

The Price and Privilege of Discipleship

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter 9, starting in verse 51, and I'll read all the way to chapter 10, verse 24. When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

And he sent messengers ahead of him who went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him because his face was set toward Jerusalem.

And when his disciples, James and John, saw it, they said, Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them? But he turned and rebuked them, and they went on to another village.

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus said to him, foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

To another he said, follow me. But he said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. And Jesus said to him, leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

[1 : 11] Yet another said, I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those in my home. Jesus said to him, no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

After this, the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. 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. Go your way. Behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

Carry no money bag, no knapsack, no sandals and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, peace be to this house. And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you 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.

[2 : 15] Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, the kingdom of God has come near to you. 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.

Nevertheless, know this, that 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 mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. The one who hears you hears me.

And the one who rejects you rejects me. And the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me. The 72 returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.

[3 : 21] And he said to them, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.

Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. In that same hour, he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 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. 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.

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 desire to see what you see and did not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it.

This is the word of the Lord. Jesus revealed himself as the Messiah, as we saw, throughout chapter 9, and Peter made the momentous observation of profession that Jesus is the Christ of God, in chapter 9, verse 2.

[4 : 47] And in all three of the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Peter's confession kind of is a pivot in which the narrative turns to Jesus' kind of unstoppable march toward the cross.

That's why he says he set his face to go to Jerusalem. So he's about to go to die on the cross, to be raised from the dead, and to ascend to the right hand of the Father. That's where he is headed now. And coming to terms with the true messianic identity of Jesus forces us to make a difficult decision. Are we willing to follow such a Messiah?

If Jesus really is a suffering Messiah, if Jesus really is going to the cross, and following him involves bearing our own cross, as Jesus taught us in chapter 9, then is it worth it?

What does it mean to become a disciple of Jesus? And this passage seeks to answer those questions. And it does so in three parts. First, we see the price of discipleship.

[5 : 45] And then we see the proclamation of discipleship. And then lastly, we see the privilege of discipleship. First, let's look at the price of discipleship. After Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem, it says in verses 52 to 53, that Jesus sent messengers ahead of him who went and entered the village of the Samaritans to make preparations for him.

But the people did not receive him because his face was set toward Jerusalem. In the Greek, the phrase, sent messengers ahead of him, is literally sent messengers before his face.

So there's actually a threefold repetition of the word face in these verses. Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem and he sent messengers before his face.

But the Samaritans rejected him because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And we know from the Gospel of John that there's some bad blood between Jews and Samaritans, which we'll see more closely in the next passage, next week.

But here, Luke doesn't mention any of that. But I think there's a deeper reason for this conflict, the rejection of the Samaritans of Jesus and his disciples.

[7 : 00] And it's that Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is his journey to the cross, as he taught us. And when he set his face to go to Jerusalem, he was embracing all that is entailed in being the suffering Messiah who will die for the sins of God's people.

And that radical redefinition of what it means to be the Christ, the king, the messianic king, was controversial not only among the Jews, but also among the Samaritans who were also waiting for a Messiah.

And so he says in chapter 9:45 that they didn't understand what Jesus was talking about. So he seems that that's what's going on here, that this is the price that the disciple of Christ also has to consider and pay.

That the king that is rejected means his followers too will face rejection, and that's not a popular result. And so here, as Jesus is on his way, he's so determined to go through the territory of the Samaritans to Jerusalem, he faces rejection because of that determined course.

Jesus was earlier rejected in Luke 8, 37 among the Gentiles, those who were non-Jews. And now here he is rejected among the Samaritans who are like the half-Jews with mixed blood.

[8 : 15] And soon he will be rejected by the Jews themselves in Jerusalem. And that's the pattern, the kind of the trajectory of the Gospel of Luke. But the disciples don't take this rejection very well.

They're the proud Jews, and these are the half-breed Samaritans. And yet they have the audacity to reject their Messiah. And so James and John, whom Jesus nicknamed the Sons of Thunder in Mark 3, 17, they react with appropriately thunderous indignation.

In verse 54, And when his disciples, James and John, saw it, they said, Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them? Seems a bit dramatic, but that's exactly what had happened to those who opposed Prophet Elijah in the Old Testament.

