

NOW & NEXT: STEPPING INTO GOD'S FUTURE TOGETHER | WEEK 06

Sent

Primary Text: Luke 10:1-20; Ephesians 4:11-13 | Michael Stambaugh

Our Mission

We lead lost people to center their lives on Jesus.

Our Vision

*Over the next 5 years, we will become a church where you are **known, loved, and sent** to live out your kingdom purpose. With the hope of Jesus, we will*

Guide people to discover their spiritual gifts & calling.

Train people to meet spiritual and practical needs.

Empower people to multiply their kingdom impact.

Sent Ahead: Luke 10:1

In Luke 9, Jesus sent out the twelve. In Luke 10, he sends seventy-two more, ordinary disciples whose names we don't even know. This isn't a passage about pastors and missionaries. It's about the people in the crowd.

Jesus sent them "ahead... to all the towns and places he planned to visit." They weren't bringing Jesus somewhere he had forgotten. They were getting people ready for a Jesus who was already on his way. You're not dragging Jesus into your workplace or your neighborhood. He has already planned to visit. You just get there first.

As he sends them, Jesus instructed them about the harvest, which wasn't the problem. Jesus said the harvest is great. The problem is the workers. How Ripe Is the Harvest? In Week 2 we saw how big the field is: about 52,500 of our Cascade County neighbors have no religious connection at all. The book *The Great Dechurching* shows how ripe it is. About 40 million Americans who used to go to church at least monthly now almost never go. For most of them, it wasn't a big blowup. One of the main reasons they gave was "I moved." In a town where military families arrive and leave every year, that hits close to home. About half of those who left evangelical churches say they'd be willing to come back. Many still believe all the same things. They're just not connected to anyone.

Sent Dependent: Luke 10:4

Jesus is honest he is send them as "lambs among wolves." Being sent doesn't make you powerful. It makes you dependent. He sends them dependent on him and others on purpose, so that they have to receive, sit at someone else's table, and trust that what they need will be there.

Sent into Homes: Luke 10:5-9

Notice what Jesus tells them to do when they enter a home:

- They start with peace. Not an argument or a pitch, but a blessing. If they don't receive it, it comes back to you.
- They stay. Not a door-to-door campaign. Settle in, be *known*, and *know others*.
- They eat. Sharing a meal is how strangers become neighbors.
- They meet both practical and spiritual needs. Heal the sick, and tell them the Kingdom is near.

Two thousand years later, researchers found almost the same steps to reengage people who have left the church. In *The Great Dechurching*, the authors conclude, "...some people need a nudge, others need a dinner table, and others need years of prayerful, consistent movement in their lives." Most of the harvest isn't waiting for you to win a debate. For many people, the work is simply an invitation. You don't have to do all three for everybody. Figure out which one the person in front of you needs, and do that one.

Everyone of Us is Sent: Ephesians 4:11-13

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.

Pastors and teachers don't do the work. They *equip God's people* to do the work of ministry and service. A pastor's job isn't to be sent so you don't have to be. It's to get you ready to go out on the mission.

Sent Home Rejoicing: Luke 10:17-20

The seventy-two returned to Jesus with joy about the results of their work. If your joy comes from results, you'll quit the first time someone shuts the door. Jesus says our joy isn't in what we did. It's that our names are already written down in heaven. We don't go to get our names written in heaven. We go because they already are. Every follower of Jesus is sent. Not someday, not somewhere far away, but this week, two by two, into the houses Jesus is already planning to visit. And we go because our names are already written in heaven, not to get them written there.

Where is Jesus sending you to lead lost people to center their lives on Jesus? A place is not always a spot on a map. It might be a job site, a classroom, a break room, a locker room, or your own kitchen table. Name yours.

What will you do beyond praying for lost people? Jesus says, "Now, go..." Maybe it's an invitation, maybe it's a meal, maybe it's a friendship. Jesus is sending us on his mission.

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