

11

PERSONAL SERVICE FOR THE KING *LUKE 10:1-42*

Three forms of personal service for the King are described in chapter ten. The seventy disciples served by preaching. The Good Samaritan served through showing mercy. Mary's service was by listening to the words of Christ.

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy — Luke 10:1-16

Jesus had not yet visited many of the towns and villages He wanted to visit before His final arrival in Jerusalem (9:51). He sent a large group of disciples to herald his arrival in these towns and villages.

10 After this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come. ²And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and salute no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' ⁶And if a son of peace is there, your peace

shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall return to you. ⁷And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages; do not go from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you; ⁹heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ¹¹'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.' ¹²I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

¹³'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. ¹⁴But it shall be more tolerable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ¹⁵And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.

¹⁶'He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.'

10:1-2. Jesus selected seventy special disciples. The number seventy is found in the seventy elders appointed by Moses (Num. 11;16-25), in the traditional number of nations on earth (Gen. 10), and in the seventy bullocks traditionally offered at the Feast of Tabernacles (Plummer, p. 269). Some early manuscripts have the number 72 instead of 70 which explains why some translations have the number 72, for example, the *New International Version*. The evidence for each reading is about equal, so one cannot be dogmatic about deciding between them. Variations exist in the Old Testament text in Numbers 11 as well as here and in Luke 10:17.

The fifth century church historian, Eusebius, said "There exists no catalog of the seventy." He said traditions included the names of Barnabas, Cephas, Matthias, Joseph, Barsabbas named Justus (*Ecclesiastical History*, 1.12.1).

The instructions to the Seventy have much in common with those given to the Twelve, but they come from two separate occasions. The Seventy did not constitute a permanent group or office in the early church. No further mention of them as a group is found in the New Testament. The instructions to this larger group are recorded more fully than the instructions to the Twelve. The mission of the Seventy was temporary. It was for the purpose of preparing the towns for the coming of the Lord and acceptance of His rule in their lives.

Jesus sent them two by two into the towns of Perea and Judea where he was about to go. This afforded mutual support and reinforcement in their witness. In another context Jesus said, "Every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses" (Matt. 18:16). See Mark 6:7; Luke 7:19; Acts 13:2; 15:39-40; 17:14; 19:22.

The harvest of men and women to be won to faith in Jesus as the Christ is enormous, but the number of laborers telling the good news is very small. Jesus urged his disciples to pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to raise up and send out evangelistic workers (Matt. 9:37-39; John 4:35). Because of the vast numbers of unreached peoples in the world, more vocational and volunteer workers are needed. God's plan is that Christians pray to the Father for additional workers. Often earnest prayers lead those who pray to become the feet in fulfillment of their prayers. The Lord is requested to send them forth "with haste and urgency . . . The verb expresses either pressing need, or the directness with which they are sent to their destination" (Plummer, p. 272).

10:3-7. Jesus did not promise the disciples a life of ease. As defenseless lambs He sent them into a world with many dangers as fierce as wild wolves. Those who minister for Christ will fall victim to the wiles of the world if they do not look to God for strength. They were not to take extra provisions or extra equipment for their journey. The *purse* was a money bag and the *bag* was a traveler's bag. Plummer summarized Jesus' charge, "Take with you none of the things which travelers commonly regard as indispensable. Your wants will be supplied" (p. 273). The time was urgent. They should go as they are, trusting God to take care of them. They should not be delayed by the long, elaborate oriental greetings.

They were to give a greeting of peace when they entered a house. "Son of Peace" is a Hebraism meaning a peaceable person. "Son of" is often used to mean one possesses a given characteristic (Matt. 23:15; John 17:12; Eph. 2:3; 5:6). They were not to give their blessing to those who were not ready to receive it.

