

All right. Ok. Well. As you can see we are going to be looking at **Luke chapter 10**. Today. And it's really such a privilege to be back together. And. Studying God's Word. Again. This Sunday. And you know, I thought last week was such a special week, for us, as a church, as we heard some different testimonies of how people became Christians, and I guess, it was such a reminder, to me, at least, of the way God is still, at work in this world, right now, saving and changing people.

**Through Jesus**. And so, as we open up our Bibles this afternoon and continue to read and study our way through the gospel of Luke, which we've been looking at for so many weeks now, which tells us about the life of Jesus. We come to this with a sense of anticipation and expectation, because we know, we are not just coming to learn more information about a historical figure who has no relevance for our lives, today, but instead, we are coming to learn about someone who is still at work, in this world, right now in the most significant of ways. And. Yet. At the same time. Obviously. We also come, knowing, that if we are going to understand anything about this Jesus and how He is at work in the world and how exactly He is relevant for our lives today. That. We, first must, do the work, of making sure, we've really, gone back to the gospels, and understood who Jesus actually was. And.

What Jesus actually came to do. Because. The only Jesus who changes lives is the biblical Jesus, the one who actually existed, and exists. And, I think honestly, this has kind of become, a burden for us as a church, actually. Making sure we understand the Jesus we are reading about. Because, we know, unfortunately, doing that isn't always as easy as it sounds, **because we often come to Jesus with preconceived notions of who He is and what makes Him important** that we've picked up from here and there which can sometimes keep us from really hearing. What He actually has to say about Himself. And. What He's come to do. And. One reason. We know that is such a threat.

For us. Today. Is because. As we've been working our way through the gospel of Luke, we've seen, that it was such a threat, for the disciples as well. Back. When. They were beginning to follow Jesus.

Actually. They were having a difficult time seeing Jesus. **Because they came to Jesus. With certain expectations.** Of who He was. And. What He was supposed to do. And. How He was supposed to work. Exactly. And. Part of what made. Those expectations so difficult for them to give up. Was that.

Many of them. Came from their reading of the Old Testament. Actually. And you. Kind of have to. Follow me here. But. Obviously. This Jesus that we are reading about in the gospels. Didn't just appear on the scene out of nowhere. Instead. There had been years and years and years where God was preparing His people for His arrival. Throughout. The Old Testament. By making certain promises. About someone called the Messiah. And. As the disciples listened to Jesus, and followed Jesus, and saw the kinds of things Jesus was doing. They. Became. Convinced. That. Jesus was the fulfillment of all those promises. That's. What Peter was saying. You remember. In. Luke 9. Verse 20.

You are the Christ of God. Which was obviously a big moment for him. And for them. Because. They were absolutely, one hundred percent right. About that. Jesus was the Messiah God had promised. The problem was. However. That. Even though they were right about who Jesus was, they were wrong, about how, God was going to fulfill all those promises through Him. Which. Is the essence of Luke. Chapter 9. Really. And. If you are following. Luke chapter 9. Is. A transitional chapter in the gospel of Luke. And. What that means is that after Jesus has spent two years publicly presenting himself to Israel as the Messiah, he's now beginning to focus more on training his disciples. And the first thing that he is trying to help them understand is how He is going about establishing the promised kingdom. Because. There was this amazing kingdom the Old Testament promised. And they understood that there was going to be a kingdom and that he was going to establish it, but they didn't understand, how he was going to establish it. Specifically. They didn't understand the cross.

Which, I know, seems so incredibly obvious to us, all these thousands of years later. But. I am telling you, that was not incredibly obvious to these disciples. At all. And. **That's. Just. Not how they were expecting the Messiah. Was going to work. Instead. When they thought Messiah. They were expecting. That. God. Was going. To intervene in this world. And solve all the problems. That. Israel as a nation. Was experiencing both socially and politically. By sending. This Messiah. To judge their enemies and establish a physical kingdom over which He would rule. Right then. At that very moment. In which they lived.** And that expectation. Of what Jesus was supposed to do. Went really. Really. Deep for them. And. Made. It almost impossible for them to understand what He could have possibly meant as he began to talk to them about how important it was for him to be rejected. And. To suffer. And. To die. On a cross. Because. If Jesus was the Messiah. In their minds. That meant. He was the King the Old Testament promised. And they thought. The disciples. If He was the King the Old Testament promised. That meant. He was supposed to judge all Israel's enemies. And. Rule over them. And the world. As well. And. I am talking. Almost. Immediately. Almost. Right away. Like right then. Which is why no matter how many times Jesus told them God was accomplishing His plan differently than they expected. Differently than that. It was very difficult for them to get their minds around. Any other possibility. And so. Even. In Luke 9. Actually. After Jesus has told them about the cross. And. And given them a glimpse of what God's plan really is. Suffering. Dying. Resurrection. Then Second Coming. Then Glory. Which what was happening at the Transfiguration, and then began, working his way through some of the implications of that plan, for their lives, and for their ministries. As sets his face to Jerusalem. In Luke 9. Verse 51. As he begins his journey towards the place where he is going to really actively put that plan in motion, the disciples, are still thinking He's going to Jerusalem to establish His kingdom and rule over His enemies. Right away. In other words. They are thinking. Of this. As. Like a victory march. Which is why, of course, when the Samaritan village rejects Him, James and John ask, if they should call down. Fire. Or you could say. Judgment. And. I guess. I wonder. Are you remembering this? Because. Obviously. I am wanting us to study Luke chapter 10 together today, and maybe this feels like a very long introduction, but I just think there's a lot in this chapter, and some of it is maybe going to be, a little bit confusing, unless you remember that Luke chapter 10. Comes after. Luke chapter 9. In other words. It's not just a random story. Of Jesus sending out. A number of disciples.

