

Later Judean Ministry, Part 1: Jesus Sends Out the Seventy and Who Is Your Neighbor?

Looking into the Face of Jesus
The Life of Christ, 2: Pages 68-75
Manuscript: Lesson Plan 65

Introduction

Our text for this lesson is Luke 10:1–37.

Who is your neighbor? I know the obvious answer is everyone, but think deeper. Who is your neighbor? Be specific. Whom does the Lord say is your neighbor?

This was the very question asked when a “lawyer” was trying to trick Jesus or catch Him in His words. Before we get there, we need to study about Him sending out the seventy in Luke 10.

We just spent a few lessons covering John 8–10; now we are transitioning to Luke. The later Judean ministry lasted about 2.5 months. It took place from the Feast of Tabernacles to the Feast of Dedication. He would spend time in Judea and then in Perea.

Jesus and the Seventy (Luke 10:1–24)

Let us look at Luke 10:1-24, when Jesus calls the seventy (read).

The fact that Christ could get seventy men to go on a missionary trip is amazing. It shows that His ministry was gaining momentum. Remember, it was just months ago that many of His disciples had left Him while in Galilee (John 6:66). We will find soon that He would be surrounded by large crowds again (Luke 12:1).

There are similarities between the sending of the seventy and sending of the twelve apostles (Matthew 10 and Mark 6). The workers were sent out in pairs (Luke 10:1 and Mark 6:7). Jesus gave them power to heal and cast out demons (Luke 10:9, 17, 19; Matthew 10:8). Their basic message was that the kingdom of God was near (Luke 10:9; Matthew 10:7). The instructions regarding personal conduct were nearly identical to those given to the twelve apostles.

There were some differences as well. The most obvious difference was the numbers sent. The work of the Twelve concluded the general ministry in Galilee while the mission of the seventy was preparatory to the ministry in Judea.

Did you notice the reaction of the seventy when they returned? They were surprised by their power and abilities (Luke 10:17). What was Jesus’ response? He said he “. . . was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning” (Luke 10:18). What did He mean by that? He was not referencing the devil’s origin. He was referencing the decline of the devil’s power.

What did Jesus tell them to rejoice in (Luke 10:20)? They should rejoice that their names were written in the Book of Life. Nothing is more important than having one’s name recorded in heaven. Jesus rejoiced and praised God for revealing His will to these disciples (Luke 10:21–24).

The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37)

Now we turn our attention to one of the most well-known parables of Jesus: the parable of the Good Samaritan. Let us read Luke 10:25-37 (read).

We need to start by looking at the lawyer. He was not a civil lawyer, but an expert in the Old Law. His question: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life" (Luke 10:25)? Why did he ask the question? Luke 10:25 tells us it was to test Him. Jesus turned the question back on him. The lawyer answered correctly. He quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. Christ answered this question the exact same way in Matthew 22:36. The lawyer did not like the first exchange, so he tried to "justify himself" by asking another question (Luke 10:29): "Who is my neighbor?"

Jesus then tells the story. Look again at Luke 10:30-36 (read).

This is an obvious answer to the lawyer's question. Jesus asked the question, "Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among robbers?" We can be sure the lawyer left "red-faced" when he had to answer, "The one who showed him mercy."

Application: Who Is Your Neighbor?

We need to challenge ourselves with this question: Who is our neighbor? Why were the priest and the Levite not a neighbor to the wounded traveler? What did they see when they saw the man? They saw him as a burden, something to get in their way, etc. How many people do we pass by on the other side? By the way, we are not talking about people stranded on the highway.

But for some reason, we think the question of who our neighbor is has layers. We first start with our family. Then we go to our friends. Then we go to people that have similar interests. By this time, do we have room for others?

So, who is our neighbor? The basic premise of this story is that our neighbor is whoever is in need. Do you know people who are in need? Are you being a neighbor to them? Are you obeying the 2nd greatest command of the Old Law: "Love your neighbor as yourself"?

So, who is our neighbor, we ask again? Notice Christ's question; He does not ask who the Samaritan's neighbor was. He asked who was a neighbor to the man. This makes this question a little more interesting. Not only was the person in need the Samaritan's neighbor whom he was to love as himself, but it implies that part of being a good neighbor is allowing others to help you. Sometimes we need to realize that we are the man stranded and left for dead on the side of the road. Sometimes we are the Samaritan that needs to help someone struggling. This is what community relationships are all about.

Conclusion

Who is your neighbor? Who do you know who needs you? How can you reach out to them this week?

Also, consider allowing yourself to have others be good neighbors to you. Look at what Jesus said in John 13:34, 35, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."