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The Gospel of Luke

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## Introduction

- Overwhelmed in China - Trying to get where I needed to be on my own... Overwhelmed knowing the history of persecution in that country, etc.
- In the states, I'm not too overwhelmed. I know how to do my job. At our church, we know how to plan programs, offer opportunities for discipleship and evangelism, etc.
- If not careful, it can almost seem as we're simply trying to keep the organization of the church going rather than realizing that the church is a part of God's plan to deliver people from sin and death.
- E.M. Bounds - "What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use -- men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men -- men of prayer."
- The church is not a machine, but God's chosen plan to take the good news of the death and resurrection of Jesus to the world.
- You are the church. You are God's plan to reach the world with the Gospel. That thought should be overwhelming to you. God WANTS you to be overwhelmed by this responsibility, and God also wants you to find great joy in this responsibility.
- Living out God's mission is not drudgery. It can be challenging and difficult, but it's joyous and fulfilling.

- This morning, I want you to be overwhelmed by God’s mission, and I’ll show you why from our text. I also want you to find joy in living for God’s mission. I’ll show you how from our text.
- I want to show you three ways we need to respond to what God has called us to as a church.

## You need to be overwhelmed by your inadequacy to serve Jesus well.

- Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem. As He makes His way from Galilee, He sends disciples ahead of Him to the towns He will visit on the way to Jerusalem.
- Jesus already sent out the 12 ([Luke 9](#)). Now Jesus is sending out 72. Why 72? 1.) Ministry is not limited to the twelve. Jesus calls all who follow Him to live for His mission. 2.) 72 - reconstitution of Israel - Jesus chose 12 disciples (12 tribes of Israel) - 72 maybe 70 elders of Israel who led with Moses ([Numbers 11:17](#)). Jesus - the true King - establishing who the people of God really are - those who follow Him and serve Him.
- [Luke 10:2-12](#) similar to [Luke 9:3-6](#). But notice... We don’t know any of the names of the 72. These are heroes of the faith! First large group sent out by Jesus to spread the good news of the Kingdom, and we don’t even know their names because their names don’t matter. Jesus’ name matters.
- We like to know the names of important people - and we want our names to be known, but what matters is people knowing the name of Jesus and surrendering to Him. We live for His name, not our names.
- Notice that the 72 are:
  - Outnumbered (vs. 2) - “Harvest is plentiful, laborers are few.”
  - Overpowered (vs. 3) - “Lambs among wolves.”
  - Under-resourced (vs. 4) - “Don’t take anything with you - not even your shoes.”

- Jesus calls them to His mission and intentionally overwhelms them. How can we reach our city when so few of us? 60,000 in a five mile radius of us - 900 of us on a really good Sunday. How? We're overpowered - our secular world wants to devour Christians - label us as bigots, irrelevant, etc. And... we're under-resourced - not enough time, money, ability to reach the city.
- It's overwhelming because we are so inadequate. Yet, inadequacy is exactly what Jesus wants us to embrace. Our inadequacy helps us to remember what Jesus has called us to is not about us nor is what Jesus called to done ultimately by our power and strength. We are completely dependent on Jesus to accomplish through us what He desires to accomplish.
- We embrace inadequacy because:
- **Inadequacy drives you to prayerful dependence.** vs. 2- Pray to the Lord of the harvest. We need a daily posture of prayer. "Lord, we are inadequate. We need your help. We are depending on you to work through us." Are we regularly praying for God to work through us for the sake of His mission?
- **Inadequacy frees you to follow Jesus' way.** Lamb among wolves. I don't have to try to be a wolf - tendency to want to fight back, flex our muscles against those who come against us. Tendency to get offended by those who speak ill toward us, etc. Yet, Jesus sending us like lambs, and I need to be led like a lamb. Lambs aren't on the attack. Rather, lambs are led by the shepherd, and lambs let the shepherd defend them. It's ok to be a lamb - to be led by the Spirit, to be gentle, to be loving in our conversations. Quit trying to be a wolf - let the Good Shepherd lead you.
- Live like a lamb at work, at school, at home... being led by the Spirit... being gentle in your conversations, etc.
- **Inadequacy helps you to focus on the message and the people that need the message.** "Go to houses." NOT go to the streets. AND, stay put in the houses that receive knowing that not all houses will receive. There will be rejection. But... tell of the Kingdom of God - The King in here - submit to His reign. Note - it's relational. Bring a message of

peace, because you've found peace. NOT bring a message of hostility. "Blessed are the peacemakers." Blessed are those who realize there is no peace outside a relationship with Jesus. Focus is on building relationships with Gospel intentionality. Are you building relationships with Gospel intentionality?