It comes after this whole chapter, where we've seen Jesus has been trying to get his disciples to understand. The kingdom wasn't coming. The way they expected. And. I mean. That is the whole thing with this calling down fire. Story. In verses 52 through 56. Actually. Because. Obviously. At first. James and John's reaction. Seems a little over the top to us, you know, to just call down fire on this village because they didn't, want you to stay there that night, seems like, maybe, these guys needed to get a life. And. I am guessing it's true, their motives probably aren't the best, actually, at that moment, but, still, the thing is, if you read the Old Testament, and what's going to happen when the Messiah. Does. Come. To defeat His enemies. It is going to be fire. From. Heaven and actually more. Than that. The Old Testament promises, a day of massive, worldwide judgment, and yet the way Jesus, responds to the disciples, makes it clear, that day, isn't here yet. Which. Is. The point. In Luke chapter 9, Jesus has revealed to them God's plan for how He's going about saving the world, and, that plan, centered in on a cross, which was kind of revolutionary for them, and it was, honestly, confusing as well. In fact. As we read. Verses 46-52. Of chapter 9. It's like. One big long. Illustration of the disciples, basically, saying. Wait. What? And. Maybe. Especially. Verses 57-62. If you can remember. Where these three people come up to Jesus with their ideas of what it is going to mean to follow Him. And with Jesus have to say to each of the three. I just don't think you are getting this. Yet.

Because. First. There was this man. You remember? Who comes to him. And he's like. I am in. I will follow you wherever you go. Because. Of course. He's thinking. If you are the Messiah, and you are going to Jerusalem, you must be going for stuff like glory, and riches and power and castles, even, you know, and Jesus is like. Actually. That's not how this is going down. At all. Clearly Because. I don't even have a place to lay my head. And. Then. Next. There's this other man, who seems to think he has all the time in the world to follow Jesus. And so. When. Jesus. Says. Follow me. He's like, yes, that sounds great, I will, sometime, way in the future, when it is convenient and I've received my inheritance. And Jesus is. Like. Oh. Man. You. Clearly. Don't know what's going on here, because I am going to Jerusalem. And. That means. There's not actually that much time left. Because. I am going to Jerusalem. To die. Which means if you go home and wait for you father to die so that you can receive your inheritance, you are going to miss out on what God's doing through me right now, and that's a serious miss, you know what I am saying, because there is nothing more significant, than what God is accomplishing through Jesus Christ, and that makes, this a very serious, intense moment, in other words. In salvation history. As Jesus is walking around the earth. It's not just any other ordinary moment, when a person is meeting Jesus, they are meeting the very center of God's great salvation plan, and so, you are going to have to be either all in or all out. There's no kind of sort of. Following Jesus. Which. Of course is what Jesus says, to the third person in Luke 9, verse 60, who is saying he wants to follow Him. And. It's like. As we come to the end of chapter 9, Jesus is having to dismantle, or take apart all these different ideas people had of what it was going to mean, for them to be his disciples. At that moment. In God's great. Salvation. Plan. And. I guess. It's almost like.

They were sitting at this bus stop. Waiting for this bus.

Called Messiah to come and take them where they wanted to go, and when they saw Jesus, there were people who were like, yes this is the one, He is the Messiah Bus you could say, and as they were getting on, they thought that meant he was heading in certain direction right away.

Especially as Jesus sets his face towards Jerusalem.

