

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*Ambassadors of Peace.*"

On Sunday mornings we're working our way through Luke's Gospel verse-by-verse and we find ourselves at **Luke 10:4**.

We're looking at Jesus sending out the 70, and I told you last week the instructions He gives them are very similar to the instructions He gave the 12. I don't want you to hear the same instructions the same info twice, so for some verses I'm going to direct you to the sermons on Luke 9:1-6.

Last week we covered **verses 1** through **3**. This morning we'll pick up at **verse 4**...

**Luke 10:4 Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.**

Everything in Jesus' instruction communicates the shortness of time and the urgency of the task.

These 12 men were given one of the most important missions in all of history. Typically, when you have something important to do, there's a list of things you need to take. Interestingly, instead of giving them a list of what TO take, He gave them a list of what not to take.

And it's a list of what you would normally take on a trip in Jesus' day:

- You would take a moneybag
- You would take a knapsack
- You would take sandals. More than likely they were supposed to wear sandals, but they weren't supposed to take an extra pair.

Jesus tells them not to take these things.

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This is the same instruction Jesus gave the 12, so if you want to know why He said this to them, I'd encourage you to go back to the sermons on **Luke 9**.

He did tell the 70 one thing though that He didn't tell the 12 and that's to "**greet no one.**"

This makes them sound unfriendly, but that's not really what's happening. In Jesus' day a greeting was a ceremony involving formalities and a meal. If they engaged in this w/ the people they met they'd never be able to reach all the people they needed to reach.

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Take a look at **verse 5**...

**Luke 10:5 Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’**

We greet each other with the word, “Hello,” but the Jews used the word “Shalom,” or peace.

But when Jesus told the 70 to say, “Peace,” it took on a far greater significance than the typical greeting of the day. Let me say it like this...

What sort of peace were they wishing for the people they met?

- Were they wishing peaceful lives for them...that they would never experience suffering or trials?
- Were they wishing peaceful relationships for them...that they would get along with everyone they met and never experience conflict or strife?

That’s not the peace they were offering. They were offering the most important peace...and this brings us to Lesson 1...

## **LESSON 1: CHRIST’S AMBASSADORS (PART I) OFFER PEACE BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.**

I told you last week that we aren’t the 70, so we can’t take what’s said to them and completely apply it to us...but there are some similarities. One similarity is they were ambassadors of Christ, and we are ambassadors of Christ, and we have the same message as them.

The message is recorded in **2 Cor 5:18-20**. Listen for the repetition of the word **reconcile**...

**2 Cor 5:18 God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**

Why would God need ambassadors to reconcile people to Him?

Our sin makes us God's enemies, but the Gospel allows us to be reconciled to Him...

**Rom 5:10 While we were [God's] enemies we were reconciled to [Him] by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.**

The Gospel establishes peace between us and God. This is why, **Eph 6:15** calls the Gospel the **Gospel of Peace**.

**Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we HAVE PEACE WITH GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

The Gospel removes the hostility that exists between us and God and establishes peace between us.

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Now to connect the dots, if you look back at **verse 5**...

**Luke 10:5 Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!'**

Notice the word **first**. Before they said or did anything else, they were to offer the house peace b/c that was their mission: preach the Gospel and offer peace between God and man.

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Look at the beginning of **verse 6** to see what would happen if they met believers...

**Luke 10:6a And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him.**

There are lots of titles for Christians in Scripture:

- Saints
- Believers
- Elect
- Brethren
- Children of God
- Chosen

And this verse shows another title: **son of peace**. This is fitting for two reasons:

1. Christians are at peace with God.

2. We're the only people who can know true, lasting peace...in this life and the next.

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Look at the rest of **verse 6**...

**Luke 10:6b But if not, it** (referring to peace) **will return to you.**

**Return to you** means they offered peace, but it was rejected. It doesn't literally mean it returned to them as though they gave it away and got it back, or it returned to them and then they had more of it.

Instead, peace is being objectified. It's presented as something physical and tangible. It could return to the 70 so they could take it and offer it to the next house.

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If the house did receive them, look at **verse 7**...

**Luke 10:7 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. 8 Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.**

I also covered these verses in **Luke 9**, so I don't want to spend much time on them. Briefly...

God's plan was for faithful Jews to give the 70 what they needed. It's similar to the way missionaries receive support like we talked about last week, or the way pastors receive support from our congregations.

