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# Knowing Jesus

## **The Joy of Christ**

**Luke 10:1-24**

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**2/24/2019**

**Main Idea: God rejoices in our amazement of His work in and through us.**

**Lesson Objective: Trust and obey God's will for our lives.**

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## Introduction

*As your class time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

Kent Crockett, in his book *MAKING TODAY COUNT FOR ETERNITY*, shares the story of Kent and Barbara Hughes and their experience with their children one Christmas season. Their daughter Holly had landed the lead role in her school's Christmas program. It was a challenging role which she performed brilliantly to the applause of both her parents and audience. Their son, who struggled with significant learning disabilities, was given a very minor role—just four lines—in his class' program.

In the weeks leading up to the programs, the entire family, including the daughter, who had her own script full of lines to learn, had to take every opportunity to help the young boy work on his lines. Tried as he might, he just wasn't able to memorize his four, short lines.

When the night of the program came, the young lad took a deep breath and delivered his lines without faltering.

With whom were the parents more pleased? The daughter who had many lines and a starring role, or the son who had few lines and a minor part? Obviously, they were equally pleased with the efforts of both their children.

We don't all have the same ability—talents and skills. We don't all have the same responsibility—duties or obligations. But we do all have the same accountability—we must all answer to God for how we used our abilities to fulfill our responsibilities. That puts all of us on a level playing field.

“How does this truth apply to us today?” he asks. “No matter what our level of ability, we all have the same potential to make God smile.”

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## Sending the Seventy(two)

### Luke 10:1-4

*<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. <sup>4</sup>Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#).*

You may notice that some translations have that Jesus sent out seventy and others have seventy-two. The difference in the numbers comes from various manuscripts that have one or the other. The oldest manuscript has seventy-two, but other valuable copies have seventy. Some may look at this as an error in the text, but with a close examination of the story, we can see why it was recorded this way. The number seventy and seventy-two point our attention to the Old Testament and the sons of Noah (Genesis 10). Whichever Old Testament text you read determined how you counted the nations. The Hebrew text listed seventy nations, and the Greek translation of the Hebrew text (a.k.a. Septuagint or LXX) listed seventy-two. This has been a long standing discussion tracing all the way back to the Old Testament times. It then becomes understandable that if you were of the opinion that there were actually seventy nations instead of the seventy-two, you would have made the correction (I know this seems outlandish but we must remember that as they were gathering the letters, they wanted to see them portray accuracy in the telling of the stories). The difference in the numbers proves that the early church saw the connection

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between the number of ones sent out to the number of nations that were created in Genesis 10.<sup>1</sup>

In his last sermon to the people of Israel, Moses mentioned the nations as divided by the number of the sons of God. (<sup>8</sup> *When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, He fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. Deuteronomy 32:8*). I know that leaves us scratching our head wondering what did that say, but Moses is referring to God separating mankind after their rebellion in building the Tower of Babel. Man did not want God over them, they wanted to rule alongside God, so they built a ziggurat. You see, there is a spiritual battle taking place even as we speak. God calls out to people all of the time for them to repent and come back to Him, but there are also demonic influences that tell them that they do not have to follow God. So what Moses was saying is that since the sons of Noah preferred to follow the demonic influence, God gave them over to them (the use of the term, “sons of God” does not place these demonic beings on the same par as Jesus. It simply refers to them as created angelic beings who had access to the Most High but were now in open rebellion against Him). Now, as God gave the nations over to the demonic realm, he chose Abram to be a father of a new nation, a nation that would shine the light into the darkness and would bring them back to God. This is our connecting point. Jesus obviously appointed this specific number to indicate that this would be the beginning of the undoing of the punishment at the Tower of Babel. Jesus’ action grabs the original reader’s attention to a coming harvest of gentiles that would essentially undo

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<sup>1</sup> Mark C. Black, [Luke](#), College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub., 1995), Lk 10:1a.

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the separation of peoples and bring them into the assembling together in God's Kingdom.

Jesus was on a mission. He wanted as many as could hear the message of the gospel to respond in faith. He sent out the seventy-two (seventy) in pairs to go out ahead of Him in the town where He was about to travel. The idea of the people going in pairs served several different roles. The first is the role of having two witnesses. As the people were traveling along, they were proclaiming the coming Messiah and His kingdom. The two traveling together would give credence to their message as the people sought validation. Another reason for them traveling in pairs would be the ongoing support that one could give to the other. Going into differing neighborhoods without knowing the people can be very intimidating, but when we have someone who cares for us and the ministry, we can find strength to accomplish the task.