It's like. I knew. He was the right one. We are heading in the right direction, and because they thought, that's how Jesus was working, it had implications for the way thought about what they were supposed to be doing. As well. Obviously. I mean. If you are on the bus with the king as he is going to sit on his throne, you are going to be having like this massive celebration on the way.

And yet, Jesus, is saying throughout chapter 9, that while, yes, this is the bus, you've got that right, I am the Messiah, I am not actually headed, exactly where you think I am headed. At least. Not right away. We're going there. It's true. But we are taking a different route to get there. Than you expected.

And that route. Includes a cross. **Which. I am saying. Had to. Create all kinds of questions in their minds, like for example, what are we, supposed to be, doing then?**

I mean. Are you understanding what I am saying? If you are going to Jerusalem to die. Jesus.

When we thought you were going to Jerusalem. To overthrow Rome. And. Sit on a throne. That kind of changes things. A little. For us. And it makes us ask. At least. If we were the disciples. And we were understanding what is going on. What, exactly, is our purpose now? And. Maybe even more specifically. Does. What you are saying. Mean. That our reading of the Old Testament and all these promises about judgment and glory and peace on earth and all that stuff. Is. Absolutely.

Completely off? And I am. Saying all this. Actually. Because I think. Those are the kinds of questions you have to have in your mind, as you read Luke chapter 10, because those are the kinds of questions, that Luke chapter 10. Is intending to. Answer. Beginning in verse 1.

**“After this the Lord appointed seventy two others and sent them on ahead of him.”**

**Which is a big old reassurance.** After all this talk about the cross, the first thing Jesus does in this chapter, is reassures his disciples, in verses 1 and 2. That whatever he is meaning by the cross, if they are having a hard time following, the one thing he's not meaning is that it is some sort of failure or end to what God is seeking to accomplish through Him. And through those who follow Him.

As well. Because the reality is, that it just keeps getting bigger, really. Jesus' mission.

As we read through the gospel of Luke, we see. In, chapter 8, verse 1. That.

Jesus went out proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God, basically by himself, with the twelve, following and watching. And then. Later. In chapter 9, verse 1.

He calls the twelve together and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.

And here in the beginning of chapter 10, after telling them about how he's going to die on the cross, the mission just keeps pressing on, and actually even increasing. As he sends out 72. Which.

Actually. Also. In and of itself, is probably a reassurance, as well. I mean. The very number.

It's either 70 or 72. And you can probably see there's a footnote, and that's because if you go all the way back to the oldest copies we have of the New Testament, they are pretty much even split between, it saying 70 or 72. But either way, I think it actually goes back to Moses.

And you have to follow with me, but Jesus appointed 12 apostles for a reason, and that's because there were 12 tribes of Israel and so he's saying something, and he's like, these are going to be the leaders of the new Israel. When I establish my kingdom.

And throughout chapter 9, there's been all these allusions to Moses, the one, we know God chose to lead Israel, out of Egypt to the Promised Land.

Like, there was Jesus feeding the 5 thousand in the wilderness, which calls to mind, Moses, giving the people manna in the wilderness, and Jesus going up on the Mountain to meet with God, which is a little like Moses, going up the Mountain as well, and then Jesus coming down, the Mountain and there being chaos, which is how it was Moses came down, and even the argument about who was the greatest, was something Miriam and Aaron struggled with, and then this thing about people doing something in Jesus' name and the disciples wanting to stop them, was something that Joshua actually got upset about in Numbers chapter 11, when certain men were prophesying, outside the camp as well. And, then obviously, the most obvious allusion, is back up on the Mountain, in verse 30 and 31, when Moses and Elijah appear and start speaking with Jesus about his departure, which in the Greek, is literally, the word, Exodus.

I mean. It doesn't take a scholar who has gone to school for a long time to figure out that Moses talking to Jesus about his Exodus, not Moses' but Jesus' Exodus has to be significant.

And. The reason I am bringing all that up again, is because it means as we come into Luke chapter 10, we are coming in with this impression that Jesus is coming to do something like Moses, but better, and this number, here of people he appoints and sends out, only reaffirms that.

Really. Whether it is 70 or 72. Because, back in Numbers chapter 11, again that's the number, 70, of elders God told Moses to appoint to share in his mission of leading Israel through the wilderness to the Promised Land, and who he gave His Spirit, as well, to help them do that, and of course if you add Medad and Eldad, who come in the story right after that, because they were the men who were prophesying, in addition to the 70, that would be 72, actually. And while I wouldn't die for that interpretation obviously, I

think, it's meant to be another subtle reassurance, that in spite of this surprise of the cross, that God's great rescue plan is still on track. And that's why.

Jesus sends them out. Luke 10. Verse 1.

Two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go and says to them.

