

The previous passage informed us that there were uncommitted followers who had priorities of comfort, family, and the expectation of others. But in this passage, we see that there were those who were willing to put Jesus first. Jesus as king of the kingdom of God is sending these men ahead of Him to announce His coming and prepare people to receive Him. That was what kings did when they visited a region. The disciples must have been convinced that this was it, the revolution that they had dreamed of was surely to happen soon. The new David was about to take over. Jesus corrected that misinterpretation of His kingdom in the parable of the mina (19:11f; John 18:36ⁱ).

¹ *After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.* Luke 10:1 Out of the large crowd now following Jesus, He selected seventy-two, which is six times twelve. Remember that twelve and its multiples are a governmental number. Some manuscripts have seventy instead. Seventy was the number of elders of Israel in the wilderness and the Sanhedrin. Either way it represents authority of a nation. It is interesting and possibly informative of Jesus' intentions to know that Genesis 10 lists seventy nations of the world, while the Greek version has seventy-two. This may show us that these chosen heralds were meant to represent all God's envoys that go out into the entire world to proclaim the kingdom is at hand. That includes you and me.

² *And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.* Luke 10:2 What follows is Jesus' instruction to those who are going before Him and to all since then who have heard the call to labor for the kingdom of God. Jesus foresaw a great harvest. These seventy-two men were insufficient for the task, for the task is world evangelism. Jesus was asking them and us to pray for more laborers like themselves. He didn't tell them to recruit more, but to ask the Lord of the harvest to send more. Where they were going and the preparation they did was only a tiny part of what needed to be done around the world. God calls us and sends us into the harvest field of our neighborhoods, work places, and the entire world (Mark 16:15ⁱⁱ).

It is God who prepares the hearts of individuals to hear the message the laborer proclaims. It is God who brings them to repentance and new life. At the same time, the worker's job is laborious. It is hard work. Harvesting in those days wasn't sitting on a tractor seat. It was long backbreaking days in the sun. Being a herald for Christ is not a life of leisure. We must watch for opportunities and obey the Holy Spirit at any cost.

³ *Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.* Luke 10:3 Jesus gave them a warning. Lambs are gentle and defenseless. We should understand that we are going to be surrounded by wolves. However, God is our shepherd (Psalm 23:1ⁱⁱⁱ), and He will keep us until it is our time. Don't be surprised by all the snarls and growls and attempts to devour you (2 Timothy 3:12^{iv}). Heralds of the Gospel have a dangerous job that requires us to continually look to our shepherd (Hebrews 12:2^v).

⁴ *Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.*
⁵ *Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!'* ⁶ *And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you.* Luke 10:4-6 These verses describe the immediate urgency of their mission at that time. Jesus was headed for the crucifixion. There was little time left for people to see His miracles and hear His

words. These men were going in faith that God would provide every need and those who met the needs would receive a blessing. They were not to greet those along the way. That seems discourteous, but greetings in that day were long conversations that took a long time. Time was short. They needed to be about their mission.

They were to accept the hospitality of the first person who invited them to stay with them. They would pronounce shalom to that home (1 Samuel 25:6^{vi}). If the householder was a man of peace, that blessing would rest on that home, but those who would not receive the blessing of peace by rejecting the message were to be warned.

⁷ And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Luke 10:7 They weren't to consider the possibility of better accommodations. The person they were with would only be with them a short time. It was a chance to disciple that person (Matthew 28:19^{viii}). God doesn't make mistakes. That first home was the one God sent them to and they should invest in that son of peace until it was time to move on. Jesus would soon be there, and they would be prepared to receive Him. **Watch for opportunities to disciple others.**

The laborer deserves his wages is a principle that the Apostle Paul will repeat (1 Timothy 5:18^{viii}). Those who devote themselves to ministry should be supported so that they can give their time to ministry. They should accept the support of those to whom they minister. While some abuse this right and become wealthy from fraudulent types of ministry, others say that ministers should all be bi-vocational. Jewish tradition gives us an idea of proper balance. It took ten men to establish a synagogue. The tithe of the ten would provide support for the leader of the synagogue that was the average of those men's income. If the minister becomes wealthier than the congregation from the income he takes from the church, he will answer to God. If he is poorer than the congregation average because the congregants won't tithe it is to their shame.

