

Jesus!
“Going into the World in Jesus’ Name”
Luke 10:1-24

Take a first look.

I. Tony Campolo tells,

I walked down Chestnut Street in Philadelphia. There was a filthy bum, covered with soot from head to toe. He had a huge beard. I’ll never forget the beard. It was a gigantic beard with rotted food stuck in it. He held a cup of McDonald’s coffee and mumbled as he walked along the street. He spotted me and said, “Hey, Mister. You want some of my coffee?”

I knew I should take some to be nice, and I did. I gave it back to him and said, “You’re being pretty generous giving away your coffee this morning. What’s gotten into you that you’re giving away your coffee all of a sudden?”

He said, “Well, the coffee was especially delicious this morning, and I figured if God gives you something good you ought to share it with people.”

I figured, This is the perfect set up. I said, “Is there anything I can give you in return?” I’m sure he’s going to hit me for five dollars.

He said, “Yeah, you can give me a hug.”

I was hoping for the five dollars.

He put his arms around me. I put my arms around him. And I realized something. He wasn’t going to let me go. He was holding onto me. Here I am an establishment guy, and this bum is hanging on me. He’s hugging me. He’s not going to let me go. People are passing on the street. They’re staring at me. I’m embarrassed. But little by little my embarrassment turned to awe.

I heard a voice echoing down the corridors of time saying, “I was hungry. Did you feed me? I was naked. Did you clothe me? I was sick. Did you care for me? I was the bum you met on Chestnut Street. Did you hug me? For if you did it unto the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you did it to me. And if you failed to do it unto the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you failed to do it unto me.”¹

II. WHAT MIGHT JESUS BE CALLING US TO DO AS WE GO INTO THE WORLD IN HIS NAME?

Take a closer look at Luke 10:1-24.

I. WE GO FORTH IN JESUS’ NAME WITH PRAYER FOR MORE WORKERS IN HIS HARVEST. 10:1-7

1. *Jesus sent the seventy-two out to prepare His way into the towns ahead.* This is one of the chief roles of Jesus’ disciples. These men were not going on their own. They were going as Jesus’ ambassadors.

Paul picks up this theme in what we call 2 Corinthians, chapter 5:18-20 (NIV). ¹⁸ *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

2. *As He sent His disciples out, He told them to pray for more workers in His plentiful harvest.* Here is the heart of our sense of need. Even though He sends us out in His name

¹ Tony Campolo, “Year of Jubilee,” *Preaching Today* (2012).

ourselves, we realize that we are never quite adequate for the work that is before us. There is always a need for more to bear witness to His grace and truth. So the disciples were asked, even as they were sent out, to pray for more workers in the harvest of God.

3. *Jesus gave them no illusion about what to expect: "I send you out as lambs among wolves."* This is both why we need to pray for other workers and why we need to pray for God's help every day. The enemy of our souls will be stirring up every form of opposition that he can to destroy the work of God's kingdom in the world.

A—Jesus sends us out in His name in this generation. We are His ambassadors; we represent the kingdom of heaven to the nations of earth.

I—This is not often easy, but it matters for eternity. Consider this description by *Christian History* magazine of the lives of two great ambassadors for Christ, Adoniram Judson and Ann Hasseltine Judson. See if we can't identify with some of their story.

He had been a cynical actor who rejected the faith of his father. She had been the town belle, indulged by her parents.

Hardly likely candidates for the rigors of the early nineteenth-century mission field—but now Ann Hasseltine Judson, nicknamed Nancy, and her husband, Adoniram Judson, are assured of their place in history. They helped open the Far East to others who would carry out the Great Commission. Before they met and were married, both Adoniram and Nancy underwent powerful conversion experiences, passing, as Nancy put it, "from death into life." Both had a passion to join the nascent missionary enterprise that was firing the imaginations of youthful Christians on both sides of the Atlantic. So thirteen days after they wed, in 1812, they set sail for India.

Aboard ship, Adoniram, an ordained Congregational minister, changed his theology to the Baptist position. Ann did also, and they were thus forced to sever ties with their sending mission. The Judsons were baptized by William Carey's colleague William Ward.

