



## **Luke 10:4–12**

4 Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

5 ‘When you enter a house, first say, “Peace to this house.” 6 If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. 7 Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his

wages. Do not move around from house to house.

8 ‘When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. 9 Heal those there who are ill and tell them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.” 10 But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 11 “Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: the kingdom of God has come near.” 12 I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

## **Reflection**

There are a long line of missionaries

who've died on the mission field. Some like Hudson Taylor after more than half a century's service. Others like Jim Elliot were killed after a few brief moments. In times past, as a testament to both the danger and their zeal for Jesus, some missionaries would pack all their belongings to head overseas in their coffin. At the head of this long line of men and women who've died on the mission field stands Jesus. Jesus, the first missionary, left his Father in heaven to bring the Gospel to our world. And he died on the mission field. But before he did, he left behind him the pattern for all future missionaries to follow – the equipping and training of locals to continue on a far greater scale the gospel work that has begun.

So far in Luke's gospel this is exactly what

we've seen. We've seen Jesus call and train followers to continue his work of mission after he has gone. At the beginning of chapter 9 he sent the first 12 out onto the mission field. And yesterday, at the beginning of chapter 10, Jesus sent a further 72. But don't miss the meta-narrative here. You see, both these numbers are symbolic as well as literal. Jesus' twelve disciples – the same number as the twelve tribes of Israel – are the beginnings of the new people of God, the universal Christian church. And the 72 hark back to the 72 Gentile nations listed in Genesis 10 meant to represent the whole world. Jesus is sending the universal church on mission to the whole world. And each Gospel will reach its conclusion and climax with the fullest expression of this mission, Jesus' parting words to his followers that have come to

be known as the Great Commission – the universal church’s task until our master returns. Here’s the Great Commission taken from the last two verses of Matthew’s Gospel,

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’

This passage calls all Christians to a missionary life. For most of us this will not be

abroad; we'll remain on mission to our families, our work colleagues and people we meet in our local communities. And when you stop and think about it, in a multi-cultural country like ours Jesus' command to take the gospel to the nations is easy to fulfil in the sense that the nations have come to us. In today's passage Jesus continues to teach some of the first missionaries about the nature of their calling and ours. Let me read it now from Luke 10:4–12,

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eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. 8 'When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. 9 Heal those there who are ill and tell them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." 10 But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 11 "Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: the kingdom of God has come near." 12 I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

Yesterday we learnt that the missionary endeavour is urgent. It begins with prayer

and sending, and will almost certainly result in strong opposition. Or as Jesus eloquently brings all these concepts together,

‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. 3 Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

Today Jesus’ instructions are specific and contain further insight into what to do and expect on the mission field of our lives.

4 Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.



Again, there is urgency here; but also great trust in God. Do not bring any worldly encumberments that will only weigh you down. Instead, trust in God. This is his harvest prepared in advance by him for you. People on mission live loosely to the world trusting in God for his provision in their endeavours for him.

What follows are the two different receptions that the gospel will receive. In the first one, the emphasis on the word peace is interesting. Jesus, the prince of peace, who's come to bring peace between God and humankind and humankind and each other says these words,

5 'When you enter a house, first say, "Peace to this house." 6 If someone who promotes peace is there, your

peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. 7 Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. 8 ‘When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. 9 Heal those there who are ill and tell them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.”’

Receive the hospitality of these people of peace with a grateful heart. But don't take advantage – moving around from house to house amongst them. And show them the Gospel in action and in truth, in word as well as deed – heal their sick and heal their souls by announcing the kingdom of God. Here we learn that the effective missionary endeavour combines both minis-

tries of mercy and Gospel proclamation. Jesus used and taught the two hand-in-hand, so should we.

But to the other type of reception we are to expect in our world,

10 But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 11 “Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: the kingdom of God has come near.” 12 I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

Notice – warm reception or hostile, the Christian message is the same. We proclaim the Gospel in and out of season. We

proclaim the kingdom of God and the result of living in rebellion against the rightful king of the world. And that word that I've just used twice is the right one. Proclaim. Not persuade or explain or defend but proclaim – in the sense of an official announcement or a public declaration. Proclaiming the Gospel is stating the stark reality of the only two choices available to humankind on which all of eternity hangs. Persuading, explaining and defending are not out of place but in the end Jesus calls us primarily to declare these two choices trusting in God's word and Spirit to do the rest. And for those who don't make the right choice,

12 I tell you [Jesus says], it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

Eternity hangs in the balance. And for those who reject God it will be worse on the day of judgment for them than for the residents of the quintessentially evil Old Testament city of Sodom.

## **Think & Pray**

This is sobering language and must cause us to reflect over the urgency and weight of the Gospel message. And our responsibility as its bearers. Do so with what time remains to you today. Then pray for God's help in your mission to our City.