⁸ Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Luke 10:8 Jesus repeated the command to eat what was set before them. Perhaps that is because we can offend our host with our demanding appetites. I have a humorous story to relay to you regarding this verse. Jesus was telling His disciples to not be picky about their food but to trust God that it was what they needed. This verse came to mind when I was in Senegal. A family had invited our little mission team to dinner just before we left for the USA. I wasn't feeling well, not realizing I was dehydrated. The host said they had a special meal for us, a local favorite. When the pot was opened, there were sections of cow leg bones with a large portion of fat attached to each. One was set on my plate. The children of the family were all eating their portion with delight. I thought of this verse and cut off a small bite size piece, put it in my mouth, chewed, and started to gag. I apologized to our host and felt terrible about it. One of the children was happy to finish it for me. I could tell you of some of the things set before me in the mountains of Japan, but I don't want to ruin your lunch. We get spoiled in the USA, but missionaries don't have the luxury. Food can be too big of a priority to us. Jesus is telling them the kingdom of God is a much greater importance than eating food we are accustomed to or prefer.

⁹ Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' Luke 10:9 The seventy-two are doing what the twelve did previously (9:5^{ix}). Their mission is almost identical. The healing of the sick was a sign to the public that the message was from God. Remember that these people are used to the old wine, the traditional teachings of the Torah and oral laws (5:36,37^x). These messengers are

bringing the new wine of the Gospel and often the old wine is preferred. The healings were a sign that the old is fulfilled in the new (Matthew 5:17^{xi}). It was to help the hearers overcome the misguided interpretations of the past.

Critics say that somehow many people had the ability to heal in those days. One person healing many people is not recorded in ancient literature with the exception of Jesus and His followers. People paid attention when their chronically ill loved one was healed. It still happens today but mostly in the third world. I suppose that is because they don't explain it away as spontaneous remission, nor can they afford to turn to advanced medical care. The miracles confirmed the kingdom was indeed near, thus preparing their hearts for the arrival of Jesus.

¹⁰ *But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say,* ¹¹ *'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'* ¹² *I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.* Luke 10:10-12 Warn those who see the signs and reject the message (9:5^{xii}). Sodom had no signs given them. The more we see, the more we are accountable. Wiping off the dust meant the disciple wanted no part in the judgment that would fall on that town. It was what Jews did when they left a foreign nation and returned to Israel. The message was that these towns, though filled with Jews, was not a part of the people of God. The kingdom had come near, and they rejected it. This is when the blessing upon those who mourn would come upon the disciples (Matthew 5:4^{xiii}). They would mourn the souls of those who reject Jesus.

Should we warn the people to whom we witness if they have seen a clear sign of God at work and then reject the message? A warning might shock them into reconsidering their decision (Galatians 5:21^{xiv}). I know I first started asking to be saved out of the fear of judgment. I don't say we should speak this way to everyone with whom we share the Gospel, but perhaps with those who we know have seen a sign or been moved by the Holy Spirit. If we do find the need to warn the hearer, it should be done with genuine tears of love and sorrow for them.

¹³ *"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes."* ¹⁴ *But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.* Luke 10:13, 14 Jesus is still speaking to the seventy-two whom He is sending out. The remains of these three cities have been discovered. Bethsaida was only recently discovered under the ruins of a Roman city. It was previously mistaken for a ruin on a hill overlooking the lake. This was a triangle of cities on the north side of the lake. We can read of the miracles in Capernaum and Bethsaida, but Chorazin is only recorded in this woe. As John proclaimed, ³⁰ *Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.* John 20:30 (NIV)

Mighty works were done by Jesus, unparalleled things. When we see such evidence, it should stir faith to believe the message. But the people of these cities went on about their lives unchanged. The amazement wore off, and the wonder died. There was conviction but no repentance. Jesus confronted religious routine that wasn't from the heart, but only a few believed. Hatred of others unlike themselves was challenged, but they refused to hear.

