



I hope by now you know our mission. In fact, I hope by now you can recite it on demand. Let's say it together, shall we? "Reaching out, welcoming in, building up, and sending forth, for the glory of God." Over the next few weeks, we are going to set our focus on the fourth phrase, "sending forth," which means that a principal part of our purpose is humbly, yet boldly, proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. It involves asking God to bless us with a passion to tell others about our glorious Lord, both in this community and in places all around the world. It means praying that He will give us the grace to speak the Gospel with kindness and serve others with love so that everyone will have the opportunity to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord!

Sending forth is the subject Luke chapter 10:1-12, a passage in which Jesus commissions His disciples—72 of them to be exact—to go forth with the good news of His coming. These 72 men aren't apostles, but ordinary disciples, and we can really see ourselves in this group. Thus, as Jesus sends them forth, so He also sends you and me forth, and He sends our church forth as His body of believers here in Carmi, IL. In other words, our call to be sent forth is the point of this passage. Jesus' commission here is our mission. And, as we will see in our text today, our call to be effective ambassadors of Christ begins with our attitudes about the task.

-- Big Idea: Effective evangelism requires the mission mentality of Christ.

-- Read Luke 10:1-12

-- Pray

-- Verse 1

-- *"After this, the Lord appointed 72 others..."*

- Some translations say “70.”
- Unlike the three men in v. 57-62, these were true disciples.
- They were the self-denying, self-sacrificing, and Savior-submitting followers who would not shrink from the daunting duty ahead.
- “...and sent them out two by two...”
- Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 – “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”
- Deuteronomy 19:15 – “A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”
  - Same idea as in Mat. 18, 2 Cor. 13, 1 Tim 5, Heb. 10, Rev.11
  - Because a single testimony is insufficient, Christ sent His followers two by two.
- “ahead of Him to every town and place where he was about to go.”
  - Jesus was coming, but He would only bless those who welcomed both His message and His messengers. (v. 8-12)
    - Those who welcome the Good News of Christ and the Gospel messenger are blessed (v. 8-9).
    - Those who reject the message or the messenger are cursed (v. 10-12).
    - This opposes those who claim to know and serve Christ, but ignore or even despise His message.
      - People who claim Christ as Savior but ignore Him as Lord.
      - Churches who claim the Bible but do not really teach it or do what it says.
      - To truly welcome Christ is to welcome His message.
    - This also opposes those who claim to love Christ but ignore or even despise Gospel messengers.

Because Jesus is coming back, we, too, are called to “go ahead of Him” into our community and to places all around the world to proclaim that the kingdom of God is near (v. 10, 11). And, as we will see in our text over the next two weeks, the effective evangelism to which we are called requires the mission mentality of Christ.

- Illustration – The differences between cats and dogs is not intelligence or even training; it’s about attitude and motivation.
- “Here boy!” Dogs usually come like their lives depend on it.
- “Here kitty, kitty!” Cats know what you want, they just don’t care.
- (In the same way) Effective evangelism and meaningful missions have a lot more to do with our attitudes than our abilities.

In these four verses, we are presented with at least seven attitudes of a mission mentality that gives glory to God. So that we might remember these attitudes and apply them to our daily lives, they are organized according to the acronym H.A.R.V.E.S.T.

- Because I do not want to keep you as long as I did last week, we have to divide these first four verses into two lessons.
- Today, we will only have time to cover H.A.

-- First, to have the mission mentality of our Lord, we must...

## **H – Have Compassion**

-- Compare this text to Matthew 9:35-38

### **A. Christlike compassion considers the crowds.** (Mat. 9:36a)

- Illustration – Downtown video cameras capturing a pedestrian hit and run, and no one seemed to notice or care.
- Notice that Jesus notices. He *saw* the crowds.
  - He looked at the lost and considered their condition.
  - Illustration – The teens smoking in the CVS parking lot.
- Compassion begins when we stop thinking about ourselves and start noticing the needs of others.
- Have often do you stop and consider the condition of the crowds?