**"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."**

And that word harvest is another allusion to the Old Testament, and this time, Jesus is not being subtle. At all. Because. Harvest, literally is a time of year, where you bring in the crops, and if you are a farmer, it's kind of like the end of what you have been working for, and that's why it is used throughout the prophets, to illustrate the time of judgment, which is going to happen at the end of the age, when God separates the good from the bad, his people from those who are not. Like.

For example. In Isaiah 24:13. Where after Isaiah's talked about the Lord emptying the earth, and scattering its inhabitants, and about a curse devouring the earth and its inhabitants suffering for their guilt. He says. **"Desolation is in the city. The gates are battered into ruins. For thus it shall be in the midst of the earth among the nations.**

**As when an olive tree is beaten, as at the gleanings when the grape harvest is done."**

And the harvest illustrates, God glorifying Himself by rescuing His people, and exercising judgment, on those who are not. And

that's. Joel. Chapter 3.12 and 13, as well. Where God's called the nations to himself, as if he's going to war, and says. **"Let the nations stir themselves up and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.**

**Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great."** And so. The harvest represents this great time of judgment, where there's a gathering in of God's people, and punishment on those who are not. And that's why I think.

As Jesus. Talks about the harvest being plentiful. Because, he's not actually talking about the mission field, as much as he is talking about the end of all things. And this final time of judgment. That's going to take place. And. So. It's like. He's reassuring. His disciples. That the fact he's going to Jerusalem to suffer on the cross doesn't mean. That this great work. They've been reading about in the Old Testament and hoping that God would do. Is done. And just not happening. But. Instead. The opposite. The harvest is plentiful. And. That means. Essentially. In terms of salvation history. The end is near.

Jesus can see that it's coming. In fact. It's like the end of all things has begun, and things are being put in motion for this great judgment to take place, and that means the work ahead of us, is not over, instead, it's just getting started. Which. Of course. Is why Jesus is sending these men out, and, it's why, the first thing he tells them they need to be doing, as they go. Verse 2. Is. To. Pray.

**"Earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."**

Which again is just another huge reassurance. Really. That.

The harvest they have been longing for is really happening. And again. I am talking. About.

The wrapping up of all things. The judgment. The establishment of the kingdom of God.

In which the Messiah reigns. And. So. When. Jesus says, the harvest is plentiful, it's like, he's looking, to this judgment, that the disciples have been anticipating, and saying, it is all still on.

And. So. As they've heard what he's said in Luke chapter 9. He doesn't want them to get worked up so much about whether this judgment is still happening. Because God is the Lord of the harvest, and it's his harvest. And He totally has his plan under control. And. So. Instead of getting worried about what's going on, as they see Jesus going to the cross, they, like Jesus, should be

looking to the judgment that's still coming, and going out and working at gathering God's people and rescuing them, in the face of what's coming, and, especially, praying, that God will be raising up more people to work alongside of them. The journey to the cross wasn't the end of their work, it was the beginning, and the disciples needed as much help as they could. In taking this message out. Because. The work itself.

Was actually going to be very difficult. And. I am thinking. Their work. Especially. Verse 3.

And this is where Jesus begins readjusting, his disciples expectations, actually, after reassuring them, that God's great Kingdom plan is still in motion. He says.

**"Go your way: behold I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves."**

Which brings us back to the part that's shocking. Actually. And this is where the cross comes in and starts messing with their expectations. Again. Because. It's not that shocking that judgment is coming and it's not shocking that God's sticking to His plan of making all things right. Either. But. What is shocking. And unsettling. Is the way the nation of Israel was responding at that moment, and going to be responding to Jesus, in the next few months, because as, you see here, Jesus is describing them here as being like wolves. **I am sending you. Disciples. Out like lambs in the middle of wolves.**

And, that's just so surprising, I am saying, because Jesus is sending the disciples in this passage to Jewish people. And. They were supposed to be God's sheep. If. You know what I am saying? They were not supposed to be wolves. And I can tell you. That's not how they thought of themselves, as wolves, which is why, of course, when the Jewish people read the Old Testament, and thought about the harvest, and the day of judgment, and the Messiah, they were thinking, almost exclusively, about Him bringing that judgment on other nations. Besides themselves. Because. In their minds. It was those other nations who were like wolves. And. That's. Why they read the Old Testament and thought the Messiah could come and just judge the nations and start ruling over them. Like right away. Without any kind of suffering or cross. Because, in their minds, the problem was out there in the world, and yet as Jesus sends the disciples out among the Jewish people, he says, the problem is, actually, in here, as well. Something's not right. With Israel. And that's going to become very, very clear as you take this message, out actually, because you are going to be like these little lambs, he's saying to the disciples, and the Jewish people, are going to be like wolves who to want to tear you. Apart. And.

