

Daily Discipleship

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

Stories of Discipleship: *A Harvester's Story*

Focus Question: *What are the joys and frustrations of harvesting for God's kingdom?*

word of life

"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Luke 10:2 (NRSV)

Read Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

Jesus is on a mission. Time is getting short and there is so much to do. In Luke 9, Jesus predicts his own death and challenges would-be followers about the difficulties ahead. In Luke 10, Jesus appoints seventy disciples and sends them off by twos. These teams of two are to go to the villages and make preparations for Jesus to visit. Thirty-five teams is an impressive number of ambassadors to be dispersed for Jesus.

1. *What would it have been like to be on one of those teams?*
2. *Why send so many teams?*

The seventy are no longer to be in the background, listening to Jesus. Like John the Baptist, the seventy are being asked to prepare the way for Jesus. Each person might be asked to speak clearly about the Messiah. Jesus is in the process of training his disciples and passing on the mission. It is an exciting transition, but these disciples are not to rely on their own abilities. "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2 NRSV)

3. *What does it mean for the harvest to be plentiful?*
4. *What happens to the harvest if laborers do not respond?*
5. *Why involve the Lord in harvesting?*

Jesus then gives traveling instructions to his followers. The seventy are being sent "like lambs into the midst of wolves." (Luke 10:3) These harvesters are not to take a purse, bag, or sandals, but rely on the hospitality of others. Instead of tangible items for their travels, the seventy take the gift of peace for their hosts.

6. *What is the advantage of traveling so light?*
7. *How is trust an issue in their mission?*

As guests, this is not the time to be selective about food and drink. Simply, eat and drink what is offered. Jesus understands his mission is bigger than dietary laws and prepares his followers to interact with the Gentiles. The seventy are to proclaim the nearness of God's kingdom.

But Jesus warns his followers. Not all will receive them well or desire to hear the good news of Jesus. If they are rejected, the followers are to simply move on and let God handle those who reject them. In this way, their mission parallels the rejection of the prophets.

8. *Do you believe it was helpful for the seventy to hear about the possible rejection? How so?*
9. *Why would people reject the seventy?*

Despite the warnings of rejection, it appears the seventy are received warmly and much good is done on behalf of Jesus. But Jesus sternly warns them about becoming too boastful about their success. Any success is because God's Spirit has been at work, not because of their own skill level. These followers are to rejoice in God's love for them.

word among us

It was time for the harvest, but no one was there to pick the vegetables from the garden. All the time spent planting, weeding, and watering was being wasted. Actually, Abraham, the owner of the garden, was in the hospital, too sick to ask someone to tend the harvest.

But Abraham had a good friend who had listened for hours to Abraham talk about the progress of the garden. As soon as the friend heard about Abraham being in the hospital, he drove to Abraham's home to check on the garden. The friend didn't know much about gardening, but he knew it was time to harvest. But when he saw Abraham's garden, he shook his head. This was not a small garden; Abraham had planted his largest garden in years. The harvest was plentiful!

Sure enough when Abraham finally was able to talk, his first question was, "Did someone harvest my garden?"

1. *Give an example of when you served as a harvester.*
2. *How much does the harvester determine the time to harvest?*
3. *What does it feel like to harvest the fruit of your labor?*
4. *What does it feel like to harvest the labor of another? Give an example.*

Not all of us have personal tales of harvesting. Yet, the image still works – even for urban and suburban residents. It doesn't take much to appreciate the sense of urgency associated with harvesting. The gardener and farmer wait until the right time for the harvest -- not too early or too late.

5. *Describe the joy of reaping the harvest.*
6. *What role does God play in the harvest?*
7. *How does this apply to making disciples?*

In this passage, Jesus is not talking about fruits and vegetables, but the right time to tell others about the kingdom of God and Jesus. There are many who have never heard the good news about Jesus, but the Holy Spirit creates the harvest time when the fruit is ripe. Workers are needed to assist in the harvest.

8. *How do you discern the "right time" to talk with someone about Jesus?*
9. *Take time to reflect on harvesting stories, when you were involved in making disciples. In other words, when have you walked with someone growing in their faith in Jesus Christ?*

Jesus confronts the issue of pride when his disciples are successful. (Luke 10:16-20) As much as it is helpful for the disciples to be confident in their work, it is more essential for those same disciples to point to the work of the Holy Spirit. It is all about God, not them.

10. *When does it get confusing about God's work and our work?*
11. *What helps to remind you to give the credit to God?*

Prayer

Creator of all, help us to be ready to bloom where we are planted and to be ready to harvest what you have nurtured. Use us as your workers to expand your reign on this earth. Amen.

Dig Deeper

Isaiah 66:10-14

last word

Pray to be open to how God might use you in harvesting.



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