

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 10:1-11

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. This week, we will read Luke chapter 10. Today, we will read verses 1-11.

Verse 1: "After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go."

"After these things"—what things? At the end of chapter 9, after coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration, the Lord Jesus steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. He knew that the cross awaited Him there. Therefore, this was a road leading to the cross. On the one hand, it was a road of suffering; on the other hand, it was also a road of harvest. How was it a harvest? It was a matter of reaping the ripened grain.

Jesus knew that this was the final stage of His earthly ministry. Therefore, He seized the opportunity to send out His disciples, two by two before Him, into every city and place where He Himself was about to go, to prepare the way for Him, to loosen people's hearts, and to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God. Earlier we mentioned that He had sent out the twelve disciples. Now He sends out seventy. By this time, a group of people had already begun to follow Jesus. Although He had to go to Jerusalem to suffer and to become the atoning Lamb for all peoples, He was also concerned for the salvation of all. Thus, at the close of His earthly ministry, He was willing to send His disciples before Him, two by two, into every city and town—seventy in total.

Seventy is a special number. In the Bible, it signifies the whole earth. For example, in Genesis chapter 10, the descendants of Noah—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—

formed seventy nations in total. The seventy nations in Genesis 10 represent the whole earth. Later, Jacob's household of seventy persons went down to Egypt to Joseph. Then Moses went up Mount Sinai with seventy elders. Seven signifies completeness in time, and ten signifies human completeness. Seventy signifies all humanity and the whole earth. The gospel of Jesus Christ is for all mankind, and He sent them out two by two.

Verse 2: "Then He said to them, 'The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'"

The metaphor of preaching the gospel as harvesting appears three times in the Gospels. This is the third time. The first time was in John chapter 4. When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well, He touched her conscience. As a result, she left her waterpot and hurried into the city to proclaim what Jesus had done. Then Jesus said to His disciples: "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" (John 4:35, NKJV). "And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life." This took place in the early stage of Jesus' earthly ministry in Samaria. When people thought the harvest was still four months away, Jesus declared that it was already ripe.

The second time was in Matthew 9:37–38, in Galilee. As Jesus went about that region, He saw the multitudes, weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." At the beginning of chapter 10, He then sent out the twelve disciples two by two. This occurred during the middle stage of His earthly ministry, which we also read about at the beginning of Luke chapter 9. Now in chapter 10, we are in the last six months of His earthly ministry. As He set His face toward Jerusalem and walked toward Golgotha, He did not forget the harvest. This time He sent out seventy, signifying even more clearly that this gospel is for all peoples.

Verse 3: “Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.”

Even today, the principle remains the same for those sent by God to expand His kingdom. We belong to God’s flock. When we go out to preach the gospel, it is like lambs entering among wolves. On the one hand, there are many dangers; yet we know the Lord takes full responsibility for us. On the other hand, the Lord wants us to understand that suffering and persecution are inevitable. Throughout the process, we must hold fast to the life of a lamb—we are willing to suffer loss, willing to endure hardship, and harmless toward others. At the same time, we trust that God will preserve us.

Verse 4: “Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road.”

The money bag was for money, the knapsack for food, and extra sandals for greater comfort in walking. According to the Lord’s command and commission, they were to press forward urgently, not greeting anyone along the way. At that time in Judea, according to Eastern custom, greetings could consume much time. To accept the Lord’s commission required faithfulness to His trust.

Verse 5: “But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’”

Because what we preach is the gospel of the kingdom of God, when the kingdom accompanies our message and comes upon a household, that household enjoys peace. Therefore, our responsibility is to bring peace into every family.

Verse 6: “And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you.”

The gospel of the kingdom brings God's rule. Where God rules, there is peace. If in God's sovereign authority we enter a house and there is a son of peace there, that peace rests upon them. If not, it returns to us.

Verse 7: "And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house."

When God's workers are sent out, what the families God has prepared provide for them is the wages they deserve. "Do not go from house to house" means we should not make our own choices.

Verse 8: "Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you."

God's workers should make no personal choices. Every receiving household is prepared by God for you. Whatever they set before you, eat it—do not be picky or compare. When I served in the church in Taichung, I was received into the homes of the saints there. Enjoying the rich hospitality and abundant supply of God's children was truly the reality of the kingdom. Such an experience was exceedingly good.

Verse 9: "And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'"

For every worker sent out for God's kingdom, he must be able to meet the needs of the local saints. Jesus commanded them to heal the sick in that city—some were physically ill, some were psychologically ill. Jesus gave His disciples authority and power to heal the sick. Yet beyond meeting their needs, more importantly, they were to declare, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." Earthly needs and bodily sickness are temporary, but the kingdom of God is eternal. God desires that

through meeting temporary physical and material needs, people's hearts may open to receive the eternal gospel, the eternal peace, and the eternal joy of the kingdom.

Everyone sent by God is like an ambassador of the kingdom. When he goes out, he represents Christ. Entering a household, he brings peace to that home. On the one hand, he enjoys the provision set before him; on the other hand, he brings the gospel of the kingdom, the peace of the kingdom, the joy of the kingdom, and extends the sphere of God's rule into that home.

Verses 10–11: “But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, ‘The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.’”

If someone does not receive us, Jesus teaches us not to force them. We wipe off the dust from our feet before them. In other words, if they reject the gospel of the kingdom we preach, their outcome is no longer our responsibility. Before them we make it clear: you have judged yourselves unworthy of this gospel. Even in such circumstances, we must still tell them that the kingdom of God has come near.

Right now, it is entirely the gospel of grace. As long as you believe and receive, you may obtain it. If you do not receive it now, one day when the kingdom of God comes upon you, it will come in the form of judgment. Though Jesus set His face toward Jerusalem and walked the road to the cross, His heart was still concerned for the salvation of all peoples. Therefore, He sent out seventy disciples, two by two, to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom. At the same time, He promised that the workers of the kingdom would receive the rich hospitality of the sons of peace.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord Jesus, thank You that Your gospel is for all peoples. Two thousand years later, today, we who were once Gentiles, having no part with You, can obtain salvation through faith. We offer You our thanksgiving and worship. You said the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore we are to pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Lord, here we are—send us out to reap the harvest for You. Bless the church where I am. Raise up many

co-workers to labor together in the harvest. It will be a sweet and glorious service. Remember and preserve our willing hearts. Our prayer, petition, and thanksgiving are offered in the Holy Name of our Lord Jesus.