



## **All You Need is God**

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

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Karl Paul Reinhold Niebuhr, an American Reformed theologian, ethicist, commentator on politics and public affairs, and professor at Union Theological Seminary for more than 30 years, said this about Christian Life and the work of a disciple:

*"Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore, we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore, we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore, we must be saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as it is from our standpoint. Therefore, we must be saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness."*

Hope. Faith. Love. Forgiveness. Essential to our lives as Christians and Disciples, and the catalyst that continues to propel us forward in the world, save the lost, help the needy, rescue the prisoner, feed the hungry and cloth the naked. But Jesus did not want us to be naïve about how difficult it would be to do all those things, and so, in our text today, Jesus lays out for the disciples exactly what they should expect, and how they should behave.

Last week when I talked about the importance of us being God mentors and the need for those mentors, I referenced a verse that is in our text today. Luke 10:2 He said to them, *"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."* Old Testament prophets used the word harvest as a metaphor for the time when Jesus will return, and we who are deemed righteous will be gathered as God's final harvest. In this context Luke is not just talking about bringing in laborers for the harvest now, but for the harvest now and until the final harvest. Luke is not talking about a Saturday afternoon of walking the neighborhood and putting out flyers or doorhangers, he is talking about the continual work of the church and the mission to make disciples.

However, we are challenged today with this notion, as we as modern-day Christians have somewhat relegated this work not to the masses, but to singled out few. Today it is still commonplace for Mormons and Jehovah Witness to require all members to participate in the work of disciple-ing. But in the United Methodist Church, as well as many other Protestant denominations, we created positions like missionary or missionary and in many ways abdicated the role of discipleship to them.

This Luke text today serves as a reminder of the work of the church, not the work of a few in the church. We as the church are commissioned by Christ to go into all the world, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We can look at this 10<sup>th</sup>

chapter and instead of being somewhat frightened by it, see it as an opportunity to create new models of mission for the church, that engages the entire church and not just a few. And the text today that gives us clear principles that can guide our renewed focus of reaching people for Christ, or discipleship.

#### 10 Principles:

1. There is a need, "the harvest is plentiful".
2. Prayer is important, "ask the Lord of the Harvest..."
3. Active participation from each disciple is required, "Go on your way"
4. We must be vulnerable, "I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves."
5. Stay focused on the purpose, "Greet no one on the road"
6. Be clear about the purpose, "say peace be with you and the kingdom of God is near"
7. Be gracious to the host, "eat what is set before you"
8. Every encounter will not be a success, "when they do not welcome you."
9. But we must persevere, "shake their dust from your feet"
10. Have assurance of God's redemptive mission, "Know this the kingdom of God has come near."

All you need is God, in Jesus Christ, to shift from fear to faith, and see the work of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ as a privilege and not a burden. Let's be honest, the harvest is plentiful, and the laborers are too few. We as the church today cannot rely on a few to do the work that takes all of us. There are still many people in this world who do not know loving God and salvific Christ. There are still many people in your neighborhood and in this community.

Can we lean into Niebuhr's pillars of Hope, Faith, Love, and Forgiveness? Can we remind ourselves that this is the mission of the church and therefore we do not do this work alone? Can we all participate in the work of bringing Christ to those who we know need it? Can we be the church? I think we can do all those things and more because all we need is God!

#### **Conclusion**

All you need is God

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All you need is God, God

God is all you need (God is all you need)

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God is all you need (God is all you need)

*-The Beatles*

May it be so, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.