

“Take Nothing for the Road”
Text: Luke 10:1-10
Series: *Follow Week 6: Deployment*
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Woodside Church

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(Newscast)

Good morning. This is Scott Burgess with the morning report from WGAL.

News has just reached us from Rome that Roman legions have captured the town of Serdica in Thracia. It has also been confirmed that Livia Augustus, the widow of the late Caesar Augustus, has passed away at the age of 88.

But the lead story today is that Jesus of Nazareth is once again in the news.

You may remember earlier in the year that Jesus had commissioned his twelve top students and sent them out, two by two, from village to village sharing His message and, if you believe the stories, healing people. Now reports have come to this newsroom that he has commissioned 72 more of his disciples and sent them out.

Evan Gellist was on the scene yesterday.

Person 1

Anchor: Hello! Evan Gellist here from Canigetawitness News. I’m standing outside the synagogue in Galilee, where Jesus of Nazareth has reportedly sent 72 of his followers out into the world. (Stops man walking hurriedly by) Excuse me, sir. I understand you are one of the 72 Jesus is sending out. Can you confirm this?

Man: Yes, yes I am! It’s super-exciting!

Anchor: So...where exactly are you being sent?

Man: Well let me think (thinks a moment)...Chorazim...Bethsaida...Capernaum...the usual garden spots.

Anchor: Wow...that sounds like a lot of ground to cover. What’s going on at all these places?

Man: Well, they’re the harvest field. And, the harvest is plenty, my man!

Anchor: Well then, there’s probably a lot of workers there already – what’s the point?

Man: Oh, no – that IS the point – the workers are few. Thus..the sending. Hey, I gotta go – see ya!

Anchor: (looks dumbfounded as Person 1 disappears off-screen...catches sight of another person)

Person 2

Anchor: Excuse me...ma'am? You're part of the 72...um (checks notes) harvest workers, right?

Woman: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I am. Heading out now, actually. What do you need. (Looks into camera) Hey, are we on TV?

Anchor: Yes, yes we are! You're on Canigetawitness News!

Woman: Cool. What's a TV?

Anchor: (silent for a moment, stares at women, shakes head) Never mind. I'm just curious. What kinds of preparations are you making for this trip? Sounds like you could be gone awhile.

Woman: Oh, nothing, really.

Anchor: Nothing? Like, didn't pack a bag?

Woman: Um.....no. He said we wouldn't need one.

Anchor: A purse? You'll need some money, right?

Woman: Mmmmmmm.....nope.

Anchor: At least an extra pair of sandals? You're going to be covering a lot of ground.

Woman. Aaaaaannnnndddd....that'd be....no.

Anchor: Well, that's nuts. That's sending you out like...I don't know...like sheep among wolves!

Woman: That's funny. He said that, too! Hey, I gotta jet. (Wait...what's a jet?) Anyway, definitely gonna keep that wolf thing in mind. Bye!

Thanks Evan. Those are pretty strange deployment instructions by Jesus. Where is he heading next? What are his plans? Based upon interviews and the places he is sending his disciples it's obvious that he is heading south. But where?

Map plotting suggest maybe Jericho, or even Bethany. Or is Jerusalem the final destination for the Nazarene teacher. As to those plans that have been so hard to uncover, our experts are still focusing on two primary theories. Is he planning a takeover of the Temple or is it the more popular belief among his followers, the creation of a revolution to rid their land of the Romans?

As for this reporter, I would just suggest that those disciples be careful. The wolves will be watching them.

This is Scott Burgess signing off. Say a prayer for somebody today.

(end of newscast)

We have been through quite a bit so far in the first 5 weeks of this series.

- Beloved – Baptized by John and Beloved of God Jesus shows us that we are beloved as well
- Blueprint – Jesus lays out His blueprint, and therefore shows us how we are to build.
- Beginnings – Simon-Peter may have been His first selection to be a disciple, but was no means finished there. He is still choosing them up to, and including, you and me.
- Danger – The very thought of change sparks dangers. What dangers have you discovered in your faithwalk?
- Decision – Last week we heard how a simple decision can radically change a life.

