

The One Who Hears You Hears Me

Introduction

The Text

¹ After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. ² 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. ³ Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. ⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ ⁶ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. ⁷ 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. ⁸ Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ ¹⁰ But 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.’ ¹² I tell you, it will be more bearable 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. ¹⁴ But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ¹⁵ And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.

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.” (Luke 10:4–16)

Sending Them and Sending Us

- A. Jesus is sending out His disciples here and, with that, by implication, we understand that in a similar way He is sending us out as well.
 - 1. Certainly this mission of the 72 is historically unique in some ways, but it is, at the same time, a bit paradigmatic for us as well. We should not think that they were sent out but we are not. No. Rather, we are meant, I think, to catch a glimpse of our own missionary imperative in theirs.
- B. I shall bring out three things for us to consider this morning, three simple words really: (1) Urgency (v. 4); (2) Intensity (vv. 5-15); and (3) Agency (v. 16).

(1) Urgency (v. 4)

Thrust out into the Harvest

- A. On this first point, I will need to dip back into those opening verses we looked at last week for a moment.

- B. The urgency of our mission was, in fact, hinted at back in [v. 2](#). Admittedly, you can't see it quite as plainly in the English as you can in the Greek. But look back and make note again with me of the what Jesus is encouraging His disciples to pray: ["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."](#)
1. The word translated here ["send out"](#) is not the word typically chosen for such a meaning (apostello, [vv. 3, 16](#)), but ekballo, a word that is far stronger and carries the connotation of thrusting out; forcing out; driving out.
 - a. It's a word that vividly portrays for us, I think, the urgency of the situation at hand.
- C. When we locate this idea within the fuller picture of harvest time, it starts to make more sense. When it comes to harvesting, you have a limited window within which you must go after the fruit or you miss it. There's a deadline to the whole affair. You can't lounge for a few weeks and get around to it when you feel up for the task.
1. That's why when harvest season came, every member of a Jewish family would be ["thrust out"](#), as it were, to labor in the fields while there was still time.
- D. You know, I imagine I feel something similar around the bay area in the Spring time. Some people get spring-induced allergies. I get spring-induced anxiety.
1. Let me explain. I love the Spring in California. I love the green hills. I love the flowers and the beauty of it all. But I get legitimate anxiety around this time of year, why? Because I know it's not going to last long. I wait all year for the rains to come and the hills to resurrect with life. But then in just a few weeks or maybe months, it's back to brown (or gold), right? So what do I do? Ask Megan. You could say I ["thrust"](#) my family outside.
 - a. Last week on my day off I had Bella and Levi in our big old two kid stroller, and I'm hiking these narrow, winding, rocky trails up Santa Teresa where I was told wildflowers were going off. Everybody I passed was just looking at my like: ["What is this ridiculous father doing?"](#) I was wondering the same thing. But then I got up to Rocky Ridge Trail, and it was just like, ["Yes, this is why I'm doing it. Who knows if these flowers will be here next week?"](#)
 - i. It's breathtakingly beautiful. I love it. But because of this limited window, there's an urgency to the whole thing.
- E. And then here's the important question this text is forcing us to face: Do I feel this same sort of urgency when it comes to the mission of God, to bringing the good news of Jesus to others, to laboring in His harvest?

The Closing Window and Coming Judgment

- A. Throughout the Old and New Testaments the idea of harvest often carries with it the overtones of coming judgment. The same is true for our text here in Luke (cf. [vv. 12-15](#)).

1. The idea, put simply, is this: People need to hear the good news of Jesus Christ before it is too late. Now is the time to go and tell and harvest, because the window is closing. The arrival of Christ in history is also the beginning of the end.
 - a. As Paul says to the Corinthians: “[T]he appointed time has grown very short” (1 Cor 7:29a). Spend it for eternity brothers and sisters!

Verse 4

- A. Now, it is this sort of thing, I think, that stands behind the urgency we sense in v. 4: “Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.”
 1. The simple sense of it is this: There is nothing more important than the mission. So He thrusts them out without time for packing or preparation. “Just go! And as you are going, don’t stop!”
- B. That’s what is meant by the little command that might seem somewhat odd to us: “Greet no one on the road.”
 1. The introverts among us read that and think: “Thank God! I finally have permission. Jesus has said it Himself. I don’t have to talk to anyone while I’m out and about!”
 2. Others of us read that and we think, well doesn’t that sound kind of rude?!
 - a. Well, let me just say, if even we Americans are inclined to read it this way, the Jews would have even more so. In Eastern cultures at this time, greetings were quite elaborate and of pronounced social importance. To neglect these things would be outright offensive.
- C. And yet Jesus is saying the mission takes priority over social norms and niceties.
 1. It’s not unlike what we saw a few weeks ago where Jesus told aspiring disciples they couldn’t turn back and bury their family members (Luke 9:60) or even say goodbye (v. 62). There’s an urgency to this and it lays claim to all else.
- D. Consider: Are we willing to put the good news before a good reputation? Do we love what people think of us more than we love the people themselves? These are tough questions. And ones we must face.

