

ENGAGE

This week we are looking at Luke 10:1-24 and Ephesians 6:10-20

- The 72 are sent out, just as you and I are sent out, and Jesus speaks about authority and identity.
- My focus on Sunday will be that our authority is found in our identity with Christ. The armor of God is a picture of our identity in Christ as we face the enemy through life.
- The study below has many questions. My suggestion is to go through the questions and highlight one or two from each segment of the Luke passage that you will ask on Sunday.
- I have given you information for the Ephesians passage for your benefit. I will be preaching mostly from the Ephesians passage. If you focus on the sending of the 72 (all of us) and the authority we have in our identity in Christ, that should be beneficial for the Body as they come into worship service.
- Blessings to you all.

EXAMINE

Luke 10:1-24

A. Instructing the seventy disciples at their departure.

1. (Luke 10:1-3) Seventy disciples are appointed and sent out.

After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves."

- a. After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also: Jesus knew that the time was short before His crucifixion, and that there were still many villages that had not yet heard His message. So, Jesus needs help getting the message out, and He turns to the larger group of His disciples.
 - i. The harvest is great: This is still true. If we believe that it is but a short time until Jesus comes back, we should make the principles of Jesus' commission to the seventy our own.
- b. The laborers are few: This means not only that there needs to be more workers, but that we have to be about our work for the Lord. When there is a lot of work and few workers, you have to get busy.
- c. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest: Jesus commands them to pray; the work in front of them is great and cannot be accomplished without much prayer.

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d. Go your way: Jesus commands them to go, because God will use them to answer their own prayers.

e. I send you out as lambs among wolves: Jesus commands them to go with a certain kind of heart, that trusts in God and doesn't seek to abuse and manipulate people. Going as lambs among wolves doesn't sound very attractive to us! Yet, it is exactly as Jesus was sent, and how the power of God worked through Him mightily.

2. (Luke 10:4-8) Specific guidelines for their ministry.

"Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you."

a. After Jesus got them praying, after He got them going; and after He put their hearts in the right place, He next gives them specific instructions for ministry. They were not to be distracted either by material concerns (Carry neither money bag, sack, nor sandals) or by tedious ceremonies of etiquette (greet no one along the road).

b. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give: They were to trust that God would provide for them through the generosity of others, and they were to thankfully receive what was offered to them.

i. For the laborer is worthy of his wages: Jesus told His disciples to not regard the support given to them as charity, but as justified payment for their work on behalf of God's kingdom.

3. (Luke 10:9) What Jesus wanted the seventy to do: to heal and to preach.

"And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'"

a. And heal the sick: The healing was important because it showed that though the Kingdom of God was coming with power (as everyone expected it would), and the power would be shown in acts of mercy and kindness (which was not expected).

b. Say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you": this means that the healing was a part of their preaching; they would then describe what the kingdom of God was all about, from what Jesus had taught and shown them.

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4. (Luke 10:10-16) What would happen to those who would reject the message of the seventy.

"But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 'The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.' But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city. Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades. He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."

a. The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you: When we truly preach Jesus' message, and do what Jesus did, we can trust that if we are rejected, it is because they reject the message of Jesus instead of rejecting us.

i. Unfortunately, sometimes through our own obnoxious manner or lack of love, people reject Jesus because of us. This should never be the case.

b. Sodom ... Tyre and Sidon: These were each notoriously sinful cities. Jesus says that the cities that reject His message are in more trouble before God, because they have seen a greater work of God than any of those sinful cities did, yet they still reject Him.

i. The more we hear God's truth, and the more we see Him move, the more we are accountable for. Since the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum had received such convincing signs, they are held to greater account for what they have seen.

ii. The Bible never specifically mentions Jesus' miracles in Chorazin. This is an indication that the gospels are sketches of Jesus' life, not full biographies. The Apostle John admitted this, saying it would be impossible to recount everything Jesus did (John 21:25).

B. Joy at the return of the Seventy.

1. (Luke 10:17-20) The joy of the seventy and Jesus' warning.

Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

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a. Even the demons are subject to us in Your name: When we look carefully at the commission Jesus gave these seventy (Luke 10:9), we see that Jesus had not originally commissioned them to cast out demons (as He did the twelve disciples in Luke 9:1-2). Therefore, this was an unexpected blessing of their ministry.

i. When we step out and do what Jesus tells us to do, we should expect that He would bless us with even more than He told us to expect.

b. I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven: What is Jesus talking about? The Bible actually mentions four falls of Satan.

i. From glorified to profane (Ezekiel 28:14-16).

ii. From having access to heaven (Job 1:12, 1 Kings 22:21, Zechariah 3:1) to restriction to the earth (Revelation 12:9).

iii. From the earth to bondage in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3).

iv. From the pit to the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

c. Here, Jesus speaks of Satan's "first" fall, from glorified to profane. What Jesus just saw in the disciples was evidence that Satan had already lost his position of power. He is a conquered enemy, and when we act in the name of Jesus, victory is assured.

d. In remembering the fall of Satan, Jesus also warns them against pride. After all, if Satan could fall like lightning from his place of high spiritual status and privilege, so could they.

e. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you: Jesus then warns them to rejoice in what God has done for them (because your names are written in heaven), not in what they had done for God (that the spirits are subject to you).

i. Some people get "drunk" on the idea of spiritual power. After God uses them in some way, they have an arrogance that is very impressed with all they do for God. God wants us to always see that what He has done for us always is far greater than what we could ever do for Him.

2. (Luke 10:21-22) The joy of Jesus as He sees the work of God in His people.

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."

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a. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit: Jesus is genuinely excited here. Literally, the ancient Greek says He was thrilled with joy. God delights in using the weak and foolish things of this world to confound the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

i. Geldenhuys says that the ancient Greek word for rejoiced is "referring to exceptional rejoicing and exultation."

b. I thank You, Father: Jesus' joy makes Him break out into prayer. He praises God the Father for His wisdom, for His plan, and for His own unique relationship with God the Father.

c. In this prayer, Jesus highlights:

- His unity with the Father (All things have been delivered to Me by My Father).
- His special relationship with the Father (no one knows who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son).
- How God allows us to have some part in that special relationship (and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him).

3. (Luke 10:23-24) Jesus tells the disciples of the unique blessing they have.

Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it."

a. Many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it: How the great men of the Old Testament would have longed to see Jesus' ministry and to minister for Him! How David would have loved to see Jesus do the things He did, and how Isaiah would have longed to hear what Jesus said! We have these privileges, but they did not.

C. Summary of the work of the Seventy: how we go forth with the gospel.

1. The harvest is great: We do the work knowing how big the job is.
2. The laborers are few: We do the work knowing that we have a key job.
3. Pray the Lord of the harvest: We do the work with a lot of prayer.
4. Go your way: We are to actually go and do the work.
5. Like lambs among wolves: We do the work making ourselves vulnerable, letting God be our strength.
6. Carry neither: We do the work without reliance upon anything except the gospel and power of God.
7. Greet no one: We do the work not allowing social obligations to hinder our work.
8. Whatever house you enter: We do the work expecting that God will bring help and provision.

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9. Eating and drinking such things as they give: We do the work not being hung up on minor points.

10. Heal the sick: We do the work looking to minister to the whole person with the power of God.

11. Say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you": We do the work preaching that the King and His kingdom are here.

12. But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets: As we do the work, we don't waste our time on those who are rejecting the gospel.

13. He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me: We do the work remembering whom we represent.

14. The seventy returned with joy: We do the work expecting God to do more than we expect.

15. Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit: We do the work knowing that Jesus has so much joy when we do His work.

Ephesians 6:10-20

The preacher receives help from the Ephesians text because it addresses the churches' task in the face of the gospel proclamation. The text is structured so that we hear, first, a rationale for the task ("to stand against the wiles of the devil"), secondly, the needed armor (truth, righteousness, peace, faith), and finally, the requisite spiritual orientation (prayer in the Spirit).

The churches are to maintain strength, wearing the "armor of God," in order to pray that "the mystery of the gospel" will be proclaimed. The proclamation is not about something knowable in the way we know a fact or a brute encounter. The proclamation is about something irrevocable (a crucifixion), unbelievable (a resurrection), and imperative (true life).

