

**2010 slogan: Whatever It Takes!**

**Sermon: Are You Ready to Go?**

**Text: Luke 10:1-24**

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**Introduction:** As we read the text for this first Sunday in 2010 we have similar questions to ask ourselves as did those early hearers. The Kingdom of God was upon them as it is for us. Following up on the questions at the end of **chapter 9**, similar questions of personal commitment must be asked. As we stand at the front of 2010 I wonder what your plans are for Jesus' agenda. Are you ready to commit to our slogan for 2010: "Whatever It Takes?" And as we open this year's continuing study of Luke another overarching inquiry arises: "Are you ready to go?" just like those early followers in light of:

## **I. Difficulty (vv. 1-2)**

**Luke 10:1-2 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup>After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. <sup>2</sup>He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

### **A. While in the flesh Jesus needed help to be in more than one place (v. 1)**

He appointed 72 other people to help get out the message, to make it public. The message of course is that the Kingdom of God has come in the person of Jesus.

Some mss. Have "70" here. This probably reflects the idea of the 70 nations listed in **Genesis 10** that were catalogued after the flood. This carries the idea of everyone hearing about the good news, i.e. a global evangelism. It anticipates Pentecost when all the various nations would hear the gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **B. A lack of workers (v. 2a)**

Not everyone wants to work. A lot of people like to watch others do ministry, but when a person is converted he is also called. "Missions is not a matter of marketing but of the Lord's directing his people to share faithfully the grace they have experienced." – Bock, Luke, p.291

There is always too much work and not enough hands in ministry. There are so many things we could do here if we just had more people. There are more people that need to be sent (*apostello*).

### C. More prayer is needed (v. 2b).

More prayer is needed for the harvest. Prayer will help provide more workers. One point should be clear: God is in charge of this harvest because it is “his” harvest. Harvest-language is end-of-time talk. The followers of Jesus were taught to pray for God’s name to be hallowed (revered) and that God’s kingdom and rule would be evident here on earth. To see this accomplished more work needs to be done not by the same people, but an expanded circle of witnesses. Will you pray every day with me for more workers?

“Are you ready to go?” just like those early followers in light of:

## II. Uncertainty (vv. 3-8)

**Luke 10:3-8 (NIV)** <sup>3</sup>Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup>Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. <sup>5</sup>“When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ <sup>6</sup>If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup>Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. <sup>8</sup>“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you.

When it comes to *our* “going:”

This command to go is quite a paradigm shift from what is normally the call of the church to come. Come to church! Come hear! Come see! All the time God is asking us (really commanding us) to go out, not so much invite others in! God will bring them in!

### A. Safety (v. 3)

When we do go, the environment in which we will be working is unsafe in some ways. It is like being a lamb among wolves. There is a certain vulnerability to lambs, but under the protection of the shepherd, our safety is assured.

### B. How God will provide (v. 4a)

This is not necessarily a strategy for world missions today. In fact later in Luke there seems to be a reversal of attitude about what to take (**Luke 22:35-38**). It shows that strategies can change. Not every method is good for all times and in all settings. There should be differences in a church plant in the inner-city and one for the affluent suburbs. But the principle of having faith in God to supply our needs is still sound. If it is God’s idea, he will not see it fail!

When it comes to *our* “going,” there isn’t much:

C. Time left (v. 4b)

Personally we have little time. There needs to be urgency to our message.

There is no time to lose. People will die and go to hell without a saving relationship with Jesus. There is no time to waste.

“During the 1981 Byron Nelson Golf Tournament in Dallas, a massive tree limb broke off and fell on a spectator who was killed instantly. It happened near the third hole where Charles Coody was playing at the time. Shortly after the accident, he was interviewed on the radio and he said, ‘After running over and seeing the accident, I tried to play golf, yet I had no desire to play after that. All of a sudden those three foot putts didn’t seem all that important.’” – illustration from Steven J. Cole sermon entitled “The Crucial Message”

We shouldn’t really worry about:

D. Our reception (vv. 5-6)

Some people will receive us and our message. And to those that provide hospitality and a welcome place for God’s people – they will be blessed. For those who reject God’s messenger, they will be deprived not only of an earthly, spiritual peace, but eternal peace.

When a person rejects you as one of God’s messengers, you should not take it personally.

We shouldn’t really worry about:

E. What God’s provision will be (vv. 7-8)

Whatever God gives us should be accepted, and we should bless Him for his gifts. A trait hard to find today is “satisfaction.” – elaborate...

