

Week 2: Travel Lightly

Passage: Luke 10:4

“Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.”

Introduction:

Jesus continues talking to those He is sending out. It's good to remember that He is talking about a particular short-term mission trip to the lost sheep of Israel just after 'Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem' (9:51). Jesus' time was limited and the purposes of God were culminating in His suffering, crucifixion and resurrection. **They needed to hear Jesus' message of peace (v5) and turn from their sins and trying to build God's kingdom in their own way through violence and revolution.** Something they largely ignored and rebelled in AD70 and were brutally crushed by the Roman Empire. Israel needed to hear and heed the message of the Good News urgently. **Though there are elements of this passage with particular application to the 72 in the text, we learn valuable insight for the way we can do mission.**

Sermon Notes:

Carry nothing

The first thing the 72 are told is to travel lightly. In fact, it almost sounds like they aren't to take anything at all. They are to take no money bag, which is a purse or similar to our wallet. A knapsack according to Darrel Bock is a traveller's bag and was a normal part of the ancient itinerant preacher's equipment; it held supplies and indicated independence. The instruction not to carry such bag highlights the need to trust in God's provision. No sandals probably did not mean without shoes but they were not to take a spare pair. **They needed to go as they were. Those being sent out into the harvest have what they need. They have the Lord Jesus for protection and will be supplied with all they need while out in the harvest so nothing more is needed.**

Partnership

As we reflect on what this passage has to say more widely about mission we notice that God does not call every missionary to travel with such meagre supplies. We see a variety of models in the rest of the NT. We see the generosity of local church communities partnering with Paul in resourcing him for mission in Romans 15:23-33, Philippians 1:3-6; 3:10-20, 1 Timothy 4:9-15. We also encounter flexibility to the degree in which missionaries relied on funding from partners outside or the communities themselves depending on the local ministry context and the ability to help support workers. (See 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12, Romans 15:23-33; 1 Corinthians 16:1-5; 2 Corinthians 8-9)

However, as we look at this passage through the lens of the NT we see clearly **that joining God in His mission required travelling lightly and not letting financial security become a priority over Christian ministry and mission. Generally speaking there seemed to be a beautiful inter-dependant, sacrificially generous, partnership in the Gospel between missionaries and churches to further the cause of Jesus Christ.**

Freedom

There is also a need to let go of comfort and not to be weighed down about the materialism, consumerism and security that surrounds us today. Just as it is easier to get through an airport terminal when only having carry-on luggage, so too it is easier for the workers of the harvest to keep things simple and take very little on their journey. **They are to leave behind that which binds them, which holds them up, which stops them from moving forward. This includes leaving behind cultural baggage and qualms that held them back from going to people, which we will see later on.**

Authentic relationships

Travelling lightly in mission also requires us to live in inter-dependant community and reliance on the welcome and hospitality of those that we go to. At first this may be counter intuitive. As people in mission we often feel compelled to be the ones with all the resources. This has both served to disempower local communities from real ownership of ministries and at times seen relationships with missionaries to be viewed through the lens of potential financial gain. Relationships of inter-dependence can increase the opportunity for authentic relationships.

Making space

'Travelling lightly' not only speaks of the physical and material lightness required in mission but also the openness we have in our time and relationships. There is much that holds us up from sharing the message of the Kingdom, nothing more so than having our weeks filled with activities and appointments. There is something to be said about giving space in our schedules so we can be open to how God is leading and moving in our lives.

More directly, the more intentional we are about leaving behind physical and emotional bindings the more open we are to see God move and have the space to respond to that. This might mean that we have the freedom to find new ways of building relationships. It may mean we have more energy to both give and receive hospitality. It may mean we find ourselves drawn closer to Jesus and His mission because we are open to seeing how He will use us to build the Kingdom.

The mission is urgent

Furthermore, Jesus highlights the urgency of the mission when he says 'to greet no one along the road'. At first glance it seems Jesus advocates being rude to people by simply continuing on to their destination, ignoring social mores of greeting. This isn't quite the case. Jesus is using hyperbole to highlight the urgency of this mission and the dedication and focus on the task that will be needed.

Middle Eastern culture was generally hospitality focussed. It included many traditions and customs of welcome that took time. They could be a welcome source of rest and refreshment for the traveller, but also a distraction for those on an urgent errand. These customs could hold the workers up. Instead, Jesus encourages them to be so intentionally focussed on the harvest that they don't spend too much time worrying about the superfluous customary greetings. They are to move from traditional greetings and get on with building meaningful relationships. Jesus directs His workers to get on with the task of sharing the Gospel of the Kingdom and make that a priority.

Again this passages instruction, 'to greet no one along the road', needs to be first heard in the context of this particular mission of the 70/72 to local villages in the area of the Jordan – as Jesus' ministry heads toward it's culminating events. To not greet someone on the road was a subversion of cultural norms for the sake of the mission. In contrast in our local settings the opposite might be true. In cities, towns and regions people are ever less present with the ones they are with through the fragmentation of communities and attentiveness to social media - so to actually greet someone on the street might be a missional subversion of cultural norms!

That being said, to look at this passage through the lens of the rest of the NT is to see a similar burden for the urgency of followers of Jesus to prioritise the mission of God. **Though every narrative of Acts, through every epistle, through Revelation we see urgent affirmations that we are the people of God, and we are encouraged, challenged, exhorted and at times even warned to make His mission the priority of our lives: whether it is our going, our praying, our giving, our partnering, our sending or our working to prioritise mission.**

Insider Story:

Ask someone in your congregation to share about how they stay focussed on Jesus and the tasks He asks of them. What kind of things have they had to put aside in order to be a worker in the harvest?

Ask the question of a ministry you're involved in at church too. Is there anything that is distracting you or the ministry at the moment?

Watch DVD clip - Global Interaction cross-cultural worker Muana provides insight from his setting.

Conclusion:

- When Jesus sends workers out into the harvest field He gives them all that they require. Are you trusting that Jesus has equipped you in your ministry right now?
- Being a harvester requires us to carry little. What do you need to lay aside in order to walk more lightly as a pilgrim of Jesus?
- There is much to distract us from the mission God has given us. Is there anything distracting you from being in the harvest field right now? What can you do to change that?

Take Home:

1. Spend some time in prayer thanking God for the gifts He has given you and the way He continues to equip you.
2. Write down three things in your life that is holding you up in your relationship with Jesus. Lift them up in prayer and give them over to God.
3. What is distracting you from being involved in God's harvest?
Talk to someone who can help you be involved in ministry in your neighbourhood more easily.
4. God will provide the needs of those who work in his harvest field.
Are you taking on too much yourself, do you need to handover your needs and wants to God and trust him for them?