

Lk 10:1-16—Committed to Christ and His Mission

I was encouraged to see many at the active shooter training last week.

One thing the SLED officer said stood out, “Sometimes cops bleed to death and firefighters burn to death when they are doing their job.”

His point: if you commit to laying down your life for another person, it is never a wasted life.

That mindset is similar to what Jesus says about discipleship—if we are committed to laying down our lives, especially for Jesus and his kingdom— it is never wasted. Laying down one’s life is most visibly seen in a commitment to Christ’s mission. Today’s text is about being committed to Christ and his mission.

As we walk through the text, we will see four key commitments:

These instructions came to the seventy-two—but the teaching serves as a pattern of what the church’s mission should look like; we have principles that shape how we think about and do mission today.

1. Commitment to Christ’s authority and sovereignty (v1)

- “After this” = after reading some discouraging displays of rejection. (Samaritans/soft-rejection in vv. 51-61)
- After this rejection we read of how the Lord Jesus dispatches another round of witnesses.
- Is it seventy or seventy two? NASB (70); ESV/NIV (72). Both readings have pretty old manuscript support; both also have the symbolic support.
- Some see the number seventy as symbolic of Table of Nations (Gen 10) = 70; others look at the account in Numbers 11:16-30. Moses appoints seventy helpers, but then two extra Spirit-filled men were added (72).

- The main point: Christ reigns over *his* mission: Note the verbs: The Lord *appointed* and *sent*.
- Appointed: highlights Christ's sovereignty—disciples are not suggesting, or even volunteering for mission...Christ is directing.

*The first thing for us to affirm in Christ's mission is that it is *his* mission. *He is sovereign. It's his calling and sending.*

- Send = Again in vs 3 "I am sending you"; we have the verb where we get our English word apostle (apostello). Here is the concept of "sent ones".

Sent ones (missionaries) know that they serve at the pleasure of the King. They follow his orders. Commitment to mission must begin here.

Mission is not an afterthought to Jesus.

If we hold to the sovereignty and authority of Christ, our church can't let mission take the backseat.

The next several commitments give concrete examples to ensure this does not happen.

2. Commitment to kingdom building prayer (v2)

- Our prayer life reveals two things about us: 1) Depth of commitment to the Lord. 2) What we hold highest in priority.

What we prioritize we will pray about.

- Here Christ directs his church to prioritize prayer for mission.
- The reason is in the harvest imagery.
- Now I used to think the harvest just referred to multitudes of people that are just ripe for someone to tell them about the glory of Jesus. But there is actually another biblical symbolism at work.

Harvest in the OT is symbolic of *judgment*.

(Joel 3:12-14).

- 12 Let the nations stir themselves up
and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
for there I will sit to judge
all the surrounding nations.
- 13 Put in the sickle,
for the harvest is ripe.
Go in, tread,
for the winepress is full.
The vats overflow,
for their evil is great.
- 14 Multitudes, multitudes,
in the valley of decision!
For the day of the Lord is near
in the valley of decision.

What drives Christ's mission is the reality of future judgment.

- Matthew's account (Mt 9:37) says that it was the compassion of Jesus that prompted him to this, "When he saw the crowds he had compassion for them."

A lot of things should drive us to mission. Foremost is obedience to the Lord and love for his glory. But also, a compassion for the multitudes of peoples headed for judgment and a Christ-less eternity ought to stir us up to pray that God would raise up more gospel laborers.

3. Commitment to right risk taking (vv3-11)

- We can take a lot of risks in life (e.g. thrill seekers, sky diving, bungee jumping, swimming with sharks).
- *The question though: is this the right risk? Would I be ok losing my life this way?*
- There is a definite risk in mission; dangers/rejection (sent ones serving in hostile places)... but there is also a reward that is built into the risk.

- First, when a Christ-follower says yes to mission, he or she opens up the door to being treated like Jesus.

1. Rejection (v3,10-11): the image of lambs in the midst of wolves gives a picture of the dangerous side of mission.

- The image highlights the threat of violence.

** Yet, there is also to be a comfort for those who know the God of Is 40:11

11 He will tend his flock like a shepherd;
 he will gather the lambs in his arms;
 he will carry them in his bosom,

Sent ones know the reality of danger, but also the real protection of a loving Father.

- Then in v10 Jesus gives the sobering reality that mission will not always be a success story (at least in our limited perspective).
- Just like our sanctification is not a straight line up, mission is not always *immediate success*.

It took 7 years before missionary William Carey saw the first convert in India. Read the bios of John Patton, Adoniram Judson.

There is a lot of rejection in mission...Jesus said: expect it.

2. Reward (v4, 7-8)

- Note the urgency in mission.
- (v4) describes someone intensely *focused* on their mission: they travel light and have no time to waste.

Principle:

It is nearly impossible to be weighed down with baggage and be serious about mission.

If our lives are so cluttered with stuff, our calendars are so full with activity, there is nothing left over.

Many of us American Christians have no margin for mission because our lives are already so jam packed and cluttered, and pockets emptied having spent on recreation, leisure and entertainment. *We can't have a cluttered life and be committed to Christ's mission.*

The instructions point to urgency.

We travel light when things are urgent.

When we know time is short, we do everything to avoid wasting it.

J.C. Ryle: "beware of allowing the world to eat up your time, thoughts, and hinder you in spiritual work."

- There is a provision aspect in vv. 5-9 is meant to give optimism is mission.
- First a "son of peace" seems best to describe a believer. A son is one who has character of the father. Peace is ultimately what the gospel brings (Rom 5:1)
- Secondly, we see real provision (v7), coming from the son of peace. Their generous sacrifice frees up the workers (in this case the 72) to devote fully to the Work.

It's the same principle we see in 1 Cor 9:14

"The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel"

Gospel believers support gospel workers.

"God's work, done God's way will not lack God's provision." (Hudson Taylor)

Being committed to mission does not mean that everyone goes cross-culturally to evangelize; or you give up your day job and relocate to church plant. Commitment to Christ's mission is

what we do when we write that check, open up a home for outreach/evangelism, or share a car or house with a visiting missionary.

4. Commitment to be the voice of Jesus (v12-16)

- Finally, Jesus speaks about the doom of final judgment for regions in N Galilee that heard the Word, saw the miracles, yet remained indifferent. *The greater the revelation, the greater accountability.*
- But jump to our last verse (v16)
- Hearing/receiving/rejecting of the 72 implies one thing: *sent ones are the mouthpiece of Jesus.*

True for 2000 years of church history.

And some have bled or burned to death for it.

Whether Christ call us to crossing cultures or just crossing the street, we are called to be the mouthpiece of Jesus. That's what it means to be committed to his mission. *Our mission as a church is to tell people about the horrors of sin and eternal judgment, but also point to the glorious good news of redemption found through Jesus.*

Two final thoughts:

1) My hunch is that the seventy-two returned as better followers of Jesus. Having intentional gospel conversations, praying evangelistically, going on strategic mission trips, giving large financial sacrifice to the church make us better followers of Jesus.

2) The seventy-two are nameless.

We know the names of the twelve, but not the seventy-two.

That may just be key to getting mission right. We are committed to Christ and his mission when we are totally content spending our lives not making a name for ourselves...but using our one life to make the name of Jesus Christ great.

We are ok if our name drifts off into obscurity *if the name of Jesus is prized.*

A life committed to Jesus and his mission will never be wasted.