I. Am saying. That's important. That's important. Because. **That Jesus' way of beginning to readjust their expectations.** I mean. As they are hearing Jesus' talk about going to the cross, and then looking at what the Old Testament, about the kingdom of God, and wondering, why it was not happening the way they expected. Jesus is reassuring them. It's still happening. There is going to be a harvest. And a judgment. And an ingathering of all God's people. And the establishment of the promised King.

But. The tweak is. That harvest is not going to take place. Exactly when you thought or how you thought. Because of some significant spiritual problems in the nation of Israel itself, which were going to have to be dealt with first. And. I mean. Is this making sense to you? This is work. I know. It's just that. This is not some story we can just disconnect from history, it's happening at a point in time in God's great salvation plan, where this nation, Israel was basically at a crisis moment. Really.

A. Turning point even. Because. After two long years. Of Jesus presenting Himself to them as their Messiah. And proving. That over and over.

Jesus is sending the disciples out, and seeing where this is heading and, yet wanting to give Israel, one last great opportunity, and so he says to disciples. Verse 4.

**“Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.”** And Those are his instructions, and we need to kind of put them in their place, because these were not instructions for all times, but instead specific instructions for this moment, and I think, intended to accomplish.

Three things. Really. First, obviously, it was supposed to make the disciples depend upon God.

Because. Really. It's like they were going out to war with no weapons. And, then second, it was supposed to show urgency of what they had been called to do, which is, actually why they were to greet no one on the road. And. That sounds overboard, you know, but it wasn't, because, what was taking place with Jesus at that moment was so significant, and the message he had given them to deliver, so important, that they couldn't just go out and act like everything was normal.

That's the point. If you are running to save people from a burning building, you don't have time, to stop and chat, and that's kind of what Jesus was sending these men to do. Because, the clock was ticking, on the nation of Israel. And so, they had to go out, without the normal supplies, third, in order to force the villages they went to, to make a decision about Jesus, and that's actually, the probably the most important point. Of. All. Because. I am saying. This was really getting to be decision time.

For the nation of Israel. I mean. The end of all things was beginning. The Messiah had come.

This was a big moment on God's whole plan for the universe chart. And Jesus is sending out the disciples now throughout Israel as his representatives, and he's doing it because at this moment, the people of Israel, needed to make a decision, and while Jesus could see, the decision they were going to make, because he's merciful and kind, he wants to put them in the position as he sends these men out, where they have to make it. They have to choose. They can't just listen to the disciples and not respond, the disciples have nothing, and they are going either have to accept them or reject.

Which means. They are going to have decide whether they are for Jesus or against Him, which explains, the disciples message, and their ministry as well. In verse 5 and following. Jesus says.

**“Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’”** Which sounds strange. To me, at least. Because. You know. Peace to a house. That's not the normal greeting. It would normally be peace to you, which tells us, this peace, is not just another hello, I don't think. Like hey I am here.

Peace. Instead, this is like peace with a capital P. The Hebrew word for the concept, is called Shalom.

And it's like a total peace, we are talking about. And so. This is more like an announcement. Really. Where Jesus' representatives are coming to a home, and saying, I want you to experience peace, eternal peace, the kind of peace only God can bring, the kind of total peace talked about in the Old Testament, and not judgment. Because. The harvest is plentiful, and the judgment is going to be massive, and the kingdom God is going to establish through His Messiah is going to be epic. And. So. I am coming here right now, into your home, and I want you all to experience that.

Israel. **“Peace be to this house.”** **“And if a son of peace is there.”** Verse 6. Which means a person who is a believer. Really.

Someone who is going to be part of this coming kingdom, that blessing they gave was going to mean something. It was going to rest on them. Meaning. They were going to experience that future peace. And, yet, on the other hand, if they were not one of God's children, that message, would just be like words in the air. Or quoting Jesus. **“It will return to you.”** And. This is actually. Pretty huge. And I am just hoping I am making this clear. Because what's happening, is the disciples were at a unique moment. . In salvation history. Where the person who had been promised throughout the entire Old Testament. As the great rescuer of mankind. Was actually on the planet.

Walking around. Speaking to the people about this kingdom he had been offering them for thousands of years now. And sending these men out now basically to offer this promised kingdom to Israel, which is why this all of this so urgent, because, as they are going into these towns, and villages, they are going as his representatives. And That's what makes them important. And. That's what makes their work significant. Not them. But the one they represent, and as representatives of Jesus, when people receive them, they were receiving Jesus. And that was huge. Because that meant they were submitting to God's great salvation plan, and the disciples were to honor that by staying in the same house that received them, verse 7, and giving them a little picture of what that kingdom was going to look like.

