

Week 5: Being Part of the Solution, Not the Problem (Overview/one week option)

Passage: Luke 10

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. And He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go your way; behold I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the labourer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, '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.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town... Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me."

Introduction:

One of the problems we can see from the passage, and the last four weeks, is that there aren't enough followers being harvesters in the field.

Rather than being part of the problem, we are to be part of the answer. We are the ones who have been sent by Jesus to share his Good News to the people of the world. In connection with the previous weeks we are involved in the wider story of God. Today, we continue to be God's messengers. We are His workers in His harvest field, seeking to share the Good News with the people who need to hear it. And while there will be judgement on those who reject God that is not ours to take part in. We are here to be part of what God is doing in the world. Whether we will be accepted or rejected it is the message of the Gospel that provides hope for the world and true salvation for those who accept it. This salvation is wide and deep. Gospel transformation is inclusive and changes everything. It makes a difference to the social and financial setting. Including and contributing to the society.

Sermon Notes:

Part of the solution

If we aren't being followers of Jesus who are taking part in the harvest then we are being part of this problem, are we not? How do we become part of the solution? It is by intentionally living lives that are witnessing to our faith and to Jesus' impact in our lives. It is by not merely walking through life believing that we know the Good News and leaving it to rot. It is through becoming one of the workers.

Costly

As we've seen there is a cost to this. It may mean giving up or leaving behind things that we consider precious to us. We need to let go of that which binds us down or stops us moving forward, and is a hindrance to us being at work in the harvest field. This may mean leaving behind our ways of doing things and old priorities that don't reflect the values of the Kingdom of God. This may mean changing our priorities from making life about the accumulation of things, and freeing up time and space to form authentic relationships so that the good news of Jesus may be shared.

Look out for people of peace

As we intentionally go about focussing on being a solution in the Kingdom of God we are to seek out those who just may be a person of peace in our world. We are to go to those who welcome us and our message, who show an openness to God and his message of peace that is in Jesus. What we need to do here is to open our eyes to the people God has placed in our lives and see where God is already at work. Coupled with this awareness of the one who is a child of peace, as Luke calls it, is the awareness that God is concerned for whole households and communities. The welcome of the person of peace, just may be the start of a movement of a whole community toward Jesus.

Practicing the Kingdom of God

Like the 70/72 we can proclaim that there is another King and his name is the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as there is another king there is another set of values we can proclaim and live for – namely the Kingdom of God. Our job in mission is to go as community to communities, and point people to Jesus through the words we say and the things we do, empowered by the Spirit of God.

Don't give up

It is hard. As Jesus said people will at times receive the message and we are his messengers, a wonderful gospel partnership will take shape. But there will be times when we fail and make mistakes where both our message and we as messengers will be rejected. But what is important is that we remain faithful to the master and continue to try.

Insider Story:

Pray with another person in your congregation about how both you and they can share the message of the Kingdom with someone else.

Ask someone in your church to share his or her story of coming to faith which involved the involvement of another believer. Is there another person in the chain? This could be done in a service, in a small group, or even over morning tea after the service.

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

Conclusion:

- Jesus expects his sent followers to share the message of the Kingdom to the towns they go to and the people they meet. When was the last time you shared about your faith to someone else? What is stopping you from sharing something of your faith in the coming two weeks?
- The Kingdom of God is near. How can you bring the Kingdom of God to people in your community?

Take Home:

1. Write out your story of faith. Find someone to share this story with in the coming week.
2. As you pray this week, thank God for the Good News and how the kingdom of God has impacted you and your life. Pray also for those who don't know God and ask that he can reveal himself to them.
3. Choose to give a certain amount of money to an organisation, such as Global Interaction, or a person that helps share the Good News to people who do not yet know Jesus. Make this a practical step this week in helping others hear the Gospel.