

First 9 chapters are about who this person, Jesus, really is

Next chapters are about what difference it makes that Jesus is who He is: discipleship, submitters, neighbors

1. You are Ambassadors

a. Jesus *sends* 72 ahead

- i. Jesus sent the 12 before this, now a greater group, and ultimately at His ascension/Pentecost He sent all His disciples out.
 1. He sent them to preach, bring spiritual freedom, bring restoration of body like He did
- ii. Why is Luke so particular about 72?
 1. In the LXX – Genesis 10 lists 72 nations as “these nations spread abroad over the earth after the flood”
 2. Jesus is saying that the entire world, all of humanity is the mission field from which He will also produce disciples to send.

b. Disciples are Ambassadors

- i. Public announcement of one Sovereign’s message to a delegation or group from a different sovereign’s land, with the authority of a representative of the former Sovereign
 1. 2 Cor 5:20 – ambassadors make an appeal to believe the message
 2. Eph 6:20 - ambassadors are to speak boldly the things the Sovereign has sent them to speak
 3. Messengers, primarily – *apostellos* – one who is sent to represent and carry a message
 - a. Increasingly, our culture is becoming uncomfortable with the idea that there is one message that must be believed
- ii. Ambassadors GO on behalf of the King
 1. GO in dependence – not your power or seeking power in the world
 - a. This is why Jesus starts with prayer: “Ask the Father earnestly...”
 - i. It is in nearness to the Lord, in deep dependence and the intimacy of need, that the Father finds and fills workers for the harvest
 - b. You are sent out into grave danger – the representative of an opposing kingdom into the land of wolves
 - c. You are not to rely upon worldly means or method (no supplies)
 - i. The mission was an expedient mission, preparing the way for Jesus, thus they were to proclaim the Kingdom, pronounce peace or judgment and move on to the next town
 - ii. This changed at the Last Supper, when Jesus was to be fully rejected, and the disciples were told to take their supplies for the road ahead would be longer
 2. GO without distraction
 - a. Don’t greet anybody on the road is not a command to be rude, but rather to stay on task
 - b. You were sent to fulfill a mission and no soldier gets distracted having a luncheon in town when he is supposed to be advancing toward a checkpoint
 3. GO and strive hard and remain accountable
 - a. Staying in the same house means that you are known by your hosts and cannot manipulate or remain shallow
 - i. It’s easy to fool people for awhile, but when you live with somebody and rely upon them, you are known and held accountable to your message
 - b. The provisions that you receive will tell you that you have earned them and are remaining faithful

- i. "Do not go from house to house" is a command to trust the Lord to provide enough and not to seek out more
 - ii. Going house to house was a common fundraising technique of travelling rabbi's and philosophers, asking for support door to door
 - iii. This method is very effective in fundraising and finding provisions, and it allows a person to remain somewhat aloof, thus Jesus calls his disciples to go against the grain and be weak
- 4. GO in Gratitude
 - a. Eat whatever is fed to you
 - i. Do not complain and do not offend on account of food
 - ii. Rely upon the well-being of others
 - b. Vv 17-21 show us that we are not to desire or depend upon power, but to proclaim and walk in constant gratitude for God's amazing grace
 - i. There should not be shred of superiority in our proclamation, for our names are written in the Book of Life solely because God graciously and sovereignly elected it to be
- c. Going Out is Only Empowered By Coming Near
 - i. To be a disciple is to come radically near to Jesus, to experience His presence, to see His glory, to intimacy and knowledge of Him, but this shows us that discipleship is also to be sent radically out to the nations, to proclaim His greatness, to serve the lowly, to announce hope through Him.
 - ii. This is very gosselly – for Jesus only draws you in to Himself that He might send you out to the world to live for others in the particular ways and places that He has sovereignly ordained you to do:
 - 1. Eph 2:10 – “His workmanship, created for good works which He has prepared beforehand for you to do.”
 - 2. You have been blessed and given great joy that you might bless and bring joy to others by proclaiming the gospel and bringing restoration of body and soul by His power.
 - a. And each of you has been called to particular people in your particular place with particular gifts that you might bring the hope of the gospel, the healing of souls, the righting of what has gone terribly wrong by the gospel, which is the power of God to make all things the way they are supposed to be. You have been sent for this!
 - b. It's not merely a command to go without power, in fearful or peculiar demand, but you have met the Son of God! Your fears find their Master in Him, He has dealt with any cause for shame or guilt in His blood. We are still learning this, of course, but the sting of sin's curse on us has been removed in His death and the power to bring healing to the nations draws force from its source, the risen King Jesus who is near and alive and powerful and active today! He drew you in and raised your dead soul to life, healed your wounds of guilt and shame with sovereign grace and fathomless love, and sends you out in the acceptance of God, as His finely honed beautiful ones, to be lambs among wolves that by His Spirit-empowered gospel proclamation you might make wolves into lambs.
 - iii. This intimacy/sending pattern is always the way that God works
 - 1. Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, etc. all were drawn in to see the LORD and then sent out to be His ambassadors. Jesus is doing the same here with His disciples – come near to Me, see Me, know Me, now go out in the fullness of my joy and proclaim the gospel to all nations, far as the curse is found bring healing and restoration and wholeness.