(2) Intensity (vv. 5-15)

Two by Two

- A. For this point, again, I want to refer quickly back to the opening verses from last week. Particularly, I want to draw your attention to v. 1 and the fact that Jesus sends these disciples out “two by two”.
- B. Now, it seems to me that Jesus does this, not only for pragmatic reasons, but also for theological reasons.

1. To help you see what I mean by this, let me read to you the words of one commentator:

“Sending the disciples in pairs probably reflects the necessity of two witnesses in capital offenses in Israel (Deut 17:6; 19:15). The requirement of two witnesses to take or preserve a human life may carry the added significance that the mission of the seventy(-two) is a matter of life-and-death importance” (PNTC).

 - a. So Jesus sends them “two by two” not just so they could have a buddy or extra accountability and support. He sends them out in this way to imply that the testimony they are bringing to these cities is a matter of life and death for their hearers. If you accept the testimony, life. If you reject it, death.
- C. Now, I’m not going to deal with everything in these verses here, but I do think this idea of life and death really divides things up quite nicely for us.

Life = Peace

- A. On the side of life, Jesus speaks, in particular, of bringing peace: “⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’⁶ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him” (vv. 5-6a).
 1. Why has Jesus come? What is Jesus here to do? It can be summed up in this word He uses here: “Peace.”
- B. It’s a word that for the Jew is much more comprehensive than our usual truncated sense of it. Shalom. The idea is not merely peace of mind, or peace in one’s environment, or peace in one’s relationships. It is peace in every dimension—in particular, because one has peace with God.
 1. We lost this peace when we broke with God. And Jesus has come to restore us to it. A few chapters later, He will stand weeping over the city of Jerusalem, and say: “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace!” (Luke 19:42). What is He doing there in Jerusalem hanging on a cross? He is making your peace. “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:1).
- C. And this is the news that we His disciples are sent out by Him to announce.

Death = Judgment

- A. But, of course, not everyone finds such news good. For many it is distasteful, even offensive. They are uninterested in this peace if this is the way it must be received. So they reject it.
 1. Here, therefore we come to the side of death, where we see Jesus speaks of judgment: “¹⁰ But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say,^{11a} ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you’” (vv. 10-11a).
 - a. It’s a symbolic gesture signaling to the city that its residents are profane, unholy, outside the realm of God’s people and kingdom, and that judgment is coming unless they repent and turn to His Christ in faith.

- B. We are not playing around here brothers and sisters. These are life and death matters we have been sent out by God to testify to.

Two Observations

- A. There are two observations I wanted to bring out at this point which I think might prove helpful for us as we engage in the mission. The two are related but distinct enough in their own right:

Observation #1: The Kingdom of God Has Come Near in Either Case

- A. I wonder if you noticed, but Jesus says that in both cases—whether a town accepts the disciples’ message or rejects it—[“the kingdom of God has come near” \(vv. 9b, 11b\)](#). It is the same kingdom of God that has come near regardless of response. The only question is with regard to the manner in which His kingdom has come near: for peace or for judgment.
- B. This is important for us to remember. We are prone to say the kingdom of God has come near when the miracle happens, when salvation occurs, when the gospel is received. And we kind of think that God must be absent when people reject, or that God is somehow on His heels, and doesn’t know what to do in the face of their objections.
 1. Listen, even when He is rejected, His kingdom stands unshaken. He has still drawn near in those moments, only not for salvation but for judgment. God doesn’t lose, and His disciples will not be shamed in the end.

Observation #2: The Results Are Not Our Responsibility in Any Case

- A. It struck me as I read these words of Jesus, that He is clearly releasing His disciples from any concern for results. He says it plainly: [“Some will accept and others will reject.”](#)
 1. Your job is not to shoot a perfect score. Your job is to be faithful to share, to scatter the seed, to bring the kingdom near. You are not responsible for the way they respond.
- B. Isn’t there a freedom in that? We cannot convert, we cannot change the will by our argumentation or our actions. We can hold out wisdom and truth, we can live it before them in love, but it is God who must open hearts—it is God who alone is Lord of the Harvest.