First, through fellowship. Relationship. Eating and drinking what they provided, and not going around looking for a better place stay or anything like that. And. Then verse 9. By.

**Healing the sick, and saying, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."**

Which means what? What's the point? This is kind of getting exciting.

And again, you have to connect this to what is actually happening, because this is a preview of the kingdom that God had promised in the Old Testament and Jesus was supposed to be establishing.

This was like a trailer. In other words. You know with movies, before the movie officially comes out, there will be little glimpses to get you excited, and that's what the disciples were supposed to give Israel, when they welcomed the message about Jesus. It is like they were supposed. To say. Listen.

We are not just here in your town just to tell you some nice ideas. We are not like philosophers here. We are more like news reporters, really. Because, we are here to tell you that something earth shaking is taking place right now. The king. That all the prophets talked about. And was promised throughout that whole Old Testament you are always reading. Is here. On the planet. And, because you have accepted us as His representatives, God is going to give you a taste of what He's going to do for you through Him, when Israel finally repents. There's going to be healing, and much, more, actually, in Jesus' coming kingdom. And. Yet. Again. On the other hand. You know. For those who don't. Accept. Them as Jesus' representatives. Jesus tells the disciples in verse 10, the consequences of that rejection are going to be huge. As well.

**"But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you.'"**

Which was a saying, basically, and it was one you would usually use, to talk about someone who wasn't Jewish, but what they called a Gentile. And, the point is judgment.

If you accept us, the disciples were supposed to be saying, you are going to get a preview of the kingdom, which is healing. And if you reject us, we are going to give you a preview of what you are going to receive as well. Which is going to be judgment. Like you read about in the Old Testament.

For the Gentiles. And. We are going to do that by making this announcement and wiping the dust off our feet. And. Really. That's the moment the disciples were living in, which obviously, wasn't quite the moment they had been thinking or expecting, because they didn't understand the depth of Israel's rebellion, and so they, had been thinking that God was just going to come in and rescue the nation of Israel, from all its enemies. When. Israel. Was too rebellious for that. Which didn't make their work less significant or important, because, as we are seeing here, while Jesus wasn't establishing the kingdom right away, they were living in the moment, when that kingdom was being offered. To Israel. And.

God was using them to take this offer out. And this was huge. Because how these villages in Israel responded to them was going to determine what happened to them. At judgment. If they rejected.

It wasn't going to stop the judgment. And it wasn't going to stop the harvest. And it wasn't going to stop God finally establishing the kingdom. But it was going to have an eternal impact on them, which is why Jesus tells the disciples. In verse 11. To say.

**“Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.”**

In other words. Oh man. You were close. You were so close and you had a privilege that many people would have longed to have had. Because, you were here, when the kingdom of God was being offered, and yet, you rejected it. And you are going to miss out. And that's so sad. Because.

As Jesus tells the disciples. In verse 12.

**“I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.”**

Which again, is absolutely like shocking, because if you read through the Old Testament, Sodom is the standard, it's stock illustration pretty much of God's terrifying judgment. You know?

If the prophets wanted to scare Israel they would say you are being like Sodom because it didn't get worse than Sodom and yet Jesus here is saying, that it actually did. Because, what's worse than Sodom. Were all these Jewish cities and villages having Jesus' messengers come into their town, announcing the arrival of the Messiah. Only to reject them. And ultimately Him. And that rejection was a big deal, because it meant their judgment was going to be worse than Sodom's, which I think this is actually kind of ironic. I mean. If you think back to chapter 9. James and John were wanting Jesus to call down fire on that Samaritan village, and that's actually what happened with Sodom if you think about it, fire came down on Sodom, and yet, when they wanted to be part of that, Jesus is saying, no, the time has not come for judgment like that on these Gentile cities. Instead.

What's happening now is I am sending you out to Israel with this announcement about the Kingdom, and that announcement is so important, that if they reject you, they reject me, and their fate, is going to be worse than, Sodom's on that day and he's talking of course, about the day of judgment. Which made. The disciples work. Very significant. The fact that they were going with Jesus towards Jerusalem so that he could die on the cross, didn't change how God was going to establish the kingdom, and judge, the way that was talked about in the Old Testament, but it did mean, that Jewish people that were living right then, that rejected him, were not going to experience that salvation.

But judgment. And Jesus knows this is where this is going and that's why he says in verse 13.

**“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you Bethsaida!”**

Which were Jewish towns. After reassuring them they are still a big part of God's mission, and explaining exactly what role they were to play, Jesus gives them a sad prediction, which is that, Israel's going to end up rejecting the kingdom. They were proclaiming. And. I mean, obviously.

