

Message #46

Luke 10:1-9

Dr. A. W. Tozer, a Pastor and writer of the early to mid-1900's, said, "If the Holy Spirit were taken from this world, most ministries would continue right on and nobody would know the difference."

He wrote this because he had seen too many ministries that were built on human philosophy, gimmicks, public relations, entertainment and various techniques that were borrowed from the world of show business. He was dogmatic that these things had no business being in the church of God. The church was supposed to be a place of ministry of God's Word and prayer. As he observed things in his day, he concluded that very few ministries were built on these things so he concluded if the Spirit were taken out of most churches, nobody would know the difference. This certainly coincides with the Apostle Paul who said Satan does his best work in the arena of religion, appearing as an angel of light (II Cor. 11:13-15).

When Jesus Christ was here on earth physically, He personally trained His disciples for ministry. He taught them and He gave them instruction and power so that they could make a powerful difference for Him in this world.

As we come to this text, we come to a passage that is interesting, important and inspired. Jesus Christ decides to send seventy disciples out at a critical time in His life and ministry. He is heading to the cross and He sends them out to minister prior to Him visiting the city and going to the cross. **So this is a pure Christological philosophy of ministry when He was here on earth.** What we see here is this:

PRIOR TO JESUS CHRIST ACTUALLY ENTERING A SPECIFIC PLACE, HE SENT HIS DISCIPLES AHEAD OF HIM TO SPECIFICALLY MINISTER IN HIS SPECIFIC PRESCRIBED WAY.

Here is the kind of ministry to have prior to Jesus Christ entering Jerusalem and prior to Him returning to this world. This is the kind of ministry that will be blessed by Him and used by Him.

Keep in mind that this ministry of these disciples was sanctioned at the most crucial time in history. This ministry philosophy was spelled out just prior to Jesus Christ dying on a cross.

There are six observations we want to make:

OBSERVATION #1 – Jesus Christ specifically appointed these seventy for ministry. **10:1a**

After Christ got done teaching and reproving His disciples, He decided to appoint seventy others. The pronoun "others" means these seventy were different from the twelve apostles and they were different from the applicants He just turned down.

These were not apostles but were seventy other disciples. We may assume contextually that they met the prerequisites He just laid out in that they put Him first over everything and everyone. He appointed them.

The word “appointed” (ανακειδνυμι) is a rare Greek word. It is one that means to set apart and to consecrate in the sense of lifting up and declaring or showing something or to exhibit something (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 29).

Jesus Christ specifically set these seventy apart from all the people and he lifted them up and declared that they were His disciples, which He lifted up and elevated for service. **Being actually called by God and entrusted with ministry is an elevated upgrade from anything else one does in life. It is an appointed privilege to be selected by Him.**

Jesus Christ did not appoint everyone following Him. Jesus did not open up this responsibility to harvest to all people who believed in Him. He chose seventy.

These seventy were men who put Jesus Christ first above every earthly security, event and person. These seventy were serious about their commitment to Jesus Christ and Christ promoted them.

Those who are involved in ministry need to realize that what is at stake is the sovereign selective work of God. In fact, every person who believes on Jesus Christ needs to realize this. Our salvation was not determined by our whims, but by the selection of God (Eph.1:3-5).

When we realize that God has a sovereign stake in our lives, we should desire to minister His way.

OBSERVATION #2- Jesus Christ specifically sent these seventy out for ministry. **10:1b**

Jesus Christ specifically sent out 35 teams of two to go to cities that He Himself would visit. Jesus Christ intended to visit the cities where He sent these disciples, but before He did, He sent these two-man teams first. This idea of sending out two-man teams is a pattern Luke points out often in the development of the church (Acts 13:2; 15:27, 39-40; 17:14; 19:22). **By sending out pairs of men, there is double eyewitness to everything that happens (Deut. 17:6; 19:15); there is companionship; there is protection and there is accountability.**

In any work pertaining to Jesus Christ, He always has forerunners who communicate truth about His coming. For example, one day Jesus Christ will come back and Rapture the church and we communicate that as a church. Seven years after that happens, He will actually return to this earth to set up His Kingdom. Before He actually returns, He has sent out millions of His people all over the world to proclaim He is coming in the Church Age and He will send out 144,000 Jewish evangelists during the Tribulation.