- d. There is great cosmic purpose for the people of God, everyone has deep and significant meaning in this: you are sent. You are not just a bag of atoms listlessly thrown into the universe, but a deeply valued, exceedingly loved, sent one when you come to Christ. You are an ambassador, a representative of the King in a world that thinks itself to be king, and there is no excuse for viewing your life any other way.

2. Ambassadors Carry a Message for the King:

- a. The disciples were not to carry anything or rely upon themselves, but were to be humble and dependent upon those whose hearts were opened by the Lord to receive the gospel
 - b. Ambassadors carry a message, they are not there to negotiate, but to deliver a message
 - i. Fact – every single disciple of Jesus is given a message that they are to publicly communicate and urge to believe it and build their life upon it.
 - 1. “Tell them the Kingdom of God is near you”
 - a. The sovereign right and rule of Jesus as author of Good and Restorer of broken
 - 2. Bring them a message of peace
 - a. If you are not received, move on
 - i. This is strongly indicative that it is the Holy Spirit of the Lord that opens blinded eyes, plows up hardened hearts to soft-earth receptive ears, and that the disciples are to rely on this preemptive working of the Holy Spirit
 - ii. Thus, "son of peace", is speaking of the quality of the heart that one would have inline with reception to the gospel of Jesus Christ
 - 1. It is not merely, "if they like you, or tolerate you, or even accept you" but rather, "if a son of peace is there"
 - 2. It is a familial term, indicating a fathering by God, a birthing, a new-birthing of the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit (John 3) that has opened one's heart by sovereign irresistible grace to see the beauty of Jesus and receive Him with humble joy
 - iii. The woes towards the cities that reject Jesus – most severe judgment
 - ii. We proclaim the Word of the WORD who spoke all things into existence!
 - 1. What privilege is this? What amazing honor!
 - 2. What glory that Jesus would bind Himself so closely to us in His sending that any treatment of the world toward you is considered by the Father and the Son as treatment of them
 - 3. Consider the severity of the Church's pronouncements here!
3. This is becoming more and more unacceptable to the world, who doesn't really care if you believe it, but are increasingly becoming intolerant if you proclaim it as something that all people should believe.
 - a. Trying to convert people is the worst offense today. “You must believe this to be truly whole and alive” is a problematic statement.
 - b. Under the word “tolerance” evil and danger are ignored in the most illogical way.
 - c. There are a few problems with this contention, however.
4. God is not a tolerant God – He is a redemptive God!

