



July 7, 2019, Luke 10: 1-12, 16-20 & Is 66: 10-14

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#### ENTERING THE SCENE:

The caption reads “the cities along the way”. As we move into the heart of Luke’s gospel we find Jesus “setting his face to go to Jerusalem” (9:51). The disciples get their marching orders and off they go. When they return Jesus warns them that sometimes the feedback we get can be deceiving. People flatter and fawn. The disciples are in danger of getting excited for the wrong reasons. So Jesus pulls them back, reminding them about Who it is they are finally serving and how much this service must flow from a close relationship with the father (Lk. 10:20). We too, must always keep in mind whose we are and what the Father calls us to do. Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it. - The Talmud (Echoing Micah 6:8.)

Lk. 10 After this the Lord appointed **seventy** others and sent them on ahead of him in **pairs** to every town and place where he himself

intended to go. <sup>2</sup> He said to them, “The **harvest** is plentiful, but the **laborers** are few; therefore ask the Lord of the **harvest** to send out **laborers** into his **harvest**. <sup>3</sup> Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like **lambs** into the midst of **wolves**. <sup>4</sup> Carry no **purse**, no **bag**, no **sandals**; and greet no one on the road. <sup>5</sup> Whatever **house** you enter, first say, ‘**Peace** to this **house**!’ <sup>6</sup> And if anyone is there who shares in **peace**, your **peace** will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup> Remain in the same **house**, **eating and drinking whatever they provide**, for the **laborer** deserves to be paid. Do not move about from **house** to **house**. <sup>8</sup> Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, **eat what is set before you**; <sup>9</sup> cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘**The kingdom of God has come near to you**.’ <sup>10</sup> But whenever you enter a town and they **do not welcome you**, go out into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup> ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we **wipe off in protest** against you. Yet know this: the **kingdom of God has come near**.’ <sup>12</sup> I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for **Sodom** than for that town. <sup>13</sup> “

(Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>14</sup> But at the judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. <sup>15</sup> And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades.)

<sup>16</sup> “Whoever listens to you **listens** to me, and whoever **rejects** you **rejects** me, and whoever **rejects** me **rejects** the one who sent me.”

<sup>17</sup> The **seventy** returned with joy, saying, “Lord, in your name even the **demons submit** to us!” <sup>18</sup> He said to them, “I watched **Satan fall** from heaven like a flash of lightning. <sup>19</sup> See, I have given you **authority to tread on snakes and scorpions**, and over all the power of the **enemy**; and nothing will hurt you. <sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, do not **rejoice** at this, that the spirits submit to you, but **rejoice** that your names are written in heaven.”

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** We have been sent out with only our faith and your companion. How long do you think it would take either of us to summon the courage to knock on that first door?

**PRAYER:** where are you going i asked / to places I have never been / was the answer / what do you plan to do i asked / my purpose will be evident at the journey’s end / who has planned your itinerary i asked / its plan will be revealed at time most untimely / why would you consent to such a vague plan i said / i accepted the challenge / when i accepted life was the answer.

Grana, Janice, Ed. [Images](#). Winona, MN. St. Mary’s College Press. 1976. THE JOURNEY: Pg. 135.

#### WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

**SEVENTY:** The people remembered that Moses had seventy elders to help in Numbers 11: 16-17. Genesis 10: 2-31 tells of the generations of the nations of the world and they add up to 70 or 72. We once again find Jesus connecting the new with the old.

*Do you think this symbolic number supported the courage of the teams of disciples as they went out? Can you remember a time when you entered upon a challenging effort supported by a memory of others doing the same?*

**PAIRS:** Each missionary group was composed of two people. In Jesus' day, if something was to be believable, two male witnesses must witness it.

*Who would you like to be teamed with if you were going forth on a challenging mission?*

**HARVEST:** Jesus came in the "fullness of time". God was bringing to ripeness the fields of mission and the disciples were to be helpers in bringing in the harvest.

*Do you sense a time of ripeness for a new message of God today? Have you heard any new words that excited your hope lately?*

**LABORERS:** The disciples were willing workers who had a certain outcome in mind for their labors.

*What labors are you willing to work for today? What activities are you connected with that expresses your hopes for the kingdom of God today?*

**LAMBS / WOLVES:** Isaiah foretells of the time of Immanuel (God with us) in 11:6. It is to be a time of peace and plenty.

