

The Gospel of Luke

Lesson 13

Thirty-Five Teams Minister

Luke 10:1 Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.

Jesus had sent His twelve Apostles out to minister and they had returned with reports of tremendous results. Now He sends out seventy people for the same mission and purpose.

Laborers Sent

Luke 10:2 And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

Jesus sends out 35 teams of two. These teams are to ask God to send more workers into the field. It is a multiplication assignment! The Lord is sending 35 teams to pray, enlist, guide, train and send out more workers. Some people, as soon as they understand the gospel, want to engage immediately in contacting unsaved people. This story suggests a different approach, beginning with mobilizing people to pray. However, before praying for unsaved people, they are to pray that other concerned disciples will join in reaching out to others.

Unemployment does not exist in the work of the Lord. God has enough work for everyone. Do not sit back and watch others work but look for ways to help with the harvest.

Lambs and Wolves

Luke 10:3 "Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

Jesus is sending His disciples out "like lambs in the midst of wolves." They will have to be careful. They will surely meet with opposition. We, too, are like lambs among wolves. We, too, must be alert!

Provisions

Luke 10:4 "Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way. ⁵ "Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace *be* to this house.' ⁶ "If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷ "Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.

Jesus wants His disciples to accept hospitality graciously because their work entitles them to it. Ministers of the gospel deserve support and it is our responsibility to make sure they have what they need.

Gratitude

Luke 10:8 "Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you; ⁹ and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

The disciples are to follow two rules. First, they are to eat what is set before them without being fussy. Second, they are to heal the sick. Because of the healings, people will be willing to listen to the gospel.

Wipe the Dust

Luke 10:10 "But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹ 'Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off *in protest* against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' ¹² 'I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

Sodom was an evil city known for its great sinfulness. The city's name symbolizes wickedness and immorality. Sodom means burning and the city's sinful population suffers because of its sin. Its judgment is not over because it will suffer again on the judgment day. However, the cities that saw the Messiah and rejected Him will suffer even more.

Woe to the Cities

Luke 10:13 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

Corazin was a city near the Sea of Galilee, probably about two miles north of Capernaum. The cities, Tyre and Sidon, were destroyed by God with the hands of Alexander the Great as punishment for their wickedness.

Rejection in Capernaum

Luke 10:14 "But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. ¹⁵ "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades! ¹⁶ "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."

Capernaum is Jesus' base for his Galilean ministry. In spite of all that has occurred in Capernaum, many of her people of the city still do not understand Jesus' miracles or believe his teaching. Therefore, the people of Capernaum will be included among those judged for rejecting him.

Teams Return

Luke 10:17 The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." ¹⁸ And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. ¹⁹ "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. ²⁰ "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

The disciples are seeing tremendous results as they minister for Jesus with His authority. The Scripture says they are performing their ministry in "Your name." In the Church today there are those who want to stamp Jesus' name on the things they do and they expect a miracle to occur and the world to jump because of their invoking His name. As a result, grave misunderstanding has occurred in today's theology. This passage does not mean that they are using His name to cast out demons, it means that they are the representatives of Jesus, doing His work the way He would if He were present. Simply proclaiming His name

could not have accomplished the work had it not been His will. Nothing about that has changed to this day!

As the disciples minister, they are elated by the victories they have witnessed. Jesus helps them correct their priorities and He reminds them that their most important victory is that their names are written in heaven. This honor is more important than any of their accomplishments.

Prayer of the Lord

Luke 10:21 At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

Many of life's rewards seem to go to the intelligent, the rich, the good-looking or the powerful, but the kingdom of God is equally available to all, regardless of position or abilities. We come to Jesus not through strength or brains, but through childlike trust. Jesus is not opposed to our engaging in scholarly pursuits; He is opposed to spiritual pride.

Christ's Mission

Luke 10:22 "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*."

Christ's mission is to reveal God the Father to people. His simple words bring understanding to difficult concepts. Only by examining Jesus' actions, principles and attitudes can we understand God clearly.

Eyes to See

Luke 10:23 Turning to the disciples, He said privately, "Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things you see, ²⁴ for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see *them*, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear *them*."

The disciples have a fantastic opportunity because they are eyewitnesses of Christ, the Son of God. Nevertheless, for many months they have taken Jesus for granted, not really listening to Him or obeying Him.

