

Luke 9:51-10:24 // The Proclaimers

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[0 : 00] Today's reading is from Luke chapter 9, beginning at verse 51, which can be found on page 1040 of the church.!

That's page 1040. Luke chapter 9, beginning at verse 51.

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead who went into Samaritan village to get things ready for him. But the people there did not welcome him because he was heading for Jerusalem.

When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy them? But Jesus turned and rebuked them.

[0 : 57] Then he and his disciples went to another village. As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, I will follow you wherever you go. Jesus replied, foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.

He said to another man, Follow me. But he replied, Lord, first let me go and bury my father. Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

Still another said, I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family. Jesus replied, No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.

After this, the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.

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. Go, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

[2 : 13] Do not take a purse or bag or sandals and do not greet anyone on the road. When you enter a house, first say, Peace to this house. If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them.

If not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, The kingdom of God has come near to you. But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you.

Be sure of this. The kingdom of God has come near. I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. Woe to you, Chorazin.

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. But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.

[3 : 29] And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me.

But whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me. The 72 returned with joy and said, Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.

He replied, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy.

Nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. 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 is what you were pleased to do. 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.

[4 : 46] Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, Blessed are the eyes that see what you see, 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.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks, Catherine, for reading. You can find an outline inside the notice sheet with the points on as we follow this passage.

And if your Bible's not open, it would be a great help to me if you could have it open on Luke chapter 9 and 10, which is page 1040 in the church Bibles.

But let's pray and ask for God's help as we turn to his word. Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending the Lord Jesus in keeping with your promises of ages past to reveal yourself to us and to rescue us.

And so we ask that whatever we've been thinking about you and about Jesus up to this point in our lives, for each of us today, we may take a significant step forward in knowing you, the living God.

[5 : 58] For Jesus' name's sake. Amen. So today we're launching our plant, and so we're sending people who we love and value to go and make Jesus known in the east of Glasgow.

And in our Bible passage today, Jesus commissions a team, and he sends them out. And Luke records it here because there are things about this sending out that apply to all of us today who are Christians, not just to the church plant launch team.

So this is not meant to be like a wedding sermon. You know, when you go to a wedding, often the sermon is for the couple and you're listening in. This isn't a sermon for the launch team and you're listening in because we're all called to be a sent people for Jesus.

And it's great to have a mission in life. People around us long for a purpose in life. They long for something to live for, even something that would be worth dying for. And Jesus teaches us that to be one of his disciples is to have a great overarching purpose for your life, that you would play a part in passing on the saving news about him.

We see that in chapter 10, verse 1. After this, the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them out two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.

[7 : 19] Well, in chapter 9, he sent out the 12. And there are special things about the 12. But here, the 72 are representative of all believers. And they're sent out to make Jesus known.

To be people who do that, we have to understand the times we live in. We have to know our times. And in our first scene, if we just back up to chapter 9, verse 51, we saw that James and John didn't understand the times that they lived in.

They've not grasped it yet. They were sent by Jesus to a Samaritan village. And when they got there to prepare their way for Jesus coming, the message was rejected.

They didn't want Jesus in that town. And so in verse 54, we read this. When the disciples, James and John, saw this, they asked, Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?

That's not such a random thing to say because they've got in their heads the days of the prophet Elijah, who was a prophet in that same region, Samaria.

[8 : 25] And the king of Samaria rejected God's prophet, Elijah. And he sent a captain and a company of soldiers to capture Elijah. And when they came, fire came from heaven and destroyed them.

So James and John have a commendable, in one sense, passion for the name of Jesus. They're thinking, well, if to reject the man of God in Elijah's time, deserve judgment, how much more rejecting God's king, Jesus?

But how does Jesus respond? Verse 55, Jesus turned and rebuked them. Why is that? They think it's judgment time. He is saying, this isn't judgment time.

Jesus has come on a mission to seek and to save lost sinners. So he's sending out the 72 with a message of peace with God. It comes three times in verses 5 and 6 of chapter 10.

Go and proclaim peace to the people you meet. And every day, until Jesus comes in glory, is another day where the message from God is, there is peace on offer in Jesus' name.

[9 : 38] Now it's us sent to proclaim that peace, which is extraordinary when you think about it, because when Jesus came into the world, God sent angels from heaven to proclaim peace.

And now, the shepherd's got angels, everyone else, they get us going to offer them that peace. We see in the next scene, from verse 57 of chapter 9, that this is something that every disciple of Jesus is called to be part of.

Three men have an encounter with Jesus in verses 57 through 62. To the first one, Jesus teaches that following him is very costly, more costly than he's realized.