*What lambs and wolves need to be reconciled to bring about a time of peace and plenty today?*

**PURSE / BAG / SANDALS:** Anyone going on a trip would need these basic essentials. The disciples were to go out without these essentials and trust in God's process.

*When was the last time you ventured out on a faith issue without any provisions for the effort? How did it feel?*

**HOUSE:** The disciples were to choose a house to serve as a base of operations while they were in a town.

*Would your house be a place of welcome for someone with a new word about God's kingdom? If so, what makes it such a place?*

**PEACE:** To wish someone peace is to wish for them total well-being.

*How do you know when someone really wants your total well-being? How do you indicate to others that you want their well-being?*

**EATING AND DRINKING WHATEVER THEY PROVIDE:** Jesus seems to be setting aside kosher laws thereby freeing the disciples to enter any home. Since Luke is the gospel aimed at the gentiles the number 70 points us in this direction.

*How do you think the disciples received this advice? Have you ever set aside a 'law' in the service of a greater good? Was it uncomfortable for you?*

**KINGDOM OF GOD HAS COME NEAR:** The disciples are to preach the kingdom of God, not Jesus. Time is precious, and the moment of decision is near.

*If you had been on one of the teams sent out, how would you talk of the nearness of God's kingdom?*

**DO NOT WELCOME YOU:** To welcome someone is to tell them that it is well that they have come.

*If a "disciple" came to your door could you say that it is well that you have come? How do you know when someone finds your coming a blessed event?*

**WIPE OFF IN PROTEST:** The disciples are not to waste time trying to convince people against their will. Jesus also knows that the disciples needed permission to get on with it, so he advised this historic gesture of public reproach.

*How do you feel about this passage? What purpose does it serve for the disciples? Have you ever wiped off your feet in reproach? Did it free you to move on?*

**SODOM:** In Gn. 19:24 we read of what happened to Sodom when it refused to listen to God's word. See below. One can hardly imagine a fate worse than Sodom's fate.

*Is there any place today that you think compares to the Sodom of old? Why did you choose that example? What is Jesus really saying by using this example?*

**LISTENS:** To listen is to be open to the new.

*What do you think made it possible for people to be open to the new message about God's kingdom? What helps you to open to new insights about God?*

**REJECTS:** To reject is to be closed to the new.

*Why do you think the people rejected the words of the disciples? What causes you to reject the new?*

**DEMONS SUBMIT / SATAN FALL / ENEMY:** The disciples have experienced the power that Jesus possessed over the demons/Satan / enemy. Now they experience that same power personally.

*Have you ever experienced a source of evil? Did you find in yourself the power to face it down? How did it feel? Where did your power come from?*

**AUTHORITY / TREAD:** Jesus is bestowing upon the disciples the ability to be the authors of their own power from God to overcome the evil powers they encounter.

*Do you think each person has an authority to overcome evil? Do you possess that power? How?*

**SNAKES / SCORPIONS:** Snakes and scorpions are Old Testament images of evil.

*What images would you use to indicate the power of evil today?*

**REJOICE:** Jesus rejoices with the disciples over their ownership of the only true power; that of having their names inscribed in heaven.

*What does having your name inscribed in heaven mean? Do you think your name is written there?*

**PARALLEL TEXTS:** Lk. 10:2 // Mt. 9:37; Jn. 4:35; Lk. 10:3 // Mt. 10:16; Lk. 10:4-7 // Lk. 9:31f;

Lk. 10:7 // Mt. 10:10; 1 Tim. 5:18; Lk. 10:9 // Mt. 3:2; 2:4,17; Lk. 10:10 // Mt. 10:7; Lk. 10:11 // Acts 13:51; Lk. 10:16 // Mt. 10:40; Jn. 5:23; Jn. 13:20; Jn. 15:23; Jn. 12:48; Lk. 10:18 // Jn. 12:31; Is. 14:12; Lk. 10:19 // Is. 14:12; Lk. 10:20 // Ps. 91:13; Rev. 12:9;

**OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK:** Is. 66:10-14; [Ps. 66: 1-7, 16,20](#); Gal. 6:14-18; Lk. 10: 1-12, 16-20;

Revised Common Lectionary: 2 Kgs. 5:1-14; [Ps. 30](#); Gal. 6:1-16; Lk. 10:1-11, 16-20;

### **SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:**

Jesus promised his disciples three things — that they would be completely fearless, absurdly happy, and in constant trouble.

