



- Our Mission: “Reaching out, welcoming in, building up, and sending forth, for the glory of God.”
 - Sending forth is the subject of our text today.
 - Jesus’ commission here is our mission together as His people.
 - Our call to be effective ambassadors of Christ begins with our attitudes about the task.
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- Big Idea: Effective evangelism requires the mission mentality of Christ.
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- Read Luke 10:1-12
 - Pray
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- In these verses we see at least Seven Attitudes of a Mission Mentality that Gives Glory to God.
 - They are organized according to the acronym “H.A.R.V.E.S.T.”
 - First, to have the mission mentality of our Lord, we must...

H – Have compassion. (v. 2a)

- We compared this text to Matthew 9:35-38
- A. Christlike compassion considers the crowds. (Mat. 9:36a)
- B. Christlike compassion perceives their pain. (Mat. 9:36a)
- C. Christlike compassion knows their need. (Mat. 9:36b)
- D. Christlike compassion sees the stakes. (Mat. 9:37)
 - The harvest here refers to the final judgment that will take place at the second coming of Christ. (Joel 3, Mat. 13, Rev 14)

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

My prayer from last week is that, by His grace, God has stirred up Christlike compassion in our hearts as we considered 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...* and yet the workers are few... and yet the workers are few.

Christlike compassion, then, considers the crowds and feels their pain because it knows their need and sees the stakes. In light of this compassion, what, then, shall we do? To possess the mission mentality of Christ, those who know His compassion must...

A – Ask God for help. (v. 2b)

Please look with me now at verse two of our text. In the first part, as we discussed last week, Jesus says, “*The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.*” In so doing, He identifies the problem that He wants us to see and highlights what is at stake. Then, in response to this situation, our Lord voices the command that we find in the second half of verse 2. He says, “*Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.*” Notice the word “*therefore*” in this verse. It connects the problem (too few workers) with Christ’s solution (prayer). He says, “*The harvest is plentiful.....The workers are few... Therefore... Pray.*”

In essence, in this verse, Jesus is telling us how we ought to react to the multitudes of harassed, helpless, and shepherd-less sheep all around us. In His compassion, our Lord is commanding a specific response to a world that is blindly and blissfully barreling toward the winepress of God’s righteous judgment. Here, Jesus tells us what we ought to do about the fact that the workers are few. **Pray!**

He says, “*Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.*”

In short, the chief principle for us to consider here is this: If we want to see a harvest of salvation, we must pray it in... we must pray it in.

At first glance, doesn't this command to pray seem a bit strange to you? Doesn't it seem strange that the farm hands should be told to beg the owner of the farm to send out more workers into his harvest? What could be going on here? Is Jesus implying that God is unaware of the shortage of reapers and, therefore, his workers must go and inform Him of that shortage? 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 beg the farmer to get more help?

Well, the apparent strangeness of this command reveals a critical truth, which is this: God has determined that the sending forth of effective ambassadors 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 informs us that God wants our mission of effective evangelism to begin on our knees.

Please understand that the workers are not few because God only wants a few to be saved. Quite the contrary! In 1 Timothy 2:4, the Bible 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 a critical truth about effective evangelism, which is this: Whenever the workers are too few, our prayers are probably too few.

Isn't that what Jesus is essentially saying here? He says, “*The workers are few, therefore, pray!*” Do you catch the insight offered by our Lord in this verse? We are herein given a kind of barometer of our church's prayer life. You see, based on this verse, we really do not have to wonder very much about whether or not our evangelistic praying is adequate. Simply put, 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 excited to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, and if more and more of

us become passionate about inviting the lost to come among us and hear about our risen Lord, then we can be sure that we are obeying Christ's call to prayer and that God is blessing us with mighty prayer warriors in our midst.

As I say this, please do not misunderstand me: I am certainly not saying that our prayers, all by themselves, have power to bring about salvation. Only God can do that. In addition, we could all go forth as fervent workers in the harvest field and still see few saved, because, again, salvation is of the Lord and not of people. However, what I am saying is that we can, to a large extent, evaluate the faithfulness of our prayer lives by the degree to which we see diligent, devoted workers being sent out into the harvest field from our congregation.

