

Title: The King is Coming
Text: Luke 10.1-12
Theme: Telling people about the coming of the King
Series: Luke
Prop Stmnt: The greatest news reveals two vastly different results.

The preaching schedule of our church alternates between a series from an OT book and then a series from a NT book. When we are in an OT book we seek examples of Christ, but when we study a NT gospel, we see Christ. If you have played a sport, you know that the initial practices focus on the fundamentals of your sport. There are drills you do over and over to develop skills. You may not understand why they are so important. In fact, you would like to skip the drills and just start playing the game. But when you see how a drill helps you develop a skill that helps you run a play that helps you win a game, then the drill makes sense. The OT is like running drills. This NT text is like a scrimmage and what we are doing now, is playing the game. The message of the entire Bible centers on the coming of God's promised kingdom. The kingdom of God is the very point of history, therefore, to reject the King and kingdom is the worst thing that anyone could ever do. The good news about Jesus Christ and his kingdom is the greatest news that you could ever know and the greatest truth that you could ever believe. The stakes of believing and rejecting cannot be greater.

When Christ began to preach, he preached about the kingdom of God because this is the most important message. To receive this message means that you believe it with your heart and surrendering yourself to it. Obviously, that means that you accept Jesus as your Savior and King. But most people refuse this message and refuse Jesus because most people are unwilling to give up the throne of their lives. Therefore, the greatest news that one could hear (the message of the king and kingdom) results in two vastly different responses and two vastly different results. In this text, Jesus appoints and prepares to send out 72 of his followers on an urgent mission to tell others to get ready for Jesus to come to their town or village.

Read Text:

Luke 9.51 says, "*When the days drew near for him (Jesus) to be taken up (ascension), he set his face to go to Jerusalem.*" The mission of Jesus on earth meant that he had to die by means of crucifixion at Jerusalem. I think that it is very possible that Jesus has his entourage are at a literal crossroads. One of the options before them is a road that leads to Jerusalem and Jesus says, "This is where we are going." At this point, the intensity builds. The clock, indicating the time that Jesus has left, is counting down. There are still many villages and town to visit. So, Jesus appoints 36 teams of 2 to go to those villages and announce to them that Jesus is coming. This event here in Luke 10 previews the book of Acts and the mission of the church. They were to go and tell these villages in the area that Jesus was going to be coming. Our job is to go into the entire world and tell people that Christ is coming back and will be King.

1. **Telling others about the coming King is our mission.** (1, 5, 9)

The text begins with “after this.” Go back to verses 57, 59 and 61. Here are 3 people who said they wanted to follow Jesus but each one had an excuse as to why he couldn’t do it right then. Jesus’ response sounded a bit unreasonable to the second 2. After all, the guy just wanted to go and bury his dad and the 3rd wanted to say good-bye to those at home. Now, we know why Jesus told them there was no time for that. He was about to send his followers out on a trip and time was of the essence. This was the priority and while those other things were reasonable and good, at this point, they had to be set aside. This mission was bigger than the 12.

A. This mission demands all hands-on deck. (1)

It is natural for us to imagine Jesus with the 12 disciples, but the entourage that followed Jesus was much larger than the 12. 36 teams of 2 is a fairly large team. The mission of Jesus was always much larger than the 12. The 12 were never to hoard the authority or do all the work, but to share it and involve as many others as possible. Is there significance in the 72? I think so. For one, God told Moses to appoint 70 men (72 if you count Eldad and Medad) in Numbers 11 to help him “bear the burden of the people” be judges over the children of Israel. Perhaps more significantly is that in Genesis 10-11, the list of nations that covered the world at that time was 70 in the Hebrew and 72 in the LXX (Greek translation of the OT) that many NT writers quoted. I think that this short-term mission of preparing people for the coming king in that region was a preview of the ultimate and long-term mission of taking the gospel to every tribe, language and nation. Their mission was to go “*into every town and place where he himself was about to go.*”

There’s a couple of things that we need to understand. 1) The specific instructions that Jesus gives here are specific for this mission in Luke 10. Some have tried to take these instructions and turn them into a secret sauce for doing missions and making converts super-fast. No, no, no. That is a bad understanding of this text. This mission points to a greater mission. 2) Every follower of Christ is involved in the mission of Jesus. When you come to faith in Christ, you become part of the kingdom of Jesus. You become part of his mission to reach people from every tribe, language and nation and let them know that the King is coming. In our case, he is coming back. In their case, he was coming then. The mission of the 72 then was a preview of the mission of the church now. We need to consistently ask ourselves the question, “what am I doing to help advance the mission of Christ’s kingdom?”