We've seen Jesus do some amazing things. He has healed people, driven out demons, calmed a storm – even fed 5000 men, plus women and children, with 5 loaves of bread and two fish; and still had plenty of leftovers. All great stuff. But those following must have wondered: How can he possibly overthrow the Romans when he hasn't started to build an army yet? When will his campaign start? When is he going to start his revolution? So far everything that he has done has been contrary to what people expected.

And then, he decides the time has come to leave the Galilee area. In the town of Bethsaida, he gathers his followers and prepares to begin his march.

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. Luke 9:51

And in doing so, he took what appeared to be his first step towards a military conquest: Like any good commander would do, he sent out scouts. He sent his disciples out ahead of him to begin recruiting.

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. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Luke 10:1-2

And like any honest commander would do, he prepared them for the harsh realities ahead.

Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Luke 10:3

He let them know that this could be a dangerous mission. But, at least he equipped his people like any good general would.

Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. Luke 10:4

Wait! What? Why would Jesus send them out completely unequipped? Army scouts are usually equipped to endure dangerous conditions. Food, first aid supplies, weapons, clothing for all kinds of weather, are just some of the ways they are equipped. Preparation is the key to success.

When we send our children to college, we want to be sure they have what they need – and more.

When we go out for that job interview, we prepare. We research the company. We try to anticipate the questions that will be asked of us, and think of ones that we will ask.

Even when we are getting ready to go on vacation, to relax and put the stress behind us, we do it by taking every effort to be sure that we don't leave anything behind.

So why does Jesus say, "Take nothing for the road"? Doesn't He want them to succeed? Of course he does. What he is saying is that they are to trust in God to care for their needs. When the Israelites needed food in the desert, did God abandon them?

Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you – Exodus 16:4

How about clothes? Wouldn't they at least need to have an extra set of clothes?:

Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith? – Matthew 6:30

But in this case, it appears that Jesus really wanted them to trust in God's provisions. I get that. I understand that we need to have that faith that He will provide. But why does that verse finish with, "and do not greet anyone on the road"?

"Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; **and do not greet anyone on the road.**"
Luke 10:4

He wasn't saying that we shouldn't be sociable, and say hi, or "yo, sup". What he was stressing was trying to stay focused, to not be distracted from the mission at hand. Distractions pull us away from what we are attempting to do. Perhaps you arrived this morning during the first, or even second song. Why? Because you had to straighten up just one more thing before you left the house. But distractions can have deeper consequences. The job that becomes such a distraction that your family relationships suffer. The addiction – to work, online gaming, pornography, drugs – that drives a wedge between you and God. Jesus had that same concern for the 72 he was sending out. He had a mission planned for them. Greeting people on the journey and hanging out with them, would interfere with their arrival at the destination he had planned.

⁵ "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' ⁶ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

⁸ "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. ⁹ Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' Luke 10:5-9

This was the revolution that Jesus had planned. Not a military revolution. Not a violent overthrow of a foreign occupying government. He wasn't sending the 72 into villages like commando's killing those that were repressing his people. He was bringing peace. Eating with his hosts. Healing and telling them about God, and His love.

He was sending them out to start growth groups.

God provides in many ways. We saw earlier that it rained bread, He also provides for us through others. God said to Elijah:

“Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.” - 1 Kings 17:9 (NIV)

Jesus instructs us to help others. But he also knows that sometimes we need the help that others can give us, help that we often don't want to accept. Society tells us to, “Pull Yourself Up By Your Bootstraps”, to do it without any outside help. Men in particular have always been driven that way. For goodness sake, we'd rather drive aimlessly than ask for directions. But no matter how strong you are, sometimes you need help.

I also know that serving is a blessing. Many of you know that I have been serving in a prison ministry for the last dozen years; leading worship services and sharing the Gospel. I can't tell you the number of times that I have come home from a service feeling that I got so much more than I gave. That is God's way of rewarding us for what we are doing. Serving makes us feel good! Why shouldn't others have the same opportunity to feel good.

The world today really isn't that much different than it was in Jesus's time. Sure, the culture is different and technology continues to advance, but the instructions Jesus gave to his disciples are still valid for us.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, - Matthew 28:19

Over the last seven years many of you have met Travis and Allegra Lee, and their four adorable children. But not all of you have heard their story.