The Old Testament makes many God-inspired predictions that Jesus will fulfill. The New Testament is no different. Read the words of Peter.

1 Peter 1:10 As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, ¹¹ seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look. ¹³ Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Eternal Life

Luke 10:25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" **26** And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" **27** And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." **28** And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE." **29** But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" **30** Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. **31** "And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. **32** "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. **33** "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, **34** and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on *them*; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. **35** "On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' **36** "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' *hands*?" **37** And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

We should not speak of eternal life and the way to it in a careless manner. We should not use the name of God as an empty meaningless term. We cannot love God and our neighbors with pure spiritual love and not be a partaker of His grace. Christ gives an example of a Jew in distress who is helped by a good Samaritan. The man has fallen among thieves and been left to die. His friends should have cared for him instead of a stranger, a despised and detested Samaritan. The true Christian has the law of love written in his heart. The Spirit of Christ dwells in him. This beautiful explanation of loving our neighbor as ourselves without regard to any differences sets forth the kindness and love of God our Savior toward sinful men.

Mary and Martha

Luke 10:38 Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. **39** She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. **40** But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up *to Him* and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." **41** But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; **42** but *only* one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Only the Gospel of Luke records this story. It furnishes the church with lessons of wisdom which should never be forgotten. When compared with John 11, it throws great light on the inner life of the family whom Jesus loved.

John 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** It was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. **3** So the sisters sent *word* to Him, saying,

"Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." ⁴ But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it." ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days *longer* in the place where He was. ⁷ Then after this He *said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸ The disciples *said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?" ⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰ "But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." ¹¹ This He said, and after that He *said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep." ¹² The disciples then said to Him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." ¹³ Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep. ¹⁴ So Jesus then said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵ and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him." ¹⁶ Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to *his* fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him." ¹⁷ So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off; ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning *their* brother. ²⁰ Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house. ²¹ Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." ²³ Jesus *said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha *said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, *even* He who comes into the world." ²⁸ When she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." ²⁹ And when she heard it, she *got up quickly and was coming to Him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him. ³¹ Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary got up quickly and went out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her *also* weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, ³⁴ and said, "Where have you laid him?" They *said to Him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ So the Jews were saying, "See how He loved him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?" ³⁸ So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, *came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus *said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, *said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been *dead* four days." ⁴⁰ Jesus *said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. ⁴² "I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me." ⁴³ When He had said these

things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." ⁴⁴ The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus *said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." ⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. ⁴⁸ "If we let Him *go on* like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." ⁴⁹ But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰ nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." ⁵¹ Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, ⁵² and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. ⁵³ So from that day on they planned together to kill Him. ⁵⁴ Therefore Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away from there to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He stayed with the disciples. ⁵⁵ Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ So they were seeking for Jesus, and were saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think; that He will not come to the feast at all?" ⁵⁷ Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he was to report it, so that they might seize Him.

Mary and Martha love Jesus. On this occasion, they are both serving him. Martha fails to realize that in her desire to serve, she is actually neglecting her guest. Are you so busy doing things *for* Jesus that you do not spend any time *with* him? Do not let your service become self-serving.

Mary chooses what benefits her soul. She is striving for a closer communion with God and His Christ. For it, she is willing to postpone all earthly care. Jesus does not condemn Martha for concentrating on the household chores. He simply asks her to set priorities. Is mere busywork service to Christ?

Worldly business is a snare when it hinders our service to God. The favor of God is essential to our happiness. The salvation of Christ is essential to our safety. The things of this life will be taken away one day when we are taken away from them, but nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

Many times an older sibling has a tendency to take charge. Such is the case with Martha, the older sister of Mary and Lazarus and who is in control of the home.

Notice that Martha, Mary, and Lazarus are noted for their hospitality, an important point because hospitality is a requirement in their social culture. It is simply shameful to turn anyone away from your door.

Martha worries about details and tries to do everything she can to make sure all is ready! It is hard for her to relax with the Lord. Her frustration with Mary is so intense that she finally asks Jesus to instruct Mary to help with the work. He gently addresses her concerns and redirects her priorities.

Following her brother's death, Martha is her same old self. When she hears Jesus is finally coming, she rushes out to meet him and expresses her inner conflict and disappointment. Jesus is not only Lord beyond death; He is Lord over death, resurrection and life! Moments later, Martha speaks without thinking, pointing out that four days have passed and it is too late. Details keep her from seeing the big picture. Once again, Jesus shows His patience.