- G.K. Chesterton

If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together. - Lilla Watson

... good leaders must have a certain capacity for thinking beyond polarities and tapping into full, embodied knowing (prayer). They have a tolerance for ambiguity (faith), an ability to hold creative tensions (hope), and an ability to care (love) beyond their own personal advantage. Richard Rohr

A discipline won't bring you closer to God. Only God can bring you closer to Himself. What the discipline is meant to do is to help you get yourself, your ego, out of the way so you are open to His grace. - James Kushner

Ministry is acting in the Name of Jesus. When all our actions are in the Name, they will bear fruit for eternal life. To act in the Name of Jesus, however, doesn't mean to act as a representative of Jesus or his spokesperson. It means to act in an intimate communion with him. The Name is like a house, a tent, a dwelling. To act in the Name of Jesus, therefore, means to act from the place where we are united with Jesus in love. To the question "Where are you?" we should be able to answer, "I am in the Name." Then, whatever we do cannot be other than ministry because it will always be Jesus himself who acts in and through us. The final question for all who minister is "Are you in the Name of Jesus?" When we can say yes to that, all of our lives will be ministry. Henri Nouwen

:"Lord, take me where you want me to go; Let me meet who you want me to meet; tell me what you want me to say, and Keep me out of Your way." Father Mychal Judge

Lk. 10.1–12: Mission of the seventy (Mt 9.37–38; 10.7–16). 1: Seventy, see Gen 10.2–31 (LXX lists seventy-two names); Jub. 44.34; in the wilderness, Moses was aided by seventy elders (Ex 24.1,9; Num 11.16,24–25). Sent them on ahead, perhaps echoing Deut 1.22–25. 4: Carry no purse, See 9.3n. Greet no one, see 2 Kings 4.29. 5: Peace, a standard greeting; see 24.36; 1 Sam 25.6; Tob 12.17. 7: Laborer deserves to be paid, see Deut 24.15; classical rabbis were not paid for teaching. 8: Eat what is set before you, anticipating Acts 10. Since no Gentile mission is yet enjoined, the context suggests kosher food. 11: Dust, 9.5n. 12: Sodom, see Gen 19.24–28; for the comparative fate, Ezek 16.45–58; Lam 4.6. 10.13–16: Woes to unrepentant cities (Mt 11.20–24). 13: Chorazin, 2 miles (3 km) north of Capernaum. Bethsaida, see 9.10n. Tyre and Sidon, Gentile cities, originally Philistine, north of Galilee; see Isa 23; Ezek 26–28. Sackcloth and ashes, Isa 58.5; Esth 4.1,3; Dan 9.3. 15: Capernaum, see 4.22n. Hades, hell, comparable to Heb “Sheol” (Isa 14; Tob 3.10; 4.19; Wis 1.14 and elsewhere). By the first century ce, the concept of “hell” as a permanent place of damnation had begun to develop. 16: Cf. Mt 10.40. 10.17–20: The seventy return (Mt 11.25–27). 17: Seventy, see 10.1n. 18: Watched Satan fall, a visionary experience (see Jn 12.31; Rev 12.7–12; cf. Isa 14.12). The Hebrew “Day Star” comes into Latin as “Lucifer” (lit., “light 122 bringer”). 19: Snakes and scorpions, see Ps 90.13 LXX. Enemy, Satan. 20: Written in heaven, an ancient Mesopotamian idea found in Ex 32.32; Ps 69.28; Dan 12.1; 1 En. 47.3; 104.1; Jub. 19.9; Rev 3.5; etc., and reflected in the traditional Rosh Ha-Shanah greeting: “May you be inscribed for a good year.” Pgs. 122–123. [The Jewish Annotated New Testament](#)

People will recognize us as speaking with authority only when they sense that, like Jesus, we are under divine authority ourselves, that our message is not our own, that our actual lives stand behind the message, that our words are meant to reveal God and not ourselves,

that we love others enough to give up protecting ourselves, that our real concern is God's kingdom and not how we impress others, that we consider the community bigger than ourselves, and that we are willing to sweat blood rather than get bitter or walk away.