Those soldiers that were sent to arrest him were consumed by fire. So they must have that precedent in mind as they suggest this. But Jesus rebukes them.

He says, He turned and rebuked them, and they went on to another village. So it's not that Jesus is totally against any form of judgment. He himself will later speak of judgment in verses 10 to 16.

[9 : 28] But what he's teaching here is that he came in his first coming in grace to save his people. He has not come to judge. He will return in his second coming, in his glory to judge.

But for the disciples who are ministering and living in between those two comings of Christ, they are not to retaliate, even in the face of rejection.

And this is a helpful correction to us. We count it a virtue to be well-liked. We don't like to face rejection. But as our culture becomes increasingly post-Christian and moves on from its kind of Christian underpinnings, the saving message of Jesus Christ is going to be increasingly ridiculed and rejected.

And so we shouldn't be surprised by the kind of the trials and suffering that we face as followers of Christ. That's the price of discipleship that Jesus is speaking of.

He doesn't sugarcoat that. And as Jesus continues on his way to Jerusalem, he encounters three potential followers. And Jesus' conversation with them is very counterintuitive.

[10 : 36] Usually when you have potential followers, you want to win them over, lure them, show them why it would be worth it. But this is how he reacts to them. He says in verses 57 to 58, As they were going along the road, someone said to him, I will follow you wherever you go.

And Jesus said to him, Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. He's expressing a desire to become a disciple of Jesus.

That's what the language of following implies. And in the ancient Jewish context, the disciple would travel everywhere with their teacher and sit at their feet to learn the Jewish laws.

But Jesus knows that following him involves much more than simply learning like a typical Jewish disciple. But it's a dangerous road. It's a costly road because the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

This is one of his favorite ways of referring to himself as the representative of humankind before God. And throughout his ministry, Jesus was a homeless teacher.

[11 : 44] He was at the mercy of the hospitality of others. And because he preaches a counterintuitive and countercultural message of the cross that he came to die as the king to pay the penalty for the sins of his people, the disciples also face suffering and rejection and they have to count the cost before they can follow him.

Verses 59 to 60 continue. It gets even harsher seemingly. To another he said, follow me. But he said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father.

And Jesus said to him, leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God. This is a shocking statement, right, to us.

But it would have been even more shocking in the ancient world because there, arranging for the burial of your parents was considered a sacred duty. One of the most important duties within the family.

In fact, even though coming into contact with the dead was ritually defiling in Judaism, the Old Testament scriptures made special exceptions when it came to burying your relatives.

[12 : 54] So it said in Leviticus 21, 1 to 3, no one shall make himself unclean for the dead among his people except for his closest relatives, his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, his brother, or his virgin sister who is near to him because she has had no husband.

For her, he may make himself unclean. But Jesus tells this man to leave the dead, to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

Jesus is not teaching his followers to neglect their families. We know that because in 1 Timothy 5, 8, it says, but if anyone does not provide for his relatives and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

So Jesus is not making a literal point here, but he's using a figurative language to establish a spiritual principle. And we know that this is figurative because dead people can't bury dead people.

They're already dead. So Jesus is not referring to the physically dead, but he's referring to those who are spiritually dead. So in Luke 7, 11 to 17, if you guys remember, Jesus touched the funeral bear of the dead son of the widow of nine.

[14:12] And in Luke 8, 49 to 56, Jesus touched the dead daughter of Jairus. But in both of those cases, contrary to expectation, instead of Jesus being defiled by coming into contact with the dead, the dead were instead raised to new life.

Jesus imparted life to them. And that's because Jesus, as he taught in John, that he said, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. So Jesus' kind of resuscitation of the dead in the Gospels functioned as a foretaste of the eternal resurrection life that he promises all of his followers.

And that should inform how we interpret Jesus' command here. Leave the dead to bury their own dead, but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

That's what that means here. Even the spiritually dead can take care of their own parents. But only a Christian can proclaim the kingdom of God.

[15:19] So you must go do it. Even the spiritually dead can work hard to earn a living for their families. But only a Christian can proclaim the kingdom of God.

God. So you must go do it. Even the spiritually dead can study hard to earn their degrees, win grants, and make breakthrough contributions in their academic disciplines and advance human knowledge.