Turning up the Heat

- A. Now, why do I stamp this section of our text with the word [“Intensity”](#)? Well, truly I am getting this from [vv. 12-15](#) which I want to quickly draw your attention to now.
- B. The basic sense of these verses is that there have been cities of old that have received some revelation of God, some visitation from God’s messengers, and, due to their rejection of it, they were judged severely.
 1. Sodom, of course, if you know the OT, is the epitome of such a thing.

- C. But then Jesus is saying something here that would have shocked any who heard it. Look at v. 12: “I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.”
1. The idea here is that, in the last day judgment, even the wicked, deplorable city of Sodom will fare better than some of these towns that Jesus and his disciples have visited.
 - a. With Jesus comes a greater revelation of God’s kingdom and glory. And with that greater revelation comes greater responsibility. And, therefore, if you reject this greater revelation, the judgment you face shall be greater as well. It will be more “intense”.
- D. There is often a mistaken notion concerning the Old and New Testaments.
1. The idea is that, in the OT, God is primarily a God of wrath—He’s destroying cities, murdering Canaanites, listing out rules and laws seemingly without end, and stoning those who disobey, etc.
 2. But, in the NT, thank goodness, with the arrival of Jesus, God is shown to be primarily a God of grace—He’s playing with children, He’s petting sheep, He’s sharing the table with the tax collectors and the sinners, He’s reaching out to the Samaritan and the Gentile, etc.
- E. Now, I understand why people might come to the conclusion they do, but such a conclusion simply cannot bear the weight of biblical evidence.
1. Truthfully, when we look a bit closer, what we find is that the wrath and grace of God run a parallel course together throughout the entire Bible. And what we must say is, not that wrath is turned up in the OT while grace is turned up in the NT, but rather that, in the NT, with arrival of Christ, both wrath and grace are turned up!
 - a. The arrival of Christ ushers in the last days, bringing us into the final stage of God’s redemptive plan, and, as such, both wrath and grace are “intensified”.
- F. This is the sort of thing that is being referred to in texts like Heb 10:26-29a, 31: “²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ^{29a} How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God . . . ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
1. Did you hear it? The clue towards this idea of intensification is found in those words there at the beginning of v. 29: “How much worse punishment . . .”
 - a. Rejecting Moses and the law is a devastating thing. But rejecting Jesus—His sacrifice, His covenant, His kingdom—is even more so. The revelation of God has reached its highest point in Christ. Therefore, rejecting Him is the gravest of evils.
- G. The idea is this: In Christ, both the peace and the judgment of God have been ratcheted up.

1. On the cross, Christ threw Himself “into the hands of the living God.” He was punished on our behalf. Therefore, the peace He offers is infinitely more intense than anything Moses or David or any OT figure could’ve ever offered.
2. But, for those who have been told the good news, who have heard of the Lamb slain for their sin, and yet have thought nothing of it, the judgment Jesus will bring on the last day will be infinitely more intense than anything ever typified in the OT era.
 - a. If you reject Jesus’ falling “into the hands of the living God” for you, then you yourself will fall there in the end.

(3) Agency (v. 16)

Hearing Us Is Hearing Him

- A. Our text ends with this profound statement there in v. 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.”
 1. The basic idea is, put simply: We are agents, or ambassadors, or representatives of God. Or, to put it another way: When people hear us, they are (or at least they ought to be) hearing Him.
 - a. Wherever I go, whatever I say, whatever I do, I am putting Him on display, I am bringing the kingdom of God near. The world should read from the lines of my life what God is like—what he feels, what He thinks, what He says, what He does.
- B. Now that is at once an awe-inspiring and convicting thought. Does such a thing characterize your life, my life? Well, I think sometimes, and more and more perhaps, but don’t we often blow this. I mean, for goodness sake, just ask my wife, ask my kids. When they hear me are they hearing Him?

Sending Him before Sending Us

- A. Now, in case, like me, you are sitting here feeling like a sorry excuse for an ambassador, this closing verse brings something very precious into view, and we must not miss it.
 1. Did you notice? Jesus locates His sending of us within the larger context of the Father’s sending of Him. He locates our mission within the larger context of His own: “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.”
- B. Does Jesus send us? Yes He does. But here is what we must see: Before Jesus ever sends us, the Father has sent Him. To do what?
 1. To die for us. To cover our sin and our shame and our failure to be the agents or ambassadors we long to be. To help us change and grow. To free us from the fear of man and the love of money and whatever else might keep us from living fully for Him.

- a. To minister the gospel to us over and over again until we get grace deep in our bones, until it so captivates us that we cannot help but speak of it with others, until we become like the women at the well who gets such a soul-satisfying drink of His mercy that she has no choice but to make a run on the town and tell them what she's found.
- C. His mission to us enables our mission to others. As we hear the way He speaks to us, we grow more fluent in speaking that language to others. Let's press in to Him now together.