

Lesson 9 24 September, 2017

"The Harvest Truly Is Great"

Lesson Scope: [Luke 10:1-24](#)

References in brackets refer to Luke 10 unless otherwise noted

Lesson Focus

Luke 10-18 covers approximately the last six months of Jesus' life. Most of the information contained in these chapters is not mentioned by the writers of the other Gospels. In this lesson Jesus chose seventy disciples to go before Him to prepare the people for His coming.

Chapter 9 records the incident when the Samaritans refused to receive Jesus because He was journeying toward Jerusalem. This tells us He had left Galilee and was moving south toward His appointment with the cross. The rest of His ministry was spent in Judea or in Perea on the east side of Jordan. Perea seems to have been overlooked by the religious movements of the day, but Jesus saw a harvest ripening there.

Jesus portrayed the multitudes as a great harvest ready to be reaped. He calls His followers to humbly proclaim the Gospel to the world.

We may be apt to think of the harvest as a person or area that is receptive to the Gospel. However, Jesus said, "The field is the world" (Matthew 13:38). This lesson applies to all of us as we relate to our neighbors and acquaintances who need the Lord.

Lesson Aim: To present principles for laboring in the spiritual harvest.

Theme Verse: [John 4:35](#). Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

Lesson Text

"I Send You Forth

[Luke 10:1-16](#)

After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. ²Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. ³Go your ways: behold, I send

you forth as lambs among wolves. ⁴ Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. ⁵ And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace *be* to this house. ⁶ And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. ⁷ And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. ⁸ And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: ⁹ And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. ¹⁰ But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, ¹¹ Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. ¹² But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. ¹³ Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴ But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. ¹⁵ And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. ¹⁶ He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

"I Give Unto You Power"

[Luke 10:17-24](#)

And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. ¹⁸ And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. ¹⁹ Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. ²⁰ Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. ²¹ In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. ²² All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and *he* to whom the Son will reveal *him*. ²³ And he turned him unto *his* disciples, and said privately, Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things that ye see: ²⁴ For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

Questions for Study

"I Send You Forth"

1. Why might the Lord have sent the seventy to prepare for Him when He normally did not need advance preparation?
2. What guidelines was each group to follow in order to be successful?
3. What would be a practical application to verse 4 in our day?
4. What are some ways to remind people that the kingdom of God is come nigh them?

"I Give Unto You Power"

5. Why did Jesus mention that He had seen Satan fall from heaven?
6. What are some areas that could get misplaced attention in gathering in the harvest (10:20)?
7. How should the truths expressed in verse 21 affect us as we spread the Gospel?

Analyzing the Passage

The "other seventy" that Jesus appointed were in addition to the twelve that were sent earlier. It is interesting that Jesus chose seventy disciples to assist Him. This would have been a familiar number to the Jews, since the Sanhedrin had seventy members and Moses had chosen seventy elders to assist him in his work. The salutation forbidden in verse 4 may have involved an embrace. It was a form of greeting that could have sidetracked the seventy from the urgency of their mission. The greeting they were instructed to use (10:5) was a common greeting, but in this case focused on the purpose of their mission and was a means of determining who was open to their ministry.

Much of this ministry was on a personal level. It was carried out in the homes of those who were open to them. This experience was valuable in preparing men to assist the twelve in spreading the Gospel after the formation of the church. In exercising authority over demons, the seventy were experiencing the enabling power Jesus could give without being physically present. Jesus' response to their enthusiasm was to remind them that spiritual power and spiritual gifts are not an indication of personal attainment but are given by God to faithful believers.

Principles and Applications

"I Send You Forth"

1. The Lord appoints the laborers to a specific place in His work (10:1). The great work of preparing people so the Lord can touch them is the re-

sponsibility of God's children. We are all responsible to influence people for God whenever we have an opportunity. In life we often find a field of labor where we expend much of our efforts. This field may open to us through circumstances, as a result of our gifts, or by direct commission from the church. God has superintended this for the furthering of His kingdom. As we respond to His direction and appointments, we can be assured of His presence and power to do His work.

2. Laboring two by two adds security and strength to the work (10:1). Everyone has weaknesses and a certain amount of blindness. These shortcomings can become an obstacle to reaching people in need. Others can help to balance our weaknesses and also provide spiritual safety in the work.

3. The spiritual harvest is an urgent matter (10:2-4). One test of our sense of urgency is if we spend most of our time and energy learning how to accumulate material possessions and do not find time to reach out to lost souls. This includes finding time to support church-organized outreach as well as taking time from our busy schedules to help a searching soul.

4. Many dangers abound in Christ's service (10:3). In the past many people have paid with their lives for being active in the harvest. Today the greater danger seems to be the exposure we face. Whatever the dangers, we must not relax and forget we are in unfriendly territory. If we allow ourselves to believe we share a similar faith with all those around us who profess to be Christians, we will be blind to the dangers, and the work of gathering in the harvest will suffer.

5. Material or social interests could hinder the work (10:4). It is easy to see how too much baggage would have worn away the strength of the seventy disciples as they journeyed from place to place. Likewise, the wealth that is available to us today can wear away our spiritual vitality through the cares that come with it. Along with that, our social involvements must never cause us to compromise our mission for God. If our social life requires that in our dress or our conduct we blend with the world rather than leave a clearly identifiable witness for Christ, we are failing our Lord.

6. A more permanent work should be established where people are open to the Gospel (10:5-9). Jesus in His Great Commission gave this charge, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). It is not enough to lead men to Christ and then let them find their way alone. To teach them to practice the "all things" of Scripture requires an ongoing relationship with other believers.

