



## Go Nowhere Among the Gentiles

### Matthew 10:5-15

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Main Idea: Following Jesus often means listening and being transformed

Theme: "The Difficult Words of Jesus," by Amy-Jill Levine. I've got you preaching on chapter 4, which is from Matthew 10:5-15, with the focus on Jesus saying, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

- Amy-Jill Levine
  - Exclusivity logion idea
  - What to do with Gentile followers? (pg. 83)
  - Religious leaders (pg. 87)

#### 1. Scripture challenge

- a. Full story
  - i. Spoilers
- b. Interpretation challenge

#### 2. First missionary journey

- a. exclusive focus
  - i. avoid the Gentiles and Samaritans; focus on the "lost sheep of Israel."
- b. Inclusive hero
  - i. Middle vs. End of Gospel
- c. Character development?
  - i. Jesus not a character
    1. **This is God in the flesh**
      - a. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever
- d. Expectations of Jesus
  - i. Compassionate
  - ii. What good reason does Jesus have to make exclusive commands?
    1. Many theologians have attempted to answer this
      - a. Makes Jesus out to be antisemitic or cheapens scripture (pg. 81-82)
- e. Amy-Jill Levine lays all this out in her book. But what this scripture shows us is we must listen.

#### 3. Listening

- a. Being a follower of Jesus means we must listen deeply and clearly.
  - i. Cherry pick

- 1. Easier not to wrestle with these passages
- ii. Actual saying
  - 1. In its context
    - a. Beginning of mission
- b. Reliance
  - i. God and others
    - 1. Accept hospitality
      - a. Carry little with them
    - 2. "give without pay"
      - a. Free gift
- c. Embrace failure
  - i. Move forward
  - ii. Do not try to convince those unwilling
- d. Challenging task
  - i. Explains some of the narrow focus
- e. Target audience
  - i. "lost sheep of Israel."

#### 4. Lost Sheep

- a. Parable
  - i. Amy-Jill Live points out this connection
  - ii. Leave the 99 for the 1
    - 1. Jesus' economy works different
    - 2. "Gone astray"
- b. Those unwilling or unable to repent
  - i. Blameless
    - 1. wealthy, the arrogant, self-righteous, and many of the religious leaders of Jesus' day.
  - ii. Parable of the righteous man
    - 1. "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector" (Luke 18:11).
- c. Sheep/shepherd images
  - i. Jesus draws upon a wealth of wisdom.
  - ii. As Amy-Jill Levine points out, Jesus is possibly drawing upon imagery of lost sheep from the prophet Ezekiel.
    - 1. Shepherds ignoring their flock
    - 2. "The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them" (34:4)
    - 3. Align w/ Jesus' teachings
      - a. These words align with much of Jesus' teachings about caring for the needy.

- i. Parable of the Good Samaritan when religious leaders neglected the injured man on the side of the road.
  - iii. Jesus critical of pride, self-righteous, unwilling to help others
    - 1. Who Jesus often critiqued
    - 2. Clarity to Jesus' intentions
  - iv. No one wants to be a lost sheep
    - 1. Wrong or need correction
      - a. Most challenging group
        - i. Not in the wrong?

## 5. Repent

- a. Mission: "The kingdom of heaven has come near.' cure the sick; raise the dead; cleanse those with a skin disease; cast out demons" (v.7-8)
  - i. Kingdom= John the Baptist
  - ii. Amy-Jill Levine explains said "(the disciples) provide for those who offer them hospitality an opportunity to confess, to address guilt, and to do what they can to atone" (pg. 80).
    - 1. Receive hospitality while challenging them
      - a. Counter to our tendency
        - i. Keyboard call outs
        - ii. Face to face challenge
      - b. Seriousness of mission
- b. Repentance= narrow mission
  - i. Samaritan/Gentile acceptance
    - 1. Repentance from what? God's covenant?
  - ii. What good is inclusion if the system is broken?
    - 1. Israel neglecting others; religious hypocrisy
    - 2. Not safe or productive
  - iii. Parable of the Sower where there are various types of soil. Some are lifeless, some thorny, some shallow, and one that bears fruit. We can see that this mission to the lost sheep is Jesus doing some weeding and pruning.
  - iv. **He and the disciples are preparing the soil for a fruitful harvest.**

## 6. Church

- a. Church growth
  - i. Practical reasons
- b. Change
  - i. Some churches have not considered that in order to bear fruit, we must look inward first.
  - ii. What do we need to repent of?
    - 1. Welcoming? Lived values? Inclusive?
    - 2. Looking inward= confess/repent
      - a. Growth

**3. Repentance is the foundation for transformation.**

iii. Transformation- starting with the lost

1. Same is true for church

- a. Don't have to stay in discomfort but must visit there
- b. Covered by God's abundant grace

7. Mission unfolds

a. Two-stage mission process as Amy-Jill Levine defines (pg. 84).

i. This mission is first to the lost sheep of Israel, then to the Gentiles through the Great Commission

1. Gentile inclusion in NT

b. The drama will unfold but Jesus starts with the lost

c. Call then and now to rely on God and repent of sin