They were to remain in the house that welcomed them. They were to receive what was provided. "They are to consider themselves as members of the family, not as intruders; for their food and shelter are salary and not alms" (Plummer, p. 274). The statement "The laborer deserves his wages" is quoted by Paul in I Timothy 5:18. See also I Corinthians 9:24. They were not to feel they were a burden to their hosts nor were they to seek more comfortable housing or food. "The

labourer is worthy of his hire, but the servant of a crucified master cannot be a seeker for luxury" (Barclay, *Luke*, p. 136).

10:8-12. Plummer suggested that verses 5-7 apply to single dwellings and verses 8-12 apply to towns. (p. 275). Christian workers who are guests in many homes need to heed Jesus' instruction to be neither greedy nor picky. In addition to healing the sick, they were to continually announce that the kingdom of God had come near to them. Compare Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15.

If a town rejected these preachers, they were to publicly wipe the dust off their feet, giving public warning that those people had chosen not to identify with the people and rule of God. Rejecting God's messengers meant rejection of God. The cities that had the greater opportunity of hearing gospel preaching will bear heavier condemnation in judgment than even the wicked city of Sodom. *On the day of judgment* read Matthew 7:22; 21:34; II Thessalonians 1:10; II Timothy 1:12,18; 4:8.

10:13-16. *Woe* expresses deep sadness and regret. Chorazin (mentioned only here and in Matthew 11:21) was located two miles north of Capernaum. Bethsaida, probably part of Capernaum, was the home of Peter, Andrew and Philip. It is not to be confused with Bethsaida Julias. Tyre and Sidon were leading cities in Phoenicia. They were 35 and 50 miles from Capernaum. They were centers of commerce and wickedness. They were unresponsive to the preaching of the Old Testament prophets (Isa. 23, Ezek. 26-28). Jesus had briefly visited their area (Matt. 15:21; Mark 7:24,31). The Gospels do not record any of the miracles Jesus worked in Chorazin or this Bethsaida. No history can be exhaustive. The Gospels do not record all that Jesus did or said. Materials were included that provided a basis for the readers for believing that Jesus is the Son of God (John 20:30-31; 21:25). The inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon did not have the opportunities for repentance that people in these cities had. The principle is — the greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility.

Capernaum, called Jesus' "own city" (Matt. 9:1), was not guaranteed a place in heaven just because of its abundant opportunities to profit from the time Jesus spent there (Matt. 4:18-22; 8:5-17; 11:23; John 2:12). The use of *Hades* in verse 15 parallels "on that day" in 10:12 and "at the judgment" in 10:14. "In all these cases, condemnation is demanded" (Foster, p. 171).

Jesus emphasized the seriousness of rejecting the gospel message. Those who reject Christ's messengers reject Christ. Those who reject Christ reject God. The privilege of hearing God's Word must not be

taken lightly. Terrible consequences await those who reject the invitation of the King. See Matthew 7:21-23; 10:40; John 13:20; II Thessalonians 1:7-9.

The Return of the Seventy — Luke 10:17-24

We are not told how long the Seventy were gone or the location where the preaching teams returned to Jesus.

¹⁷The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" ¹⁸And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

²¹In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will. ²²All things have been delivered 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 any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

²³Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! ²⁴For 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."

10:17-20. They were overjoyed that they were able to cast out demons in Jesus' name. The Twelve had been given this power when Jesus sent them out (9:1), but He made no mention of this power in His instructions to the Seventy. It may have been an unexpected benefit.

They spoke of the defeat of demons. Jesus spoke of the overthrow of Satan, himself. Some hold that Jesus saw Satan overthrown in the casting out of demons by the disciples. Others believe Jesus referred to the expelling of Satan from heaven before the world was created. The promise of authority over "serpents and scorpions" may be a figurative promise of spiritual victories. One must seek to understand if the author of a statement intended it to be literal or figurative. Study Matthew 16:6-12; 18:9; 19:24; Luke 18:52; John 2:19-21; 6:51.