To the third one, Jesus teaches that following him takes commitment. You never look back. And then in the middle one, in verse 59, Jesus says to the man, follow me.

And the man says, Lord, first let me go and bury my father. People have different views on this. I take it that the dad is not yet dead.

[10:43] That this was a phrase you would use at the time for when your father was alive to continue working the land until he died and you got your inheritance.

So, an equivalent today might be if we were to think, well, one day I'll get on with following Jesus. But first, I've got things, I've got other priorities. I'm saving up for a flat or I've got family commitments.

And Jesus is saying, it's too urgent for that. But if you look at verse 60 and you just cover up the last kind of seven words with your finger and you think of what you'd expect Jesus to say in verse 60, he says, let the dead bury their own dead, but, now I would have expected him to say, but you come and follow me.

But he doesn't say that. He says, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God. In other words, Jesus is saying, to be a disciple, to be a follower of Jesus is to be one who proclaims his kingdom, the news about him, to be a herald of that news.

Now it's going to look different for different people. Rico Tice was here last month, the developer of Christianity Explored. He did a great evening for us, training us and talking to others about Jesus.

[12:04] Rico travels around universities every year. He speaks to hundreds of people at a time about Jesus, impressing on them the goodness of Jesus, the need to respond to Jesus.

Many of us will not be like Rico. It is striking though how much Rico models it in his personal life. He opened his diary at that training night. At the back of his diary, he has listed lots of people in his neighborhood who he's got to know what's going on in their lives, the names of their kids.

He wants to celebrate them and love them and serve them. For most of us, proclaiming the kingdom of God is as simple as being known as a Christian with the people around us, inviting a colleague or a classmate to an event at our church over Christmas.

If they come to a carol service doing the thing that sometimes is actually harder than inviting them, of actually saying to them, what did you think of the talk, of the message?

Have you thought about these things before? What do you think about Jesus? Would you like to think about him more? It's going to look different for each of us, but the call to follow Jesus is the call to proclaim Jesus to people who don't know him yet.

[13:22] Now it's good to get this because sometimes in church life today, I think we separate out godliness from evangelism, from speaking to others. And we think of godliness as things like bearing the fruit of the Spirit and spending time in prayer and living to serve others.

And rightly so, those are marks of being godly. But sometimes then we think of evangelism as like an added extra that lots of us will think, well, I'm not really very good at that.

But some people are good at that, but it's not really for me. Well, what is it to be godly? Being godly is being like Jesus. He is the God-man.

And what was Jesus like? Well, since Luke chapter 4, we've seen that he is a proclaimer. He said in Luke chapter 4, his manifesto was that the Spirit has anointed him on a mission to proclaim good news to the spiritually poor.

The good news about him. So to be like Jesus is to be a proclaimer of Jesus to make him known in the world. And so if you're a Christian here today, let me invite you to ask yourself and reflect on, is this the agenda that drives my life?

[14:36] So that it affects how I spend my time. that I would invest in people outside the walls of church, loving them well, serving them, celebrating them, praying for them, praying for the chance to talk to them more about Jesus, to cross the pain line and ask them what they think.

East Church launch team scattered about here now. We love you. It's costly for us to send you out. We do that joyfully and we say, good for you that you're going to make Jesus known.

Good for you that that's been your priority. And when each of us asks ourselves, should I go with them? The question we're not asking at that point is, do I want to proclaim Jesus? That's not an optional question for us. Whether we, people who stay here or we're people who go, whatever our home church is, we are a people called by Jesus to make him known. Now why do we find that difficult to do? Often it's that we fear rejection. For many of us it will be that we've experienced rejection of the message, even hostility to the message and we get weary of it. [15:51] We think people are not interested. And actually in our times far more people are interested than we think a lot of the time. But no wonder we fear rejection because Jesus says here in verse 3 of chapter 10, go, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

It's quite an extraordinary thing for the most loving man who's ever lived to say, go like lambs among wolves. But in the rest of Luke chapter 10 we see three key reasons why we should accept that mission.

So, we're on to our three point. I know it's taken me a while to get to the three points of this three point sermon, but we're there now. Okay, the first reason you would accept the call to mission is that the judgment of God is really coming.

Our offer to the world is peace with God, but if the messengers go to a town and their message is rejected, look at verse 12. Jesus says, I tell you it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

Well, Sodom was an ancient city that was so immoral that God brought forward the judgment he'll give to the whole world and destroyed it. Jesus is saying here, the judgment on the towns who reject the news about him will be worse because they've heard more from God.

[17:12] He tells us that in verse 13 as well, speaking of two places in Galilee, war to you, Chorazin, war to you, Bethsaida. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, those were two proud, godless, prosperous cities outside the promised land, well, if they'd seen the miracles you've seen, verse 13, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes, but it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.