There may even be here in **verse 8** an illusion to being offered non-kosher food. If it is from God’s hands, it should be accepted. This is a lesson Luke would let us see later in Acts as Peter prepares to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

“Are you ready to go?” just like those early followers in light of:

III. The Clear Message of the Kingdom (vv. 9-24)

**Luke 10:9-11 (NIV)** <sup>9</sup>Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’ <sup>10</sup>But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup>‘Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.’

It is God’s intent that we be whole and at peace with him. So, he commanded those he had sent - to deliver his message of healing and the closeness of the Kingdom.

You will notice it does not say *show* them the message of the Kingdom, even though there must be a life-style that is Christian. It says, “tell them!”

There are two edges to this message. Both need to be told. The negative side of God’s message is:

**A. Judgment (vv. 12-16)**

This message is increasingly unpopular and unbelievable in the ears of the current culture. Yet, there is here a clear warning to those who will not listen.

**Luke 10:12-16 (NIV)** <sup>12</sup>I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. <sup>13</sup>“Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>14</sup>But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. <sup>15</sup>And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. <sup>16</sup>“He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

**1. Judgment is the result of no repentance.**

The point is that man is doomed unless he does change his mind and do what God wants. This requires putting God’s will for us ahead of any other desire or wish of ours.

**2. Judgment is also the result of not listening.**

And at some point God is going to say: “didn’t I tell you; didn’t others tell you?” Most people have many invitations to listen to the gospel. Most people, though, only do what they want to do.

Luke makes it clear that to reject any messenger of God is to reject His Son and ultimately to refuse His mercy and grace. When I ask you to follow and obey Jesus, I am asking you to do so to avoid eternal punishment.

But the positive side of this message is there is also a:

**B. Reward (vv. 17-20)**

**Luke 10:17-20 (NIV)** <sup>17</sup>The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” <sup>18</sup>He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. <sup>19</sup>I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. <sup>20</sup>However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

**1. What It is not!**

Ministry is not about glory and recognition for the messenger, but the Sender of the message. God, the Father is the one to whom all glory is to be given.

The opening of Rick Warren’s book, *The Purpose Driven Life* says it all here (p. 17):

**Colossians 1:16 (TMSG)** <sup>16</sup>For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, ... —*everything* got started in him and finds its purpose in him.

Atheist, Bertrand Russell even recognized the problem with faith or no faith: ‘Unless you assume a God, the question of life’s purpose is meaningless.’

When it comes to your life ...“It’s not about you.

The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. It’s far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born *by* his purpose and *for* his purpose.”

**2. What it is!**

A part of our reward is the fact that souls are added to the Kingdom as a result of our working in tandem with God. The text says we are commanded to continuously rejoice about our own salvation. And that is not really difficult when one realizes his name is in the Book of Life.

Luke tells us later in **chapter 15** there is cause for great joy over misplaced coins, lost sheep, and a son who was lost, but is now found. There is rejoicing in knowing you are back where you belong, back with God, the heavenly Father.

And finally some are chosen to receive:

**C. Divine Revelation (vv. 21-24)**

**Luke 10:21-24 (NIV)** <sup>21</sup>At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. <sup>22</sup>“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” <sup>23</sup>Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. <sup>24</sup>For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”

*Divine revelation* is for the humble and meek. There needs to be a proper time to share the gospel. For those who have all the answers and are disinterested in the plan of God for their lives, it is difficult for them to hear anything God has to tell them. But if one admits that God’s presence is needed, then ears will open.

*Divine revelation* is God’s choice. Since Jesus has come, God has used many people to declare his gospel. To know Jesus is to be prepared to share Him. Not to know Him is to be ill-prepared.

**1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)** <sup>15</sup>But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

The idea of revelation is not that it is unknowable (a mystery), but that God lifts the curtain and unveils the truth at just the right time.

*Divine revelation* is a blessing from God. What a wonderful gift to be entrusted with the very words of God. What a responsibility we have been given to tell. We ought to be thankful. We ought to fall down in worship over the magnitude of this divine blessing.

**Conclusion:** If we choose to follow God’s call and instruction, we must understand one important point. Success in Kingdom work is not about us, but the souls yet to be added. Our hope is that our names are found in the Book of Life (v. 20). Beyond that, we certainly hope that those now lost will be found in Christ this new year. Would you take the attitude, especially about evangelism this year, that “Whatever It Takes,” we will try together to share what we know about Jesus!