They would have victory over the power of the enemy, Satan (Matt. 23:25; Rom. 16:20; I Pet. 5:8). Paul assured Christians they were "more than conquerors" over spiritual and physical foes through Christ (Rom. 8:31-39).

The greatest cause for continual rejoicing is not that you can expel demons but that your soul is redeemed for eternity. Ability to work miracles does not ensure salvation (Matt. 7:21-23). We can have the abundant joy that comes from assurance of salvation, possessing all the privileges of God's eternal kingdom. Sir James Simpson, discoverer of chloroform, was asked what was his greatest discovery. He responded, "My greatest discovery was when I discovered that Jesus Christ is my Saviour" (Barclay, *Luke*, p. 138).

10:21-24. Their joy moved Jesus to a prayer of rejoicing and thanksgiving. He thanks His Father that His truth has been unrecognized by those who prided themselves on their superior intellect but plain to those humble enough to listen to and accept God's revealed wisdom. "Intellectual gifts, so far from being necessary, are often a hindrance" (Plummer, p. 281). Arrogance and pride keep many from learning from God because they are not listening, being "wise in their own conceits" (Rom. 12:25, KJV). See also John 7:49; 9:40; Romans 1:22; 12:16; I Corinthians 1:18-31; II Corinthians 4:3-4. Jesus is not disparaging human intellect or learning. He gave this gift to man. He is saying God's truth is hidden to those whose intellectual pride keeps them from listening to, trusting in, and obeying God's wisdom.

God, the Father, is the only one who understands who Jesus really is. No one has an accurate understanding of God except Jesus and those who learn from Jesus. See Matthew 11:17; 26:63-65; Mark 13:32; 14:61-64; Luke 22:70; John 1:14,18; 3:35; 6:46; 8:19; 10:15,29,30; 14:9; 16:15; 17:5,10. "It is through Jesus and only through Jesus that men come to know the Father as He is" (Morris, p. 186).

Privately He told the disciples that they had a high honor and blessing in personally seeing and knowing the long awaited Messiah and Savior. Peter wrote, "The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy

Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look" (I Pet. 1:10-12).

The Parable of the Good Samaritan — Luke 10:25-37

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is one of Jesus' best-known and widely-loved parables. It is recorded only by Luke.

²⁵And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" ²⁷And 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." ²⁸And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live."

²⁹But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³²So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, ³⁴and went to him and bound up his wounds pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' ³⁶Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

10:25-28. Apparently Jesus was teaching a group of people, and a lawyer stood up to be recognized and to ask a question. The words *lawyer* and *scribe* are interchangeable (Matt. 22:35 and Mark 12:28). A lawyer was not an attorney but rather a scholar, teacher and interpreter of the law of Moses, especially the first five books of the Old Testament. He put Jesus to the test. He did not ask out of sense of spiritual need for information as much as he wanted to see how Jesus would answer. Religious leaders too often engage in "theological fencing," debating ideas endlessly without really seeking God's truth on

the matter. We should not judge the lawyer too harshly because another scribe questioned Jesus to test Him and Jesus told this man he was not far from the kingdom (Matt. 22:35, Mark 12:34).

The lawyer's question about eternal life identifies him with the Pharisees who believed in the resurrection from the dead. He saw salvation as a matter of works. He had no understanding of the concept of grace which Jesus brought.

Jesus answered a question with a question, as He often did. Jesus turned it back to him, "You know the Law. How does the Law answer your question?" Orthodox Jews wore leather boxes on their wrists, called phylacteries. These contained scripture passages from Exodus 13 and Deuteronomy 6 and 11. Some say it was easy for him to quote memorized verses to Jesus. However he showed spiritual understanding of the law beyond most of the Jewish leaders to select the two commands which Jesus said were the greatest commandments (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:36).

Jesus commended his answer as correct. If the lawyer really understood these commands and continually practiced them he would have eternal life. This would not mean he would then *earn* salvation. Those who were saved under the law because of their faith and obedience were saved by the grace of God. They did not merit salvation. We must recognize that this answer was given before Christ's death and the new age of the gospel plan of salvation.

