

BEING SENT LIKE JESUS

Hillsboro Presbyterian Church

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God did not create us just to live for ourselves. We are created in love and redeemed through love for the purpose of God's love reaching this world. Like the Blues Brothers, we are all on a mission for God! Before the cross, Jesus was talking to Father God and he says this, **"As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."** (John 17:18) God sends Jesus, Jesus sends us. In **Luke 10:1-9**, Jesus sends his followers on a mission trip. Jesus gives them – and us - some basic instruction on what they – and we - are to do as they – and we - are on our mission for God.

#1 - Cooperation: get a partner.

Luke 10:1 **"The Lord appointed seventy-two others (besides the 12 disciples) and sent them out two by two ahead of him to every town and place he was about to go."**

God never meant for you to fulfill His work by yourself. Why? 1) You are more effective together. You encourage each other, pray for each other, help each other. 2) You are more confident when you have somebody to back you up, support you, share ideas with, be creative with, and to tell your story to. Anybody can be your partner. If you are willing to be used by God, God will use you to change people's lives. You just have to be willing...and you have to work together.

#2 - Expectation: depend on God.

Luke 10:4 **"Don't take a purse..."**

You don't depend on money...or talent or connections...you depend on God. Jesus says this 3 different times...why? 1) Depending on money makes us less dependent upon God...even keeps us from depending on God. When you're poor and you have nothing, you have to depend on God...this is why the poor are often so rich in faith. 2) Money often harms ministry. There is a right way and a wrong way to give money. You don't throw money at a problem. You can give money to someone in a way that will make them dependent - or in a way that will empower them and bless them.

#3 - Simplification: keep it simple.

Luke 10:4 **"Do not take...bag or sandals"**

First, understand the application bridge. When you look at a passage, say, "what did it mean for them?" That's the interpretation. Then the implication: "what is the timeless principle?" Then the application: "what does it mean to us now?" Jesus says: don't load yourself down with extra stuff. Stuff can slow you down, be misplaced, be stolen. But there is a deeper reason: you don't want to show off wealth. We serve people in need. We want to be sensitive to them. When it comes to your mission, it is how you love not how you look that matters. It is not your apparel or your appearance...it is your attitude. It is our attitude of love that gets through to people.

#4 - Concentration: stay focused.

Luke 10:4 **"...and do not greet anyone on the road."**

This sounds so rude...but that is not the point. The point is to stay focused on your purpose. You are going into the world to help and to heal, to share the good news and to represent Christ. Back then, a greeting could take hours. It meant a long conversation, a lot of rituals, food, story telling, and relatives. When you're on mission for God don't be distracted. You want to have a sense of urgency.

#5 - Affirmation: begin with a blessing.

Luke 10:5-6 **"When you enter a house, 'Peace be to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him. If not, it will return to you."**

If you want to make a difference in somebody's life, you don't start by telling them they're a sinner. You start by blessing them...by affirming them...by saying, "God's peace be upon you." Jesus blessed people with a look, a word and a touch...a look of understanding, a word of encouragement, and a touch of affirmation. That is how you bless people. Everybody on the planet is starving for three things: understanding, encouragement, and affection. When you give those three things, you are fulfilling your mission for God. You are blessing people the way Jesus blessed people.

#6 - Incarnation: invest time to build a relationship.

Luke 10:7 **"Do not move around from house to house."**

What does "incarnation" mean? Think "Chili con carne"...chili with meat added in. "Carne" means "flesh." In Jesus, God became flesh. Jesus became a human being with real skin and bones. The way we are to minister to people is in person...just like Jesus. "Do not move around" means you are building a relationship. You cannot win your enemies to Christ...only your friends. You win friends by spending time with them. Often the most Christlike thing you can do is simply being there.

#7 - Accommodation: adapt to local tastes.

Luke 10:7 **"Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you."**

When Jesus talks about this he's talking about far more than just dietary rules. Americans often don't understand how important it is to share food with people. We eat pretty casually...but for poor people, sharing your food is sharing your life. When they put food out on a table, sometimes that's all they've got...and it's everything they've got. They are giving you their life. Eating with people brings you closer to them...it is relaxing and it is the fastest way to build a bridge to them.

#8 - Alleviation: begin where they hurt.

Luke 10:9 **"Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'"**

Everyone has hidden wounds...certain sicknesses, sins, insecurities, fears. Everyone has been hurt by the past. And everyone needs healing...but in different ways. Jesus is saying find that hurt and heal it with God's grace. Start with their agenda, not your agenda. Jesus cared for the mind, the body, and the spirit...we should too. The nearness of the kingdom of God is all about wholeness. It is about relieving suffering – AND – it is about experiencing the fullness of life God has for us. It is about sharing our experience of God and caring enough to reach out to the hurting in Jesus' name.

#9 - Mobilization: pray others will join us.

Luke 10:2 **"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers in his harvest field."**

Pray that others will join us in this mission for God. God says: "I want the whole world to know that I love them...to hear the healing message of salvation...to know that I care." If you want God's blessing on your life here's how you get it: Care about what God cares about. What does God care about most? First, Jesus Christ His Son... The second greatest thing is that that news gets spread to all around the world because God wants his lost children found...to know him...to love him the way he loves them...to live the kind of life that he intended for them to live. This is our mission from God.