But only a Christian can proclaim the kingdom of God. This is not to belittle the activities and relationships that preoccupy our human lives, but simply to express the priority and necessity of proclaiming the kingdom of God.

In short, what Jesus is saying here is there is no temporal duty that is so important that we should neglect or delay following Christ for it.

Arranging for the care and burial of our aged parents is important. Schooling our children and taking them to music lessons and little league games are important.

[16:28] Alleviating poverty and abolishing human trafficking are important. But while we do all of these things, we must not forget the important truth that the world's greatest need and our unique ability as Christians meet in the proclamation of the kingdom of God.

That's our unique responsibility and prerogative. This man had a very good, reasonable request to make of Jesus.

He just wanted to honor his parents and give them a proper burial before he left to follow Jesus as a disciple. But Jesus says even that is an insufficient excuse for postponing Christian discipleship because an important thing must never take precedence over the ultimate thing.

Because a good thing must never take precedence over the best thing. Some people say, well, after I have graduated from school and when I'm less busy, I will really follow Christ and serve Him. After I climb the corporate ladder to a point where I have built sufficient wealth and job security, then I will really follow Christ. After I'm married and have a family, I will really follow Christ and serve Him.

[17:49] After my kids are grown up, I will really then apply myself to following Christ. That's not how Christian discipleship works. That's what Jesus is saying. His command doesn't necessarily mean that all of us have to leave our day jobs and leave our families to move to a foreign country as a Christian missionary.

It might mean that for some of us, but that's not what it necessarily means for all of us. But what it does mean is that all of our lives' purposes and priorities have to be radically reoriented with Christ as the center.

Because following Christ subordinates and subsumes all of our other obligations. So then, are you faithfully involved in the worship and fellowship of the church?

What are the relations and activities that you have allowed to push out your priority of following Christ and proclaiming the kingdom of God?

Have you been sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with your friends and neighbors? Because you may be, very well be, the only Christian close enough to them to proclaim the kingdom of God.

[19:08] Do you realize that that's precisely where our unique ability as Christians and the world's most desperate need meet? That's what that means. Leave the dead to bury their own dead.

But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God. We encounter a third candidate in verses 61 to 62. Yet another said, I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.

Jesus said to him, no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. This is an allusion to 1 Kings 19 verses 19 to 21.

That's where prophet Elijah calls Elisha to become his disciple. It says, so Elisha, so he departed from there and found Elisha, the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with 12 yoke of oxen in front of him.

And he was with the 12th. Elisha passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elisha and said, let me kiss my father and my mother and then I will follow you.

[20 : 19] And he said to him, go back again for what have I done to you? And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people and they ate.

Then he arose and went after Elisha and assisted him. So in this passage, Elisha literally looks back while he's plowing the field.

But more importantly, he figuratively looks back from plowing the field. He's called to the prophetic ministry by Prophet Elijah. But he says he needs some time to put his former life in order.

He's going to settle some accounts. He's going to sell all the things related to his day job, sell the oxen, get some money for his family. He's going to kiss his father and mother goodbye and then he joins him.

And this was an urgent mission. They lived in a desperate time under the wicked king, Ahab. And yet, and Elijah was given a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to follow one of the greatest prophets of old, Elijah.

[21 : 22] Yet even in that context, Elijah was given the freedom to return and to settle his accounts and to first say goodbye to his family. But Luke and Jesus here is intentionally drawing a contrast to convey the reality that following Christ is far more urgent than that.

What Elisha had the luxury to do. The disciple of Christ does not have the luxury to do because it's a matter of eternal life. And like the two preceding cases, this case too is more illustrative than literal.

What Jesus is saying is you cannot have split allegiances. You cannot follow after two things at once. The Israelites after their deliverance from their slavery in Egypt, after the Exodus, they looked back on their time of slavery and they said, well, maybe it would have been better there than being in the wilderness here in freedom.

Lot's wife, if you guys remember, when she was rescued from Sodom as he was being destroyed, she looked back longingly at that city that was being destroyed and was turned into a pillar of salt. Jesus is issuing a warning that's similar. He's saying, don't look back at your former life. When you're called to Christ, don't look, don't be lured by the things of this world.