Soberingly then, Jesus is unmistakable here that a judgment day is coming. A day when we'll all stand before him, God's forever king, glorious, majestic, and by ourselves all of us will stand that day as rebels in God's world because we've lived for other things instead of for him.

So we're against him and he will be against us. And the Bible gives us this message that's our only hope, wonderful hope, because it holds out to us, rebels like us, the author.

God wants to make peace with you. He wants to forgive you. He wants to redeem you and set you free. So we line up our lives behind the goal of making that message known.

William Booth, who founded the Salvation Army, he wrote a vision for the lost, a vision of the lost, where he described the world without Jesus as like a dark and stormy ocean with vivid winds and towering waves.

[18:44] And he went on, he said, in that ocean I saw myriads of poor human beings plunging and floating, shouting and shrieking, cursing, struggling and drowning, and some sank to rise no more.

And I saw that out of this dark, angry ocean a mighty rock rose up. And all around the base of this great rock I saw a vast platform.

And onto this platform I saw with delight a number of the poor, struggling, drowning wretches climbing out of the angry ocean. And I saw that a few of those who were already safe on the platform were helping the poor creatures still in the angry waters to reach the place of safety.

A number of those who'd been rescued were working industriously to deliver the poor strugglers out of the sea. And some had jumped into the water to rescue their perishing. And I hardly know which gladdened me the most.

The sight of poor people climbing onto the rocks and reaching safety or the devotion and self-sacrifice of those whose whole being was wrapped up in the effort of their deliverance.

[19:52] But as I looked on I saw that there were many on the platform who simply occupied themselves with different pleasures and employments. And only a very few of them seemed to make it their business to get people out of the sea.

What puzzled me most was the fact that though all of them had been rescued at one time or another from the ocean nearly everyone seemed to have forgotten about it. It perplexed me that these people did not even seem to have any care about the poor perishing ones who were struggling and drowning right before their eyes.

Well knowing that this is the spiritual condition of those around us we get why Jesus would send us out even though he cares for us like lambs among wolves.

Now it's very contemporary to think that we have to be safe. To be unsafe is it must be wrong if it's not safe.

That's kind of the spirit of our age. But emergency service workers will tell us that sometimes you put yourself in a position where you are very unsafe to rescue others.

[21 : 03] And Jesus is saying this is a rescue operation. We go because the judgment of God is really coming. Secondly secondly we go because the plan of God cannot be thwarted.

Jesus sends out the 72 and then in verse 17 they come back and report how it's gone and they're full of joy. They say Jesus you should have seen it. Lord even the demons submit to us in your name verse 17.

Jesus replies verse 18 I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I've given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy.

Nothing will harm you. I take it that snakes and scorpions is a vivid figurative way of describing demonic powers. And when Jesus says he's seen Satan fall from heaven it's a reference back to something in Isaiah.

What he's saying here is as he sent out these followers with the message about him Satan was bound. the power of evil spiritual evil was bound so that as the message of Jesus is proclaimed that message has the spiritual power to liberate people out of Satan's darkness and bring them into the kingdom of light the sun's kingdom and no power of hell can stop Jesus rescuing whomever he wants to rescue.

[22 : 29] As he sends people out on his mission they carry with them his authority to overcome all demonic power which is so helpful isn't it to have the kind of the curtain drawn back on that spiritual reality because I remember meeting a mate to do the word one-to-one which is John's gospel designed so you can read it with a not yet believing friend and it's an app the word one-to-one so we're sat in a Costa coffee shop and I've got my phone out and he's got his phone out and we're just reading out John's gospel and we're talking about it and if you looked around Costa that day it just we look the same as everyone else there it just looked so ordinary but as we do it there is the spiritual power of God in the word to rescue people from the devil now of course as we do that we find lots of people are just not interested they don't want to do that they don't think anything of it it was the same for

Jesus it was the same for the 72 he said you're going to be like lambs among wolves but faced with that very mixed response it's very striking isn't it that Jesus when they report back is full of joy in the wisdom of God's plan at work look at verse 21 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 is what you were pleased to do so what's he rejoicing in not that everyone is saved they're not but as some people reject Jesus and other people joyfully accept Jesus what Jesus rejoices in is that God is revealing the extraordinary wisdom and goodness of his gracious plan for the world the Lord of heaven and earth has done something ingenious through the gospel if God had made it that you could find your way to him through science or philosophy then the most intelligent people would be right with would get right with

