

Luke 10v1-16 – Jesus sends out the seventy-two

Jesus was heading towards the cross. He was to claim his kingdom, by dying for sin. He was calling his disciples. Some were not ready (9:57-62). They turned back. Others were ready. He sent them out now to preach the kingdom.

1. How they were to go (v1-8)

These preachers were going ahead of Jesus. They were preparing the way. People were to be told – the kingdom is coming; be ready! Decide if you are for it or against it! Today gospel preachers are also sent ahead of Jesus. He is returning. Are you ready? Those that Jesus sent were not perfect. Jesus uses weak and unworthy people. He told them the task was too big – God has a harvest of all nations. The workers were too few. But they should not give up – they should pray. It is God's harvest; he will send out more workers if we ask him. They were to go urgently. They were not to waste time or think about their own comfort. They were to fix their eyes on the work. When they found a house they should stay there. They should eat and be thankful. Preachers deserve their food. They must give themselves to the work – not to politics, or money, or an easy life; but to preaching the kingdom of Christ.

2. What they were to preach (v9)

They were sent with a message. They were to preach that the kingdom of God was near. What is the kingdom of God? It is God's rule. It is where he puts creation right again. It is where the nations return to obedience to God. It begins in the hearts of believers and goes into their lives. The seventy-two were also able to do signs – signs of the kingdom. As they healed the sick, it was a sign of God restoring the world again. How would the kingdom come? Jesus was going to Jerusalem to claim his kingdom. He would claim it by suffering and dying for sin, and rising from the dead. That time was near. It was time to decide – were the people for or against Jesus? God is putting the world right through his Son. Bow to him – without Christ, you have no God.

3. The warnings they were to give (v10-16)

Some people will not receive God's word. The preachers needed to be ready for this. People want to be left in peace in their sins. Jesus told his disciples to warn such people. The message was still true. There will be a day of judgment (v12) when God brings justice to those who despised him. That judgment will be terrible. We are not safe if our lives look good outwardly. Jesus told the cities of Galilee – religious, upright places – that they would be judged very severely. Even the wicked, ungodly, greedy, immoral cities of the Old Testament (Sodom, Tyre, Sidon) would be judged more gently. Those cities were destroyed by God's anger. But to reject the gospel is worse. Capernaum was the town Jesus spent most time in. They were very religious. But they would be thrown down to the depths, because they rejected God's kingdom when it came in Jesus. Your privileges and blessings today are useless if you refuse to repent and believe the gospel! Verse 16 tells us that we cannot separate the preacher from God who sends him. If he faithfully preaches God's words then we have heard the voice of God himself. If we criticise and complain and find excuses to not obey, then we have dishonoured God himself. How have you been responding to the message of God's kingdom?