**Show God’s Love**

Luke 10:25-37

Here is our overview for this short series - Experience God:

**Experience God**

* Hear God’s Voice
* Know God’s Heart
* See God’s Hand
* Show God’s Love
* Share God’s Grace

Think of this series as training and ***preparation for a short-term missions trip***. Whenever we send our teams on a missions trip we spend several months preparing them for what they will do on the trip. This series is intended to help us think of this fall as a short-term missions trip right into the world you live in.

***What is the Lord saying to you?*** How is He leading you? Are you connecting with His heart for the lost and hurting and broken people in your life? How are you seeing God’s hand moving? Is there someone you know who is asking spiritual questions or struggling with some kind of crisis? As we develop relationships with people ***we are watching and waiting for openings*** - for opportunities to have spiritual conversations and help them take a step closer to Jesus.

In two weeks, we will start an 8-week series called Meet Jesus.

MEET JESUS SLIDE

That series is inspired by the TV show, **The Chosen**, so that show is a resource for you to consider using in your fall outreach to friends, family, and neighbors. If you know someone who is ready for the full treatment, you might schedule to watch an episode with them every week and go through the season 1 workbook with them. That booklet has a daily devotional plus group discussion questions. So that would be the full immersion.

On the other side, if you haven’t seen the Chosen or just didn’t get into it - that is totally reasonable option to ***not use the TV series at all*** and just dig into the Bible passages each week as they are. That will be our focus here on Sunday mornings. Our goal is not to exegete the episodes, but to study the key Bible texts that inspired the episodes. Some of our small groups will be using the Chosen workbooks, others will not be. We are a “Free” church after all!

If you’re not planning to use the Chosen, still consider how you might engage with a friend or neighbor this fall - maybe just by inviting them to study the gospel of John with you, like we’ll be doing in one of our Oakwood Mill classes this fall.

So those are the extremes - all in with the Chosen, or not at all using the Chosen. And of course, you can scale your involvement to somewhere in the middle - where you host one or two watch parties with some neighbors this fall even if you can’t get people to watch with you every week. The point is to take a step.

***What is your next step?***

Open with me to Luke chapter 10 and let’s get our marching orders from King Jesus.

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.” Luke 10:1

What we will see in this chapter are **three steps to showing God’s love** to the people around us. First:

1. Embrace your **Mission**

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.” Luke 10:1

***In Luke 9 Jesus sent out the 12.*** Here, just one chapter later, he sends out the 72. This event may have been six months or a year later - all we know is that it was “after this” referring to all of chapter nine or maybe just the end of chapter nine where Jesus talks about the cost of following him.

But the point is that ***Jesus had more than just 12 disciples***. By the second half of his three-year ministry - of all the people who had heard him and the many who had been healed by him or freed from demons or otherwise impacted by his ministry, there was a growing group that was committed to him.

When you read the book of Acts and hear about the dramatic miracles that Peter did or that Paul did, you might be tempted to dismiss those as irrelevant to YOU because those guys were apostles. Those were miraculous validations of guys who were writing the Bible or were about to. True. I would argue even those dramatic events are still relevant for us because Jesus told all of his disciples they would do greater things than he did once the Holy Spirit came upon them. The book of Acts is really the fulfillment of that promise.

But even if you do believe that the apostles had a special authority and power upon them - you still have to deal with Luke 10 where Jesus sends out a group of 72. Were they supervised by the 12? For sure. But they were sent out in PAIRS - not teams of 6-7. So this passage is meant to apply to the everyday Christian, not just for first century apostles or modern day pastors and leaders. ***This passage is for YOU!***

Jesus APPOINTED 72. He SENT THEM.

I hope it’s not a new idea for you that ***Jesus has appointed YOU***. He has sent YOU on ahead of him to every place where he himself is about to go.

Have you ever thought of it that way?

Jesus wants to get into your neighbor’s house. He wants to break into the life of your co-worker. Jesus wants to change your brother or sister, your aunt, your nephew. But the way ***He wants to do this is THROUGH YOU***.

Could Jesus have just gone to these villages and towns on his own? Of course! Would it have been more efficient and more powerful in some ways? Sure. Think of the risk it was to send out 72 with minimal training and minimal supervision. What were these guys likely to say? Did they have all the answers? Did they have handbooks on apologetics to answer all the questions people would ask? Of course not!