- We need to be overwhelmed with the mission - it's massive. We need to be overwhelmed with our inadequacy. We can't do it - BUT we serve a Savior who is more than adequate and empowers us as we depend on Him.

## You need to be overwhelmed by your knowledge of God's judgment.

- People in these towns that these disciples loved - and they would experience judgement if they did not turn to Jesus.
- Tyre and Sidon = cities condemned by the prophets of the OT because of their materialism, arrogance, and wickedness. "If they would have seen the miracles you have seen, they would have repented...."
- Capernaum - the place where Jesus set up his "home base" of ministry. They were around Jesus, heard him teach, saw miracles yet did not believe. They would not be exalted to heaven. Instead, they would be sent to the place of eternal death.
- Jesus is clear: the eternal destiny of people hinges on their response to the message that we proclaim (vs. 16).
- **God's judgment is unbearable.** vs. 12 "It will be more tolerable for Sodom." "It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon." In the minds of Jews, no people were worse than the people of Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon. Yet, Jesus says that for Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, their punishment for rejection would be worse. I'm not sure how it could be worse, but a sober reminder. The people in Galilee had been EXPOSED to the Good News yet rejected. Jesus lived AMONG the people of Capernaum.
- What Jesus says is true of some people in this room - exposed to Jesus week in and week out but never respond to His message. Constantly

around the things of Christ, but constantly reject Him. If you do not turn to Jesus for salvation, judgment will be unbearable and eternal.

- [Hebrews 9:27](#) - judgment is coming. You will not be able to stand in the judgment unless you turn to Jesus. You won't be able to plead your case ([Luke 7:22-24](#)). The only hope you have in judgment is to plead the blood of Jesus.
- **God's judgment should motivate Gospel conversations.** We don't like to talk about the judgment of God, but we can't avoid it. It's coming. Our hearts should be broken for those we love. Knowing that Jesus is the only hope for the world motivates us to pray for those who are far from Christ and motivates us to labor for the Gospel. We know this, but why is there little prayer? Little labor?

## You need to be overwhelmed by the joy of living on His mission.

- This is a heavy passage. So far, the reality of our inadequacy and the reality of judgment.
- Heavy, yet joyous. The 72 return in joy. Undoubtedly, they had hardships on their journey. Undoubtedly, they experienced rejection. BUT...they saw God at work through them.
- "Demons submit..." They saw victory over darkness.
- vs. 18-20 - Reference to [Isaiah 14:12-15](#)? Jesus rejoicing in the work that He has empowered His followers to do - Satan falling - darkness being pushed back as the disciples go in the power of Christ.
- vs. 18-20 - **Jesus looking forward** - seeing what's going to happen. He will defeat Satan once and for all through His death and resurrection, and as His church goes forward sharing the Gospel, His church proclaims the Good News of the One True King! This is joyous! vs. 19 - Nothing will harm us? Speaking spiritually, not physically. The enemy cannot overtake the children of God. He cannot harm us spiritually.
- vs. 20 - We don't rejoice as much in the demonic fleeing as we rejoice in the assurance that we have in our salvation. Because of our faith in the

risen Lord, our names are written in heaven, and so our the names of those that we have the opportunity to lead to faith in Jesus Christ.

- The 72 - we don't know their names, but God knows every name of the 72 - He has written their names in His book. There will come a day when no one remembers your name, but God does. Through your faith in Christ, He has preserved your name for all eternity.
- How do I experience the joy of living on His mission? Especially when living for Jesus' mission seems difficult, impossible, and even scary?
- **Get your eyes on Jesus.** For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross for you. He died the death you deserve and rose from the dead to give you life. It was joy for Jesus to suffer for you in your place. That's huge! He didn't say to the Father, "Really? This is the plan? Do I have to?" Rather, "Not my will, but your will be done." Have you placed your faith in Jesus? Turn to Him today. (That's it? vs. I want more...)
- **Get your eyes off of you.** Ph. 2 - Jesus took on the form of a servant. How often do you take on the form of a master instead of a servant? What can this life give me vs. how can I give away my life? What can others do for me vs. what can I do for others?
- **Get your eyes on others.** How will you pray for others this week? How will you pray for your church this week? How will you be a Gospel blessing to someone this week?
- When you serve Jesus and live for His mission, there's joy. When you see someone embrace Jesus as Savior, there's joy. When you obey Jesus, there's joy. When you give up your desires for His desires, there's joy. Be overwhelmed with the joy of serving Jesus.