- a. Jesus claims a *greater* judgment than Sodom and Gomorrah for those who reject the message of the gospel. He warned many would believe they knew him, only to learn they have been rejected with these words: "Depart from me, all you workers of evil!" ([Matt. 7:21-23](#); [Luke 13:22-27](#)) Rather than find welcome into God's kingdom, they would find themselves in a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.
 - i. Both the Old and New Testaments display a God who doesn't tolerate sin. Yet there is one story in Scripture that demonstrates most clearly the intolerance of God.
 - b. This is the story of the cross.
 - i. Take a fresh look at the terrifying and uncomfortable reality of the cross. Here is an innocent man—whipped, beaten, nailed to a tree, bearing the sins of the world. For you. For me. Is this the picture of a tolerant God who ignores evil? No, this is a gruesome picture of divine wrath and judgment. The story makes no sense if God is a tolerant God.
 - ii. The cross demonstrates God's character in all its complexity. It shows his love, kindness, and mercy united with his justice, holiness, and wrath. It perfectly demonstrates a God who surpasses understanding. The Lord is giving us a glimpse into the immensity of his love for us. The love of God is not a tolerant love. It is much better. It is a redemptive love.
5. Tolerance of *Anything* Is Unloving and Unjust
- a. Sin must be paid for. To tolerate evil is to deny justice. God unleashes his full wrath on evil because he's good. If good tolerated evil, it would cease to be good. Refusal to tolerate sin, then, is an essential part of loving others well. It might be tolerant for a mother to let her children play in a busy street or run with scissors, but it's not loving in the least.
 - b. We also should hate sin because it's harmful, even if we don't always understand the harm that may be caused. As a child is unaware that a car may quickly appear, we must understand that we're unaware of all the dangers of sin. God, our loving Creator who understands our frame more fully than we do, bids us to flee from evil and find abundant life in him alone. Life outside the revealed will of God doesn't ultimately fulfill; it leads to misery and emptiness.
6. The Gospel is HOPE for the world, not mere demands upon the world
- a. When Jesus sends us out to communicate the gospel. The word, "gospel" (euangellion), means "news of an objective, history-changing event that change the world as we know it" and we need to respond to it. Thus, when a king would win a victory over the enemies of a state, a "gospel" would be sent back from the battle proclaiming the king's victory and that war was over. The announcement was that everything changes now! Break out the wine, unbar the doors, tear up your ration cards, etc!
 - i. For example, we have an early Greek usage of the word "gospel" referring to Caesar Augustus, which was inscribed on a calendar discovered in the city of Priene, not far from Ephesus. In the inscription you can see many claims, the overarching claim was that Augustus would bring peace and save the people, and this is described as a "gospel" by which all Asians should alter their lives and celebrate. It reads:

