

## *Bringing Jesus to Your World*

### HOW TO DEVELOP A MISSIONAL MINDSET Luke 10:1-24

Good morning, Central Bible Church. Last week, we began our series in the Gospel of Luke entitled “Bringing Jesus to Your World.”

By the way, what do you think of the amazing background image that Jeni Brown came up with? An image, a picture says a lot, doesn't it? We see the TriMet MAX stopping in our city. And who gets off the MAX? That's right...it's Jesus himself!



By his expression, it's obvious that he is very intentional. He is *on mission* in the world. Our key verse for this series, Luke 19:10 says, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” And if we are his followers, that's what he calls us to also. God calls you and me to be *on mission* for Jesus Christ – all the time, anywhere, and even at great personal cost – because the stakes are very, very high.

But just what does this mean for you and me? How do we develop this kind of mindset? How can we become more “missional” in our daily lives? How can we best bring Jesus to our world? I believe that Jesus gives us some answers to those questions in Luke 10.

#### **1. Every Christian has been called to count the cost of bringing Jesus to our world.**

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. Luke 10:1

As for the 72 disciples sent out by Jesus, you and I are called to be *on mission* for Jesus Christ. This mission involves (as we'll see in the following verses) proclaiming the *words* of the gospel, carrying out the *works* of the gospel, and engaging in the *warfare* of the gospel against the powers of darkness. Obviously, this is not “business as usual.” With the promise of eternal life

comes the privilege of sharing that life with others. Jesus is *our* Savior, but he is also the Savior of the entire world.

I want you to notice that this mission is *not* limited in this context to the twelve apostles. The Twelve are sent out in chapter 9 and uniquely to the “lost sheep of Israel” (cf. Matthew 10:5-6). But here it is the 72 “others.” Why 72 (or as some translations read “70”) and how does their mission differ from the 12 apostles?

First, these 72 “others” speak, I believe, of *every* believer who counts the cost of bringing Jesus to our world. How do I know that? Luke 10 follows on the heels of Luke chapter 9. There, in verse 57, a man says to Jesus, “I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replies, “Oh really, are you sure about that? I don’t even have a place to lay my head at night.” While we might quibble over the fine nuances of comfort between a Sealy Posturepedic or a Spring Air mattress, Jesus had no idea of where he would have his next nights sleep!

And then another man comes and says, “I will follow you, but let me first go and bury my father and then I’ll come.” And Jesus essentially says, “Would you rather bury the dead or “raise” the dead by preaching the gospel? And then a third man says, “Lord, I’ll follow you, but let me first say good-bye to my family!” “No,” Jesus says, “family must not take priority over the Kingdom of God.” Ah, that’s a big one for you and me today!

It was shortly after this that Jesus sends out these 72 “others” who *are* willing to count the cost of bringing Jesus to their world. To follow Jesus means to be *on mission* for Jesus. And that is the calling of *every* Christian. It’s not just for the twelve apostles, it’s also for the 72 others. It’s not just for the pastors. It’s not just for the elders of the church. It’s not just for the teachers. It includes everyone. It includes *you*. No matter what your age is, what your vocation is, what your background is, what your gifts are...we are *all* and *each* called to be *on mission* for Jesus Christ – even at great personal cost – because the stakes are very, very high.

However, many Christians don’t seem to get what Jesus is saying here. It’s not business as usual. Life is not first of all about me, *my* family, *my* work and *my* retirement, *my* comfort. And that’s why Jesus says in verse 2 that the workers are few. The spiritual harvest is great, but the workers are few. *Why are they few?* ...Because personal concerns take priority over the concerns of the Kingdom.<sup>i</sup>

## **2. We are called to bring Jesus to the diversity of nations/cultures within our world.**

Verse one not only tells us something about *who* is sent (*i.e.* every Christian), but also to *whom* we are sent. There is a clear hint in this account that the target audience of the 72 disciples included a good number of Gentiles.<sup>ii</sup> You see, the number 70 (or 72) had special significance for the Jews. During the period between the Old and New Testaments, it was believed that there were exactly 70 (or 72) nations in the world. So here, the scope of the disciples’ mission goes beyond the Jews, including the various nations of the world. Already we see Jesus’ ministry here turning away from being uniquely focused on the Jewish nation, to the nations of the world. Isn’t it paradoxical that God has been accused of narrowness, and yet he has opened the way so wide through his Son?

Central Bible Church, we have the world at our doorstep here in Portland, Oregon. And I am so pleased that God is bringing to us an ever increasing number of nationalities that make up our church family. I believe God is saying something to us. Our God is the Lord of the harvest. And that harvest includes the vast diversity of every nation and language. And if we are serious about bringing Jesus to *our* world, then our church will reflect that same diversity.

**3. You and I cannot effectively bring Jesus to our world alone. We are *on mission* as a team.**

These 72 Christ followers are not sent out as individuals, but in pairs, two-by-two. And they are not only sent out in pairs, but later in this passage they given “bed-and-breakfast” by those in the various cities who support their ministry. What this tells me is that we are on mission, but we are not alone in this mission. It is best carried out in partnership with others. The disciples were sent out two-by-two. This provided a sense of sharing, accountability and protection of their integrity. The Christian life as well as Christian service and mission are never an individualistic affair. There is no room for lone rangers. We are in this together. We are called to join hands with others and work, not *independently*, but *interdependently*.