On one level, the text concerns the proclamation not just of the gospel but of the mystery of the gospel, for the command to have life eternal through eating bread and drinking wine in Jesus' name is, indeed, a mystery. On another level, the text's command is directed to the assembly to pray for the preacher! Consider that this praying is so arduous and important that it requires serious attention to armaments which not only protect those who pray but also pierce the listener.

Battlefield imagery is problematic for many Christians. Here we have the warrior garb of Roman soldiers who upheld an oppressive, totalitarian regime. A soldier conscripted from among the large percentage of the population who were not Roman citizens would receive citizenship with its many benefits after serving for at least 25 years.¹ When obedience reaps huge rewards, a soldier eagerly carries out the tyrant's orders.

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Do Christians really need a soldier's garb? Years ago Marva Dawn gave a Bible study in which she talked about the language in the old hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers," reminding us that following Christ Jesus by praying for our enemies, turning the other cheek, forgiving endlessly, etc., is in many respects to live embattled. It is not to fight against other people. It is not a triumphal war to form a Christian government (a theocracy like that endorsed today by various religious traditions). It is not a struggle opposing non-Christians or back-sliders or even one's own petty and enormous inabilities. The task is much bigger, and for that reason the image of being robed in the armaments of violence is meant to emphasize the eschatological scope of Christian identity.

The "whole armor of God" is needed for the war against the principalities and powers, and against the forces of sin, our own separation from the Holy One, our own desires for what does not feed and nourish God's creation. The enemy (verse 12) is "the rulers... the authorities... the cosmic powers of this present darkness... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." The enemy threatens from within and outside ourselves. To be readied for war with that enemy is to be set for the daily battle against all that opposes God's desire that "the mystery of the gospel" give joy on Earth.

Several commentaries describe these six pieces of armor with varying explanations of what they offer to the faithful. One matter to hold in mind is that, while they constitute the garb of an individual soldier, in the context of serving as equipment for prayer, they are the armor of the church as a body. We wear these gifts together. We "stand therefore" (verse 14) shoulder to shoulder as Roman soldiers would do,² as today's riot police do: an impenetrable wall of strength.

The belt holds up the toga so the soldier can move unencumbered by cloth. The "belt of truth" fixes what is necessary in such a way that it leaves the church free and flexible, able to walk or run, loosed from what constrains or trips the wearer.

The breastplate covers the core of the body. Righteousness protects the heart and lifeblood from cosmic evil.

Shoes are for readiness to stand and speak peace.

The shield is defense against flaming arrows. Roman shields were leather, wetted against incoming fire, and large enough to cover the one who carried it and one-third of the person beside him.³ The shields were linked, so that again, we can see the church, armed with faith, facing assaults from those who do not know the gospel is about peace.

The "helmet of salvation" reminds us of baptism, the cross on our foreheads.

The only piece of this armor that can be used for offense is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Proclaiming the mystery of the gospel, the word of God both cuts and salves. It is law and gospel,

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in Lutheran terms -- trouble and grace, in the language of homiletician Paul Wilson.⁴ Even the offensive weapon is for healing and peace, because, in Christian terms, the Spirit kills and brings to life.

The preacher is given all this specificity in exploring the paschal mystery so that, in the end, the assembly can feel the armored heft and power of God's Word and move emboldened into the week ahead where the church is to pray in the spirit and persevere. Living the paschal mystery in the presence of the forces of destruction calls for impressive tools.

Suggested Bible Study

1. ASK FOR INSIGHT; READ THE PASSAGE

- a. (a) Read Luke 10:1-4. How did Jesus send his disciples out? What would be some reasons for this approach (Acts 13:2-4)? What might be the basis for the 70 (72 in some versions; Numbers 11:16; Genesis 10)?
- b. (b) What term is often used to refer to reaching others (Matthew 9:37-38; John 4:35-38; 1 Corinthians 3:6-9)? What is the greatest need? How are we to respond to this need? Who is in charge of this?
- c. (c) What does he call these who are sent out? Is there any danger for them (Luke 10:3; Matthew 10:22; John 15:20; 16:2)?
- d. (d) How is sense of urgency and importance conveyed about their task in Luke 10:4 (also Luke 9:57-60)? What is God's promise to them in Luke 22:35? Does this mean we should not be friendly to people? Explain.
- e. (e) Family: Read Luke 10:1-4 and John 4:35-38. Talk about the importance of sharing the gospel. What are the dangers? What are the rewards? What are some reasons that we delay or avoid this? Pray that you might have opportunities this week to share the good news with someone.