Woe is a proclamation of judgment, and here it's almost like a cry, as well and Jesus is crying out, because he knows how terrible their judgment is going to be. Which he illustrates.

By comparing them to pagan, Gentile cities. Verse 14.

**“For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago.”**

And that's honestly saying something, because if you have read the minor prophets you would know that God has all kinds of bad things to say about Tyre and Sidon. These were not good cities.

They were not the kind of people you would normally hold up as an example, and yet, Jesus is saying, if they had been privileged to see what these Jewish villages were seeing, even these cities would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. Which makes what is happening in Israel. Pretty terrible. Because, God's fair, and he's going to take note of all this, on the day He judges.

And as a result. Verse 14: **"It will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon than for you."**

In other words. There's going to be a difference in the way God judges people based on the amount of revelation they received. And of course. The point here is not that Tyre and Sidon's judgment is going to be easy, because if you read the Old Testament, it's definitely not, but instead, that the judgment these Jewish villages were going to receive was going to be much, much worse, because they had Jesus standing there. And sending these disciples out, and yet, they were still so proud.

Which. I think. Is verse 15: **"And you Capernaum, will you be exalted to the heavens?"**

And Capernaum is where Jesus did so many of his miracles, of course, and it's like he's trying to wake them out of their sleep, by saying do you really think, God's going to exalt you.

To the heavens. No. You shall be brought down to Hades, which here basically means hell, and I am not sure how the disciples were reacting obviously, as they heard Jesus say all this, but.

Certainly he wanted them to feel the heaviness of the responsibility which they had been given, as representatives of Jesus, they were representing someone, who was the standard, on which people's entire eternal futures would be judged and honestly, because of Israel's sin, their work was for the most part going to be a sad, kind of responsibility, because in spite of all they were doing, in the end, Israel was going to reject them, and by rejecting them, they were going to reject Jesus, and in rejecting Jesus, they were rejecting God the Father Himself.

I mean, are you seeing, how the cross, was turning upside down their expectations, where they thought, perhaps that they were on the way to Jerusalem to see Jesus established as King and Israel rescued from their enemies, Israel was in fact, going to reject Jesus, and in rejecting Jesus, these particular Israelites were going to actually condemn themselves.

And so you might think, wow. Now if the disciples are processing. What did the disciples, have to be happy about them, if their ministry was going to do, almost, the opposite of what they had been expecting? Verse 17 and following.

**"Luke tells us the seventy two returned with joy, saying, 'Lord even the demons are subject to your name.'"**

And. Obviously, they are coming back to Jesus, after ministering, and they are excited because it, all seems to be working. And Jesus. Is not surprised. By this. Because, he is in the middle of defeating Satan and he knows, this is what his journey to Jerusalem is ultimately about. Verse 18.

**"And he said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.'"**

And I am not sure, we know exactly what moment Jesus is talking about, actually, or if this more like a prophetic declaration of something that is going to happen, but we do know the, that Jesus has no question, whether or not Satan is going to be defeated, and the disciples casting out demons, was illustrating that. And. Obviously. This is definitely something to be excited about, even if God wasn't establishing the kingdom according to their plans, the fact that Jesus came into this world, meant that man's greatest enemy, was on his way to be absolutely crushed. And. What's more, Jesus says.

They themselves were able to courageously go to war against the forces of the devil, being confident of God's protection over them. Verse 19.

**“Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.”**

And this is one of those verses that I know here in Africa could cause us to miss the whole point, because I don't think Jesus is saying, we are supposed to go out and step on snakes or something, and we can know we'll never get hurt. Because, most of Jesus' disciples, ended up being killed.

I think, honestly, serpents and scorpions are not. Really literal.

Just like I don't think Jesus means he saw Satan literally fall like lightning from heaven.

Falling like lightning is a picture, and treading on serpents and scorpions, is a picture, of what the disciples have just been talking about as well. Which. Was. The fact that demons had been subject to them in Jesus' name, and so, as the disciples are coming to Jesus rejoicing in the fact that they are winning in this battle against demons, Jesus is saying, yes. I know. Because.

I've seen that the devil actually defeated, and so.

You don't have to be afraid. In the middle of this crazy world. As things are not going quite the way you are hoping. One thing you can rejoice in. Is that. Ultimately, your greatest enemy has been defeated and you don't have to go out there, constantly afraid of him and his evil forces anymore.

I've given you power and authority over him, and he can't hurt you, in the long run, any longer.

Which of course. Is an encouragement. But, there's actually even something bigger. And this is like, I think, such a high point, like where this passage is bringing us.