[22 : 54] Have no regrets about following Christ. Hold fast to your confession because no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

When you're plowing a field with an ox, the goal is to plow a straight furrow and just a little distraction looking around and looking back could veer you off course.

And because of that, in the ancient world, in a lot of ancient literature, that metaphor, that image of plowing a field was used to convey a sense of discipline and focus, a dedication, a single-minded dedication to a task.

And that's what Jesus is calling Christian disciples to an unwavering discipline and a focus. And Jesus is not saying that if you ever falter in your faith and look back from following Christ that you will automatically be disqualified.

He's gracious. Jesus later restores Apostle Peter even after he denies Jesus three times. But Jesus is saying that following Christ requires focus and dedication much like plowing a field.

[24 : 03] Following Christ is an all-consuming affair. It's not a side gig or a hobby. Following Christ should be our first love, should be our great purpose, our consuming passion, our life's work.

Not just for ministers and missionaries but for every Christian. And following Christ, I admit and many of you can testify will often feel like an uphill climb. That's because we're fighting our sinful flesh.

That's because we're going up against the currents of the sinful world. And as soon as you align yourself to Jesus Christ, you become the sworn enemy of Satan and his demonic minions because we're engaged in this cosmic spiritual warfare.

And because of that, there will be hard days. There will be very hard days. And there will be suffering. And there will be temptations. And there will be persecutions.

But don't look back. Keep your hands on the plow. Plow ahead.

[25 : 16] Keep going because your great reward, Jesus Christ himself, awaits you. we need to constantly encourage each other with this truth in this way.

We're always being tempted to look back, to look around. But we need to call each other when our eyes begin to wander. Keep plowing.

That's the price of discipleship. Nowadays, sometimes it feels like churches are in a mad dash to see how quickly they can lower the bar of Christian discipleship. you don't have enough people joining your church.

Easy. Just lower the bar so less people are offended and more people are comfortable in the pews.

You can be a church member without coming to the worship service regularly.

You can be a Christian without believing what the Bible teaches. You can be a Christian without changing your lifestyle. You can be a Christian without renouncing your sins. You can be a Christian and still live for yourself.

[26 : 20] These are soul-destroying lies. Don't believe them. Jesus raises the bar impossibly high.

Why? Because Christian discipleship is hard. And unless you set the bar high, people who climb over are not going to make it to the end of the journey. That's the price of discipleship.

And then in verses 1 to 16 of chapter 10, we see the proclamation of discipleship. He had sent out 12 apostles earlier in chapter 9, but here he sent 72 others and sent them on ahead of him two by two into every town and place where he himself is about to go.

As you have seen throughout the Gospel of Luke, numbers are significant. He sends them two by two so that they can bear a credible witness to whether or not someone accepts or rejects the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

That was the standard given in Deuteronomy 19.15 for establishing a credible witness. And that's why in the cases of church discipline and excommunication you need two or three witnesses.

[27 : 24] It has to happen in the context of the gathered church, the corporate body. 72 is also significant. Jesus chose the 12 earlier to represent as an allusion to the 12 tribes of Israel to signal the fact that he is reconstituting God's people.

But now here he picks 72 for this reason because in Genesis 10, chapter 10 verses 1 to 31, it begins this way.

These are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, and Ham, and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood. So this is kind of a starting over of the line of humanity after the flood judgment. And it lists 72 names. And it says after at the end, these are the sons of Shem by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

And from these, the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood. That's what it says in verse 31. And that's why Genesis chapter 10 is called the table of the nations. And by sending out 72 disciples, Jesus is signifying the fact that Christian mission is not restrictive, it's not merely to the Jews, but it's to all national and ethnic people groups of earth.

[28 : 40] because our God is not a local deity, he's not a regional deity, but he's the God of all creation, he's the God over all the nations, and so his worship is due from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues.

That's what this is about. It's the cosmic mission that we get to be a part of. Take a look at this map that I'm projecting for you. It's from a book entitled The Atlas of Global Christianity.

The colors display the percentage of majority religions. Blue is Christianity, green concentrated heavily in North Africa and the Middle East is Islam, pink concentrated in India is Hinduism, orange is for Buddhism, and the tan color in much of China represents agnosticism.