**4. Our mission must be carried out from beginning to end by prayer.**

He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Luke 10:2

One of the most important principles that we get is this: *Our mission must be carried out from beginning to end by prayer.* Mission is not a matter of marketing a product. It’s not carried out successfully by slick techniques or fancy programs. Its accomplishment is not ultimately dependent upon our efforts, but upon the effective working of God’s Holy Spirit.

And that is why we have this tremendous privilege of prayer. Prayer is an expression – the expression *par excellence* – of our dependence upon God. God never intended that you and I feel adequate *in and of ourselves* for anything. But when we don’t pray, that is what we are saying: “I can do this myself.” And when we fail to pray as a church, that is what we say: “We can move forward in our own strength.” But when we do pray we are saying, “God, apart from you we can do nothing.”

Not only is prayer an expression of dependency, it is also a means of transformation. Prayer changes the pray-er. It’s impossible to pray regularly for a family member, a neighbor, or a colleague at work and not be eventually moved to be the “someone” that God would use in reaching that person. It’s impossible to regularly pray for God to provide workers for his harvest and not make ourselves available to be used by God in answer to our prayer!

This month, on Sunday, September 30, at 6:30 in the evening, we will be gathering as a church family to pray. I want to challenge you this morning. We have a lot to pray about. As we cast the vision for *Joy Central*, as we encourage one another in our outreach to friends and neighbors, as we live our daily lives *on mission* for Jesus...we need a fresh work of God’s Spirit in us and through us. I urge you to make this gathering a priority in your planning. Come as a family.

As we pray, we will discern how best to bring Jesus to our generation and to our community.

## **5. Our methods of bringing Jesus to our world must be adapted to our specific context.**

<sup>3</sup> Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup> Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. <sup>5</sup> “When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ <sup>6</sup> If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup> Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. <sup>8</sup> “When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Luke 10:3-8

Different environments require different approaches for preaching the gospel. The approach of a missionary in a Latin American barrio will be very different from one who ministers in a major urban center to business leaders.

We see that same principle here, also. Don’t take purse, bag or sandals. Don’t greet anyone on the road. They are to travel light and they are to travel quickly. It’s interesting that Jesus tells his followers to do *just the opposite* later in this gospel.

Then Jesus asked them, “When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?” “Nothing,” they answered. He said to them, “But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag... Luke 22:35-36

Why the change of strategy? The circumstances are different. Here in Luke 10, Jesus anticipates that the people will show hospitality to the disciples, and through this their needs will be taken care of. But later, the vast majority will have rejected Christ and therefore the disciples must go equipped to care for themselves.

Our methodology must be intentionally adapted to the specific context of our mission. Our message never changes. Our methodology must constantly change according to the context. This afternoon, we’re gathering as a church family at lunch to share the vision of reaching our community through the ministry of *Joy Central*, the proposed day care center. Our leadership, after over a year-and-a-half of research, prayer and planning, believes that this one way that we can intentionally move out into our community with the message of Good News. Throughout its history, Central Bible Church has valued reaching children with the gospel. But gone are the days of being able to pick up children by the hundreds on a church bus or host back-yard Bible classes. The message hasn’t changed. But the methodology *has* changed.

## **6. In bringing Jesus to our world, we need to have a special focus on cities.**

I see something in these verses about a methodology that probably *hasn’t* changed since the time of the New Testament. I’m speaking of the emphasis on cities in this passage. In verses 1-16 cities are mentioned at least six times. While the NIV translates the word “town,” the better translation is “city.”

- Verse 1: “to every city and place”
- Verse 8 “Whatever city you enter...”
- Verse 10: “whatever city...”
- Verse 11: “dust of your city...”
- Verse 12: “that city”
- Verses 13-16 the “cities” that rebuked

What was true for Jesus was also true for the missionary endeavors in the book of Acts. While never neglecting the more rural areas, the emphasis was always placed on the larger urban areas. Why? It’s simple. This is where the majority of the people live.

Central Bible Church, God has called us to bring Jesus to the city of Portland. Just a week-and-a-half ago, a family of three committed murder-double suicide. Where did they live? ...In the neighborhood of Central Bible Church, at 110<sup>th</sup> and Glisan. When officers arrived at the home, they found a hose hooked up to the exhaust pipe of a hearse parked in the driveway and attached to the air ducting of the home. In an e-mail to a friend earlier that evening, the father wrote: “There was a decision we both made long ago that should anything life-threatening ever happen to any one of us ... that we wish to all die together, if possible.” The mother *was* sick. She had been diagnosed with cancer. And in light of that news, this family in *our community* just gave up.