The Judsons found that the English governors of the subcontinent did not welcome these Western visitors with their Bibles and zeal. Threatened with deportation, they left India and went first to Mauritius and thence to Burma--a closed land, ruled by a tyrannical regime, horribly hot and disease-ridden. The Judsons found the place "dark, cheerless, and unpromising."

Over time, Ann Judson suffered from smallpox and spinal meningitis, buried one child, and saw her husband shut up in a vermin-infested prison for two years. Yet she also translated the Gospel of Matthew into Burmese and strove to improve the lot of Burmese women, who were considered little more than chattel. She missed her family but could affirm that "I am happy in thinking that I gave up this source of pleasure [and] I am happy [to] labor for the promotion of the kingdom of heaven." She, and a new baby, died soon after Adoniram's release.

Adoniram fell into a deep depression after Ann's death and even contemplated suicide. But he recovered and went on to translate the entire Bible into Burmese. He also pursued an itinerant ministry that, after many years, began to yield fruit. In 1845 he returned to the US for a visit, to find himself lionized as a living Protestant saint.

Judson, who was married three times, outlived all his wives and several of his children. Between marriages, he entrusted his children's care to others. Some of his children never saw him after childhood. But when he died in 1850, he left behind 7,000 more "children"—members of the Burmese Christian church he and Ann had begun.²

II. WE GO FORTH IN JESUS' NAME WITH TRUST IN GOD, BOTH TO PROVIDE AND TO PROTECT. 10:8-16

² "William Carey," *Christian History*, Issue 36.

1. *Some of the houses and towns the disciples went to would welcome them and provide for them.* The disciples were sent out with nothing but the clothes on their backs. It was a short-term mission they were on, but they were being asked explicitly to trust in God to provide for them through the people they encountered.

2. *Some of the towns would refuse to welcome them and would face God's judgment as a result.* The disciples were taught to expect some rejection, which is an important aspect to preparation for serving Jesus. They were told to shake the very dust off of their feet as a witness against the towns who would not receive them. God Himself would see to their accounting on the day of judgment.

3. *Their reception would mirror the response of the people to Jesus Himself.* Here is the key to handling rejection. Though it seems as though the people who reject the Christian message are rejecting us, it is really Jesus Himself they are rejecting. They will have to answer to Him for this.

A—We must be faithful to discharge our calling and trust God to provide for us and to protect us.

I—We can surely trust God to provide all we need to accomplish all He desires to accomplish. We saw this in our experience of going out to Paris on the Tsilent Tsunami project in the early years of this millennium. God provided in many ways, through direct gifts from many of our church family and from others, through a yard sale that netted over \$900, through a family concert that brought in almost \$800, through folks sending us nearly \$8,000 in the mail, through an art show and sale that brought in more than \$2,240, and through God's supply through those of us who went and through our families who paid some or all of our own way. When we got there, we were convinced that God had provided and that we were right where we belonged.

The response of the missionaries in Paris reinforced this. They were so appreciative for our work, thanking us for extending their own eyes and feet and voices months into the future. We were very timely in our coming to help them, as they have had only one other short-term team and a handful of summer missionaries to get the Tsilent Tsunami going at that very early stage of the process in Paris.

I must confess that when we began to think seriously about this project, I thought that I would be the stateside catalyst and supporter. When the West-coast coordinator for this outreach asked me if I had considered going along, my answer was simply, "No, not really." So I began to pray about it. I came up with two reasons why I couldn't go with the team: *time* and *money*. Then I realized that these two factors are the same factors that deter others from going. As I prayed about them in light of the call of God to reach "all the ἔθνη (ethne)" all the *people groups* of the earth, my factors were simply excuses. I agreed to go, as did Jeannie, and we watched God provide the way, even using the generosity of many of this congregation to make it possible for some in our group to go.

I have observed this over and over again. Our team preparing to go on the Helping Hands mission to Mexico have also found this to be true!

We are called to *go*, to *send*, to *pray*, and to *give* so that Jesus will have ambassadors in every culture of the earth. We must trust Him to protect us and provide for us as we do so.