And that multicolored region in the center represents the areas of greatest missions need. And that map might make us think that Christians are a minority in those regions, those countries, because people there are more resistant to the gospel.

But that would be a false assumption. Take a look at this next map that shows people's responsiveness to evangelism.

[30 : 07] the darker the color, the more responsive they are. There's no reason why we shouldn't be going to those places.

the harvest is plentiful. Laborers are few.

I pray, hope, that our church sends many missionaries to these places. People are coming to know the Lord in these places. And it's our calling as the people of God to go to the ends of the earth so that God who deserves all glory and honor and praise is worshipped from every nation, tribe, and tongue.

That's our greatest consuming desire to see him glorified among all the nations. That's what this mission is about. And as Jesus sends out the 72, he tells them this in verse 2, 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. This single verse dispels two of the most pernicious lies that prevent Christians from proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ.

[31 : 34] First is the lie that evangelism is futile, that no one wants to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. But Jesus tells us here that the harvest is plentiful.

Even here in the United States of America, even here in New England, the frozen chosen they say. The harvest is plentiful.

Yes, we will face rejection sometimes. There is a threshold of pain to cross, but there are still plenty of people who respond favorably to the gospel. The harvest is plentiful.

What is lacking is not the harvest as we like to think, but it is the workers, the labors that are lacking. The labors are few, and one of the purposes of discipleship is to increase the labor force, the workforce that will go into this harvest.

So, he tells us, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. This part exposes the second line. The second line that says we are responsible for creating the harvest.

[32 : 44] It's our job to get people converted. That's not our job. God is the Lord of the harvest. He is the Lord of the harvest. It's his harvest.

He is the one that gets it ready. We simply go and tell people about the saving news of Jesus Christ, and it's up to God to enable them to hear and believe it. So, if you're telling people about Jesus, which I know many of you are, regardless of how many or how few of them become Christians as a result of your testimony, you're being faithful to your calling.

You're being faithful as a Christian disciple. Does Romans 10 not say this? For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

How then will they call on him unless they have believed? And how could they believe if they have never heard? And how can they hear unless someone preaches to them? And how can someone preach unless they are sent?

And we can add to that this verse in Luke 10. How are they going to be sent unless you pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest for laborers?

[33 : 59] It begins with earnest prayer for more laborers. And the laborers go, and then they're sent, and then they preach, and then they hear, and then they believe, and then they are saved.

It's great that we pray for the salvation of our non-Christian friends and neighbors. We need to go beyond that. Pray for ourselves, that God may embolden us as his witnesses, that God may give us open doors of opportunity to share the gospel with people.

We need more laborers. And these laborers that are raised up must be prepared for suffering, sacrifice, and service. Because Jesus says in verse 3, Go your way, behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

If the verses weren't so morbid, like it's almost humorous, right? This is their kind of final huddle before they're sent out into this mission.

Everyone bring your hands in, right? Let's go. Lamb among wolves. What? Conquering lions?

[35 : 20] How about that? Lamb among wolves. Why? Because Jesus was the slain lamb of God.

And we go as his representatives. And so when we represent him and when we obey him, when we live for him, and as a result of that we suffer, ridicule and suffering, we become pictures for this world to see of the slain lamb of God himself.

That's the privilege of being lamb among wolves. We are living pictures, metaphors of Christ, our king, our slain lamb.

That's the glorious calling. And Jesus continues his challenging instruction in verse 4, carry no money bag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.

The task is so urgent that the disciples, like a farmer who only looks forward while plowing the field, are to avoid distractions by greeting no one on the road.

[36 : 28] They are to go straight to their destinations and proclaim the kingdom of God. And as they go, they're to travel lightly and deliberately forego extra provisions. Jesus is not telling them to go barefoot.

What he's telling them is do not carry sandals. They're already wearing sandals. He's telling them not to carry an extra pair of sandals. Don't pack anything extra. These instructions for missions work are not normative for us today, as I mentioned a couple weeks ago.

And the reason for that is because Jesus explicitly modifies this instruction later in Luke chapter 22 verses 35 to 37. He says to them, When I sent you out with no money bag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?