[Fr. Ron Rolheiser](#)

God is looking for imperfect men and women who have learned to walk in moment-by-moment dependence on the Holy Spirit. Christians who have come to terms with their inadequacies, fears, and failures. Believers who have become discontent with 'surviving' and have taken the time to investigate everything God has to offer in this life. - Charles Stanley

People must not only hear about the kingdom of God, but must see it in actual operation, on a small scale perhaps and in imperfect form, but a real demonstration nevertheless. - Pandita Ramabai

The image of the kingdom of God draws attention to all the ways in which God is already at work in our world, liberating human beings and renewing the whole of creation. It directs us to a transcendent, always greater God, who escapes our comprehension and our plans, yet who breaks in upon the world, overturning our expectations, calling us to conversion of heart, and to the transformation of structures of oppression. Pg. 46. Denis Edwards. *Jesus and the Cosmos*

Not only are [food and lodging](#) to be provided for passing travelers, but the travelers must be accommodated graciously. The statement of the early sage Shammai that one should "greet each person with a cheerful facial expression" ([Mishnah Avot 1:15](#)) is understood [midrashically](#) (in [Avot De-Rabbi Natan 13](#)) as an admonition to hosts not to provide for their guests amply but angrily. Better, teaches the midrash, to offer a guest but a little in a gracious tone than large portions obviously proffered grudgingly.

It is a courageous thing to keep getting up every day, and it is a much more courageous thing to rouse your heart and incline it to love. To care for each other, to open the door to the stranger, to open your heart to the stranger, lifts you up into the great dance of life. Homan, Daniel, OSB & Pratt, Lonni Collins. [Radical Hospitality](#). Brewster, MA. Paraclete Press. 2002.

Courage is the power of the heart, and it resides not in the emotion, but in the will and the power to choose. Courageous people will themselves to move past an obstacle that paralyzes others. 167

Homan, Daniel, OSB & Pratt, Lonni Collins. [Radical Hospitality](#). Brewster, MA. Paraclete Press. 2002.

The dangers of life are infinite and safety is among them. Goethe

"If we are to think anew it must be from a new stance, one essentially unfamiliar to us; or say, from a further perspective that is uncontrollable by us..."— Stanley Cavell, "Time after Time", *London Review of Books*

Life only demands from you the strength you possess. Only one feat is possible – not to have run away. Hammarskjold

"I hope you've met at least one 'Kingdom person' in your life. They are surrendered and trustful people. You sense that life is okay at the core. They have given control to Another and are at peace, which paradoxically allows them to calmly be in control. A Kingdom person lives for what matters, for life in its deepest and lasting sense. There's a kind of gentle absolutism about their lifestyle, an inner freedom to do what they have to do—joyfully.... Kingdom people are anchored by their awareness of God's love deep within them and deep within everyone else, too." -Richard Rohr in *Jesus' Plan for a New World: The Sermon on the Mount*

The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" (that is, here) and "at hand" (that is, now). It's not later, but lighter—some more subtle quality or dimension of experience accessible to you right in the moment. You don't die into it; you awaken into it. Cynthia Bourgeaul

Jim Marion's wonderfully insightful and contemporary suggestion is that the Kingdom of Heaven is really a metaphor for a state of consciousness; it is not a place you go to, but a place you come from. It is a whole new way of looking at the world, a transformed awareness that literally turns this world into a different place. Jim Marion, *Putting on the Mind of Christ*

## **SODOM & GOMORRAH**

Most authorities regard the ruins of these cities--if, indeed any ruins were left--as submerged under the circled, shallow waters of the Dead Sea, south of the Lisan Peninsula. All local traditions preserved by natives of the country favor this area. Josephus says that the Dead Sea extended from Jericho as far as Zoar (B. J., IV. viii. 4); and the Christian historian, Eusebius, of the fourth century, confirms that statement and adds that a Roman garrison was there. Also the mosaic map found in a Greek church of Medeba, dated from the fifth or sixth century, places Zoar at the southeast corner of the sea.

In 1924 a joint expedition of the Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary and the American Schools of Oriental Research, led by Drs. Albright and Kyle, explored the territory at the south end of the Dead Sea to determine the sites of Sodom, Gomorrah, and Zoar. They found the ruins of a Zoar of the Byzantine and Arabic periods, but believed that the site of the earlier Zoar had been submerged by the continual rising of the Dead Sea.

Jebel Usdum (Mount Sodom), a mountain of crystalline salt, 5 miles long and 300 feet high, along the southwestern shore of the Dead Sea, is so named from the belief that Sodom stood near it.