B. The mission is telling others the King’s message of peace. (5)

Do you remember seeing the cartoons of Martians saying, “We come in peace.” When you think about it, Jesus came here from “space.” He came here from another place. He came to the world that rebelled against him, but he did not come to wage war against us, he came to bring us a message and an offer of peace that was procured by his death on the cross for us. We were the ones who, by our rebellion were in a hostile relationship against him and we naturally had reason to fear that his coming was to judge us for that. But Jesus came to offer us peace. Those who believe that are his emissaries. The 72 are emissaries of Jesus who are going into these towns and villages. Jesus said, (v.5) “*Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’*” That’s an offer of peace. Jesus is literally telling them what to say. Look at v.9. Jesus

gives the 72 power to heal the sick and once again he tells them literally what to say. “*say to them ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’*” The offer of peace is the message of the kingdom of God. That remains the case today.

C. The message of peace is the message of the King and Kingdom. (9)

One of our favorite Christmas songs is O Holy Night, where we sing, “his law is love and his gospel is peace.” Those lyrics remind us that it is so loving of God to reveal to us our true condition before him. We have broken his laws. His laws reveal what we need to be in order to be at peace with him and we do not measure up. His revealed law reveals that we are guilty and liable for punishment. But his gospel is peace. The message of peace that these people were sent to deliver is the message of the King and Kingdom. The law reveals our need, the gospel, the good news that the King has come to unite us to God and to reconcile what we broke so that we can be at peace with God is the best news anyone could ever know.

D. The mission will be successful. (5-8)

There will be some people who will receive this message of peace. Jesus prepares the teams for what to do when that happens. They will receive you and when they do that, stay with them. Eat what they serve before you. In other words, build relationships with them by sharing your life with them as they share themselves with you. Jesus is describing the culture of his kingdom. People who are peace with God are now free to be at peace with one another. When we are at peace with one another there is a sweet level of comfort that we have. Every Sunday is a family reunion. There is joy, laughter, rest, freedom, acceptance, meaningful communication, and genuine love. All of that is compelling and because of the bond of the Spirit, it can happen quickly and should.

We all know settings at schools, work, small towns, or other places where, if you aren’t from there, or weren’t born there, or grew up there, then you never really fit it. I was at a gym one day, when a guy was on a treadmill and another guy was waiting to use that treadmill and the guy waiting was getting angrier by the minute. The guy on the treadmill appeared to be of middle eastern descent and the other guy clearly was not. Finally, the guy waiting became so frustrated he went and pulled the plug out of the socket, which of course shut off the treadmill and threw the runner off the treadmill. Of course, an argument broke out and the guy who pulled the plug said, “go back to where you came from.” That hurts. I felt the sting of that and he didn’t say it to me. Sadly, that is the norm. Jesus is laying out a preview of his kingdom where people who a day ago were strangers are now family. This is what the gospel does to us and for us. Our peace with God means that we don’t have to fight for attention, prominence, or notoriety. The gospel makes it clear to us that because of our sin against God, no one has a right to be at the table, or in the family, but here we are by grace. And what is more, there is room for more! As we see in this text, there will be some serious rejection. But the fact that this mission will be successful and there will be people (Jesus calls the elect) who will believe in Christ is such an encouragement to us to tell people about Christ.

2. Telling others about the coming King demands humble dependency. (4)

“Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.” Why did Jesus do it this way? 1) This underscores the urgency that Jesus has in sending these teams out. Do not forget that Jesus has a limited amount of time to finish his mission. Those who wanted to follow him needed to know this. He was in the 4th quarter. Any followers did not have time to go say goodbye to family or even bury a beloved family member. You had to go now and this means that you do not have time to go to the ATM and get some cash. You don’t have time to stop at Walmart and get some trail mix. You do not have time to get bogged down by conversations on the road. Do not even greet people. You have to go right now, but you will be taken care of. You won’t need these things. There will be people who will receive your message and will receive you. They will take you in and feed you and give you place to stay. When you meet these people, which you will, stay with them. Do not go from house to house. Eat what they set before you.

This is not a formula for sending out missionaries. The early church did not send Paul and Barnabas or Silas out like this. They gave them money and other provisions to take and continued to support them along the way. But the big idea remains. Following Christ means that we are engaged in his mission and this mission demands humble dependency. Let’s talk about that for a second. What exactly would this look like for you or me?

I need to embrace the fact that making people aware about Christ is an urgent matter. I need to be prepared at all times to make Christ known. Making Christ known has to be at the top of my “to do” list. When I do that at the beginning of the day, then from the start the focus of my life is not on me, but on him. That’s always good. Then I am on the lookout for the people that God puts into my path that I can care for. That is what I mean by humble dependency. *“God, would you open my eyes to the people around me who need your grace and truth?”* I was in a grocery store the other day and I saw a lady in the aisle with her hands in her face. I stopped and waited for her to look and when she finally did, I was able to ask her if she was okay and if she needed anything. Just offering to pray for people or give them a word of encouragement is like giving a thirsty person a cup of cool water. Ask God to make you aware of those around you who need that. They are everywhere. In fact, you are sitting near some like that, right now.