2. ASK FOR INSIGHT; READ THE PASSAGE

- a. (a) Read Luke 10:5-9. What kind of responses were these disciples to look for? What might this mean (Ephesians 2:17; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20)?
- b. (b) Read 2 Corinthians 2:15-16. How does this help to explain the responses of people to the gospel?
- c. (c) For this mission, how were these disciples to conduct themselves? Why was it important that they not go to many different houses? What is the responsibility of those who receive the gospel (Galatians 6:6)?
- d. (d) Why does Jesus tell them to eat what is set before them (1 Corinthians 10:27)? What kind of cities were the 70 sent to? What was the focus of their message?

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- e. (e) Why do we need to be careful not to offend others when we are sharing the gospel (Luke 17:1-2; Matthew 18:17; Romans 14:20; 1 Corinthians 10:32; 2 Corinthians 6:3; 1 Corinthians 9:18-23)?
 - f. (f) Family: Read Luke 10:5-9 and 2 Corinthians 2:15-16. Why do people respond differently to the gospel? What is one indication that God is working on a person's heart? Pray that you might be sensitive to those who are open to the gospel.
3. ASK FOR INSIGHT; READ THE PASSAGE
- a. (a) Read Luke 10:10-16. Will everyone response properly to the gospel (John 15:18-27)? What should we continue to do?
 - b. (b) What symbolic action were these men told to make? Is this required all the time or was it a special sign to the Jews about their rejection of the Messiah (Acts 18:6)?
 - c. (c) What cities does Jesus say will receive a more tolerable judgment? Why? What is said about the miracles done in Chorazin (do a search)? What does this tell us about the ministry of Jesus (John 20:30-31)?
 - d. (d) What did Jesus say about those who reject his servants (John 13:20)? What did he also say about those who receive his messengers (Matthew 10:40-42)?
 - e. (e) Family: Read Luke 10:10-16. Will everyone receive the message of salvation? Talk about who we should respond when people reject the gospel. Pray that you will have a right heart whenever you are rejected for following Jesus.
4. ASK FOR INSIGHT READ; THE PASSAGE
- a. (a) Read Luke 10:17-20. What were these disciples excited about when they returned? What other things had they been doing (Luke 10:9; 9:1)? Why do you think they were most excited about this?
 - b. (b) How did Jesus describe the impact of their ministry? What did Jesus say about this ministry in Luke 11:20?
 - c. (c) What do these verses tell us about how Satan is defeated (Revelation 12:11; Colossians 1:12-14; Acts 26:18)?
 - d. (d) What should we rejoice about (Luke 10:20)? Why should this always be our greatest joy (Luke 15:7, 10, 32)?
 - e. (e) Family: Read Luke 10:17-20 and Luke 15:1-10. What happens when a person comes to faith in Christ? How does all of heaven respond to this? Why is this the greatest miracle of all? Pray for someone that needs to know Jesus.
5. ASK FOR INSIGHT; READ THE PASSAGE
- a. (a) Read Luke 10:21-24. What did Jesus rejoice in? How deep was his joy?
 - b. (b) Who were the wise and the prudent that God did not reveal Jesus to? Why does God do this (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)?
 - c. (c) What kind of heart is open to the revelation of God (Mark 10:15; Matthew 18:3; Luke 18:17; John 3:3-6; Matthew 16:17; John 9:39)? How is the new birth a mysterious and miraculous event?

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- d. (d) According to Jesus, what is the greatest blessing of all (Matthew 13:16; John 20:29)?
- e. (e) Family: Read Luke 10:21-24 and John 3:3-6. What is the new birth? What does it mean to become like a child in order to enter the kingdom of heaven? Pray that all of you might see what a great blessing knowing Jesus is!

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