



A Biblical Mandate – Luke 10

Luke 10 is a very helpful story as we think through our central tasks in mission. It's particularly helpful as we consider our three-pronged strategy for our corps in our division.

The prelude to our story in Luke 9 is not great. In fact, the disciples have failed again and again! They prayed for healing and failed (9:37); they argued about who among them was the greatest (v46); they wanted to stop people they hadn't approved of doing ministry (v49); they wanted to call down fire on Samaritans (v51); and they gave three reasons for not following Jesus (v57)! An unimpressive list (and some food for thought for us!). And yet, when we turn to chapter 10 there is wild success. Why?

We are missionaries in God's power

Firstly, this mission trip was an object lesson for them that the real power is Christ's, not theirs – "Whoever listens to you listens to me", Jesus says in verse 16. It's his power through our work. It is Jesus who sent them ahead (lit. 'before his face' (1)). We can't save people! But we can be his heralds, his representatives, preparers of the way.

There's also another crucial idea regarding the Kingdom in this chapter. It's within us. It's seen in us. We carry it with us. And this is really, really important! Jesus says in verses 9 and 11 "The Kingdom of God has come near". Why? It's not so much us, but rather God in us, the living Christ in us, bringing the reign and rule of God near to people who do not know him.

Our presence matters! Our being in the world changes the world whether people accept our mission or not. We're called to be in the world for the world's sake, so that wounded creation can glimpse the Creator. It's why it hurts the Church so much when there is abuse, anger, hardness of heart, cynicism, and criticism among us. We are failing at the very thing we're meant to be doing, bringing the Kingdom near. On the other hand, when we offer love and kindness and hope to people, even if they don't get saved, we are doing Kingdom work!

Missioners need to be resilient and persistent – don't give up!

Secondly, while we are bringing peace, offering Kingdom peace (v5-6) in people's lives will not always be accepted. But the value of the message is not measured by its acceptance – so we go on! Yes, we are lambs among wolves – seemingly weak and powerless in a pretty

brutal world, but people's rejection of the message does not affect its truth. We can do it! Each of us.

Salvo songwriter Sidney Cox's very first song was an attempt to encourage people in this very task. He says, "I sang the little melody over and over to myself, I could almost point to this person and that one and another with the thought and hope in my heart that perhaps a little melody of this kind might help them to release the loveliness and beauty of their Christian experience for their own sake and for the benefit of someone else".

You can tell out the sweet story. You, yes you.

Somebody's life will be brighter.

Somebody's care will be lighter.

You can tell out the sweet story. You, yes you.

Well, how do we tell out this sweet story? And here's a biblical basis for our strategy and benchmarking as a division. If we were to summarise the method of this chapter it would be. "Eat what is provided, heal the sick, and announce the Kingdom". Or if you like: Humbly gather at table, help the hurting, proclaim your King in word and deed.

1. Gather at table – share a meal with people who need to be encouraged towards the Kingdom. Gather for Kingdom conversations, not just invite friends over (although that's good, too). It's why Jesus says, "Remain in the same house; eat what's set before you" (v7). We don't look for better tables. We gather at tables, break bread together, to bring the Kingdom near to people who desperately need to hear the sweet story. This was the great genius of Alpha. It was built around a shared meal and deep conversation that brings the Kingdom near!

2. Heal the hurting (v9) – we're not doctors. In the 21st century, physical healing is well taken care of. But we can help the hurting – those wounded in their hearts, in their spirits, who need help and healing. Our job is to offer support, financially, emotionally, physically, spiritually; and so we encourage, we provide. That is the role of every Community of Hope and the programs they offer.

3. Proclaim our King (v9) – this is the fundamental task of our worshipping communities. When we meet together we proclaim Jesus before each other and before the world. And we take every opportunity to proclaim his Kingdom; sharing the Kingdom by our actions and loving care, but also ready to tell out that sweet story; to say 'yes Jesus is my King, I'd like to tell you about him'.

And so we are called to:

Humbly share at the table, help the hurting, proclaim our King in word and deed.

But why? Why would we do it? Well, because something amazing happens when we do. We see this in Jesus' response in Luke 18-20, this extraordinary image of Satan falling from the

sky. You see, when the people of God bear witness to the Kingdom, something significant shifts in the world. The wounding of the world is healed, the sin, despair and evil that hurts us so is defeated and diminished by faithful loving Christians living out the Kingdom. Something changes in that unseen but powerful world of the spirit. What we might call the unseen real.

So keep going; even if your part in God's mission seems small; even if the challenges ahead seem daunting. You're changing the world even if you can't see it!

The unseen real is powerful and important. The world of heart and spirit binds us and holds us. We know this in the deep unseen connections we have with people we love and care about. As human beings we need them, these unseen ties. They hold us, keep us, name us.

But there is not just love and goodness in the unseen real. Too often in the world there is unseen fear, unseen hate, and unseen despair. Some might call it dysfunction. But we know its root cause is sin. And when we as Kingdom people, in whom the light of glory dwells, mirror the love of our King and act with kindness and generosity, the Kingdom of darkness is diminished; we defeat those unseen forces that destroy, and corrupt, and hurt, and wound and bind us.

This Kingdom mission is a big job! So we're going to need a plan! See our strategic plan, including all known timelines and dates, at <http://mySalvos.org.au/hoperising/plan/>.