### **B. Christlike compassion perceives their pain.**

- All throughout His ministry, we see that our Lord was filled with compassion for the lost.
  - Matthew 14:14 – “*When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.*”

- Matthew 15:32 – “Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for these people...”
- Matthew 20:34 – “Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes.”
- Mark 1:41 – “Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man.”
- Mark 6:34 – “When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them.”
- Luke 7:13 – “When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her.”
- John 11:33 – “When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.”
- Mat. 9:36a – Jesus saw the crowds and had compassion on them.
  - The word translated “compassion” here (σπλαγχνι, zomai) is the strongest word for compassion in the Greek language
  - It refers to that extremely deep and acute sympathy that you feel in your gut. You feel this kind of compassion.
- Illustration? (Mark Schultz?)

### C. Christlike compassion knows their need.

- Mat. 9:36b – “He had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”
  - “Harassed” here means “troubled, worried, annoyed.”
  - “Helpless” here means, “thrown down, put down, and dejected.”
- Mat. 9:36b (NLT) – “He felt great pity for the crowds that came, because their problems were so great and they didn't know where to go for help.”

Isn't that an accurate description of our world today? Let us, like our Lord, simply take a look around and see the crowds through the eyes of Christ. People all around us are terribly troubled, woefully worried, and dreadfully disenchanting. The sidewalks, streets, and store aisles are filled with anxious, angry, and annoyed people who have been thrown around, put down, and trampled by the world they long for. Like sheep with no shepherd, their hearts are hungry, their souls thirsty, their minds tormented, and their lives are lost. Their false shepherds have led them astray. Their false beliefs have laid them low. Their false Gods simply cannot and will not come through.

- Illustration – The crowd coming out of “Underworld” movie.

Effective evangelism begins with a compassion that not only considers the crowds and perceives their pain, but it knows how desperately every lost soul needs the forgiveness, grace, and redemption that can be found only in Jesus Christ.

#### **D. Christlike compassion sees the stakes.**

- Mat. 9:37 – *“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.”*
- The harvest here refers to the final judgment that will take place at the second coming of Christ.
  - The Jews knew about this harvest.
  - Joel 3:12-16 – *“Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side. Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow—so great is their wickedness!’ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble.”*
  - Matthew 13:39-42 – (Jesus explaining the Parable of the Weeds in the Field) – *“The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*
  - Revelation 14:15-19 – *“Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, ‘Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.’ So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested. Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, ‘Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth’s vine, because its grapes are ripe.’ The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God’s wrath.”*

-- The chief concern of Christlike compassion is the plight of lost people who are heading for this inevitable harvest of judgment.

Please hear this: We absolutely cannot even understand, let alone practice, Christlike compassion in our lives unless we set our hearts upon the big picture, because Christlike compassion has its focus on eternity. This is why Satan is so desperately trying to convince us to wrap up our lives in the smallness of this world. The more the enemy can swallow our thoughts in the petty prattle of this passing world, the more he can rob our main mission from meaning and power and victory.

Do we see the big picture today? Do we have our gaze set upon this impending worldwide harvest of divine judgment? Is our compassion set ablaze by sea of lost sheep all around us and all around the world? And if our compassion is not aroused by the eternal impact of this great harvest to come, then consider the rest of verse 37, where Jesus says, "*The harvest is plentiful **but the workers are few.***"

There are so many everywhere who are being eternally devastated, depressed, and destroyed by false teachers, false leaders, and false shepherds... yet the workers are few. The final harvest of final judgment with an eternal verdict that brings an everlasting sentence is unavoidable... yet the workers are few. An uninformed, undecided, unrepentant, unredeemed, unregenerate, people stands unconverted in Christ... yet the workers are few. The world without Christ is *harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd...* yet the workers are few... and yet the workers are few.

Because Christlike compassion sees the stakes, it considers the crowds and feels their pain.

In light of this, what, then, shall we do? Those who have Christlike compassion must...

### **A – Ask for help.**

Now that we have a more complete picture of the compassion that inspires this sending of the seventy-two, turn with me back to our passage in Luke's Gospel to see what Christ directs us to do about it. In response to the fact that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few, Jesus commands us in the second part of v.

10:2b – “Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

In short, what this means is simply this: If we want to see a harvest of salvation, we must pray it in... we must pray it in.

