

The Seventy Sent Out

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 19th July 2009

Read Luke 9:51-10:12

Intro

- Will look at what is happening here from Jesus' perspective to find lessons to apply to our situation here.

1. Jesus was focussed on the lost- 9:51-52

- If we were focussed on going to die on the cross would we be planning an evangelistic outreach? Jesus did just that- 9:51-'When the time had come for Him to be received up Set His face towards Jerusalem.. .and He sent messengers before His face'- He wasn't so focussed on where He was going that He forgot why He was going: for the people. Our desire to see the Church grow must never disconnect from our love for the lost.
- Strong link between the cross and mission- the message is for ALL not just a minority of people. Jesus wants whole communities to be saved that's why He sent people ahead. Jesus wants Brynmawr, Nantyglo, Ebbw Vale, Merthyr to be saved.
- James and John got offended by those they were trying to reach-9:54. This was just the sort of person Jesus came for 9:56 and later He gave the parable of the good Samaritan to challenge people's preconceptions of those we consider to be 'low-lifes' (Lk 10:25-37). Jesus came to give mercy to the undeserving. Jesus criticized for hanging out with 'sinners'- prostitutes, tax collectors, drunkards etc. He was nicknamed 'friend of sinners'- are we criticized for same? It is the sick who need a doctor, not the well. We need to look beyond the behaviour at the heart and have Jesus' compassion for them.

2. He maximised His resources- 10:1

- The one man ministry- one evangelist to many was not used but rather 70 sent out (10:1) ahead of Him to prepare the way. Jewish background- Gen 10 there are 70 nations listed in the Masoretic text and 72 listed in the LXX. Thus the number 70 came to reflect the nations (that is, the Gentiles), and in the NU text of the NT it says that 72 were sent out, perhaps reflecting the LXX translation. If this was in Jesus' mind then it is a prophetic picture of the Church reaching out to all nations in the last days. The Church has a 'John the Baptist'-type heralding role to play preparing the way for the return of Christ and this time it is not only all villages, but all nations the gospel is to go to. This very town has been chosen for Him to come to and He is coming here soon and has sent us ahead of His visitation to prepare the way- are we doing it?
- Jesus maximised His resources by sending 70- the aim was to reach as many as possible. We are all to be evangelistic heralds (see 2Tim 4:5-do the work of an Evangelist). The difference between an evangelistic campaign being like a cheap or expensive box of fireworks is proportional to the number of people willing to witness- it is all to do with cost. The effectiveness of this coming outreach is proportional to the number of people willing to share their faith. If one person shares people may disregard them for a crazy person, but if 20 share the person starts to question their own sanity. Picture of cine film-constant bombardment of scenes one after the other becomes effective- same with a saw-the many teeth all focussed on the same place get the job done- Isaiah promised we would be like a threshing

sledge with many teeth- Isaiah 41:15. This is the Church when all witness. 2X2- for purposes of encouragement and boldness- 'I will give you that treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places'- Is 45:3 and Josh 1:6 'be strong and courageous for to this people you will divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them'

3. He saw the greatness of the harvest- 10:2

- Do we? Sometimes people are sitting on a goldmine and never realise it and so do not dig. I always check McDonalds Monopoly stickers in case I am throwing away a winning ticket. We are sitting on a goldmine. We are holding a winning ticket. The harvest is great around us and it is ripe- swine flu, recession, marriage breakdown, suicide rates, abortion rates, addictions are ravaging society- do we see the harvest? People are desperate for answers. Unless we see the goldmine we will never dig it.

4. He experienced the reluctance of the workers- 10:2b (compare with 9:57-62)

- Jesus said 'the workers are few'. He had just experienced 3 major excuses for people not joining in with the evangelistic outreach, and each was related to comfortable lifestyle of the home and is a warning to Christians not to let the comfort of being 'safe' in the security of the Church divert us away from our responsibilities to those outside:
 - i. 'Lord I will follow You anywhere as long as I don't have to leave the comfort of my sofa' Lk 9:57 (Stu's paraphrased). 'I really like my home Lord so I will watch the campaign on the TV and provide prayer backup'.
 - ii. 'Lord first let me...'- Lk 9:59. What is our 'first let me' excuse to not evangelise? First let me' find my feet as a Christian, once I get sorted, earn the right to speak into their life, go on a course, see others modelling it to me, wait until it stops raining, get over my fear of speaking etc. We can always find excuses for not sharing the gospel but Jesus' response to us is 'let the dead come up with their own excuses- you go and preach the Kingdom of God'.
 - iii. 'First let me bid farewell to my old lifestyle and reminisce as to the amazing times we used to have before I started to follow God...'- Lk9:61. One foot in the world and the other in the kingdom, swaying between two opinions- opting for the safety zone rather than fully committing and becoming a 'fanatic' leads to a lukewarm witness. We need to be sold out for Jesus, not half-hearted.
- Jesus was so offensive here because time was very short- this was their last opportunity. How much time do we have? How many more opportunities will we have to witness on planet Earth?

5. He gave his heralds the message of shalom to proclaim- 10:5,6

- The gospel is the message of peace with God- Is 9:6-7 Prince of peace and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, Is 52:7- How beautiful... are the feet of him who brings good news Who proclaims peace Who brings glad tidings of good things'. Eph 6:15 -feet shod with the..gospel of peace Rom 5:1- justified by faith we have peace with God.
- Shalom=hello, goodbye, peace, prosperity, wellbeing. Some receive the gospel and these are to become our focus. Some are angered by the gospel and our peace 'returns to us'- they tell us what we can do with our message. We should not be discouraged or let them distract us from moving on to others who do want to listen. We are not responsible for people's reactions. Lk 10:10-12 'shake off the dust'- as was done when a Jew came out of Gentile territory so do in Jewish territory as a sign that they are unclean.

- Peace, shalom means praying for the sick, delivering the oppressed, setting the captives free as Jesus did- bringing His peace into all situations. The demonic will manifest in all sorts of inconvenient ways, but we are to keep our sense of peace as Jesus did- rebuke the storms and the demonic oppression- we carry peace to the world through the message of the gospel

Conclusion

- Jesus was focussed on the lost and so must we be. We have been made heralds of good news proclaiming the coming king prior to His visiting this area (when He returns). Let's not be like those who made excuses, but like the 70 who rose to the challenge of preaching the gospel.

Song: *There is a voice*