Jesus also commanded the traveling evangelists to pray. This does not mean that they would not have to be involved in the work, because they were commissioned to go out and do it. It reveals that ministry is in need of MORE workers. Only God can bring the right laborers into the right field. We need to constantly pray that God will continue to call more workers as we are working. There was not time to waste. All Seventy-two had a message of good news and hope, and everyone in the towns needed to hear it. Jesus wanted them to not waste time jumping from house to house seeking the approval of the people or better benefits. He knew that these homes needed someone to take time to explain what was about to happen, so that when Jesus came through t,hese people would be able to explain it to others. This was Jesus' model of discipleship. He never called the people to come to a classroom and listen to lectures. He called the people to go into the harvest and invest in other people's

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lives, sharing the truth of God's word, so that they will become workers in the field as well.

Jesus sent out these messengers without daily necessities in order to teach them an important lesson in trust and faith. These people were sent out without what you and I would consider to be necessities. They were sent without knowing for sure whether their needs would be met, but Jesus knew all along that they would be. As they were going, Jesus was teaching them to trust in all that He would provide for them. Many times we look for excuses for not going. We will use lack of training, lack of support, lack of finances, and lack of calling to keep from going. The important thing to note is that God will provide all that is needed when He calls you. In many cases, He has already called, but we are not answering.

Already in Jesus' ministry, the soil had begun to produce and the harvest was ready. Crops will not wait on farmers to be ready to harvest them. When the harvest is plentiful, farmers must be ready to act or else run the risk of losing the crop. God has chosen us to accomplish the task of evangelism, and we must not wait around until we feel ready. We must be prepared to take the gospel to the lost, but we also need to be aware that we cannot do this on our own. We must rely on the Lord for strength and send more workers to help us reap the harvest.

**What does this tell us about where we should look for strength as we seek to share the gospel with others?**

**Why do you think Jesus told His disciples to take such little provision with them as they carry out His mission (vv. 4-7)?**

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## Warning the Wicked

### Luke 10:5-16

*<sup>5</sup> Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' <sup>6</sup> And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. <sup>9</sup> Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' <sup>10</sup> But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup> '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.' <sup>12</sup> I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.*

*<sup>13</sup> "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. <sup>14</sup> But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. <sup>15</sup> And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.*

*<sup>16</sup> "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." [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#)*

Jesus did not promise the task would be easy. Rather, his command placed disciples at the crossroads. There would be no need for the people to seek out advance lodging reservations. They were instructed to enter a city and find a family and stay awhile with them. They should bless the house with God's peace, and pray that God would bring wholeness and blessing and harmony to the house (vs.5-6). The result of the blessing would have depended on the head of the household. A peace-loving, hospitable host would receive God's peace and blessing.

On the other hand, the person who rejected them and made life difficult for them would not receive God's blessing, Jesus said. Thus, the coming of the

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messenger brings the host to the crossroads as well. Response to Christ's messengers determines the nature of a person's life. The messenger must stay put, and not go looking for better rooms. Again the focus must be on mission—not on personal needs and desires. The host is responsible to take care of your needs. You are working in God's harvest and should be paid for your work. But do not try to up your pay by looking for a better place to live. Living arrangements are not important. Gathering the harvest is.

The mission was simple: heal and preach (cf. 9:1–2). The kingdom of God is near. In the simple ministry of Christ's messengers, people find themselves in the midst of God's kingdom. The kingdom is not something far away in space and time. It is present reality for those who see God's power at work.

A warning accompanied the command to go into the towns. Jesus referred to some of the people they would encounter as wolves. Wolves were wild animals, and were known to prey on helpless lambs (v.3). This means that there would be some who may have even received a harsh punishment for doing what Jesus had commanded. Regardless of the outcome, they were to be obedient.

Workers in God's kingdom harvest should expect rejection. The demands of kingdom service are too great. The reality of kingdom presence is too unbelievable. The comfort of worldly security is too strong. Yes, the city stands at the crossroads of decision: accept God's message of the kingdom or lose your life (9:24–25). The messengers were to use the symbolic act of wiping dust from their feet (9:5) to make vivid the kingdom demand for decision. Rejection means the kingdom has come, but you have chosen the road that leads away from the kingdom. This action was very common among the Jewish people. As they traveled into gentile land (remember above they saw the other nations as

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demonic and pagan) they were shake the dust of the gentile land off go themselves as they were entering into God's Holy Land (the land was considered Holy because of the Lord's presence at the Temple). What makes this action fascinating is that they were not traveling in the land of the gentiles. So when the Jewish communities refused to receive them in the name of Jesus, they were acting as if they did not believe in God and were living in a land that was unclean. This is the symbol that the people were to proclaim when the towns rejected them. This brings back the importance of having two people to stand as witnesses against the faithless community and their rejection of God.

