and his disciples stayed at Martha's house, she busy serving the meal and doing the serving. To quote Chuck Swindoll, "We all know Martha's. They are the one's doing all the work at a church pot luck". We also read of her sister Mary not helping with the work. She was just sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to Him.
 - ii) With that said, one has to see the humor in Verse 40. It says Martha complains to Jesus that she's doing all the work. Imagine telling Jesus something like, "I know that you are the God of the Universe, the Promised Messiah, and you're words tell us how we are to live our lives, but excuse me sir, please tell my no good sister to help me with the housework!" If you think about it, Martha could have told her sister to come help, instead she interrupted Jesus' teaching to scold her sister. That leads well into the last two verses of the chapter:
18. Verse 41: "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things,⁴² but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."
- a) If you think about it, Jesus could have chewed out Martha here for her attitude. Instead we read of Jesus compassion for her while at the same time pointing out to Martha that Mary is doing the right thing of just listening to Jesus. Are there times in our lives where we have to do the housework? Of course. Are there times where we should be listening to Jesus? Of course. If we just study our bibles all day, no work would get done. If we do spend all day just doing our work, we miss the most important purpose for living, which is to learn what Jesus wants us to know about life and how to live it.
 - b) Believe it or not, that leads me back to why this story is here. In the last story, Jesus tells us how impossible it to please Him based on our works. However, that doesn't mean of course that we ignore Jesus. The reason God created a 7th day of rest, is so that we can take some of our time to listen to Him and learn from Him and not "work" all the time.
 - c) That's why I titled this lesson "who". The who is not just us, but God. It is the reminder that the who of our life is Jesus and not ourselves. Martha is the hero in this little story simply because she reminds us to take some time to just listen to what Jesus has to tell us about how to live a life pleasing to Him. Yes we can't please Him based on trying hard enough, but that's not the extent of the message. We can only make a difference for Him based on using His power to do so. Believe it or not, that ties to my ending prayer for this lesson. Speaking of which:
19. Heavenly Father, we are reminded in this lesson that You are the "who" that we need to focus our life upon. Help us to rely upon Your power so that You can use anyone like us who are willing to trust You with our lives. Help us to realize how impossible it is to please You based on our efforts and at the same time realize we can make a difference for You by relying upon Your power to do so. Guide us as we make that difference. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.