They said nothing. He said to them, But now let the one who has a money bag take it and likewise a knapsack and let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you that the scripture must be fulfilled.

in me and he was numbered with the transgressors for what is written about me has its fulfillment.

So that's the instruction that Jesus gives just before he's arrested and dies on the cross.

[37 : 32] So he explicitly modifies this instruction. And the reason why he changes it is because now that Jesus is dying and being treated as a sinner, he's being persecuted and killed on account of him, all those who follow him will face similar fates and so they can no longer count on the receptivity and hospitality of the people that they minister to.

So they have to take provisions for themselves. So that's why that changes later. But even if the specific practice doesn't apply to us now, the principle that is taught here in Luke chapter 10 applies to us because by, as I mentioned before, there's a Bible commentator who calls this a calculated deficit.

by traveling with no extra provisions, the disciples were intentionally handicapped, intentionally given a calculated deficit so that they're forced to depend on God's provision, so that they have to minister by faith and not by sight, and so that they have to expect God and pray to God to supply all of their spiritual and material shortfalls.

That's the nature of Christian mission and discipleship. Similarly, you might feel inadequate for the task of evangelism and discipleship.

Will I have the right words to say? What if I don't have the answers to their questions? What if they reject me and think I'm stupid? I'm so sinful, am I even worthy to be an ambassador for Christ?

[39 : 03] But God sends all of us with all of those nagging questions, because even the most seasoned and gifted evangelists among us are sent with the calculated deficit.

So we find our sufficiency not in ourselves, but in the Lord of the harvest. And one of the means that God uses to provide for his servants will be people of peace.

Jesus says in verses 5 to 8, whatever house you enter first say, peace be to this house, and if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you 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. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. The biblical concept of peace is not just an absence of conflict, but it's a spiritual wholeness of being rightly ordered and being in proper relation to God and to the rest of creation. It's a wholeness. And so this is not just a greeting, but it's a blessing. It's really a promise of salvation should they receive these messengers and believe in their message.

[40 : 14] And so these people of peace, the son of peace is a reference to the child of the kingdom that Jesus mentioned earlier. These are those who are like the child, who believe in Jesus, who come with humble faith to Jesus and receive and provide for his disciples.

And when received into home, the disciples are to heal the sick and say to them, the kingdom of God has come near to you. And they are to announce the kingdom of God and to give evidence of the kingdom of God by healing the sick.

But it says in verses 10 to 12, whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, even the dust of your own town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you.

Nevertheless, know this, that the kingdom of God has come near. I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. So wiping off the dust from your feet, as we talked about a few weeks ago, is a dramatic gesture that conveys that you have nothing more to do with this town. It's a symbol of judgment. And the disciples are still to tell them that the kingdom of God has come near. But notice the important distinction between what they are to say to those who receive them in

verse 9 and what they are to say here to those who reject them.

[41 : 28] Earlier they were to say to those who receive them, the kingdom of God has come near to you. But here they are simply to say the kingdom of God has come near, but not to you.

The kingdom of God has come. It is still near. But to those who reject the disciples of Christ, it has not come to them. They are still on the outside looking in.

And Jesus pronounces a series of judgments. He says, I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. Sodom is kind of the perfect example of sin city in the Bible, right?

So infamous for its wickedness that God literally destroyed it with fire and brimstone in Genesis 19. That's where the phrase fire and brimstone comes from.

And Jesus says here that that's how bad Sodom was. Yet on the day of final judgment, what God renders his verdict, the towns that reject Jesus' followers will face a more severe judgment even than Sodom.

[42 : 40] And then he pronounces woes on several of the cities in the Jewish region of Galilee, that their judgment will be worse than the wicked cities of Tyre and Sidon from the Old Testament.

And there's a reason why the current generation is accountable for the current generation since Jesus' time, and that includes us, we're liable to greater punishment than even the worst of the past generations because we have received the greater revelation.

And therefore, we'll be held accountable for more. Jesus explains this in verse 16. The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.

The disciples of Christ represent the power and authority of Christ himself, and Christ represents the power and authority of God the Father himself. So to reject the disciples of Christ is to reject God himself, and the past generations didn't have this kind of revelation, this kind of privilege.

We've benefited from the personal visitation of the incarnate God. We have benefited from unprecedented demonstrations of the power of the Spirit, and for that reason, we'll be held accountable for more than the previous generation.