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When they entered an area, they'd remain in the same house until their ministry in that area concluded. Then they'd move on to the next area and the process would begin again.

The words **Do not go from house to house** and **eat what is set before you** reveal that Jesus wanted them to be content with what they received:

- They weren't supposed to be picky.
- This was wise practically b/c it kept them from wasting time finding other homes, and it prevented hosts being offended when they moved down the street for better accommodations.

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Look at **verse 9**...

**Luke 10:9 Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’**

The words **heal the sick** reveal why we can’t put ourselves in these verses. We don’t receive the same supernatural power as them. We pray for the sick, but that’s much different than having power to heal.

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In **Luke 9**, when Jesus sent out the 12 they also preached the kingdom of God. I had a sermon on called, *“The Progressive Revelation of the Gospel.”* If what I’m about to say is interesting or confusing, I’d encourage you to listen to that sermon, b/c this is going to be very abbreviated...

Since they preached the kingdom of God, you could look at this and wonder, “Did they preach the Gospel?”

Yes, they did! The Gospel has always been the same in that man has always been saved by grace through faith...BUT the content of the Gospel has changed as greater revelation has been given.

I would encourage you to think of three dispensations of Gospel preaching:

1. The OT
2. Christ’s day, or the Gospels.
3. The Church Age

We tend to think of the Gospel as a NT invention, but the Gospel was preached throughout the OT as people heard the Messiah was coming. People were saved by grace through faith as they looked forward to the Messiah coming. For example:

- **Gal 3:8 [God] PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO ABRAHAM** (now listen to this and tell me if it sounds like a Gospel presentation...), **saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”**
- That doesn’t sound like a Gospel presentation, does it?
- It doesn’t mention the death, burial, or resurrection of Christ...but it couldn’t b/c the crucifixion hadn’t taken place yet.

But let me ask you this...

Did it let people look forward to Christ by faith?

- Yes, b/c Jesus was the way **all the nations [would] be blessed** and as Abraham – and others – believed God would fulfill His promise to bless the nations of the earth they were saved by grace through faith.
- **Gen 15:6** says **[Abraham] believed God, and [God] counted it to him as righteousness.**

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When the Messiah came, He brought the kingdom of God with Him from heaven to earth, so the priority was preaching that kingdom:

- In the OT, the Gospel was, “The Messiah – or king – is coming!”
- During Jesus’ earthly life the Gospel was, “The Messiah – or King – has come and brought His kingdom with Him:”
  - John the Baptist preached this message: **Matt 3:1 John the Baptist came preaching...2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”**
  - Jesus preached this message: **Matt 4:17 Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.”**
  - The 12 preached this message: **Luke 9:2 [Jesus] sent [the 12] to proclaim the kingdom of God.**
  - And this was the message preached by the Seventy: **Luke 10:9 Heal the sick in it and say to them, “THE KINGDOM OF GOD has come near to you.”**

Did you catch the language of nearness?

- The end of **verse 9** says **near to you.**
- The end of **verse 11** says **the kingdom of God has come near.**
- John the Baptist and Jesus said **the kingdom is at hand.**

Why does the kingdom sound so close?

Because Jesus brought the kingdom with Him – from heaven to earth – and people were invited to enter it by faith in the kingdom’s King.

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If the Gospel message during Jesus’ earthly life was the kingdom of God, what would be the Gospel message be after the King was rejected and killed?

After the cross, we preach Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection: **1 Cor 1:23 we preach Christ crucified.**

Before we move on from this topic, the main thing I want you to know is the Gospel has been preached throughout the Old and New testaments.

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But when the 70 preached the Gospel, some would reject the offer. Look at **verse 10** to see what to do when that's the case...

**Luke 10:10a 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.'**

Now let me ask you something...

In **verse 10** Jesus said **whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you**. Have we recently seen a town that didn't receive Jesus?

Look at **Luke 9:53**...

**Luke 9:53 But THE PEOPLE DID NOT RECEIVE HIM, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.**

Then what did James and John want to do? Call down fire on the town and destroy everyone. Then **verse 55** says [**Jesus**] **turned and rebuked them**.

I want you to notice the tremendous contrast between what James and John wanted to do, and what Jesus told the 70 TO do.

The reason for this brings us to the next part of Lesson 1...

## **LESSON 1: CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS (PART II) ARE PEACEFUL MEN.**

There are a few directions I could take this. Obviously I could spend some amount of time talking about how we – as Christ's ambassadors – are supposed to be peaceful people. We could have a whole sermon about the importance of being peacemakers.