Of the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah, Dr. George Adam Smith says:

Here was laid the scene of the most terrible judgment on human sin. The glare of Sodom and Gomorrah is flung down, the whole length of scriptural history. It is the popular and standard judgment of sin. The story is told in Genesis; it is applied in Deuteronomy, by Amos, by Isaiah, by Jeremiah, by Ezekiel and Zephaniah, and in Lamentations. Our Lord employs it more than once as the figure of the judgment he threatens upon cities where the word is preached in vain, and we feel the flame scorch our own cheeks (Mt.10:15; 11:24; Lu.10:12; 17:29). Paul, Peter, Jude make mention of it. In Revelation the city of sin is spiritually called Sodom. Though the glare of this catastrophe burns still, the ruins it left have disappeared. Thompson Chain Reference

“I need to be trusting enough to know that God will give me more than I ever dreamed of if I am just faithful to the people I am here for.” Henri Nouwen

A gift is not complete until it is used for the purpose for which it was intended." Rev. Ann Pierce Smith

You've got to jump off cliffs all the time and build your wings on the way down." Ray Bradbury

I had an experience I can't prove. I can't even explain it, but everything that I know as a human being, everything that I am tells me that it was real. I was part of something wonderful, something that changed me forever; a vision of the Universe that tells us undeniably of how tiny, and insignificant, and how rare and precious we all are. A vision that tells us we belong to something that is greater than ourselves. That we are not, that none of us, are alone. Carl Sagan

Instead of an intellectual search, there was suddenly a very deep gut feeling that something was different...seeing that Sun...set in the background of the very deep black and velvety cosmos, seeing –rather, knowing for sure – that there was a purposefulness of flow, of energy, of space in the cosmos – that it was beyond man's rational ability to understand, that suddenly there was a nonrational way of understanding that had been beyond my precious experience....On the return trip home, gazing through 234, 000 miles of space toward the stars and the planet from which I had come, I suddenly experienced the universe as intelligent, loving, harmonious. Edgar Mitchell

The path ahead, then, is dialogue among yourselves, dialogue in your presbyterates, dialogue with lay persons, dialogue with families, dialogue with society. I cannot ever tire of encouraging you to dialogue fearlessly. The richer the heritage which you are called to share with parrhesia, the more eloquent should be the humility with which you should offer it. Do not be afraid to set out on that “exodus” which is necessary for all authentic dialogue. Otherwise, we fail to understand the thinking of others, or to realize deep down that the brother or sister we wish to reach and redeem, with the power and the closeness of love, counts more than their positions, distant as they may be from what we hold as true and certain. Harsh and divisive language does not befit the tongue of a pastor, it has no place in his heart; although it may momentarily seem to win the day, only the enduring allure of goodness and love remains truly convincing. Pope Francis

"We need to set out on the journey and we need to let ourselves be coaxed into the unknown. Sometimes unwillingly and sometimes in the hands of our friends, sometimes by the fact that there is no other direction to go." Corrine Cavanaugh, *Spinning Straw into Gold*

Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive, and then go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive. -Howard Thurman

“To become a true priest of the Life-giving Holy requires a certain loving detachment. We have to enter the border country and live among its secrets without having our eye fixed too much on how we can make use of them. We are there for love and communion and enjoyment, not for use. We must often learn to let the Holy set the question as well as give the answer.”

-L. William Countryman, *Living on the Border of the Holy*

Other references to the sayings in this text appear in the

1. *Didascalia* (9. 19) “Also our Savior said: “Everyone that wrongs you, wrongs me, and him that sent me.” (Lk. 10: 16)
2. Lk. 10:19 in *On First Principles* by Origen the second century: “He, too, has come who according to Job had “subdued the great fish”, and who has given to his true disciples authority to “tread on serpents and scorpions and over every power of the enemy,” without being in any way harmed by them. (Book 4, Chapter 1.28)
3. Lk. 10: 4 has a parallel saying in this same document: “If now we approach the gospel in search of similar instances, what can be more irrational than the command: “Salute no one by the say, which simple people believe that the Savior enjoined upon the apostles?” Book 4, Chapter 3, 3.

#### **ADDITIONAL READINGS:**

Beck, Robert. *Sunday Homilies: Cycle C 2012..Pgs.131-135.*

Grana, Janice, Ed. *Images*. Winona, MN. St. Mary's College Press. 1976. NOT FOR THE HESITANT: Page 130. THE JOURNEY: Pg. 135.

Shea, John. *The God Who Fell From Heaven*. Allen, TX. Argus Communications. 1979. A SONG OF DISCIPLESHIP: Pa. 7.