3. Telling others about the coming King demands humble boldness. (2-3, 5-12)

A. **There is more work than workers.** (2)

The work is big and we don’t have the army large enough to tackle it. This is humbling. If we are going to successfully bring in the harvest, we have to have God’s help. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. We are tempted to fuss because the cost of a plumber, electrician, pipe fitter, HVAC tech have all gone up, but part of the reason is simply supply and demand. There are simply not enough people for the jobs. So much ministry that needs to be done in church planting here and around the world. Here is something that Jesus commands us to do. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest. Pray that the Lord will

send your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews into the harvest. We pray about what matters to us. We always tend to pray for the urgent, but not always for the important. This is important. This is ultimate importance. If I really believe that Jesus and his kingdom is the most important thing, then my affections, attention, and resources are going to be poured into this.

Some of you get this and I thank God for you. We have opportunities to do so much more. I have a guy who would like to plant a church in northern Macomb County who may be joining our fellowship in hopes that we can be part of helping to help launch him. I was contacted by another guy this week who would like to come and do an internship here because he is considering going into ministry. Right now there happens to be some growing interest in missions, church-planting and ministry and we need to recognize that the Lord has entrusted this to us and we need to figure out how to steward this well. There is a lot to be done and the job is never over until glory. Beloved, we will never regret praying, supporting and sending in order to advance the gospel of the kingdom. In fact, we will spend eternity rejoicing in whatever part we were able to have. But the mission is serious and the work is hard.

B. You are going into a hostile environment. (3, 10-11)

The message that these teams were sent to declare was a good message. So, why does Jesus command them to pray and then in the next breath say that he is sending them as lambs in the midst of wolves? The imagery is fearful. Lambs have no chance against wolves. Lambs can't run fast and have limited fighting skills and are tasty. To be told that you are a lamb going into a den of wolves means that you have to have a measure of boldness. But the boldness has to come from your reliance upon God. Jesus said to them to pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest. These teams are praying and they are going as part of the answer to their own prayers. Praying is an act of dependency upon God. Their willingness to go as lambs means that they are going into hostile situations banking on God to protect them as they go and do what he has commanded them.

This is intimidating, going as a lamb among wolves. But they are not alone. They are going in obedience to Christ and they are going in teams and one day, as Isaiah says, "*The wolf and the lamb shall graze together.*" (65.25) Still, it requires boldness. But why would this take boldness if, the message they are bringing is one of peace? You would think that bringing a message of peace would be good news and would be welcomed by the those who hear it. Why is sharing the good news about the coming of the King intimidating? It is intimidating because there are many needy people who refuse to admit that they are needy.

C. You are going into a needy environment (5-9)

Again, look at the message the messengers were to bring. They were bringing a message of peace on behalf of the king. The King is coming and he is coming in peace. He is coming to bring peace. He is coming to have a relationship of peace. That should be good news and it is to those who are willing to live under the reign of the King. The sad truth is that most refuse to admit

that Jesus is the actual Creator and King who has the right to rule. That is why Jesus prepares them for the rejection that they will face.

D. Your message is one of life and death. (10-12)

Those who reject the message of Christ reject the person of Christ. Refusing to love the One who came to die for you, is astounding, in a bad way. Refusing to submit to the One who is your Creator and King is absolute madness. But that is what people did then and that is what people do now. The consequences are horrific.

At this point Jesus references the destruction of Sodom. Sodom was well known for its wickedness and God destroyed that city by fire. That destruction previewed a greater judgement. All of this displays the seriousness of sin and the intensity of God's judgment against sin. But Sodom did not have a Bible. Sodom did not have churches. Sodom did not have the written law of God. Sodom did not have Jesus perform miracles and do teaching. Still Sodom was held accountable for her sin in a spectacular manner. The judgment of Sodom, on the coming day of judgment will not be as severe as the judgment of God against these cities and villages that refuse to accept Jesus. These messengers were charged to warn the people of this by wiping the dust of the streets off of their feet. Let them know that there is a clear distinction between those who follow Jesus and those who refuse to. This is no game. Your message is one of life and death.

To those who do not submit to Christ, I plead with you to cry out to God and ask him to help you repent and believe.

To those of you who trust Christ, let the urgency of this mission, cause you to feel the urgency of our mission as a church to make Christ known and to realize that time is of the essence, and so is your life.