It is interesting to note that He sent out 35 teams and not 70 individuals. You would think that by sending 70 individuals, He could cover more ground. What we learn here is that God is more interested in quality, rather than quantity.

OBSERVATION #3- Jesus Christ instructs these seventy to be men of prayer. **10:2**

Jesus Christ was only going to be on this earth for a short period of time. Time opportunity to see Him and believe in Him was limited and there were very few who could actually do the job.

The problem of ministry in Christ's day and the problem of ministry in our day is the same kind of problem; the quantity of potential work versus the number of qualified workers.

The work of God is always plentiful and the number of qualified workers is always few. There is an imbalance between the amount of work and the number of appointed workers. **One of the reasons why the labor force was so small is because Christ had just turned down three applicants because they were not willing to abandon everything for Him (9:57, 59, 61).** Christ demands that His ministers be willing to put Him first.

To illustrate the point of all of this, Jesus uses a farming illustration concerning the harvesting of crops. The problem was there were lots of crops, but few workers to harvest them. Again, keep the context in mind. Jesus could have sent out 70 individuals to 70 different places, but He coupled them into teams of two. So God is not interested in just numbers, He wants quality.

Now what is important to see here is that Jesus Christ teaches His disciples what they should do when they see a need for more quality disciples. He does not tell them to hold rallies and beg people to come forward to join God's work force. He does not tell them to get some talented musician to play soft music so they can move or manipulate people to get involved in service. **He does not tell them to challenge everybody to get involved; he tells them to pray.** Pray that God will raise up His laborers and send them out. **This is God's work, this is God's ministry and this is God's harvest and what is needed is men who have actually been called and gifted by God to do the work. God's ministers are chosen and sent by Him and what God's people need to do is pray that God will raise up those who will fulfill their responsibilities.**

It is important to bring out a dispensational point here. What exactly is the responsibility of one truly called by God today? We know from Matthew 13:30 that the harvest will not come until Jesus Christ returns to judge and harvest His crop. **Our primary responsibility today is not to harvest the crop; it is to sow the seed. The harvest is specifically connected to the physical coming of Jesus Christ.** Our responsibility today is to proclaim the Word, to plant and water so that God may produce increase. **Our primary harvesting responsibility today is sowing the truth.** Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. What we actually need are those who have been called and gifted by God who actually know the truth and can communicate the truth so others may be saved. In order for men sound in the Word to surface, we need to pray God will surface them.

There are many things that get done under the auspices of ministry, but until people are serious about prayer, God's presence and power will be missing. **In fact, leaders who don't pray are sinning (1 Sam. 12:23).**

When God raises up a quality laborer, behind the scenes, there are many people who are praying. No ministry will amount to anything without prayer. If we want God to produce a great harvesting work in this church, we must pray for it. God wants His people asking Him for results.

OBSERVATION #1- Jesus Christ informs the seventy that He is sending them into a hostile and dangerous world. **10:3**

Jesus Christ never portrayed ministry as being easy, fun or safe. He specifically says it will at times be difficult and dangerous. To do any true work for God requires risk. But when one is truly doing a work for God, survival is possible.

When Jesus compares lambs with wolves, rather than sheep with wolves, He is really intensifying the danger and hostility that a true disciple of Christ will face.

Luke uses the noun "wolf" two times in his writings (Luke 10:3; Acts 20:29). Matthew uses it twice and John once. **In every N.T. reference wolves represent religious people who are dangerous and false. This world is filled with these wolves that are out to kill God's truth and at times kill those presenting it.**

When Jesus uses this image here, He is telling the seventy that I am sending you out into a religious world that is hostile and false. That world will be your vicious opponent. They are secretive and dangerous. They will oppose your teaching and will try to destroy you.

Religious people with a variety of beliefs will oppose you and hate you. God's truth will pierce the heart of the wolf and his hate will be evident. Any true minister of God's grace can expect to be attacked by religious wolves.