In the previous verses Jesus told the seventy-two to shake off the dust from their clothes when a town rejected the message, a way of warning them that they were outside

God's kingdom. Jesus is doing the same here. He is with deep sorrow telling these cities that judgment is coming. They saw and heard but did not repent. If the Gentile towns of Tyre and Sidon saw and heard what these Jewish cities did, they would have repented. Jews saw those towns as unclean and destined for judgment. Isaiah and Ezekiel had prophesied their demise (Isaiah 23; Ezekiel 26-28). Jesus said even these towns were more open to the truth than these towns of Israel that held their religious education with great importance. He was teaching them the truth about pride in their religion. Religion meant nothing if the heart was not repentant. It will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment because they didn't have the witness of Jesus' miracles and words. The more we see and hear the more we are accountable (12:47, 48^{xv}).

¹⁵ And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. Luke 10:15 But surely Capernaum was different where Jesus stayed for much of His ministry. Think of all that was done there. The demon cast out of the man in the synagogue. Peter's mother-in-law healed. The entire town came to Peter's door and were healed. One group even broke through the roof. The town knew of Jesus' claim to forgive sins, proven by the raising of the paralyzed man. A leper was made whole in an instant. Even the ruler of the synagogue's daughter was raised from the dead! Surely, they had repented and would be exalted to heaven. No! They would be brought down to Hades!

¹⁶ "The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me." Luke 10:16 The one who hears Jesus' disciple share the good news of the kingdom, has heard from Jesus. The power of the Spirit helps the messengers of God and empowers their words. It is the same as if Jesus spoke them. If they reject the messenger, they reject Jesus. When they reject Jesus, they are rejecting God. That shows us the importance of faithfully representing Jesus!

This is another of those sayings of Jesus that if put in the mouth of anyone else, we would think the person had lost their mind. Who would say, "If you reject me, you reject God who sent me"? But Jesus is saying this is true even of His ambassadors. When we share the Gospel, the Spirit of God is present. To reject it is to reject God (John 15:20, 21^{xvi}).

¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" Luke 10:17 When Jesus sent the twelve out He specifically gave them authority over demons, but this was not mentioned when He commissioned the seventy-two. They seem to be joyfully surprised that they were able to cast out demons from those who were possessed. It was a successful preparation for Jesus entry into those cities. This may be part of the reason for the great crowds at the triumphal entry (19:37^{xvii}).

¹⁸ And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Luke 10:18 There are different explanations for Jesus' expression. These untrained workers dealt a shocking blow to Satan's domain. Jesus may have meant that Satan saw his influence diminished as sudden as lightning strikes. It was a powerful surprise blow. Another interpretation is that long before Jesus had seen Satan's fall from heaven (Isaiah 14:12^{xviii}). Therefore, these disciples should not be proud of their new-found authority, because it was a result of what God had done in limiting Satan's power.

¹⁹ Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Luke 10:19 These disciples, and by extension all who go out to proclaim the message, have been given authority.

Scorpions and snakes are representations of evil. No wonder so many have a strong adverse reaction to them. Jesus added "and all the power of the enemy." It was literally experienced by the Apostle Paul when the deadly viper bit him (Acts 28:3-5^{xix}). But don't test the Lord your God (Matthew 4:7^{xx})!

They were given authority over all the power of the enemy, and nothing could hurt them. This does not mean that we can't be harmed. It does mean that greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4^{xxi}). God allows trials of illness and seeming defeat to strengthen our faith (James 1:2-4^{xxii}). Consider Paul's trouble with his eyes, his shipwreck, being stoned, beaten, and chased out of towns (1 Corinthians 11:24-27^{xxiii}).

We see this power exercised by the Apostle Paul. He cast a demon out of a lady who was following his team and annoying them (Acts 16:18^{xxiv}). He caused a magician to be blind so that he would stop influencing a dignitary (Acts 13:11^{xxv}). He miraculously escaped a number of assassination plots.

Is this authority for all followers of Jesus? Certainly, it is for those who live in fellowship with Jesus and act at His leading proclaiming the Gospel, especially when sharing the Gospel to those who never heard. But like Jesus and the Apostle Paul, it does not mean that God will keep us from all harm, but rather that He protects us from any attacks of Satan that would hinder the ministry. With that assurance we can be patient in affliction, and fearlessly go forth with confidence (Romans 12:12^{xxvi}).