How can we do what they did? How can we live loud for Jesus? First of all, don't let their story intimidate you. They are both very talented musically, and they are gifted in sharing the Gospel. And as they were both educators they are able to home-school their children as they travel in their ministry. If I ever heard God telling me what he told Travis & Allegra, I would have to come to one of two conclusions:

1. Occasionally God might make a mistake, or more likely
2. God does have a sense of humor and he's just joking with me.

But the important point is not the “How” of what they do. It's not the music. It's not the home-schooling. It is the sharing of the Gospel. It is trying to make disciples wherever they are serving. And each one of us can do that. There are three points more important than how.

The first is:

- What
 - But He does call us, and He wants to send us to share the Gospel. The first thing we have to discover is “What”, as in, “What does God want from me?” We need to listen, think, pray and discuss – sometimes in various order.
 - Travis and Allegra were feeling called, but they didn't know to what. They prayed and fasted until they received their instructions.
 - Sometimes it is to use a talent that you already have. Love to cook or bake? Are you a craftsman/handyman? A teacher? What talent do you

have that you can share with others, and in what way can you use that to answer His calling.

- Maybe it is something you never tried. Something that on the surface just seems absurd. Try something different.
- Join a growth group, start and lead a growth group. Invite a friend to join your growth group. It could be somebody at Woodside; maybe somebody at another church; maybe somebody that doesn't go to church at all. I did that once and 7 or 8 years later, he's still here. And remember, it doesn't have to be a lot of people –

20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”
Matthew 18:20 (NIV)

- Where

- Sometimes the where is simple. The “what” that you found identifies where. The opening announcements or the bulletin. Maybe there is something there suggesting what & where.
 - Why don't you pull out that connection card that you filled out earlier. Turn it over and look at what's coming up.
 - How did you look at it earlier? Did you really look to see how you might be able to serve, or did you just glance and make excuses on why you can't? Did you even really consider it?
- Sometimes the where isn't so simple. Back in 2007 when the growth group I was part of, decided to try Prison Ministry, we didn't just go knock at a prison door and ask if we could come in. Each of us discussed it first as a group and then with our spouses (it was a couples group), prayed on it and tried to see if it was something that we were really being called to do. We then found a group that was already doing prison ministry, Conquering Life Prison and Recovery Ministry, and found a way to join them in what they were doing.

- Why

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

Luke 10: 17 - 20

What is your motivation for serving in the way that you serve, or want to serve? There is a multitude of reasons to serve. Some good, some average and some bad. There are two that instantly came to mind for me as I prepared for today. One really bad and one great reason. Let's discuss the wrong reason first.

1. It's all about me! Look what I do. Aren't I just something special? It is ok to like what you're doing. Absolutely! It is even ok to feel good about what you are doing. The joy

that you feel in ministry is God's way of saying you are doing well for Him. But if you are doing it to promote yourself, then you aren't serving with the proper attitude. Which leads us to:

2. Serving to share the gospel and to glorify God.
 - a. It is wonderful to help people, and there are so many ways to accomplish that. But we're not just out there doing good deeds. There are atheists that do good deeds. The difference is that we get to share the gospel with our good deeds. Jesus didn't say, "Therefore, go out and help people with your good deeds." He said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,..." You don't have to be a "bible thumper" with the people you are serving. But when it is appropriate and feels right, you can pray with them. Share why you do the things you do. Share your story of faith. The greatest gift that we have been given is the gift of eternal life. Don't keep that to yourself. Share it with as many people as you can.
 - b. Glorify God. There is a simple prayer that I often use in the prison with people that want to accept Jesus or recommit.

I'd like to start my closing prayer today with that prayer and I invite you to repeat the prayer with me – out loud or silently.

Dear Lord, I acknowledge that I am a sinner, and I need your forgiveness. Thank you, Jesus, for dying for me and giving me eternal life. Transform my life so that I may bring glory and honor to you alone.

Thank you Lord for your guidance, instructions and focus. Allow me to continue to hear your voice and be your hand and feet here on this earth. I honor you, worship you and love you and pray for your continued presence in my life. In Jesus's name I pray. Amen.