

Luke 10:1-11

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of Him in pairs to every town and place where He Himself intended to go. He said to them; “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say; ‘Peace to this house!’ and if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The Kingdom of God has come near to you’. But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’”

The Gospel of the Lord

Reflection Questions

- 1) **Context:** The Context for this passage is Luke 10:1-18:14; the teaching section of the middle of Luke's Gospel. Luke is using this section (in part) to turn the principle of 'divine retribution' (a commonly held theme in Jewish theological thought—health and wealth are signs that God is pleased with you, illness and poverty are God's way of telling you that He is angry with you). Those upon whom God's favor does not shine would be considered the non-elect (those not chosen for God's favor). But Luke demonstrates that God's love and goodness shines upon all humankind alike (in this case even the 'gentiles'). Jesus sends seventy on ahead of Him (most likely a reference to Genesis 10 where we find a list of Gentile nations that descended from Noah.)
- 2) "He sent them on ahead of Him in pairs to every town and place where He Himself intended to go." A literal translation would say "He sent them before His face" (a phrase we find in Luke 7:27 and Luke 9:52). Previously, John the Baptist was the one sent ahead, but now it is the disciples who will carve the path for Jesus' ministry. In what way(s) have we been called to pave the way for the Lord?
- 3) He 'sent them in pairs' (v 1b). There are very practical reasons for this, Deut. 19:15 requires the testimony of two witnesses for any recorded event. Not only that; but anyone being sent out alone could get discouraged easily. When people are sent out in pairs, they are more likely to be able to persevere. How do churches follow this prescription today? What benefits does it have? In what way is 'burn out' more likely for those who are sent alone?
- 4) Before Jesus sends out the 70 he asks them to pray to the Father that He will send more laborers because "the harvest is great but the laborers are few." In what way is prayer the foundation of any fruitful ministry? In what ways is the harvest still great and the laborers few? Where do we see great harvests? When do we overlook them?
- 5) Jesus has recently foretold his own suffering and death and then he tells His disciples that they will be sent out like lambs among wolves. He is warning them about the enemy territory that they will be entering at times. He wants to make them aware but not so aware that

they are paralyzed. Commissioned Christians have been empowered to be “as wise as foxes and as gentle as doves.” In what ways are both shrewdness and gentleness necessary for the effectiveness of the mission?

- 6) “Say Peace to this house. If anyone in the house shares this peace, your peace will rest on that person.” We remember that this otherworldly ‘Peace’ was one of the first gifts Jesus bequeaths to His followers after His resurrection. This “peace’ could be interpreted as the Hebrew greeting “Shalom” but for Jesus and His followers, it means so much more. They were to look for and offer the Messianic Peace; a Peace that paves the way for the Lord’s coming. If the inhabitant of the house had this kind of Messianic Peace, that would be a person of hospitality and openness to hearing the gospel message. In what way(s) does Jesus still count on His disciples to be bearers of that Messianic Peace in order to spread the message?
- 7) Once offered hospitality, they were to remain in that house during their entire stay. This was important because the disciples were not to be accused of moving around in order to ‘upgrade’ their accommodations. No, instead, they would choose to rest in the home that offered them the immediate welcome which would be a sign for others about the kind of openness that was required to receive the gospel. What role does hospitality play in Catholic Christian communities today?
- 8) “Eat whatever is set before you.” The disciples (Jewish men) would be passing through towns that were mostly gentile. The gentiles did not observe the Jewish kosher eating and the Jewish disciples were not to let their religious observances separate them from others. They were instead to humbly graciously accept the hospitality offered. How are humility, dependence and graciousness all part of the Christian witness?” When do certain forms ‘religiosity’ threaten to create unnecessary divisions among those we are trying to evangelize?
- 9) “Cure the sick who are there and tell them ‘the Kingdom of God has come near you’ (vs. 9). Of course the healing would be an act of compassion but even more importantly it was a sign that God’s personal love for them and His power was in their midst. The spreading of the message would happen both with words and deeds

(thus the term “proclamation” is used and not just the word “preaching”.) How is God calling us to “proclaim” the message in both words and deeds in our world today? Where can we find local, national and international opportunities to do this?

- 10) But if the disciples are not welcomed, they are to “wipe the dust off their feet as a protest against” those who do not welcome them. This protest is not meant to be a final rejection, but instead a warning to people who are not disposed to welcome the message or the messenger. This warning is meant to convert, not to injure or shame. The ones who see this repudiation may be further persuaded to listen and realize that our God of second chances is still working. This is also a way to remind the listener that whether or not he/she receives the message that he/she is held personally accountable for his/her response. How are we called to proclaim the message in such a compelling way that speaks to the powerful implications of the gospel message spoken?