7. Prudence must be used with those who reject the Gospel (10:10-11). In

relating to those who reject the Gospel, we want to leave something with them that the Lord can use to soften them. In some occasions, a rebuke for sin or a sober warning may help men realize the seriousness of resisting truth. While those rejecting the Gospel may close the door to us, we want them to know that if they have a change of heart, we are waiting to help them find the Lord.

"I Give Unto You Power"

8. The Lord enables laborers to overcome the powers of darkness (10:17-19). In seeking to help people find the Lord, there are many opportunities for misunderstandings. This is especially true in differing backgrounds and cultures. Add to this that the journey of faith can take time and patience, and the devil is there to hinder all the time. Yet many laborers in the harvest have observed the Lord helping people overcome the powers of darkness and have sensed His enablement to reach people they normally would not have been able to help.

9. It is of utmost importance for the laborer to maintain his relationship with God (10:20). The apostle Paul wrote of the danger of having preached to others and then becoming a castaway. Moving among an ungodly society on a daily basis can drain our spiritual life. It is important that in seeking to gather in the harvest, we do not become careless in our personal life and lose our way. We maintain our relationship with God by daily Bible reading, by faithfulness in prayer, and by a strong tie to God's people.

10. The truth of the Gospel is revealed to those of childlike faith (10:21). God does not need highly educated people to win others for Him. Working at gathering in the harvest may take us into situations that are unfamiliar, but what God needs most from us is a willingness to be guided by His Spirit. He can help us understand the needs of those we meet and help us present the truths of the Gospel in a way people can understand and find help.

11. We are privileged to be recipients of the Gospel message (10:23, 24). Many Old Testament saints looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. While their understanding in many cases was probably imperfect, they seemed to believe He would bring renewal. Today we can experience the many better things they looked forward to. The knowledge that we have been given spiritual opportunities many have not had should motivate us to work fervently in the harvest.

Important Teachings

1. The Lord appoints the laborers to a specific place in His work (10:1).
2. Laboring two by two adds security and strength to the work (10:1).
3. The spiritual harvest is an urgent matter (10:2-4).
4. Many dangers abound in Christ's service (10:3).
5. Material or social interests could hinder the work (10:4).
6. A more permanent work should be established where people are open to the Gospel (10:5-9).
7. Prudence must be used with those who reject the Gospel (10:10-11).
8. The Lord enables laborers to overcome the powers of darkness (10:17-19).
9. It is of utmost importance for the laborer to maintain his relationship with God (10:20).
10. The truth of the Gospel is revealed to those of childlike faith (10:21).
11. We are privileged to be recipients of the Gospel message (10:23-24).
12. The labor includes warning the unrepentant of coming judgment (10:10-13).

Answers to Questions

1. Why might the Lord have sent the seventy to prepare for Him when He normally did not need advance preparation?

It was a training period for the seventy in learning to reach out. It helped Him reach more people since He was still confined to a human body. The ministry of the seventy could break down some initial reservations and give a head start to Jesus' work in a community.

2. What guidelines was each group to follow in order to be successful?
Travel light (10:4), identify themselves (10:5), maintain contact (10:7), and make a contribution to the well-being of those they are with (10:9).

3. What would be a practical application to verse 4 in our day?
Laboring in the harvest requires laying aside legitimate comforts of life in many cases. For many who move to new areas, it involves a lower standard of living. Another application might be that we follow the Lord's leading in outreach, even if we are not always sure how it will work out financially. This is not to advocate carelessness, but if we sense the Lord's leading and have the blessing of His people, we may need to step out in faith.

4. What are some ways to remind people that the kingdom of God is come nigh them?

When we mention God, it reminds people of Him. To live a consistent life that practices the principles of Scripture is a reminder. We need to be care-

ful not to live in such a way that people conclude our way of life is just a culture. To remind them of the kingdom of God, they must be able to observe that we are motivated by our faith.

5. Why did Jesus mention that He had seen Satan fall from heaven?

He was reminding His disciples that while Satan was a powerful foe, in many ways he was also a defeated foe. We realize Satan and his power are real, and we are no match for him. But we also must never forget that under Christ's direction and protection, we need to have no fear of him.

6. What are some areas that could get misplaced attention in gathering in the harvest? (10:20)

We could put much emphasis on numbers brought to salvation. We could overemphasize dramatic conversions. We could put ourselves and our families in spiritually trying situations that eventually cause us to compromise or lose our own faith.

7. How should the truths expressed in verse 21 affect us as we spread the Gospel?

Although God uses our abilities, a simple childlike faith is more important than our abilities. If we depend on our abilities, we may actually block the Spirit's direction in our lives and become a hindrance to God's purposes.

Summarizing the Lesson

In the harvest field there is work to do,
For the grain is ripe, and the reapers few;
And the Master's voice bids the workers true
Heed the call that He gives today.

Crowd the garner well, with its sheaves all bright,
Let the song be glad, and the heart be light;
Fill the precious hours, ere the shades of night
Take the place of the golden day.

In the gleaners' path may be rich reward,
Though the time seems long, and the labor hard;
For the Master's joy with His chosen shared,
Drives the gloom from the darkest day.

Lo! the Harvest Home in the realms above
Shall be gained by each who has toiled and strove,
When the Master's voice, in its tones of love,

Calls away to eternal day.
Labor on! Labor on!

Keep the bright reward in view;
For the Master has said
He will strength renew;
Labor on till the close of day!
—*Christopher R. Blackall*

Research Guide

1. Read Jesus' commission to the twelve in Matthew 10:1-15 and Mark 6:1-13.
2. Also read Matthew 13:1-23. To reap a good harvest we need to be faithful in sowing good seed