Therefore, the greatest indication that God is going to unleash an army of ambassadors from this body of believers will be the emergence of a widespread movement of prayer among 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 can be sure that God is using us to fulfill our mission of sending forth for the glory of God.

Let us, then—every one of us—fall on our knees and cry out to the Lord of the harvest. Let us ask 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.*

In addition to Having compassion and Asking for help, putting on the mission mentality of Christ means that we must...

R – Respond to the call. (v. 3a)

The next command that Christ gives us in this text really could not be simpler. It consists of one word: "*Go!*"

-- Illustration – Little League Baseball – Parents shouting "Go!" to a bewildered batter. (Angels in the outfield – Run Home)

-- Sometimes we are like that about God's call to go forth with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

As we consider this single imperative verb, "Go!" we are blessed to notice the direct audience of this command. That is, notice who Christ is talking to here: He is addressing the very same disciples whom he had just commanded to pray. Having just commanded these same disciples to pray that God would send our workers into the harvest field, Jesus is, in the next breath, commanding them to be part of the answer to their own prayers.

I am going to take a guess that, upon hearing that previous point about asking for help, there were a lot of us who said something like this: "Ok, I can do that. I can pray that God will send someone out to tell others about Jesus Christ... someone *else* that is." And that prayer is not altogether bad. God wants us to pray for an awe-inspiring abundance of ambassadors of Christ to be sent forth. However, it seems clear from this passage that God intends for this commission to begin with us, not others.

And understandably so. Why should God take our prayers for evangelistic workers seriously if we don't? And how sincere can our prayers for evangelistic activity really be if we are not even willing to take part in it ourselves? Indeed, it is hypocritical for me to pray that others will do what I will not... that others will obey while I merely observe... that others will send forth while I stand fast... that others will win the game while I cheer on the sidelines. On the cusp of a worthy battle, only a coward says, "Lord, send them and let them win, but whatever you do, don't send me!"

According to Christ's own command, we ought to be praying that God will send out workers into His harvest field. Yet, as we pray, we must be ready to be sent forth ourselves, because our Lord commands us to go. Therefore, as we submit to Christ's call to prayer, and as we ask God to send out workers into His harvest field, our prayers ought to begin by asking God to prepare *us* to go and give *us* the grace to be used effectively by Him for His glory. To have the mission mentality that Christ desires of us, we must not only **H**ave compassion and **A**sk God for help, but we must also **R**espond to the call.

That brings us to the fourth element of the mission mentality commanded by Christ, in which we are summoned to...

V – Verify the mission. (v. 3b)

Sadly, there are many well-meaning people who have set out to proclaim the message and win the lost, but have, somewhere along the line, neglected the testimony they were told to tell and forgotten the victory they were commanded to win. Instead of the Gospel, too many want glory. Instead of a cross, too many want a crown. Instead of Christ, too many want the crowd.

These words are not spoken to disparage anyone, but to serve as a warning to verify the nature of our calling. Notice that in verse three, immediately after commissioning His disciples to “Go!”, Jesus reminds them that He Himself is the source of their mission. He says, “*Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.*” He doesn’t merely say, “Go like lambs among wolves.” Rather, Jesus declares that He is the author of their mission. We see a similar reminder in the Great Commission, when our Lord says:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

(Matthew 28:18-20)

These two commissions come together to emphasize that Jesus Christ—and Jesus Christ alone—is the Maker and Master of our mission. Thus, if we go forth or send forth from any foundation other than the call and commission of Christ, then we necessarily proceed from a faulty foundation. Thus, as we go forth to win the lost, we are compelled to ask ourselves why we are going and what we hope to accomplish.

For example, do we go forth for God’s honor and praise or our own? In Galatians 1:10, Paul asks, “*Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.*” Second, we verify our mission by guarding the message we preach,

making sure, as best as we are able, that it corresponds to the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jude 1:3-4 – *“Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”*

So, then, the mission mentality of effective evangelism requires us to have compassion, ask for help, respond to the call, verify the mission, expect trouble, and the

S – Stay focused. (v. 4b)

To conclude, I would like to examine verse four in reverse order, and I do so for a deeply theological reason—the acronym works better that way. Therefore, look with me at verse four, where our Lord gives His disciples these instructions: *“Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.”*

First, in the command, *“Do not greet anyone on the road,”* we see the great urgency of the Gospel. In fact, the call is so urgent that Jesus forbids His disciples from even greeting people on the road. Now, we ought to understand that the greeting of which Jesus speaks here is not the typical, “Hi, how are you?” to which we are accustomed in our culture. In that day and place, to greet another was a much more significant event. It meant to sit down with them, share a meal, and talk for a while. It could even mean staying in someone’s home for a period of time.

