

Luke 10:1-12, 16-20 God's Priority List for Us! Pentecost 7 July 25 & 28, 2019

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God's grace and peace to you and to all people through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.
God's Word to help us believe in Christ and to help reach others is from Luke 10:1-12, 16-20.
These are your words heavenly Father. They have power to save us. Your Word is truth! Amen.

Dear People, redeemed by Jesus,

You have 24 hours to live! How would you react if your doctor told you that? You would want to make certain that it's a correct diagnosis. Once you know it is, you begin to make a list as to which family or friends you want to see or who you should call. You also need to get your family things in order or make a video. You would have much to do in 24 hours! I pray that none of us will be in that desperate a situation! Yet, we really do have 24 hours to live in this day. Time is a precious gift of God. Do we have the right priorities in using our time? Have we told people that we love them and have we told people that Jesus loved them enough to die in order to save them from their sins? Today, we will look at

God's priority list for us!

First, God begins with preparation. Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem to attend a festival. It meant that in a few months His ministry would end. There was much to do and so little time. So, He gathered a group of followers and told them to go to parts of the country where Jesus had not been. He told them, "*The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. So ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field*" (v.2). God so often encourages believers to pray. Do we begin each day with prayer to ask God's blessing on our activities and family? Remember the hymn: "*With the Lord begin thy task, Jesus will direct it. For His aid and counsel ask, Jesus will perfect it.... Let each day begin with prayer, Praise and adoration. On the Lord cast every care; He is thy Salvation.*" (ELH 82, vs 1, 2).

So, His followers prayed that the Lord would send out workers into the harvest field and God answered by sending them to take the message of Christ. Their message prepared people for the future when Jesus came to their villages, preaching and doing miracles. We later find that the people's response to the message was good in answer to their prayers. So, God encourages us to come to Him in prayer seeking His will and His blessing on our important work of delivering the gospel.

Jesus also provided for the workers. He said, "*Go your way. I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. Do not carry a money bag or traveler's bag or sandals. Do not greet anyone along the way*" (v.4). To me, this sounds like their prospects did not look good. They were like lambs among wolves? But, they were to remember that Jesus, their Good Shepherd, was going to protect them. He would also provide for them as they traveled. They wouldn't need extra money, clothes, or shoes. Their business was urgent, so they were not even to stop for long greetings. There were to be no unnecessary delays!

When they arrived at a town and began to preach about the Savior, some people gladly welcomed them into their homes. Jesus said, "*Remain in that same house, eating and drinking what they give you, because the worker is worthy of his pay*" (v.7). This should remind us that when we plan to reach out to people personally or through Vacation Bible School, Sunday school, Bible class, or Christian school, the Lord will provide for us to accomplish His work. Jesus reminds us, "*Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you*" (Matthew 6:33).

So far Jesus prepared His followers by prayer, provision, and He also promised them peace. Jesus said, *“Whenever you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace be to this house.’”* (v. 5). The word for peace in the Hebrew was Shalom. It meant well-being, happiness, and contentment in life. Can there be peace in our hectic lives? Yes, because this peace centers on God’s love based on Jesus’ forgiveness. *“Isaiah wrote, You will keep in perfect peace the mind [that is] dependent [on You], for it is trusting in You”* (26:3).

That doesn’t mean that life will be easy when we speak about Jesus. There will be some pushback. Jesus said, *“But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust from your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this: The kingdom of God has come near”* (v.10-11). The work is so important that we cannot get discouraged and stop but move on!

Second, there is power as we proclaim His saving truth. When the 72 returned to Jesus, they were excited. They had accomplished things. Demons were driven out of people along with healing in Jesus’ name. Yet, Jesus told them. *“Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven”* (v.20). What does it mean to have your name written in a heaven?

In Jesus’ time, cities kept track of their citizens by writing their names on a scroll. Those citizens received full rights. We know that our names should not be listed as citizens of heaven due to our sin. But God sent His Son to live and die in our place to take away our sins. When we believe that Jesus gave His life to free us from sins and that God has called us as His dear children, we are certain that our names are written in heaven. God did this to give us the freedom of eternal life.

God wants all people to believe and have eternal life with Him. We, like the 72 disciples, have been given the privilege to speak the powerful life-changing word about Jesus. People take safety and CPR courses in case a life-threatening condition, but they hope they never need to use it. We are here today to learn the saving truth about Jesus with every intention of talking about the Savior. We know that everyone without Jesus as their Savior will die in their sins and suffer forever for them. We have God’s powerful word to save them! Jesus said, *“He who listens to you listens to me”* (v.16). Sadly, some people will reject the message of Christ, but not everyone!

Our verses state, *“The 72 returned with joy and said, ‘Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.’ Jesus replied, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to ... overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you”* (v.17-19). The devil is like lightning: powerful, bright, awesome, but once it hits the ground, its power is gone. So, as Jesus’ disciples proclaimed His powerful truth, the devil’s kingdom sputtered out. Armed with God’s Word we too can take our stand against the devil. He will try to get us to lose our spiritual priorities. But Christ is with us and has given us His Word. He has defeated our accuser with His victory on the cross! As we share the news of Christ with others, God will accomplish His good purpose. Even sickness or death will work for our good. When we die our victory in Christ will be complete and our souls will be carried to heaven. We will be rid of the devil, sin, and death forever! That will be our final victory over evil.

So, as we consider the next 24 hours that we have to live, we remember God’s priority list. He put us so high on His priority list that He sent His Son to save us. He thinks so highly of us that He made us His messengers. What a blessing! As we pray and reach out to others, we can be sure that God will hear and answer us. He will provide for us! People will hear, believe in Jesus, and spend eternity together in heaven! Amen.