***But that is how God prefers to work - through ordinary people.*** Just read the Bible! The “heroes of the faith” are super ordinary guys and gals. Abraham. Moses. David. Peter. James. John. That’s a pretty good top six in the Bible - and they were all very flawed, very normal guys. But through those men God did amazing miracles. He split the Red Sea. He conquered foreign armies. He healed the sick, raised the dead and ripped open prison cells.

***Have you embraced YOUR MISSION?*** Have you recognized that God has sent you to a specific place and to specific people? Look at verse 2!

1. Embrace your **Mission**

“The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” Luke 10:2

Jesus calls together 72 of his disciples, arranges them into teams of two and then gives them this very short speech as marching orders. Start with prayer. Here is what you are to pray: “Lord of the harvest, please send out workers into YOUR harvest.”

Now. As those 72 believers prayed - who was the answer to their prayer?

Did a different 72 suddenly pop out of the ground to go out on this mission? Was it like Snow White and suddenly all the woodland creatures came swarming in to carry the good news of the kingdom?

No. Those 72 workers were the answer to their own prayer.

And the same thing is true for us **when we sincerely pray this prayer**. Think about it. If you pray for your next-door neighbor according to this verse, what do you think is going to happen? If you pray for your co-worker who sits beside you what do you think will happen? Could there be another believer on your street or in your office - sure, that’s possible. But what is the most likely result? You will become the answer to your own prayer.

But that wouldn’t be the case if you didn’t pray. ***Prayer HELPS US embrace our mission.*** It helps us SEE the mission and the reason for it. Prayer connects us with the heart of God and helps us see people as He sees them. We see their pain, their loneliness, their brokenness, their sin and desperation - and we long for them to find freedom, healing and new life in Christ.

1. Embrace your **Mission**

“Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.” Luke 10:3

Right after the instruction to pray for laborers Jesus says, “Ok. Go.” You’re ready. Off you go. ***Will it be easy? Of course not!*** I’m sending you out like **baby sheep** - one year old lambs. Could Jesus have chosen a more vulnerable animal? Maybe a little baby duckling. But at least those guys can get out into the water where foxes and wolves can’t get to them. Lambs are only safe with the flock. And Jesus was deliberately scattering the flock. Sending them out two by two.

Are you a worker in Jesus’ harvest field? Do you see yourself that way? Until you embrace your identity as a missionary for the kingdom - an ambassador for King Jesus - you will not be effective on your mission. That’s step one to live a missional lifestyle - embrace your mission. Second:

1. Engage your **Motives**

“Whatever house you enter, say, ‘Peace be to this house.’” Luke 10:5

Once you are oriented to the fact that God has appointed you for a specific mission, right now, the next step is to work on your heart. Isn’t this beautiful? ***Our goal is to bring PEACE*** - the shalom of God - to the homes of people.

Think of **the Garden of Eden** before the fall - peace. Shalom. That’s the last time this world has known true peace. Not just the absence of conflict and sin, but the presence of joy, and wholeness and intimacy and love between God perfectly and between Adam and Eve perfectly. No guilt, no shame, no blaming, no hiding, no selfishness, not sin at all - just shalom.

But you and I have never known true and perfect shalom. ***We have a foretaste of it in the Lord Jesus*** and the Holy Spirit in our hearts. There is a peace that passes understanding - but we only see it as through a glass darkly - it’s a glimpse of the future restoration of all things; it’s an appetizer for the great eternal banquet. We live in a dark and broken world, fractured every which way by the lack of peace. But at least we have the light of Christ burning in our hearts.

Our friends and neighbors outside of Christ don’t even have that. ***All they have is darkness.*** All they have is brokenness. Lack of shalom. Oh, they long for the peace and love and joy of the Lord - but they don’t even know what to call it - other than longing or desperation.

But ***when you show up at your neighbor’s door*** - you are offering them flame for their candles; fire for their fireplace; heat in the cold; light in the dark. What you are bringing them in your love and with your message is SHALOM. They may not have a word for it at first other than “friendliness,” but as you pray WITH THEM and walk with them through dark times, they will notice that you are different - there is something you have that they want and need.

**What that thing is - is shalom.** You have peace. You have life. You have a sense of security and confidence even when bad things happen to you.

As we embrace our mission to reach people in the harvest, we need to engage our motives - we need to stir up our cold, selfish hearts with LOVE. Love for God and love for people.