Thus, Jesus is definitely not saying, “Be rude as you walk down the road.” Rather, the main idea behind this command not to greet anyone is the call of Christ to stay focused on our mission. In other words, “Don’t get distracted.” Our Lord has called us on a Gospel mission and He wants us to keep our eyes on the prize, because it is so very easy to lose focus.

- Illustration – “Entertainment Tonight” – Who cares?
- The more devoted we are to worldly pursuits, interests, and goods, the less effective we will be in our mission from Christ.
- Common distractions: TV, entertainment, sports, work, stuff

In short, then, effective evangelism requires a mission mentality that seeks to serve Christ, not self, and faithfully proclaims the Gospel “once for all delivered to the saints” in Scripture. By this mentality, we verify our mission as ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

E – Expect trouble. (v. 3b)

In verse three, after giving the charge to “Go!”, Jesus tells the disciples—perhaps shocks them—with a description about how they are to go. He says, “*Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.*”

For the sake of time, I’ll jump right to the main point of this statement. What Christ is essentially saying here is that persecution of the messenger will be the world’s inevitable response to the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. This same sentiment is echoed in 2 Timothy 3:12, where Paul writes, “*Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*” In short, Jesus is telling these disciples, and us by extension, that the authentic Gospel messenger is destined to become like a lamb sent out among wolves because the darkness that of this world simply cannot tolerate proclamation of the light. Whenever we, as God’s people, announce God’s truth about righteousness, sin, and redemption, we will find ourselves to be the prey of the God-hating, Christ-rejecting, Satan-controlled world around us.

Thus, if we are going to possess the mission mentality of effective evangelism, we need to expect the trouble that accompanies the true message of Christ, for the disciple who is not ready for trouble is likely to recoil when it comes. In John 16:33, Jesus says, “*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*” Thus, the Gospel messenger’s confidence comes not in the fact that everyone loves him and cheers his message. Rather, it comes from the fact that the trouble we will surely face is no match for our Lord, who has already overcome it.

In every town and village, there are harassed people with no idea where to turn for hope... so stay focused. The bells and whistles of the world are drowning out the call of conviction... so stay focused. False teachers, false shepherds, and false gods, abound on street corner and station... so stay focused. The timeless truth of Christ is under assault at every turn... so stay focused. People everywhere are perishing without Christ and yet the workers are few... so stay focused. The task is too urgent to wait for our distractions and diversions... so stay focused on the mission with the mission mentality of Christ.

Finally, effective evangelism requires us to...

T – Trust the Lord. (v. 4a)

This point is the main point of the first part of verse four, where Jesus says to His disciples, “*Do not take a purse or bag or sandals...*” These seem like strange instructions to men heading out by foot on a difficult mission that will cover many miles. How could such restrictions possibly prove helpful?

However, the main point here is not about missionary logistics, nor is it really concerned with personal possessions either. Rather—and please hear this—the main message Christ is imparting in these instructions is every disciple’s need to trust in Him to help us and use us in His mission. The chief emphasis here is walking by faith and trusting in God. The main idea behind these seemingly unhelpful restrictions is to emphasize the fact that all real power for genuine evangelistic success comes from Jesus Christ alone, and not from us. In other words, every spiritual victory belongs to the Savior, and not to His servants.

The main point here is that all meaningful power and everlasting glory belong to the Lord, Jesus Christ, and to Him alone. Jesus placed such stringent restrictions upon their evangelistic journey because He was stressing the essential truth that for all that God asks, He gives all that Christ is, and that’s more than enough.

Our purpose of sending forth requires us to possess the mission mentality of Jesus Christ, and to pursue our purpose with the mission mentality of Christ we must:

Have compassion.
Ask God for help.
Respond to the call.
Validate the mission.
Expect trouble.
Stay focused.
Trust the Lord.