[43 : 59] That's the fearful judgment that our neighbors and friends who do not know the Lord face. It's our responsibility to tell them, to warn them about it, and that's the loving thing to do.

A 20th century American pastor named Lee Rutland Scarborough once said this, if we could only have a five-minute glimpse into hell, our evangelism would be changed for a lifetime.

Do you really know the peril that awaits those who perish apart from Christ?

People being tormented in hell for eternity are not going to be impressed that we were too polite to warn them. We just don't get it sometimes.

I include myself in that. Do we really believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation or not?

Do we really believe in life eternal? Do we really believe in God our Father, in Christ the Son, in the Holy Spirit?

[45 : 18] Do we really believe in the name of Jesus? Because Jesus instructed his disciples to greet no one on the road because that's how urgent this task is. But are we so distracted by the trinkets and frivolities and pleasantries of this life that we have lost sight of the irreplaceability and the urgency of this proclamation?

It's the proclamation of the discipleship. The price of discipleship is high and the proclamation of discipleship is imperative and what motivates us still to pay that price and proclaim the gospel is the privilege of discipleship that Jesus speaks of in verses 17 to 24.

Please read verses 17 to 20 with me. The 72 returned with joy saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. And he said to them, I saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven.

Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

They return with joy seeing that even the demons are subject to the name of Jesus Christ. They have the authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and that meaning of that phrase is explained by the next phrase, and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall hurt you.

[46 : 50] So serpents and scorpions represent powers of the enemy. So we shouldn't be going out in search for serpents and scorpions trying to step on them to test this authority.

They symbolize, they're venomous beasts that symbolize the poisonous power of evil and they will not prevail against true disciples of Christ because God will protect and preserve us from the power of the enemy.

But it's not this authority and power that's the chief source of our joy. Rather, the chief source of our joy is that our names are written in heaven. Those who have been united with Jesus Christ by faith are included in that heavenly roll call.

We're in the census of heaven. If refugees fleeing life-threatening situations, they break down with tearful joy that their names are on that immigration list, how much more should we rejoice that we have been spared from eternity in hell?

That we will get to share eternity with God, who is the infinite perfection of all that is good and right and beautiful and glorious. That even though we face trials and tribulations here, even though we are strangers and exiles here on earth, that we have a home in heaven, that we have a citizenship in the kingdom of God, that any, we have an inheritance in the family of God.

[48 : 16] That's the joy of knowing Jesus Christ. And if you're not yet a follower of Christ, I want to exhort you. This is how you come to know that joy.

Verses 21 and 22. In that same hour, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and reveal them to little children.

Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 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.

Jesus is the one mediator between God and man. No one comes to the father except through him. And Jesus, as the son of God, has the exclusive privilege of revealing God the father to us and bringing us into relationship with him.

And the initiative doesn't lie with us. It lies with him. No one knows who the father is except the son and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him. It's his sovereign choice.

[49 : 33] That's what the doctrine of election is about. It's Jesus who sovereignly chooses who will be whom he will reveal God the father to. But then how can we know if we are among God's chosen people?

Verse 21 tells us, you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and reveal them to little children. Those to whom God has revealed himself are called little children.

And that's the key that unlocks the privilege of discipleship. Jesus said earlier in Luke 9, 48, whoever receives this child in my name receives me. And whoever receives me receives him who sent me.

For he who is least among you is the one who is great. Those who rely on their own wisdom, their own righteousness, their own morality cannot come to know God.

Only those who become like little children. Only those who humble themselves before God. Only those who become the least. Only those who acknowledge that their righteousness is insufficient and repent of their sins.

[50 : 41] Only those who acknowledge that their wisdom is insufficient and confess their ignorance before God. Only those who abandon all hope of saving themselves and entrust themselves and cling entirely to the Jesus Christ who was sent to die for our sins on the cross and was raised from the dead on the third day and ascended to the right hand of the father.

Those who cling to him alone like a child that clings desperately to his parent. He alone. She alone will be saved. That's the little child. Only such people are the little children to whom God has revealed himself.

So I urge you to do that today. Humble yourselves today. Become children of God today. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.