But at first glance, doesn't this command of Christ seem strange to you? It seems initially strange to me that we the “farm hands” should be told to plead with the owner of the farm to send out more workers into his harvest fields. What is going on here? Is Jesus implying that God is unaware of the shortage of reapers and, therefore, his workers must go and tell him about it? Or does Jesus mean that God is indifferent as to whether or not the harvest is collected? Surely not! Why then are the farm hands told to ask the farmer to provide more help?

Well, the apparent strangeness of this command reveals a critical truth, which is this: God desires that His miraculous work of salvation must be preceded by prayer. As John Piper has said, “God loves to bless the world, but even more, he loves to bless the world in answer to prayer.” In other words, this command powerfully reveals to us that God wants our mission of effective evangelism to begin on our knees.

From this text, we ought to understand that the workers are not few because God only wants a few to be saved. On the contrary, 1 Timothy 2:4 says, “[God] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” No the workers are not few because God only wants a few workers in His harvest field. Rather, from Jesus' words here we must surmise that if the workers are missing in action, it is because our prayers are missing in action as well.

Isn't that what Jesus is essentially saying here? In response to the fact that the workers are few, Jesus commands us to, “Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

- Notice the “therefore” in this verse.
- The workers are few, *therefore* pray.

Do you catch the insight offered by our Lord in this verse? We are herein given a barometer of our prayer life in this church. You see, we simply do not have to

wonder whether or not we are praying enough about the spread of the Gospel through our church. If the workers are too few, then our prayers are too few. On the other hand, as we see a growing abundance of people who are passionate about telling the Good News of Jesus Christ and inviting the lost to come and hear about Jesus Christ, then we can be sure that God is blessing us with a spirit of prayer and some mighty prayer warriors.

Please do not misunderstand me: I am not saying that are prayers have power to bring about salvation. Only God can do that. In addition, we could all be faithful, fervent workers in the harvest field and still see no one saved, because, again, salvation is of the Lord and not of people. However, what I am saying is that we can evaluate the faithfulness of our prayers by the degree to which we send diligent, devoted workers out into the harvest field.

Therefore, the greatest indication that God is going to send forth an army of ambassadors from this body of believers will be the emergence of a widespread movement of prayer among all of us. If, in His sovereign kindness and mercy, God graciously pours out upon us a spirit of Christlike compassion, and if that compassion translates into a great movement of prayer, then we will be well on our way to fulfilling our mission to be sending forth for the glory of God.

Let us, then, fall to our knees and cry out to the Lord of the harvest, asking Him to send us out into His harvest field with hearts filled with a compassion that considers the crowds, feels their pain, knows their need, and sees the stakes... for *the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.*

I'm down on my knees again tonight  
I'm hoping this prayer will turn out right  
See there is a boy that needs Your help  
I've done all that I can do myself  
His mother is tired  
I'm sure You can understand  
Each night as he sleeps  
She goes in to hold his hand  
And she tries not to cry  
As the tears fill her eyes

CHORUS:

Can You hear me?  
Am I getting through tonight?  
Can You see him?  
Can You make him feel all right?  
If You can hear me  
Let me take his place somehow  
See, he's not just anyone  
He's my son

Sometimes late at night I watch him sleep  
I dream of the boy he'd like to be  
I try to be strong and see him through  
But God who he needs right now is You  
Let him grow old  
Live life without this fear  
What would I be  
Living without him here  
He's so tired and he's scared  
Let him know that You're there

CHORUS

Can You hear me?  
Can You see him?  
Please don't leave him  
He's my son

R – Respond to the call

V – Vanquish fear

E – Entrust yourself (to Christ) or Expect trouble

S – Stay Focused

-- The task is urgent

T – Tell the truth or Travel light

-- No purse, bag, sandals

-- Do not get so tied down with worldly goods that

-- Illustration

-- Watching Entertainment Tonight dissect the most minute details of some celebrity's life and thinking, "How could anyone possibly care about this stuff?"

-- The same could be said about the vast majority of what dominates the attention of the world.

-- My distraction often comes in the arena of sports.

-- There is nothing wrong with most of these distractions, but they had better be put in their place.

1.) Compassion / Sympathy

2.) Conviction

3.) Consecration / Supplication

4.) Compliance / Submission

5.) Courage

6.) Reliance / Subjection

7.) Urgency