God and the rest of us would perish and those who made it could be so proud of themselves it was because of my intelligence that I'm right with God if God had made it instead that you could earn your way back to him through being a good person through good works then surely it would be all the people with the right backgrounds the stable home lives morally upstanding role models they would have all had an advantage they could have all earned their way to heaven and they could have been so proud of themselves for their righteousness so instead God has subverted the whole thing by ordaining that the only way to be saved is through receiving a message that a child could understand the offer of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus so that the proud often are the people who stumble over it because there's nothing to boast in and the humble are astonished and full of joy and they praise God forever that he would think to save them so Jesus rejoices in that wisdom from his eternal father it delights him and in the same way we can be spurred on to mission today knowing that whatever however people respond to our message about

Jesus we are seeing God working out his good plans for the world even if people we know reject the message nothing will stop God's will as he draws the humble all around the world to enter his

kingdom and be saved so why would we go the judgment of God is really coming so we go with compassion the plan of God can't be thwarted and our third reason we accept Jesus' call to mission is the blessing of God is our joy we rejoice that whatever happens our own future is absolutely secure look at verse 20 he says they're thrilled by what's happened verse 20 do not rejoice that the spirit submit to you but rejoice that your names are written in heaven and that's wonderful isn't it because it means we can't lose that joy whether our own personal evangelism is a story of abject failure or we meet astonishing success the people around us want to become Christians whatever happens our joy is the same our joy is that Jesus wrote my name in heaven so as Rico put it last month when he was teaching us about evangelism he said when we go out on mission we don't go out for approval from God we go out from approval knowing he's already approved of us our future is secure and then Jesus says that even while we wait for that future we should consider what a blessing we already have in knowing God through him so in verse 22 he says that only he knows the father and so only he can make God known and then he turns to his disciples and look at verse 23 he says blessed are the eyes that see what you see 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 in other words life with

[28 : 31] Jesus is the most wonderful privilege we might think wouldn't it have been special to have been one of the great prophets of God Isaiah Elijah or Daniel God speaking directly to them we might think wouldn't it have been special to have been one of God's kings David Solomon Josiah well at those times that those men lived God's unfolding plan was still very hidden and they longed to understand how God would have fulfilled the promises he made to them and the prophecies he made through them and now in Jesus coming for us the lights have come on that God's word to them was to serve us that we would know Jesus God has been unimaginably gracious to us that we live in our times that we can know God through Jesus blessed are we and you and I can be really effective in speaking about

Jesus if we speak from compassion because we know people are under judgment without him but also we speak from joy a joy in our hearts from what we found in Jesus that just flows out from us and means we've got deep security as we share that message and how has that come about that we would receive that blessing well today we actually arrived at a key moment in Luke's gospel Jesus in the chapters we've been in over the past weeks has been in ministry in the north of Israel around Galilee but if you look at chapter 9 verse 51 and how he starts this section Luke tells us that a new section big section of his gospel has come as he says that Jesus now starts a journey to Jerusalem he's mindful of what's coming it says as the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven so that's his death resurrection ascension and then what it literally says in verse 51 is Jesus resolutely set his face towards

Jerusalem the reason that's important for us is it's like a hyperlink in your Bibles if you're used to hyperlinks because Luke here when he says Jesus set his face to Jerusalem unmistakably is taking on here the language that the prophet Isaiah used about God's coming saving servant I've actually printed it inside the notice sheets just to look at it there Isaiah chapter 50 at the bottom of the sheets there this is God speaking through Isaiah words that the servant would be able to fulfill and he speaks of his humiliation in verse 6 I offered my back to those who beat me my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting and he does that knowing God will vindicate him if you look at verse 7 because the sovereign Lord helps me I will not be disgraced and then this little phrase that we've got in

Luke therefore have I set my face like flint and I know I will not be put to shame in other words here is Jesus sending us out on mission for him but first Luke wants you to know that Jesus set out on a more costly mission for you from now on in Luke's gospel we see a man whose death is casting a shadow over him he's going to Jerusalem to be delivered over to men who will mock him and spit on him and lift him up to die because that's his mission so he sends us out because he wants us to have compassion and face up to the judgment of God but he set his face to Jerusalem not just to warn people of judgment but to endure the judgment in our place to exhaust the holy wrath of God for our sin and as we come to the!

table we can reflect with thanks on what he chose to do led like a lamb to the slaughter that he could say to you and me rejoice that your name is written in heaven let's pray together Lord Jesus we praise you for what our eyes have seen and our ears have heard thank you for blessing us with a relationship with your father father we rejoice that you've written our names in heaven so as your

father sent you out to seek and to save us now you send us and we ask that by your spirit at work in us we will step forward in answer to that call that peace with God in your name will be proclaimed by East Church that souls will be saved there and by us here at St.
[33 : 44] Silas for we ask in Jesus name