Instead, I want to focus on the application that is shown through the text...or in other words, I want to talk about why the 70 could be peaceful men. I see one main reason that has a lot of application for us...

They could be peaceful men b/c they could leave the results to God...versus feeling as though they had to make people accept the message.

If you think about their mission, it could've gotten pretty ugly:

- It could've involved a lot of arguing...
- It could've involved a lot of contention...

But Jesus said if people rejected their message they were supposed to walk the streets and say the words of **verse 11...**

**Luke 10:11 “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.”**

This isn't figurative language. They were commanded to do this. The Jews shook the dust from their feet as an expression of disdain when they returned from Samarian or Gentile regions. They thought so poorly of the area they didn't want to take any of it w/ them, even the dirt itself. Jesus tells the 70 – which He also told the 12 – to apply this to Jewish towns that reject the message. The point is Jews who reject Christ are no better than Samaritans or Gentiles.

So please notice the balance:

- They weren't supposed to argue or get upset...they simply moved on to the next town.
- But they were still supposed to tell the people they were rejecting the kingdom of God.

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And what did it mean if they rejected the kingdom of God?

I will cover **verses 12-15** in a moment, but for now look at **verse 16...**

**Luke 10:16 “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.”**

Since the 70 represented Christ, when people rejected the 70, they were rejecting Christ...and rejecting Christ meant rejecting the **One who sent [Him]**, which is to say rejecting God the Father.

And I draw attention to this, b/c it reveals why the 70 could be peaceful men: they weren't really being rejected!

If we remember this, it will allow us to be peaceful when we share the Gospel, b/c nobody ever really rejects us. Our pride tells us we're being rejected, but the truth is – as Christ's ambassadors – people are truly rejecting Him.

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As we continue through Luke's Gospel I want to keep identifying the OT passages that prefigure or foreshadow what we're studying.

There is a passage in the OT that looks forward to this passage, and here's the context...

- Jesus told the 70 to go through Israel offering peace to the different towns.
- Joshua is a clear OT picture or type of Christ. His name – Joshua or Yeshua – is the Hebrew form of Jesus.

1,500 years before Jesus sent His men through towns in Israel offering peace, Joshua sent his men through towns in Israel offering peace.

Let me read the verses, but listen for the dramatic difference between Joshua's men and Jesus' men...here's part of **Deut 20:10-13**...

**Deut 20:10** “When you draw near to a city to fight against it, **OFFER TERMS OF PEACE TO IT.** **11** And if it responds to you peaceably and it opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall do forced labor for you and shall serve you. **12** But if it makes no peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. **13** And when the Lord your God gives it into your hand, you shall put all its males to the sword.

Okay, now please follow me...

Deuteronomy means “Second Law,” b/c it's the book that records the Law being repeated to the new generation of Israelites...b/c the old generation that received the Law at Sinai died after wandering around for 40 years.

And did you notice:

- The way the towns of Israel were treated under Joshua in the Old Covenant when they rejected the offer of peace...
- Versus the way the towns of Israel were treated under Jesus - the true and greater Joshua - under the New Covenant when they rejected the offer of peace?

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After looking at the way Jesus rebuked James and John, and looking at the way Jesus instructed the 70 – compared with the way Joshua instructed his men – how does Jesus look? What words would you use?

- Peaceable
- Kind
- Merciful
- Compassionate
- Forgiving

People reject Jesus and it almost looks like no big deal! The 70 shake off the dust and that's the end of it.

But right when you're about to start thinking that rejecting Jesus is no big deal, look at **verse 12**...

**Luke 10:12 I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day** (referring to the day of judgment) **for Sodom than for that town** (referring to the town that rejects Christ).

This truly is an unbelievable statement from Jesus. Consider what He just said:

- To the Jews – and to us – Sodom is the picture of wickedness.
- Towns couldn't be worse than Sodom even if they tried.

So to say it will be **more bearable** for Sodom would be unbelievable to Jesus' listeners.

The words **more bearable** don't mean that Sodom is going to heaven and these other towns are going to hell:

- They're all going to hell, but this shows there are degrees of punishment in hell.
- Hell will be miserable for everyone, but apparently it will be **more bearable** for some than others.

And these towns that rejected Christ were actually going to have it worse than Sodom.

He makes a similar point in the next verse. Look at **verse 13**...