Look just a few verses down in this chapter! A lawyer comes up to Jesus and asks, “What must I do to be saved and inherit eternal life?” Jesus asks him what the Law of Moses says, and the Jewish teacher of the law answered:

1. Engage your **Motives**

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27

This is similar to the interaction in Matthew 22, but in that case, Jesus says these words and the question was different. In Matthew, a lawyer asks Jesus what is the greatest commandment in the Law of Moses. Here a lawyer asks Jesus what he must do to be saved. Both asked him questions to test him, but it’s remarkable that this lawyer actually gave the right answer. Maybe he was listening in when the other guy asked his question. But here in Luke 10 look at Jesus’ answer:

1. Engage your **Motives**

“You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” Luke 10:28

What an answer. Yup. You got it buddy. Just love God with all that you are, and also love your neighbor as you love yourself - do that all the way, right away, every time, with a happy heart and THAT will earn you your spot in heaven. Boom. Easy. Try that for a month and come let me know how it went.

This verse, and also Romans 2:7, show that ***salvation by works is possible*** - but you have to do it perfectly; no slip ups or mistakes. So, most of us were long since disqualified from trying to be saved by that route. Ok, all of us. But Jesus grants the premise - if someone could, for the sake of argument, love God and people perfectly he would be perfect himself and earn his way to eternal life.

The point for our purposes here is to ***get our motives right*** and to stir up these proper motives for mission, back to verse 27.

1. Engage your **Motives**

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27

How can we become more evangelistic and live more on mission? It has to start with prayer and with kindling our passion for God. If we don’t love our neighbors very much it’s because we don’t love God very much. Flip that - in order to feel more love for the people around you, start by stoking the flames of your love for the Lord.

***God is the Creator of all things and all people.*** Everyone was born in the image of God and that image was tarnished by the fall. God loved the whole world so much that He sent His only Son to die for our sins. His heart is filled with love for the hurting and broken, the sad and disconnected, the addicts and sinners.

The more you know the heart of God the more your heart will fill up with love for people. To pray “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,” leads directly into the next breath: “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

***What is the will of God?*** “God wills that NONE should perish but that all should come to repentance.” God hates divorce. God detests violence and injustice. God loves the poor and the powerless. God defends the orphan and widow.

**Think about Jesus**. He was a friend of sinners. He paid special attention to tax collectors and known sinful women. He spent time with lepers and outcasts. He explicitly said that he didn’t come for “the righteous but for sinners” because “it isn’t the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”

Let your heart fill up with love for Jesus - as you ***experience His love for you*** - sinner and outcast, lowlife and leper that you are. And as your love for Jesus grows, so will your love for people. At the same time, the more you come to love people practically the more you will know Jesus and the joy of having Him work through you.

Now, think about this familiar **parable of the good Samaritan**. Familiar to us, but undoubtedly shocking to the Pharisees and religious leaders in Jesus’ day - really to all the Jews. A man gets beaten up badly and robbed, left for dead on the roadside. “By chance” a priest walks by and you think, “Ok, the poor beaten man will be fine - God provided a priest of all people!” But the priest moves to the other side of the road and just walks on by - no doubt busy with other, in his mind more important, affairs.

The camera shifts to the beaten man’s perspective, his eyes flicker open and he sees the robes of the priest trailing dust off into the distance and hope is extinguished as fast as it had sparked up. But then more footsteps. Someone else is coming! Hope again - and your eyes glimpse another well-dressed religious leader - this one is a Levite. Surely this Jewish leader and caretaker of traditional values will take care of a fellow Jew, especially in this extreme situation.

But like the priest, the Levite crosses to the other side of the road and just keeps walking. Hope again dies in the man’s heart.

Until one more set of footsteps approaches and this time, they come right up to you there on the side of the road. A hand touches your shoulder to see if you’re even alive. Compassionate, strong arms help you sit up and you feel a water skin pressed to your lips and you draw in much needed water.

1. Engage your **Motives**

“But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.” Luke 10:33

Here’s the shock. The caring person - the one who stopped and helped - was the last person you would have thought. A Samaritan. A modern version of this parable might make him a Nazi soldier to convey the level of surprise and impossibility.

But that’s the point - this parable is ***a gut punch to religious people*** who thought they were pretty good people - thought they had the religion thing wired, they had God in their neat little box. And God said, “You have a neat little box there, all right, but I am not in it.” In fact, I want nothing to do with it!

Luke reveals ***this lawyer’s motives*** at the start of this interaction - he asked his question to TEST Jesus and then asked his follow up question, “Who is my neighbor” to JUSTIFY himself. He wasn’t approaching Jesus as a rabbi to instruct him, but as an enemy to entrap him.