10:29-32. Jesus' response reached the conscience of the lawyer and he grew defensive. Desiring to justify himself, he asked, "Who is my neighbor?" It is easier to discuss love or give a lecture on love than it is to practice love. He may have been reasoning this way, "This raises problems. How do you define neighbor? The one who lives next door to you? Those in your community? Your fellow Jews? The rabbis can not agree on this. Where do you draw the limits on loving your neighbor? These are heavy questions that we may never be able to answer."

Jesus refused to engage in an endless philosophical debate. Some have complained that Jesus did not directly answer the lawyer's question. But real love does not ask for limits but only for opportunity. Love does not ask the lawyer's question (Hunter, p. 72). Jesus told the parable to illustrate how one who has the real spirit of love behaves in his relationships with other persons.

We are not told but it is safe to assume that the traveler was a Jew. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho had a steep descent. It was narrow and rocky with many turns. It dropped over 3,000 feet in about

twenty miles. It was a desolate, wilderness area. Robbers often hid behind rocks or in caves and suddenly overpowered travelers. Josephus said it was called the "Bloody Way" (*Antiquities*, xx.6.1). The robbers violently beat the traveler, stripped him of his possessions and left him "half dead."

A priest happened to pass along the road. Priests were descendants of Aaron who were in charge of temple worship. These may have been some of the excuses he used to justify his hurrying past on the other side of the road. He may have felt too busy to stop. It was too dangerous, if he stopped the robbers might beat him next. He may have felt he didn't have the equipment or financial means to help. Perhaps someone better able to help will come along. He may be dead and touching him would make the priest ceremonially unclean for seven days (Num. 19:11). No one would know of his neglect of duty. A Levite came by, and perhaps using the same kinds of excuses as the priest, also passed by on the other side. Levites were members of the tribe of Levi who had responsibilities of caring for the temple but were not priests. Edersheim, a Jewish Christian, observed: "It was the principle of questioning, 'Who is my neighbour?' which led both priest and Levite to such heartless conduct . . . Thus Judaism (in the persons of its chief representatives) had, by its exclusive attention to the letter, come to destroy the spirit of the Law" (vol. II, p. 238). It is easy to congratulate oneself on not doing bad things, while giving no attention to the good things that are left undone.

10:33-35. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews as semi-heathen. Samaritan was a byword of contempt to hurl as an insult (John 8:48). Josephus said the Samaritans would often refuse hospitality to Jews going to the feasts at Jerusalem, sometimes murdering them (*Antiquities*, xx.6.1, see Luke 9:53). He could have reasoned that the man is a Jew who hates me, why should I help him? He might have feared reprisals from fellow Samaritans for helping a Jew. This Samaritan stranger rose above his culture. He could have had many of the same excuses as the priest and Levite. His compassion for a fellow human being in need overcame any excuses. He went to the man and cared for his wounds. Oil and wine were used as remedies (Gen. 28:18; Josh. 9:13; Isa. 1:6; Mark 6:13; James 5:14). The wounded man was put on his beast while the Samaritan walked to the inn. A *denarius* represented a day's wages. He deposited two days' wages with the innkeeper for the man's care with assurance he would repay any extra expense when he returned that way.

10:36-37. Jesus asked the lawyer which man treated the man as a

neighbor. The lawyer had the insight and honesty to respond, "The one who showed mercy on him."

"Go and do likewise" was Jesus' simple, powerful conclusion. Love does not ask where it can stop but what can it give. Love acts in the other person's best interests. Love without expression in action is dead. We are not loving or merciful because we talk about it. It must be demonstrated in our attitudes and actions. See Matthew 5:43-45; 7:12; Romans 12:20-21.