**Luke 10:13 “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.**

In this verse Jesus makes what – at least to me – is probably the most troubling statement from Him in the Gospels. He said if the same thing happened in **Tyre and Sidon** – that happened in **Chorazin and Bethsaida** – **Tyre and Sidon** would've repented.

I don't think this is as literal as it sounds, b/c if it was, then Jesus is people are going to hell when He knew they would repent. I don't think that's God's character.

Jesus often used exaggeration to make points and I think this is one of those times...

Miracles doesn't cause people to repent. We know that from:

- Moses' day when Pharaoh and most of Egypt didn't repent despite seeing the most dramatic miracles in all of history.
- The Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus: **Luke 16:31 He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets (if Scripture isn't enough to cause them to believe), neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead (no amount of miracles will do it).'**'"

So if Jesus wasn't speaking literally, what was He saying?

I think He's simply making the point that it was going to be really bad for these cities that rejected Him...and we'll talk about why in just a moment.

For now, look at **verse 14**...

**Luke 10:14 But it will be (here it is again...) more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.**

**Tyre and Sidon** were also notoriously wicked cities. For Jesus to say it would **be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon** than **Chorazin and Bethsaida** was also pretty unbelievable, b/c **Chorazin and Bethsaida** didn't seem to approach the wickedness of **Tyre and Sidon**.

Jesus has one more city to mention. Look at **verse 15**...

**Luke 10:15 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.**

Let me get you to notice what Jesus did in these verses...

- He mentioned 3 notoriously wicked ancient cities: **Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon.**
- To condemn 3 present-day cities that rejected Him: **Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.**

It was particularly chilling for Jesus' listeners to hear Him mention these ancient cities b/c they had been judged and everyone knew it. Nobody was waiting around to see if God would actually punish them. This made the punishment of the 3 present-day cities seem certain.

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So here's the obvious question...

How could less wicked cities receive stronger punishment than wicked cities?

The answer brings us to Lesson 2...

## LESSON 2: ACCOUNTABILITY DETERMINES JUDGMENT.

If you look in **verse 13** it says Jesus performed **mighty works** in **Chorazin** and **Bethsaida**. This gave them very high accountability.

In **verse 15** Jesus named **Capernaum** and said it would be brought down to Hades. Why was it singled out for a particularly strong judgment?

- This was Jesus' headquarters during His Galilean ministry.
- He lived among these people for 18 months.
- Second only to being the 12 apostles themselves you can't get higher accountability.

But despite all these cities had been given they rejected Christ and this made them deserving of terrible punishment. This isn't my opinion. This is why Christ discussed being rejected in **verse 16**...

**Luke 10:16** "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."

Jesus concluded with this statement, b/c it reveals why their judgment was so high. They rejected Christ AFTER being given such special privileges.

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The Bible doesn't say God is fair. If God was fair everyone's lives, privileges, trials, and blessings would be exactly the same.

But the Bible does say God is just. And there might not be any place in all of Scripture that shows God's justice clearer than these verses, b/c they show that God judges – and by extension punishes – people based on their accountability.

Listen to these verses...

**Luke 12:47 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.**

The lesson of these verses is so important, b/c it reveals why we can't compare ourselves with others:

- If the towns in Jesus' day compared themselves with the wicked cities in the ancient world, they would've thought they were pretty good...when you look at Sodom you can feel like the best city in history.
- If we compare ourselves with wicked people – which is how we tend to compare ourselves: we find the wickedest people around us – then we'll feel good about ourselves.

But the standard for comparison is Christ, and when we compare ourselves w/ Christ we see how far short all of us fall. This is why we all need to repent and embrace Christ.

If you haven't done that, the lesson of these verses is the more you know, the worse your punishment will be if you reject Christ.

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Let me close by asking you this...

How much have you learned about Christ?

- How many sermons have you heard?
- How many Bible studies have you attended?
- How long have you gone to church?
- How many Christian books have you read?
- How many Christian conferences have you attended?

I think for most of us, the answer is, “a lot,” and that’s why our accountability is so high.

Be thankful for the Savior who delivers us from the punishment we deserve, and if you haven’t surrendered your life to that Savior, do so, before you stand before Him in judgment.

If you have any questions about anything I’ve shared this morning or you’d like prayer for anything, Pastor Doug and I will be up front after service and we’d consider it a privilege to speak with you.

Let’s pray.