²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20 Jesus redirected the reason for joy. It is not that demons are cast out but that souls are saved. The person who is freed from oppression might turn again to bondage. The city that honors Christ will one day lie in ruins. Great Christian centers may end up in the hands of Muslims or atheists. What is eternal is your name in the book of life (Daniel 12:1^{xxvii}; Hebrews 12:23^{xxviii}; Revelation 3:5^{xxix}). That should be the reason for great joy. **That you are God's instrument in this world means you are chosen, redeemed, and will forever be the bride of Christ!** Now that is something to rejoice over!

God is using ordinary people like you and me to advance His kingdom in the hearts of men and women. That's amazing, and it give Jesus great joy. May God help us recognize the opportunities He sets before us and faithfully represent Him. May we be eager to share the good news of the salvation we have in Christ. And may our hearts always rejoice not so much in the power given us but that those who receive the message also have their names written in heaven. That will never pass away, nor will we ever tire of it. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor can we imagine the things God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9^{xxx}).

We are less than half way through Luke, and already we are reading of Jesus preparing the way for His journey to the cross (9:51^{xxxi}). He was preparing His followers to carry on. He was setting in motion His plan to prepare for Himself a pure and spotless bride (Ephesians 5:27^{xxxii}). Now that is a reason to rejoice in the Spirit! (Luke 10:21^{xxxiii})

Questions: 1 What was the mission of the seventy-two? Ours? 2 What was the warning? Is it for us too? 3 Why was it urgent? 4 What exactly did they do? 5 Who should we warn of the consequences of rejecting the Gospel? 6 Why were the three cities to be judged? 7 Why is hearing the messenger the same as hearing Jesus? 8 What is our responsibility? 9 What does verse 18 mean? 10 What is the most important reason to rejoice?

ⁱ **John 18:36 (ESV)**

³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."

ⁱⁱ **Mark 16:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Psalms 23:1 (ESV)**

¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

^{iv} **2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV)**

¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

^v **Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)**

² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

^{vi} **1 Samuel 25:6 (ESV)**

⁶ And thus you shall greet him: "Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have.

^{vii} **Matthew 28:19 (ESV)**

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

^{viii} **1 Timothy 5:18 (ESV)**

¹⁸ For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."

^{ix} **Luke 9:5 (ESV)**

⁵ And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them."

^x **Luke 5:36-37 (ESV)**

³⁶ He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.

³⁷ And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed.

^{xi} **Matthew 5:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

^{xii} **Luke 9:5 (ESV)**

⁵ And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them."

^{xiii} **Matthew 5:4 (ESV)**

⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

^{xiv} **Galatians 5:21 (ESV)**

²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

^{xv} **Luke 12:47-48 (ESV)**

⁴⁷ And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. ⁴⁸ But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

^{xvi} **John 15:20-21 (ESV)**

²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.

^{xvii} **Luke 19:37 (ESV)**

³⁷ As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen,

^{xviii} **Isaiah 14:12 (ESV)**

¹² "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!

^{xix} **Acts 28:3-5 (ESV)**

³ When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. ⁴ When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." ⁵ He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.

^{xx} **Matthew 4:7 (ESV)**

⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

^{xxi} **1 John 4:4 (ESV)**

⁴ Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

^{xxii} **James 1:2-4 (ESV)**

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

^{xxiii} **2 Corinthians 11:24-27 (KJV)**

²⁴ Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. ²⁵ Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; ²⁷ *In* weariness and painfulness, *in* watchings often, *in* hunger and thirst, *in* fastings often, *in* cold and nakedness.

^{xxiv} **Acts 16:18 (ESV)**

¹⁸ And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

^{xxv} **Acts 13:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand.

^{xxvi} **Romans 12:12 (ESV)**

¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

^{xxvii} **Daniel 12:1 (ESV)**

¹ "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

^{xxviii} **Hebrews 12:23 (ESV)**

²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

^{xxix} **Revelation 3:5 (ESV)**

⁵ The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

^{xxx} **1 Corinthians 2:9 (ESV)**

⁹ But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

^{xxxi} **Luke 9:51 (ESV)**

⁵¹ When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

^{xxxii} **Ephesians 5:27 (ESV)**

²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

^{xxxiii} **Luke 10:21 (ESV)**

²¹ In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.