

scattered

Bible Study

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Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Acts 8:4

Faith for the Harvest

Luke 10:1-9 (ESV)

Introduction

One day my car broke down in the parking lot where I worked. My wife, Eileen, picked me up and took me to purchase the needed part. I returned, lifted the hood of my car and started working.

A chilly, humid breeze blew from the west. Rain was in the air. I hurried to complete the repair. Then the downpour struck. Frustrated, I closed my toolbox, hastened to get into my wife's car, and said, "Let's just go home. I cannot do this work in the rain."

Eileen pointed to the western sky. She had seen what I did not see. Even though we were sitting under a gray storm cloud, on the horizon was a sun-washed light blue sky. The breeze was blowing the storm cloud away. The clear sky was coming our way.

The point is simple. I needed to look up from my work to the horizon to see what the wind was bringing my way.

When Jesus spoke with Nicodemus, as recorded in John 3, He explained that the activity of God's Spirit can be compared to the action of the wind. "So it is," said Jesus, "with everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8b, ESV)

Not long after His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus said to His disciples, "Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest." (John 4:35b, ESV)

Today, Jesus tells us to lift up our eyes and see where His Spirit is at work. There is a harvest prepared for workers to gather.

The John 4:35 principle shapes this study of Luke 10. The principle is this, "**Every Christian must assume that, within the reach of your life, there are people whose hearts are ready to respond to the gospel, if you will just look for them.**"

Read Luke 10:1-9

Wherever groups of Christians are multiplying rapidly in the world today, they relate to Luke 10 as an action plan, not just as a historical account. Read this text and think about what it would look like for you and your group of Christian friends to immediately obey these instructions of Jesus.



(1) After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.

Reflect and Apply

Personal

How do appointments made by Jesus impact my schedule?

What neighborhoods, interest groups, or identity groups are within the reach of my life?

What does it mean that Jesus is “about to go” into a new place that is within the reach of my life?

Group

While you might not have 72 people in your group, Jesus is prepared to send teams of two from your group to someplace nearby where He is about to go.

As a group discuss this question: How might our group be impacted if we conclude that Luke 10:1-9 describes an action plan for us?



(2) And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

Reflect and Apply

Individual

If I decide Jesus is personally saying to me there is a plentiful harvest within the reach of my life, what impact does this have on how I pray and what I do?

What is the earnest prayer I can pray today in response to Jesus’s instruction in Luke 10:2 to pray earnestly? (Write this prayer here, and pray it now.)

Group

Pause as a group to ask Jesus to reveal His plan to your group.

Take a moment to share as a group anything (place, person, group) that came to mind as you prayed.



(3) Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

Reflect and Apply

Individual

Jesus tells His follower to pray for workers, then He immediately appoints them to go do the work. How might I be an answer to the prayer I just wrote?

The lambs and wolves imagery suggests “danger.” (Wolves are known to do harm to lambs). In today’s culture, what might be the risks I face as Jesus sends me out as lambs in the midst of wolves?

The lambs and wolves imagery suggests “differences” (lambs are different from wolves). What realities might I face if Jesus sends me into a people group that is very different from my own life experience?

Group

What would it look like for your group to practice simple faith by following the model of Luke 10 and acting on whatever Jesus brought to your minds while you prayed?

The teams of two went out to tell their story (how Jesus changed their lives) and tell God’s story (present the gospel). If teams of two from your group follow the model Jesus provides in Luke 10, how ready are you to concisely share your personal testimony and to lead someone to a personal relationship with Jesus?

Would you like to be trained in telling your story and telling God’s story? Who can do that training?



(4) Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.

Reflect and Apply

Individual

Why do I think Jesus tell His disciples to “go poor”? They had nothing material to give and had no extra provisions for their own needs.

Why did Jesus tell His disciples to go directly to the people group He identified without stopping to talk to anyone else?

Group

As Jesus puts a new place (person, group, neighborhood) on the hearts of your group members, what provisions do you need to gather for your journeys to that place?



(5) Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' (6) And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you.

Reflect and Apply

Individual

Have I created margins in my life so there is time and emotional space for me to build a new relationship with a new friend who is spiritually open?

Can I describe the peace that comes to a person and her/his household when they encounter Jesus?

Group

A person of peace is someone within the reach of your lives whose heart is ready to respond to the gospel, if you will just look for them. Is your group beginning to have a deep conviction that there are spiritually open people within the reach of your group?



(7) And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. (8) Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.

Reflect and Apply

Individual

What would it look like for me to invest substantial time into a new relationship with a spiritually open person who has opened her/his life and household to me?

How does it affect me to simply receive the hospitality someone offers?

How comfortable am I in learning new customs and receiving the food that is customary for a different people group? Am I willing to do this for Jesus even if I am uncomfortable?

Group

Why do you think Jesus instructed His disciples to build new relationships by receiving hospitality, rather than building new relationships by giving money, goods or services to people?



(9) Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

Reflect and Apply

Individual

Is my personal theology and my prayer life shaped by the belief God will do something

supernatural today to convince new people whom I meet that Jesus is real and His kingdom is near?

Am I willing to step out in faith, trusting in the supernatural work of God's Spirit, to new people who are spiritually open?

Group

Like a motion sensor turns on lights, the supernatural work of God is motion-activated. The supernatural work of God today is activated by our submission to God's will, our obedience to Jesus' instructions and our willingness to take risks.

What is God up to here? Why did Jesus lead our group to study this passage?

What is our next step as a group?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we want to respond to this study of Luke 10:1-9 by putting Your plan for finding spiritually open people into practice. Please show us our next steps. Give us persistence to follow through. Give us faith in Your supernatural activity in the world today. Amen.

Every Christian must assume that, within the reach of your life, there are people whose hearts are ready to respond to the gospel, if you will just look for them.