III. WE GO FORTH IN JESUS' NAME WITH JOY AS WE SEE GOD AT WORK. 10:17-20

1. *The 72 returned with a joyful report of God working through them.* This is what always happens when we are faithful to the call. The disciples obeyed Jesus' call, and they saw God do through them what would never have happened if they would have stayed at home.

A—Here is the truth: there comes a point in the Christian life where to find joy one must serve. No amount of taking in, either in God's temporary blessings or in good teaching will be enough to sustain joy without offering our blood, sweat, tears and toil for the work of God's kingdom.

I—Some time ago, we offered ourselves to God and to what was then the Yakima Valley Baptist Association, to lead worship in Children's Camp. Again, usually I am content to send others, to promote the program, and to pray for the children. Realizing a need for help and the ability to do what needed to be done, Jeannie and I, along with Danielle Suttles and a friend of hers, agreed to go. Because of this, we were there as children made professions of faith in Jesus Christ, seventeen of them in all. There was a sense of joy that surged through my heart, and I am sure the other staff felt the same, as we watched God's kingdom expand to include 17 more precious children.

There is no greater joy than to report for duty, my dear fellow-servants of Jesus, and find that God works through our lives!

2. *Jesus told them to rejoice not in their authority over the demonic but rather in their salvation.* Here is the locus of our Christian joy. It is not in the power itself as an end; it is in our salvation. Our "names are written in heaven."

A—The greatest joy in the Christian life is the assurance of our salvation.

I—Consider for a moment what the Apostle Paul suffered for the sake of the name of Jesus Christ. He described it himself in more than one place in his extant writings. The most thorough of these descriptions comes in **2 Corinthians 11:23-33 (NIV)**: ²³ *Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?*

³⁰ *If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. ³² In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. ³³ But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.*

So was Paul despairing in all of this bad experience? No, he wasn't. He had gained a confidence from his relationship with Jesus Christ that gave him hope and joy. He brings this to the front in his letter to the Romans. Listen to **Romans 8:35-39 (NIV)**: ³⁵ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:*

*"For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."*

³⁷ *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

That is an assurance based on his theology, which he already expressed in **Romans 5:2b-5 (NIV)**: ⁴² *... And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our*

sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

Paul had a joy that came from “the hope of the glory of God” and from the immediate and personal experience of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. This can be true for us, as well, who have assurance of our salvation.

IV. WE GO FORTH IN JESUS’ NAME WITH TRUTH, BECAUSE GOD HAS GRACIOUSLY CHOSEN TO REVEAL HIMSELF TO US.

1. *Jesus praised the Father through the joy of the Holy Spirit because the Father had chosen to reveal his truth not to the “wise and learned” but rather to “little children.”*

2. *Only those to whom the Son of God chooses to reveal Him know the Father.*

3. *Jesus reminded the disciples how much of a privilege they had to see and hear what they did.*

A—This truth we proclaim is not inherent in us, nor did it arise from within us, but it was *revealed* to us.

I—Remember that stirring scene in Caesarea Philippi, when Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” It is recorded in Matthew 16:13-16 and echoed in Mark 8:27-29 and Luke 9:18-20. The disciples had already been with Jesus well over two years, watching Him teach, heal, and cast out demons. They had seen Him calm the storm on the Sea of Galilee with a word and were convinced on the basis of His teaching and works that He was the Messiah. Now He tested them to see how in touch with their culture they were and to see how keen their personal understanding of Him really was.

When Jesus turned the question to them, it was Simon Peter who spoke, presumably, for the group. He said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16, NIV). What Jesus said next is quite remarkable (Matthew 16:17, NIV): “Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for *this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.*’”

The truth on which we have taken our stand for eternal life is one that has been revealed to us, not something we either dreamed up or conjured up on our own.

Take it home (questions for application).

I. Have we taken our stand on this truth?

II. Have we found the joy of our salvation through Jesus Christ by making ourselves available to God to work through us? What is keeping us from this?

III. Have we come to trust God explicitly for all we need as we go into the world in His name? What do we need to entrust to His care today?

IV. Are we praying that God will strengthen us as we serve Him and that He will raise others up to serve by His grace and power, also? Let’s offer a “prayer of availability” right now!