

ROOTED

Witness

Luke 10:1-13

March 26, 2017

Good morning. We are into a series of messages that we're going to continue with this morning. We've been talking about what it looks like to grow spiritually through practicing some spiritual disciplines in our lives. Think of it this way...it's like saying that I want to be in shape so, I need to put some disciplines into my life like not going to the cookie jar, working out in some way on a regular basis, getting rid of the snacks and candy at the office, etc. right. Or, maybe you want to become proficient at a new language because you're going to be taking a vacation and you'd like to learn how to at least get around. So, you get a copy of Rosetta Stone and you implement some personal discipline to listen everyday so that eventually you can know how to order a cup of coffee and find the bathroom, right.

We go to untold measures to get better at things. The "self-help" industry is still one of the largest industries in America. The ability to DIY just about anything is out there, waiting for you to be willing to spend the time and energy it takes to get better, to accomplish the task, to build the project, or even remodel your house. You can find just about anything on YouTube if you're willing to be disciplined enough to sit down and do the work. So, during this series we've been highlighting some of the things you can do to get better in your spiritual life. We've talked about fasting, solitude, giving, study, and today we're going to talk about developing your ability to live out your faith in such a way that others can see it and maybe even hear about it.

We're going to look at a passage in the book of Luke, so if you have your Bible's handy or a Bible app open start finding Luke chapter 10. We are going to look at what Jesus does with his disciples as a training ground for bringing the message of Jesus transformational power to the whole world. Now, listen to me for a minute...before we hear this I want to recognize that this might sound a bit harsh when it comes to the consequences for those who don't listen and become transformed. Let me say this...Jesus is reminding all of us of the urgency of the message of forgiveness and salvation. He is saying to all of us that what he brings to the world is eternal life and you cannot write this off like someone is asking if you want to buy a time share vacation spot and you're just not interested. So, keep in mind that Jesus sees the big picture of heaven/hell and eternity and to him, rejecting the message is life threatening. So, let's listen to Luke 10:1-13.

So, let's look at this passage to see just what Jesus wants us to do when it comes to living our faith out in front of our lives. Jesus purposefully sends out this group of 72 disciples into the streets and towns where Jesus is planning on visiting. There are two things that may catch you by surprise. First, there were more than 12 disciples...maybe you didn't know that. While there was a close group of 12 who are often called the apostles, there were others who followed the teachings of Jesus. The apostles were those who were a part of the inner circle while the disciples are those who followed the teachings of Jesus. We still use the term disciple today to talk about those who follow the teachings of Jesus. Based on the Bible there may have been even more than the 72 mentioned here and the 12 apostles. Some suggest that there may have been as many as 500 based on a comment found in 1 Cor. 15:6 about Jesus visiting that many after his resurrection. All that being said, in this passage Jesus is sending out the "who"? He is sending out the disciples...not just the apostles. Jesus is entrusting the message and mission to those who are his followers, not just the inner circle. And Jesus has been sending out disciples ever since. But, hold on to that thought, we'll come back to it in a bit.

The second thing I want you to see is that Jesus clearly has a plan. While reading the New Testament Gospels in the Bible you might think that the places Jesus showed up at and the events that took place were random or willy-nilly. But, if you read this passage you see that Jesus had a plan to visit certain towns. So, much so that he decided to send out an advance team to prepare the way. He knows where he's going and what he's going to do. His work while on earth was not hap hazard but very plan and purposeful. I tell you that because some of us in the room today wonder if Jesus has a plan and I want to tell you beyond the shadow of a doubt, Jesus has a plan for your life, for the life of your loved ones and for the world we live in.

Oh, and you are a part of that plan if you are one of his disciples. As a matter of fact, you're plan A and there is no plan B.

So, there are some things I want to look at with you in this passage that will help us get on plan with Jesus because, now that you know there is a plan you just might want to know how you fit into the plan, right. Okay, first things first when it comes to how Jesus called this plan into action. The first thing I notice is this...in verse one it says that the 72 (oh, your translation might say 70, same group) were not sent out alone, they were partnered together. Jesus knew something that most of us learn the hard way, that doing something alone is more difficult than doing something together with another person. We believe in this some much here at CrossPoint Church that one of our core values says it things way: ***we believe we do life better together.*** It's hard to find any place in the Bible where God calls someone to act alone to advance the Kingdom of God on earth. **It's** just so much **better to work together** when it comes to being the witness God wants us to be. That's why we believe in LifeGroups and mission trips where we partner together with other believers who can encourage and support us as we live out the plan.