God allows everyone to make a decision in order to repent and follow Him. He wants us to let everyone we know have an opportunity to make that choice. God will not force people to follow Him. He will allow them to reject His grace and mercy, but they must suffer the consequences. And what consequences—punishment worse than that of the city burned by God for unspeakable sins (Gen. 19:24–28; cf. Isa. 1:9–10; 3:9; 13:19; Jer. 23:14; 49:18; 50:40; Lam. 4:6; Ezek. 16:46–56; Amos 4:11; Zeph. 2:9; Rom. 9:29; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 1:7; Rev. 11:8). Rejecting God's kingdom is accepting the eternal destiny of Satan's children.

**What does it look like to live as a lamb among wolves in the way that we deliver and demonstrate the gospel? Why is this necessary?**

**When we share the gospel with others, why is it important that we also seek to demonstrate the gospel by the way that we live?**

**Although we should expect persecution and hardship, what can we do to live at peace with others, so far as it is up to us (see Rom. 12:18)?**

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## The Joy of the LORD

### Luke 10:17-24

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

*21 In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 22 All things have been handed over 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 anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."*

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

[The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#)

When the job was completed by the seventy-two, they returned to Jesus over whelmed with everything that had taken place. They noticed that within the spiritual realm they had authority through the name of Jesus. This did not mean that they used Jesus' name as some magical word (like "abracadabra"), that once it was mentioned magical things appeared. The significance of the name of Jesus comes from the role that He represents. When we as believers pray in the name of Jesus, we are affirming our faith in His position within the Trinity and His role as the Messiah. Through faith in His name we are called on to believe and act according to the reality of who Jesus really is. When the people were proclaiming the name of Jesus, they were trusting in His position of authority over all things and who He was as the saving Messiah. It was through

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this faith that God moved. We must never think that just because we call on the name of Jesus that God must answer. Jesus is not magic, He is Majestic.

Jesus responded that He “**saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.**” The verb tense in the sentence can mean an ordinary physical experience (14:29; 21:6; 23:35, 48; 24:37), a gift of foresight or insight (Acts 27:10; John 4:19; 12:19), or have a symbolic meaning. Here it could refer to the fall of Satan seen by the pre-existent Son (Isa 14:12). It is more likely, however, that it refers symbolically to what the exorcisms performed by the seventy(-two) meant. Their casting out of demons demonstrated the defeat of Satan (cf. Luke 11:20–22). The tense of this verb, an inceptive aorist, is better captured by translating it “I was seeing.” Luke understood each exorcism by the seventy(-two) as demonstrating the defeat of Satan.<sup>2</sup>

Treading on serpents and scorpions should not be taken literally, but Jesus is referring to the spiritual authority through His name that will be exercised over the kingdom of darkness. Jesus had given them this power over darkness along with a promise of protection, but this did not make them invincible. Many prosperity preachers will use passages like this one for a proof-text of divine authority and control over anything they deem as evil (e.g. poverty and sickness). This type of interpretation takes the whole passage out of its original context. We must remember that Jesus commissioned these seventy-two evangelists to go before Him. They were told to not waste any time and to spend every moment they had with the people preparing them for the coming Messiah. This was a direct assault on evil, but God will protect them as they were doing what He had commanded. The idea is that we should not worry

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<sup>2</sup> Robert H. Stein, [Luke](#), vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 309.

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about what Satan's retaliation towards us is, because God has got it all under control. Even in cases of Christian martyrdom, God is still in control. This doesn't mean that somehow Satan has won the spiritual battle or that the fallen believer did not have enough faith. God has given us the overall victory through the works of Jesus Christ. He has given us all that we will ever need to engage in the spiritual warfare. Sound biblical theology recognizes that God uses loss to proclaim His greatness. He uses the blood of the martyrs to water the seeds of the gospel, as we will see in the book of Acts. Understand that the protection that Jesus offers is guaranteed through His finished work of redemption, and there is nothing that Satan can do to change that outcome. We may lose our life along the way, but our lives are not the same as they were before Jesus came into them. We have a new life in Christ that will never be taken away.

Jesus rejoiced. Jesus finds great pleasure when His people take on their new identity in Him and are obedient by doing what He has commissioned them to do. Imagine our God finding joy in us being who we are called to be. The joy of Christ reveals His heart. He rejoiced when the people were astounded by the divine power of Jesus in their lives. He praised the Father that the greatness of God was revealed to these people not through lectures and studies, but through obedience. These unnamed people were able to see something that saints of old longed to see. They saw the greatness of God by doing what He had called them to do.

**Are you doing the work God has called you to do?**  
**Where has God called you to serve?**  
**How can we experience great joy in serving God?**