

Weaving the Word

Lord of the Harvest

Part 78 – August 20, 2017

Welcome to where we're learning to seize the moment!

I got the chronology of John's disciples wrong last Sunday.

There are seven separate stories¹ that weave together here; and, it took a lot more rereading and seeking to see how they fit. Yet, once your eyes are opened to it, it seems so obvious.



And, it creates an incredible account that tops “Jesus’ Big Day”!

Last week, we saw that Mark reports how Jesus left Nazareth to go and teach from village to village; (Mk 6:1-6) and, how Mathew takes the baton from Mark and elaborates.



Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because **they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.** [So many needs. Only one Jesus. What's the Lord to do?] **THEN he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.** – Matthew 9:35-37 NIV



Now, watch for when Luke, in an earlier *flash-forward*, takes *this baton* from Matthew.

Capernaum (top); and Galilee

After this the Lord appointed **seventy-two** others and sent them **two by two** ahead of him **to every town and place where he was about to go.** [What's the Lord to do? Duplicate himself, and expedite the process for visiting His next 36 stops. These 36 pairs will be sent ahead to scout a location, determine the level of hostility, and prepare the people] **He told THEM,** [before He appointed them; and, **taking the baton from Matthew**] **“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.** Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. [And, **seventy-two** inexperienced and unprepared little lambs nod their willingness to pray that. “Yes! We'll gladly add that to our prayers.” Talk about missing the point!] **Go! I am sending you** out like lambs among wolves. – Matthew 9:37-38; Luke 10:1-3 NIV

He's “the Lord of the harvest”. And, seeing His compassion on the crowd, they should ask *Him* “to send [them] out [as His] workers” in “His harvest field”.

¹ Matthew 9:35-38, 10:1-11:1; Mark 6:6-13; Luke 9:1-9, 10:1-16, 10:17-24, 12:1-13:9

“Wait. *What?* You want us ... to go out ... in *Your name* ... by ourselves?!”



“Like lambs among wolves”.

Not everyone will receive you or even appreciate your good intentions. In fact, they may come against you. Slander you.

And, you’re not allowed to react as a wolf.



You must respond as a lamb when under attack.

“So, raise your hand, who wants to go?!”

Know who didn’t go?



Those three disciples on that unexpected walk to the dock in Capernaum just before He calmed the sea.

Remember them?

“I’ll follow you wherever you go!” “I put my dad’s burial preparations in capable hands; but, now I’m having serious second thoughts.” “I should really say goodbye to my family ... *again*.”

Jesus says to the boaster, “You’re gonna retreat to your foxhole,” and to the hesitater, “You’d rather remain with the dead,” and to the excuse maker ...

“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.” [“Go home, stay home, till you’re actually ready to come and follow Me.” And, *that’s* why Luke’s flash-forward is tied to these guys:] **After this** the Lord appointed seventy-two **others** and sent **them** ... – Luke 9:62-10:1 NIV

Being a lamb among wolves doesn’t disqualify us from the harvest.

It empowers us, by forcing us, to put our trust in our Shepherd.

Know what *disqualifies* us? Pride, hesitation, and excuse making.

Boasters, vacillators, and excuse makers will always miss out.

And tragically, they’re not enough aware to even feel their loss.

Would you have gone out in His name; or, made an excuse?

It’s no different today when we are unexpectedly called upon.

What do *you* typically say on your walk with the Doc?

These seventy-two rookies are obviously caught off-guard.

“Why us? We’re just lambs! What would we *take*? What would we *say*? What would we *do*?”

Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; [**“you’ll represent poor, humble servants who simply trust and obey their Master’s commands”**] and do not greet anyone on the road. [“No socializing with friends and family as you travel to your destinations; this will cause them to question and discuss and conclude that you are **characterizing yourselves as strangers and aliens in a foreign land** – which, in actual truth, is the actual truth.”] [“When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ **First and foremost, bring peace wherever you go**] If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; [“It’ll be obvious if he wants the peace you bring.”] if not, it will return to you. [“In whatever the cultural form for saying, ‘Scram.’ Possibly accompanied by a hand gesture. Now, if your peace is received,”] Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, [**“You’re imposing; so be grateful and respectful, even if they offend your sense of decency. Don’t act as though they are your servants!** And, feel no guilt for whatever hospitality they show.”] for the worker deserves his wages. [“You must understand that **you are workers, doing a job, and I’m your Boss.**”] Do not move around from house to house. [“People will talk, and wonder why, and speculate about nonsensical offenses, and create all sorts of needless distractions from your mission – because that’s what people do; but, not you. **My workers don’t make unnecessary drama.** And, once you’re settled in, and the people know you’re there, they’ll want to have a big public potluck to check you out. So,”] [“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. [**“Don’t make people feel inferior.** This is important, because it’s human nature; therefore, **part of your job must be to work at not coming across as self-superior.** So, **join in and enjoy the food and the company and build comradery.**”] Heal the sick who are there [**“I’ll give you the power through My Word, to truly heal.”**] and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’ [“In fact, He wants to come and teach and heal if you’ll receive Him.”] But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, [**“Don’t let that keep you from confronting them in truth and love.”**] go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God *is near.*’ [“In fact, He’s passing by, and would love to enter in.”] I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. [“But, you insert *that town’s* name; don’t say, ‘*that town.*’ Here are a couple examples of towns whose wolves/leaders have already rejected the Lamb”] [“Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. [**“Cause them to contemplate their coming judgment. We got’a wake ‘em up!** Whatever it takes to instill the fear-of-God in ‘em, in a gracious and merciful manner. Yet, **do not speak with cowardice or contempt in your voice. Speak with the confidence of the conviction that you’ve come to save them in My name.** And that’s your job. And I’m your boss. So, remember,”] [“He who listens to you listens to me; [“So, **be careful to rightly speak My Word with grace and mercy and kindness and joy.** And, **don’t take offense at their rejection.**”] he who rejects you rejects me; [**“It’s not about you.** You work for Me. And **rejection is part of the job.**”] but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.” – Luke 10:4-12 NIV

Our Father has created each of us with a productive purpose, and a capacity to join Him in His work in our wolf-and-lamb world.



The clock is ticking. The need is great.

The harvest is here! This *is* your moment!

And, the Lord of the harvest is *calling* you.



Don't fall prey to the Peter Pan syndrome: **fearing and refusing to grow up, mature, and accept responsibilities and commitments.** They're known as the *lost boys*. And, they remind me of the guys on that walk to the dock.



And, don't be deceived by its *opposite*: **seeing your responsible success as an excuse to take life easy and just run out the clock.**

You've been blessed to be a blessing.



Don't mistake the harvest years for *leisure* years!

You've been blessed to invest *yourself*!

Don't miss your moment.

Don't sell yourself short. Too young? Too old? Too busy? Too tired? **It's all self-deception, designed to distract you from the harvest and defraud you of your moment.**

What's your field of expertise?



Maybe it doesn't sparkle with spiritual glamor; but, that's where we find the largest harvest.

[So,] Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. – Colossians 3:23-24 NIV

If you see *Jesus* as your Boss and your field as your job, you'll relate and respond from a secure, grateful desire to please *Him*, free from the fear of what the wolves may snarl behind your back.

So, whatever fills your day, approach your work as worship.

Remain grateful and faithful whatever your field. And, *whatever* your field and *whoever* you're praying for, the Lord of the harvest would say the same: **"Go! I'm sending you."**