## **7. The eternal consequences at stake must instill within us a great sense of urgency.**

<sup>9</sup> Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’ <sup>10</sup> But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup> ‘Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.’ <sup>12</sup> I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. <sup>13</sup> “Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>14</sup> But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. <sup>15</sup> And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. Luke 10:9-15

What is at stake is the eternal destiny of all those that we are trying to reach with the gospel. And that truth should place within each one of us a great sense of urgency. No wonder Jesus earlier tells those sent not to “greet anyone along the way.” Jesus isn’t telling the disciples to be rude to people. He’s simply saying that they must not engage in long and elaborate discussions that would deter them from the mission at hand. They must be intentional. They must not be encumbered either by material possessions, family concerns or socializing with people along the way. That’s also why they were not to move around from house to house. Their purpose was not to casually “hang out” with people, but to urgently proclaim the gospel. Why? Because the Kingdom of God is near. And if the Kingdom of God is near, the time of judgment is near.

## **8. We must remember that we are representatives of the one who sends us.**

“He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.” Luke 10:16

Look again at the picture of Jesus getting off the MAX. Remember, that is *you*. There is an unbreakable link between God, Christ and you and me. Jesus says elsewhere that those who reject Him, reject the Father. And here He says that those who reject you and me as His ambassadors reject Christ Himself. On the other hand, for people to hear the message of His disciples is to hear Christ.

This says something so very important about *how* we represent Jesus Christ. If you are a believer, you *are* a representative of Jesus whether you like it or not and whether you know it or not. This is like the authority, privilege and responsibility that we give to an ambassador today. When he speaks, he represents what his country and government is saying. In the same way, our lives and our message must be in line with the message and character of Jesus Christ.

## **9. In fulfilling our mission, we are called to engage demonic powers of darkness.**

<sup>17</sup> The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” <sup>18</sup> He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. <sup>19</sup> I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. <sup>20</sup> However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” Luke 10:17-20

Each time we reach out into the lives of those around us, with the words of the gospel and with the works of the gospel, Satan falls from heaven. Oh, he has already fallen. He fell the first time when he was expelled following his prideful attempt to be like God. He fell when his power was broken at the cross and the ransom of our sin was paid. And he will be finally defeated when thrown into the lake of fire as described in Revelation 20.<sup>iii</sup>

But he also “falls” in a certain sense each time the gospel penetrates into the life of a sinner. He “falls” each time a local church begins to take seriously the mission God has entrusted us with. He “falls” when we look beyond ourselves and our own comfort zones and begin to move out as a mighty army into our communities and cities, preaching the gospel, and pulling people back from spiritual and eternal disaster.

But even when we see this happening, our true sense of motivation is other than this. It’s found in verse 20: “Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” “Your names are written,” is more literally “your names have been written and they stand written.” In other words, it’s a done deal. Our salvation is guaranteed. Even when we see God’s hand on our lives and people turning to Christ and the powers of darkness pushed back, our real sense of joy and motivation must come from the display of God’s grace in our lives. Yes, there is urgency. Yes, there is responsibility. But most of all there is gratitude that God has saved us and written his names in his book. Our eternal destiny is sure. And it is that sense of gratitude that will motivate us to be *on mission* for Christ in the long haul.

## 10. Our involvement in mission brings joy to the heart of Jesus.

At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. Luke 10:21

That expression “full of joy” comes from a word meaning literally “jumped for joy.” What brings joy to the heart of Jesus? When we make ourselves available to be *on mission* for God. What brings joy to the heart of Jesus? When through our witness “little children” – those who are humble enough to recognize their need – are led into the kingdom of God.

Our involvement in mission brings joy to the heart of Jesus. Is that what you want to do? I do. If so, let this song be your prayer this morning. But please, don’t sing the words routinely. In fact, I encourage you *not to sing at all* if you aren’t serious about being *on mission* for Jesus Christ, no matter what the cost.

### Our Heart

Our heart, our desire, is to see the nations worship;  
Our cry, our prayer, is to sing Your praise to the ends of the earth.  
That with one mighty voice every tribe and tongue rejoices;  
Our heart, our desire, is to see the nations worship You.

Heavenly Father,  
Your mercy showers down upon all people,  
every race upon this earth;

May your Spirit pierce the darkness  
break the chains of death upon us,  
let us rise in honest worship to declare your matchless worth.

There is no power that for one hour  
can withstand the greatness of Your Word on tongues of faith;  
So, we’re bold in intercession,  
claiming all of Your possessions,  
Praying now that every heart will bow before You, Lord in praise.

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<sup>i</sup> Let me ask you: Do you have a nagging sense of responsibility toward those who don’t know Christ? I want to remind you that this sense of responsibility comes from God’s Spirit within you. If saving this lost world is what is most on the heart of God, and the very Spirit of God lives within you as a believer, then it makes sense that you will sense the weight of that responsibility. And that very responsibility should drive us to dependence upon God. And that’s what we see in verse 2.

<sup>ii</sup> Otherwise, there would be no need to speak of what is eaten if these were only Jewish homes.

<sup>iii</sup> We see with these seventy-two disciples the first moments of decisive victory. It’s sort of like D-Day for the allies in World War II. The war actually lasted long after that initial strike on the Normandy coast. But the outcome of the war was decided in those first few days of the allied invasion.