Okay, that first thing is don't live the plan alone. The second thing is this, cover the plan with prayer. Look at verse two: ² ***These were his instructions to them: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.*** There is a seriousness and an urgency to the plan. There are people who need to hear the message of God's love and salvation and few who seem willing to speak the message of Jesus Christ. The urgency is that the harvest will not be in the field forever. We all know that truth...we've all lost someone die before their time. I have some regrets in my life, some times when I felt the nudge to share my faith with someone and I didn't and learned later that the person had died. So, Jesus says we should **live the plan covered in prayer.** Jesus has a plan and it's important for us to talk with the One who's plan is perfect and know knows exactly what he wants us to say, who he wants us to say it to, and when he wants us to say it. The only way I'm going to know those things is if I am tuned into the voice of God in prayer....amen? Jesus follows that up by reminding us that witnessing to the plan is going to take us being smart in a tricky world. The only way I can do that is by prayer.

Alright, let's move on to the next verse to see another key to the plan. I actually think this is one of the most important things Jesus says to his disciples that we miss. Look at verse four: ⁴ ***Don't take any money with you, nor a traveler's bag, nor an extra pair of sandals. And don't stop to greet anyone on the road.*** So many of us don't feel like we're schooled enough or know enough of the Bible or articulate enough to be used by God to advance the Kingdom. But, what Jesus says to his disciples here is clear...it's not about being trained. He sends these 72 out without what most of us would think are the essentials and he sends us out too without what you might think is an essential – education, study, biblical knowledge. Instead, what he wants them to depend on is the story of transformation that has happened in their hearts and lives by knowing Jesus. That's what **it's about, feeling ready, it's about telling the story.** Our story of how Jesus changed our lives, healed our hearts of our bodies, restored our families or marriages, or made us a part of the family are what is more attractive to people than all the biblical knowledge the world has to offer. The other stuff can be a distraction to the story you have so Jesus says, don't get distracted along the way...stay focused on the story you have of what Jesus has done for you. Anyone here have a story to tell...I thought so.

So, why don't we tell our stories? I think it's because we forget how important the message we've been give truly is to those who hear it. We get busy doing all of the things that constitute our daily lives and forget that real people need to hear a real, living message of hope and eternal life in Jesus Christ. We get distracted by all of the things that area all around us. Jesus reminds the disciples of just what is important...home, family, peace, blessings, meals together, healing of our bodies and souls. Those are more important than making sure we catch the latest movie, bingeing our favorite show, downloading music, or any of the things that have very little lasting value. Verses 5 through 9 are all about **staying focused on the things that matter the most.** It's in those things that we get a chance to share the life changing message of Jesus Christ.

Now, I want to say something that is a part of Jesus message to those who are living the plan. In verses 10-13 Jesus says some things that might seem kind of harsh to some of us. He is clearly saying that not everyone while listen to what you have to say or believe that life change is available for them. He tells the disciples: ¹⁰ *But if a town refuses to welcome you, go out into its streets and say,* ¹¹ *'We wipe even the dust of your town from our feet to show that we have abandoned you to your fate. And know this—the Kingdom of God is near!'* ¹² *I assure you, even wicked Sodom will be better off than such a town on judgment day.* ¹³ *"What sorrow awaits you, Korazin and Bethsaida! For if the miracles I did in you had been done in wicked Tyre and Sidon, their people would have repented of their sins long ago, clothing themselves in burlap and throwing ashes on their heads to show their remorse.*

I want to be clear and for you to hear this today, we're responsible to tell the story, there is no release from that. God expects us to witness to others about the great things He has done for us. But, we are not responsible for what the hearers do with it. Some of you carry the bourdon of knowing that you tried to tell others and they wouldn't listen. Some of those people you tried to witness to were some of your own family members. Your responsibility is to share the message, to live in such a way that others see Jesus in you, to talk in ways that reveal a changed and transformed life. It is not your responsibility to save anyone...that's God's job. You are not Moses or the Messiah. The plan is to **be passionate about the story you have to tell**. Our job is to bring the message to others in the most compelling way you possibly can. It is then up to the individual to hear and accept the message of God's unconditional love for themselves. If that person chooses not to listen, go back to prayer and ask God to send someone they will listen to. To continue to try might actually do more harm than good. Many have been turned away from God and salvation because the person presenting was not sensitive to the person they were witnessing to.

So, Church, you are Jesus' Plan A to share his message with the world we live in. So, let me ask you, what's your story look like? Do you know what you would say if someone ask you about eternal life, if someone wanted or needed to hear about the saving power of Jesus, or if someone needed to know how Jesus changed your life. Are you ready to tell your story? Are you ready to be Plan A?

I want you to jot down a few things that make up your story. Just the high lights to get you thinking. What has Jesus done for you? What life change, healing, transformation, salvation did Jesus bring into your life? Jot down just a few of those things as a way to jump start your witness as a part of God's Plan A.