- ii. “It seemed good to the Greeks of Asia, in the opinion of the high priest Apollonius of Menophilus Azanitus: “Since Providence, which has ordered all things and is deeply interested in our life, has set in most perfect order by giving us Augustus [τὸν Σεβαστόν], whom she filled with virtue that he might benefit humankind, sending him as a savior [σωτήρα], both for us and for our descendants, that he might end war and arrange all things, and since he, Caesar, by his appearance [ἐπιφανεῖς] (excelled even our anticipations), surpassing all previous benefactors, and not even leaving to posterity any hope of surpassing what he has done, and since the birthday of the god Augustus was the beginning of the **good tidings** for the world that came by reason of him [ἤρξεν δὲ τῷ κόσμῳ τῶν δι’ αὐτὸν **εὐαγγελίων** ἡ γενέθλιος ἡμέρα τοῦ θεοῦ],” which Asia resolved in Smyrna.” (Priene, 105.40, 9BC)
 - b. That’s what a gospel meant: something had changed in history that brought great salvation and hope, thus heralds declared the gospel of Caesar Augustus throughout the Roman Empire. One couldn’t say, “Well, he’s your Emperor, but he’s not my Emperor!” No, when he became Emperor, everyone had to deal with it, and that’s why everyone wanted to know the news. It made a huge difference who was on the throne, even if you didn’t like the guy on the throne.
- 7. Tim Keller, from his book, *The King’s Cross*, writes: “A gospel is an announcement of something that has happened in history, something that has been done for you, that changes your status forever. It is not good advice, it is good news.”
 - a. This is the gospel. It is not advice to be followed or a treaty to be negotiated. It is the King’s triumph! His birth is the gospel of God with us. It is the history-changing, momentous, transformative event that has happened, and the appeal is to believe it or else history is going to leave you in its wake. If a city at war didn’t believe the message of victory, their entire lives would be wrapped up in fear and running and loathsome turmoil. In fact, some may have tried to make themselves kings, looted their neighbors, forgotten the king and worked to build their own wealth, their own cities, and their own little kingdoms. What happens when the king returns and find little kingdoms who want to fight Him for their right to rule themselves? Believing the gospel of Jesus’ triumph changes everything!
- ii. So, if somebody says that it’s OK for you to believe in Jesus, just don’t try and convert anybody, what they’re really saying is, “You **must not** believe in Jesus.” Because the gospel of Jesus changes everything!
 - 1. If we really believe this than shouldn’t we all be running out proclaiming that He has triumphed, even if it means that we are consumed by wolves in the attempt?
 - 2. To hide such news of hope is wickedly unjust, not merely a choice we can make because we are afraid. And it certainly isn’t loving, though it may be tolerant or “open-minded”, to withhold such good news, is it?
 - a. If you had the cure for cancer, would it be loving or open-minded or tolerant to keep it for yourself, your family, or your immediate neighbors?
 - b. Nobody is arguing that the NFL is being loving, tolerant, or open-minded for keeping to itself the news that concussions have devastating effects on the brain that can lead to dementia and suicide.
 - c. No, they are arguing the opposite, so why is it unjust to announce the hope for sin and death and sorrow and guilt and shame and significance? It’s not!

This is why we are ambassadors and not diplomats. We are not here to negotiate common ground, or try and compromise for a decision that all parties can agree upon. No! We are announcers, heralds, runners with a glorious message of peace and wholeness and restoration and joy because Jesus Christ has arrived and the kingdom of God is near!

In 490BC, at the battle of Marathon, the Athenian army went out on the plains of Marathon to battle the Persian army, and everybody expected Persia to win. Thus, Athens knew that when the Persian army broke through the lines that the city would be left defenseless. What were they thinking in the city as war was raging? What did they do? What was the mood?

Surprisingly, the Greek army defeated the Persians and they knew that they had to get that message, that gospel, back to the city as quickly as possible because the city was under extreme duress, fear, and danger. They needed to announce to the fearful city that something critical had happened, some incredible victory had been won, that danger was averted, that everything had changed. So the story goes that they sent a single runner, Pheidippides, who ran from Marathon to Athens (40 km), to deliver this gospel as fast as he could. He ran into the city and all he was able to do was cry out, "Rejoice! We have victory!" and then he died.

When Jesus sends us to proclaim the gospel, do you realize what we have been called to announce? The victory has been won by the King! He has triumphed, not merely over another kingdom, but over sin and death itself, which has captivated all humanity for all time. He has reconciled the finite rebel-creatures to the infinite holy God through His blood. And He lives, triumphing over death! He is the Son of God, with glory that emanates from His very being, chosen as the unique and superior Savior bearing us anew to a living hope by raising from the dead. He suffered the cross and was raised triumphant. "Rejoice! He has triumphed!" This is the message that we are called to announce. May the truth that your names are written in the Book of Life, by God's sheer and utter gift to you and not because of what you have done, compel you to announce the glorious victory of King Jesus so that all whom He has called may hear the message of His victory and humbly and joyfully receive Him as Savior and rightful King. Amen.

Benediction:

"The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶ But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. ¹⁷ To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." (1Ti 1:15-17 ESV)