

Luke 10

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Title: Understanding our Christian mission!

At this point in the Gospel of Luke, he focuses on Jesus working His way through Israel, on the way to Jerusalem for the "big scene". The main purpose of the three-year missionary time is to try to convince people He's their promised Messiah and teach how to live as God intended: to live as a witness for God in the world around us. Chapter 10 focuses on examples of how Jesus wants us to act with illustrations and examples of being a witness for Him! The secret to studying this section isn't to "read history", but to grasp how Jesus wants us to act after we commit our lives to serving Him. Yes, I realize we all have busy lives. He calls some of us to drop everything and do "this". For most of us, we're to continue our lives as we are, praying daily for guidance and studying His Word! Then making the best decisions we can, given our situation. Yes, that is old news for most of us. I just want each of us to consider that as we go through Chapter 10 and ask how it applies to us and not just the disciples 2,000 years ago!

The basic stories are about Jesus sending 70 (or 72) other disciples ahead of Him to preach about Jesus coming in the world! Then He condemns those who refuse to repent! Then Jesus expresses joy for all who accept His will to spend eternity together. Then the last half of the chapter is the famous story of "The Good Samaritan". On the surface the story is given to a Jewish religious expert to illustrate what His desire is: How God expects that guy to act. The underlying point is about being a good witness to those around us as none of us know who's saved! In summary, these stories indicate what makes Jesus joyful in that He uses people to spread the word about how to achieve eternal salvation and He calls us to fulfill that role. Again, I know that's old news for most of us! The specifics remind us that we must use our lives as He desires which is why we were saved in the first place. Therefore, let me go through these stories and hopefully give us some pointers on what God expects of each of us! Let's begin!

Chapter 9 focused on Jesus teaching the "12" about what He expects of His disciples. Chapter 10 opens with Jesus sending out 70 more. None of the 70 are named. Some old manuscripts say 72. Either one can be argued, but to me it's an insignificant issue. It shows there were many more with Jesus then! It doesn't mean the other 70 were saved, just that they were picked for a short-term mission trip. All they were instructed was to go from town to town accepting whatever was given to them (places to sleep, or food) and in essence preach the Gospel and accept the hospitality without complaining. They were told not to bring extra provisions or weapons. They were not to waste time with long greetings but only the fact they were to preach the Gospel. Jesus said they'd have during that trip a miraculous ability to heal people of sickness. When the 70 returned (they traveled in pairs) they announced the demons went out of people by mentioning Jesus' name. The length of time they traveled was never stated, nor the names of any of them.

I admit the topic of demonology always fascinated me. They always seem to be around when a person is drawing close to Jesus. Remember the purpose of demons is to exist on earth as long as possible 'till Jesus returns. When a person is drawing close to Christ, "stuff happens" to the person to draw or scare them away! The power of the Cross is greater than demonic power! Preaching Jesus and being used to lead others to salvation is literally the quickest way to deal with that issue. I realize that some demons are more powerful than others and if we encounter something like that, prayer is key!

As far as the "70" it doesn't mean all Christians can wave their arms and empty a hospital in His name! It doesn't mean we shouldn't prepare before entering a mission field. The point is God calls some of us for a short-term mission to learn to trust Jesus when we're working to make a difference for Him! This (being a witness for Jesus) doesn't mean people will instantly be cured of all diseases. Miracles are up to God strictly on His timing.

Another thing that fascinated me here is Jesus is asks them (and us) to pray for God to send workers to lead others to Him! Obviously, God could "snap His fingers" and people would be saved. Asking, for prayer for workers is God's way of getting us involved with His desire to build up the church!

The final thing to catch from the first 12 verses is the consequences of rejecting Jesus. The key fact for us is to preach the truth, that to deny Jesus all one's life is literally a ticket to hell! Jesus taught them to "shake the dust off their boots" as a sign of rejection. It was a cultural way of saying, "You reject me, I need to explain the consequences of that decision!" Jesus then says something fascinating: He says the places that reject Him will be judged harder than Sodom. In Genesis, that town was instantly destroyed by sulfur raining down! Does Jesus mean some places will be judged harder than others? This implies judgement "varies". First remember salvation is strictly about what we did with the knowledge Jesus is both God and the full payment for our sins. Location judgement deals with destiny of a location. All I am saying is the long-term destiny of the Israel locations that rejected Jesus will suffer more since they got better information about Jesus than say places outside of Israel or places like Sodom that got wiped out long before such knowledge about Jesus occurred. The Romans destroyed Israel in 70AD which is what I suspect Jesus is referring to here! It was slower and more painful than Sodom's quick death!

Then of all things Jesus breaks out into praise. He explains WHY the 70 and the 12 should be happy! I should say it's not because they cast out demons or healed people or even lead some to Jesus. What we are to be grateful for above everything else, is simply the fact we are saved! Another thing emphasized is the fact it's not based on high intelligence or high education that people figure out the Gospel is truth and comes outside of time and space. I've always liked 1st Corinthians 1:26 that states not many nobles are saved. There's a famous story of an English queen who says she was saved by the "m" in many!

All this leads to one of the most famous stories in the Bible, the parable of the good Samaritan. It starts with an expert in the Jewish law asking Jesus about salvation. First that man quotes "The Shema", that is two verses most religious Jews can quote off the top of their head. In short, it says, love God with all our heart, soul and strength and love our neighbors as much as ourselves. Jesus compliments him as it's a good summary based on two verses in the first five books of the Bible. Then this guy wants to take it one step further and asks Jesus to define a neighbor! That leads to the whole good Samaritan parable!

I assume most of us know this story well. In essence, a man was robbed and left for dead traveling near Jerusalem. Two devoutly religious Jewish man ignored him probably out of fear of being ambushed. It required someone hated by the Jewish culture to show compassion and help him out. Jesus is teaching about evidence of how to live as God desires. I realize there's lots of compassionate people who aren't saved! Jesus is not teaching salvation here, but about showing evidence that we desire to live as God is calling us to live by how we treat others. I realize we can easily go broke trying to help everyone. One must pray for His guidance and then make the best decisions we can in such situations.

That leads to the final story in Chapter 10. This is another famous story about two sisters who both are believers in Jesus. When He showed up, one sat at His feet listening to Him, while the other focused on serving Jesus and the other guests there. What puzzled me is why did Luke decide to list this story next after the Good Samaritan parable? The previous story showed the benefit of serving. The sister's story

is also about serving. There's nothing wrong with being a good servant. The issue's priority. Remember Jesus desires we pray for workers for the harvest (witnesses for Him) and use our lives as witness!

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on the link for the detailed study. It's still a joy to study this stuff and again I'm grateful for everyone who reads this.