

Lectionary Gospel Commentaries

By the Rev. Dr. Harry Wendt, Founder of Crossways International
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Based on the Lectionary Pericope Covering:

SOLA-LSB (Lutheran Service Book):
RCL (Revised Common Lectionary):

Luke 10:1-20

Year C - Proper 9, Text: Luke 10:1-20

Year C - Proper 9, Text: Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

In Luke 9:51, Jesus leaves Galilee and heads for Jerusalem. Today's Gospel selection, and those that follow in coming weeks, describe events that took place during the course of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and death. The following ten chapters of Luke's "Travel Document" (9:51-19:28) contain a number of Jesus' best-known parables. They also describe Jesus' encounters with people along the way.

Verse 10:1: Some scholars suggest that Jesus spoke the words recorded in 10:1–12 while still in Samaritan territory (see 9:51–56). If so, Jesus is directing His disciples to enter Samaritan homes and eat there — an interpretation that points to the broad implications of Jesus' words and actions.

Although Jesus has already established a community of twelve disciples, He now appoints an additional 70 and sends them on ahead to the places that He plans to visit. Most likely, the members of the larger group are not as closely associated with Him as are the Twelve.

Some ancient manuscripts refer to seventy disciples, and others to seventy-two. Both 70 and 72 are symbolic numbers. According to Numbers 11:16–30, Moses chose 70 elders whom God endowed with the spirit. Genesis 10 divides the world among 70 descendants of Noah's sons. However, ancient Greek translations of Genesis 10 refer to 72 descendants. Seventy-two is six times the number of tribes in Israel. Whatever the number, Luke would want to remind his reader of these rich traditions so that they might understand the full implications of what Jesus did.

Verse 10:2: Although the need to make Jesus' message of the Kingdom known to the world is great, few are equipped to proclaim and explain it. According to Luke 9:1–6 (see also Matthew 9:37–38), the message that Jesus addressed to the Seventy (10:2–11; note v. 4) was the same as the one that He had addressed to the Twelve earlier. (Note also Luke 22:36.)

Verses 10:3-4: The mission field into which Jesus

sends the Seventy is anything but a welcoming one. The Seventy are to travel light. Although in today's churches, issues of salary scale and housing are important, Jesus instructs the Seventy to carry no purse, no bag, no sandals. "Travel light! Focus on the mission! It is an urgent one!"

Verses 10:5–6: The first thing that the disciples are to say after entering a house is, "Peace to this house!" (note Luke 2:14 and Matthew 10:13.) Those who respond positively will experience peace; those who respond negatively will not experience peace.

Verse 10:7-8: The disciples are not to move around from house to house, but are to remain in the house that welcomes them and eat whatever food the hosts set before them. They are to focus on the mission, not on their comfort level! Yes, they do have a right to expect that hospitality be offered to them and to accept it. The principles listed in this verse are to apply to any town that the disciples visit.

Verse 10:9: When the disciples visit a town, they are to heal the sick within its walls. (No doubt, they are to do this with Isaiah 35:5–6 in mind.) Miraculous healings will declare that the Kingdom of God has broken into human history.

Verses 10:10–11: When the disciples enter a village that refuses to welcome them, they are to protest about the negative reception that they have received by wiping all village dust from their feet. This same act could indicate that the disciples were not to carry the rejection with them, by letting it cloud their continued enthusiasm for their mission. Rather, they should let go of dwelling on those who had rejected them.

Verse 10:16: To reject Jesus and His message is to reject the Father who sent Him. The implications of this statement are profound. Sad to say, we live in a world in which many believe in and worship the god of their own imagination rather than the God of inspiration revealed in His written and Living Word.

Verse 10:17: Eventually, the Seventy return to Jesus with joy. They report that when they proclaim Jesus' message of the Kingdom, even the demons submit to them.

Verses 10:18–20: The implications of Jesus' response are profound. Although the Old Testament writings have little to say about an evil Satan (but see 1 Chronicles 21:1 and Zechariah 3:1), the New Testament writings reveal Satan to be every spirit, power, institution, and influence that seeks to divert people from living to serve God and others into serving themselves. Sad to say, Satan is alive and well in today's confused and troubled world. Jesus makes it clear that He came to deal with the real enemy, which was not the Roman imperial system, but Satan. (See John 12:31; 14:30–31; 16:11; 17:15.)

A Final Question

To whom are God's people to entrust the work of God's Kingdom? The following question and statistics serve as a reminder concerning where the real "church" and "mission field" are located.

Several years ago, researchers probed the question, "How do people come into a relationship with Jesus and His Church?" Their research revealed the following:

- Evangelistic crusade: 0.5%
- Special needs: 1–2%
- Pastoral visitation: 1–2%
- Church program: 2–3%
- Walk-in: 2–3%
- Sunday school: 4–5%
- Pastor: 4–5%
- Parents, relative, or friends: 75–90%

Indeed, food for thought! So, how about "Full-time, everyday family-and-friend" school rather than Sunday school?

To repeat an insight often referred to in Crossways International publications: "Above the entrance to every worship structure there should be a sign that states, 'Servant's Entrance.' Above the exit door to every worship structure, there should be a second sign that states, 'Your Mission Field Ahead'!"