Someone summarized the parable as follows: The robbers practiced the *Iron Rule* — "What is yours is mine and I intend to get it." The priest and the Levite practiced the *Brass Rule* — "What is mine is mine and I intend to keep it." The Samaritan practiced the *Golden Rule* — "What is mine is yours and I intend to give it to you." Our Lord challenges us to be a neighbor to every person in need.

Jesus in the Home of Martha and Mary — Luke 10:38-42

This interesting story of an incident in the home of Martha and Mary gives insight into their personalities and emphasizes the priority of listening to the Word of God.

³⁸Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; ⁴²one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

10:38-39. Luke does not tell when this visit occurred nor does he name the village. We know the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus was in Bethany (John 11:1; 12:1-3). Bethany was located about two miles east of Jerusalem on the east side of the Mount of Olives. The present name of the city is a form of Lazarus' name. Generally in the Gospels Martha is listed before Mary (10:38-39; John 11:4,19-20; 12:2-3). John 11:1 is an exception. Martha welcomed Jesus into *her* home (10:38). Martha may have been the older or the one who generally took the lead (Hendriksen, pp. 597-598).

Mary "sat at the Lord's feet." This was a way of figuratively

stating that she was a pupil learning from Jesus as teacher. Paul had been educated "at the feet of Gamaliel" (Acts 22:3). Later this same Mary would anoint Jesus' feet (John 12:3; Matt. 26:6-7; Mark 14:3). The tense of the verb indicates that she continued to listen to His teaching.

10:40-42. Martha was *distracted* by her serving, literally, "pulled in different directions." "But Martha was being distracted about all that had to be done. Suddenly she came to him and asked, Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work all by myself? Tell her to take hold and help me" (Hendriksen's translation, pp. 598-599). Martha wanted to be the proper hostess. Mary wanted to be a proper listener. Martha was impatient and showed her temper in complaining to Jesus. Do you think she was out there rattling the pots to try to get their attention and make Mary feel guilty and Jesus feel sorry for her before she marched in and addressed Jesus? She felt Mary should have helped but was continuing to neglect her duty. She is annoyed with her sister. But she also is frustrated that Jesus has allowed Mary to sit there. How often do we see people who are frustrated with a person address their complaint to another person rather than speaking directly to the one with whom they are upset.

The repetition of Martha's name softened His rebuke as it expressed affection and tender regard for her as well. Jesus taught that we are not to be anxious (Matt. 6:25,28,31,34; Luke 12:11,22,26). She was distracted in mind and outwardly upset. She was upset because she had so much to do, but she was the one who chose to do so much.

Jesus said, "One thing is needful." Did He mean, "One dish or portion of food is sufficient. A full course meal is not necessary"? Or "The important priority is the spiritual one rather than the physical one"? Jesus approved Mary's action of listening to His words. He disapproved of Martha's anxiety about household duties. It is a lesson in priorities. The most difficult decisions in life are not between the good and the bad but between the good and the best. We must determine that we will put Jesus and His Word first in our lives (Matt. 6:33).

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How did the commission to the Seventy differ from the commission given to the Twelve in Luke 9?
2. What does Jesus ask His followers to do about the shortage of workers for the harvest?

TWENTY-SIX LESSONS ON LUKE

3. Why were the Seventy disciples not to take extra provisions or equipment for their journey?
4. What did Jesus mean "the laborer deserves his wages"?
5. What contrast is drawn between Chorazin and Bethsaida and Tyre and Sidon?
6. What joy did Jesus say was greater than that of casting out demons?
7. Why is God's revelation rejected by the "wise" and accepted by "babes"?
8. Who alone is capable of revealing who God is?
9. Identify the lawyer.
10. Why did Jesus commend the lawyer?
11. Why did the lawyer ask, "Who is my neighbor?"
12. Identify the priest and the Levite.
13. What excuses could the Samaritan have given for not helping the wounded traveler?
14. What did Jesus mean, "Go and do likewise"?
15. In what city did Martha and Mary live?
16. Contrast the behavior of Martha and Mary.
17. What did Jesus mean, "One thing is needful"?