Because as I have been saying over and over and over again, the cross is unsettling, especially for these disciples, because, it was kind of turning their short term dreams upside down. That what happens obviously when Jesus says something if you want to follow me, you have to take up your cross, and later, that, if you follow me, you might even be homeless, and all of that, because, I am sending you, Jesus is saying, and Israel's not going to accept you, that's the thing, they are going to reject you, and as a result, you aren't going to be the means of their rescue from Rome right now, like you thought you were, but you actually are going to be a source of long term judgment.

For them. And. If the disciples understood that, at all, you know, what Jesus was saying, there was going to have to be some, like what is going on, until then they went out and saw some success.

Casting out demons and things. And I think they are like yes, oh yeah, this is what I am talking about, I don't know what Jesus meant, but the demons are subject to us, and Jesus is like, you are right, that is exciting, and you can be encouraged, because Satan is going to be defeated, I've seen it, I prophecy it, and that means, ultimately, he can't even hurt you right now, but, listen, if you really are grasping, the significance of what's taking place, that's not really the thing that should bring you the most joy, in light of all that I've been saying. And. You know. What's that? It's. Verse 20.

**“Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but that your names are written in heaven.”** It's eternal life. Salvation. That's what meant by written in heaven, it's like a picture, of a heavenly book, the book you could say, of eternal life. And it's like. Jesus' point is. That.

In light of all these people you are seeing that are rejecting me, in spite of all the evidence, you should be amazed that you are not, and that's more exciting than all your accomplishments right now.

And we can see in verse 21, that it certainly was to Jesus. Because Luke says.

**“In that same hour, he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.”** Which, as far as I know is the only time Jesus is described like this. At this moment, in spite of the rejection, in spite of the suffering he’s about to experience, as he’s on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus is filled with spiritual joy. And you know why?

**“I thank you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.”** And he’s talking of course about the disciples, and this kingdom plan, that he’s been describing and what’s even more significant, I think, is the fact that not only are they coming to understand all this, when so many other people weren’t, they were also being given the ability, to begin to appreciate, the reality of who exactly Jesus is. Verse 22.

**“All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”** Which honestly needs a whole sermon, but let me see, if I can summarize all this.

Because. After Jesus has talked about the cross, the disciples have got to be wondering what’s going on, is everything God’s planning for the Kingdom over, and Jesus here, is making clear that it’s not and they have an important work to do and they are going out to offer the kingdom to Israel and to show them what their response to Jesus is going to result in. And. It’s going to feel a little bit like a failure at first, because Israel is going to end up rejecting them, and these villages and people are going to end for the most part, experiencing God’s judgment as a result of their ministry. But that.

Doesn’t mean God’s not defeating Satan. And that God’s not able to take care of them.

It does mean, they should be really, really thankful for their salvation, because the only reason they understand anything about what God is doing through Jesus is because God has revealed it to them, and what’s more, they should be rejoicing, because as they come to understand what God’s doing in the gospel, and doing through Jesus, they are actually being drawn into this amazing relationship with God the Father through Jesus Himself. And that’s why. Jesus. In verses 23 and 24. Turns to the disciples. And says. I know it’s not what you are expecting as you were reading the Old Testament, but in the end it’s going to be even better, and so, even though, following me means having to pick up your cross, when you thought you were going to Jerusalem to rule. It’s absolutely one hundred percent worth it. Because. Satan is being defeated. You are being saved. You’ve been given a relationship with God Himself. And you are being given a glimpse, of what the prophets and others throughout the Old Testament, longed to understand better themselves.

**“Then turning to the disciples he said privately, ‘Blessed are the eyes that see what you see!’**

**For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”**

Which of course, is not only true for them, but it is also true for us, because as we look out in this world, obviously God may not always be working according to our expectations, but He is working, and specifically He is still on track to keep all the promises He made throughout the Old Testament about this amazing promised Kingdom. And right now, He’s making an offer to you of total peace, eternal peace, political, spiritual, physical, peace, and you have gotten a glimpse of that peace, in Christ and the disciples work throughout the gospels, and your ability to enter that kingdom is, one hundred percent dependent on your acceptance of the message they preached, found in the gospel, because your attitude towards that reflects your attitude towards Jesus Himself.

And, so, it’s not going to be easy now, necessarily, for us, following Jesus, just like it wasn’t easy for them, but, even in the middle of the pain and suffering we might experience, we have to remember, if we are believers, we really are blessed, because we have

an eternal future, because, we are part of God's great plan to defeat Satan through Jesus, because we are saved, and have come to understand, the greatest, most important, spiritual realities in the history of the entire universe, because God Himself revealed them to us, through Jesus.