Back in 1884, Funk and Wagnall published a massive three volume work called *The Theocratic Kingdom*. It was written by George Peters. George Peters came to the conclusion that there was a major difference between Israel and the Church. He concluded that Israel would receive a literal Kingdom based on the promises God made in His Word. He said that unless one understood this, he could not properly understand the Bible. The majority of the religious world hated him and there were times he feared for his life.

It is a war and those who are truly doing the work of God will learn they are lambs among wolves.

OBSERVATION #5- Jesus Christ gives the seventy travel and ministry instructions. **10:4b**

Jesus specifically gave travel instructions to the seventy. These are similar to the instructions He had given to the twelve, when He sent them out. This is a short-term ministry assignment and they are to travel lite because they will not be in those cities for very long. Now when you travel, there are provision concerns. One must count the cost of any travel trip. There are seven responsibilities and travel instructions that He lays out:

Responsibility #1 - Do not take a money belt. **10:4a**

They would not need a money belt because the assumption is that God would provide everything they needed. He would provide the means for them to accomplish the goal.

Responsibility #2 - Do not take a bag. **10:4b**

This is a reference to either a traveler's bag or a beggar's bag. A traveler's bag was kind of like a backpack or knapsack that held various supplies. When someone carried one of these bags, it typically meant one was on some independent trip and had plenty of supplies for the trip. A beggar's bag was used to get people to give to you.

Responsibility #3 - Do not take shoes. **10:4c**

This seems to be an admonition not to take back-up pairs of shoes. You will not be gone long enough to need another pair of sandals or shoes.

Responsibility #4 - Do not greet someone on the way. **10:4d**

The point here is not that you did not say hi to people, it was that you did not get sidetracked from your primary responsibility. There was no time for socialization. David Garland said, "Harvesters cannot dawdle, and they cannot be delayed by the lengthy exchange of niceties that governed etiquette" (*Luke*, p. 426). In other words, stay focused on your target and get there to get the job done. Don't stop or get distracted because you bump into someone you know.

Responsibility #5 - When you choose to enter and stay in a house, then stay there. **10:5-7**

Now in **verse 5** Jesus says the first thing you do when you enter a house is to pronounce a blessing of peace on the family and home that has housed you. You tell them that the peace of God and the blessings of God are on this house for taking you in.

According to **verse 6**, if a man realizes that you represent Me and I am God, then that peace will be on that home. But if not, it will return to you. This was a very special blessing given to these seventy to be able to do this.

Jesus says in **verse 7** that if the house takes you in, you stay here and you eat and drink what they give you because a laborer is worthy of his hire and do not be jumping from house to house.

A minister is worthy of support but you don't jump from place to place because you get a better offer. What Jesus is saying is if you go to a place and the people take care of you, then stay there.

They were to eat and drink what they were given. God did not want His ministers to be rigid, legalistic people. They were to go to places and minister in places.

Responsibility #6- Stay in whatever city receives you. **10:3a**

The ministry now expands from a house to a city. God wants His ministers to hunker down in cities where they are wanted and where they are received. That word "receive" (δεχομαι) is one that not only refers to a mental acceptance, but a kind and hospitable reception (*Ibid.*, p. 103). It seems to me the ministry principle is don't stay where you are not wanted; stay where you are wanted.

Responsibility #7- You eat what they serve you to eat. **10:3b**

What if they went to a house that served pork? What if they went to a house that served them something that was not kosher? They were to eat it. He did not want those representing Him to be rigid legalists. He wanted them to fit in with the city and the people to whom they were ministering.

OBSERVATION #6- Jesus Christ tells the seventy to heal the sick while preaching The Kingdom. **10:9**

These seventy were to heal the sick, but they were to do it by proclaiming the Kingdom of God gospel. They were to heal and preach. That Kingdom of God message was to say we are disciples of Jesus Christ and He is coming and He is the king and He can establish His kingdom, but you need to repent and believe Him.

The healing they performed was a healing designed to show that what they were telling them about Jesus Christ was true. Jesus Christ is the God/Savior/Messiah/King. Jesus Christ is going to come and when He does, you need to have believed in Him.