That’s a significant sign that you’re a religious person - if you have conversations with God to JUSTIFY yourself. You feel a prodding to help a friend or neighbor, but you push back and look for evidence to support your current lifestyle just as it is. “I do a lot at church. I help a lot of people. I give a lot of money. That assignment isn’t for me. Someone else will take care of it.”

Go back to the prayer in verse 2. “Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.” Guess who the worker is going to be if you sincerely pray that prayer? Ah, there’s your friend the Priest, sitting on your shoulder convincing you to justify yourself. You’ve got a Levite on the other shoulder to also reassure you that your church work is plenty, you don’t need to get messy with sinners and lost people. That would just be so complicated! It’s ok to walk by on the other side of the street. Kids, look the other way. Don’t make eye contact.

Now, don’t hear me judging anyone here. Probably a better way to modernize this parable would be to make the first guy to walk by and ignore the victim a pastor. “Now by chance an E Free Pastor was going down that road…” And right after him came a Baptist Pastor - both walked by on the other side and kept going. And who stopped to help the guy? A LAWYER. Ba dup - sh. Around here it probably would be an injury lawyer - let me just leave you my card…

Look at that key phrase in verse 33 - “When he saw him, he had compassion.” Did the priest and Levite feel nothing? We don’t know. Probably they felt some sadness, some degree of sympathy. But they didn’t feel real Biblical love for the man because if they had, they would have stopped to help him. ***True compassion is revealed not by what you FEEL but by what you DO.***

Two guys had no compassion. One guy did - and, of all people, it was a Samaritan.

So, if you want to live a more missional lifestyle - if you want to have more impact on the people around you - first embrace your mission as a missionary and ambassador sent out by Jesus; then engage your motives to love God and love people. If you attempt to do ministry for any other motives, you won’t sustain it and will probably do more harm than good. One more step to a life on mission.

1. Empower your **Movement**

“He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine… and brought him to an inn…” Luke 10:34

Here’s my “out of left field” third point for a sermon called “Show God’s Love,” we need to actually DO STUFF. What did the priest and Levite do? Nothing. Maybe in their heads they said, “We will pray for the man,” but they obviously didn’t really pray for him, or they would have stopped to help him. The Samaritan is the one who stopped to help.

And notice that it cost him. Not just money - for the inn and whatever expenses - but TIME, attention. The Samaritan promised to come back to check on him and cover the rest of his expenses to recover from his serious wounds. Look at the end of this parable.

1. Empower your **Movement**

“Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man?” Luke 10:36

Jesus ends with a provocative question. The lawyer provoked this chat with what he thought was a clever dodge - “And who is my neighbor?” But Jesus used that question to walk him right into the central issue of life: who are you living for? Yourself? God? People?

You want to inherit eternal life? Just love God with all you are and, while you’re at it, love your neighbor as you love yourself. Do that and you’ll live forever. Easy peasy.

And who was a neighbor to this guy?

1. Empower your **Movement**

“The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.” Luke 10:37

The lawyer got the right answer both times. He summed up the Law of Moses perfectly (probably quoting Jesus back to himself) and he rightly identified the hero of the parable. Now, the simple application - go do it.

That is our application today as well. “Go and do likewise.”

You ask yourself - very significantly - “And who IS my neighbor?” Great question. Pray sincerely to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest and Jesus Himself will show you who your neighbor is. I’ll bet you already know. You’ve seen this person around. They may not be literally lying on the roadside bleeding to death, but you can tell they’re in pain. Maybe you have a friend going through a divorce. Maybe they are battling cancer. Maybe they have a child or grandchild in trouble. Maybe it’s a widow or widower. Maybe it’s someone in the church - maybe it’s someone outside of the church. Maybe it’s an actual, literal neighbor.

***Let’s take the next few minutes and pray.*** If you want to walk over to use the prayer board, you can write on a notecard and place it on the SUPPLICATION line and the prayer team will join you in praying for your person. Of course, you are welcome to just stay where you are and pray.

Two parts to your prayer:

1. Start with Luke 10:2 - “Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” Embrace your mission. Engage your motives of love for God and for people.
2. Pray for compassion. Ask the Lord to show you someone who needs encouragement, who needs to experience His love. Pray you will have compassion for them. Pray for God to fill you up with His love so you overflow with love for this person.

I’ll close our time of prayer in a couple of minutes, then we will close the service with a song.

Let’s pray.