

Living the Word

A Bible Study for Missionary Discipleship

Session 1

Luke 10: 1-9

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”



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Session 1

OPENING PRAYER

God of life and love, pour forth Your Spirit to inspire me with Your words of compassion, forgiveness and love. Stir in me a desire to renew my faith and deepen my relationship with Jesus, Your son. Open my heart to hear and live your Gospel message. Strengthen me to be a Missionary Disciple, a sharer of the Good News in words and witness proclaiming your all-inclusive love, mercy, and grace in all that I do. Amen

OPENING PSALM

(Create two groups and take turns reading together)

Psalm 25

Prayer for Guidance and for Deliverance

Group 1 ¹ To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

² O my God, in you I trust;

do not let me be put to shame;

do not let my enemies exult over me.

³ Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;

let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

Group 2 ⁴ Make me to know your ways, O LORD;

teach me your paths.

⁵ Lead me in your truth, and teach me,

for you are the God of my salvation;

for you I wait all day long.

Group 1 ⁶ Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,

for they have been from of old.

⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;

according to your steadfast love remember me,

for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

Group 2 ⁸ Good and upright is the LORD;

therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

⁹ He leads the humble in what is right,

and teaches the humble his way.

¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,

for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

OPENING REFLECTION VIDEO

<https://wordonfire.institute/film>

THIS WEEKS BIBLE PASSAGE

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few”

You are being called to one of the 70.

Luke 10: 1-9

After this the Lord appointed seventy^[a] others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ² He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³ Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ ⁶ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸ Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹ cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’

REFLECTION

In our first reading for this Bible series on “Becoming a Missionary Disciple,” Jesus is sending out 35 pairs of disciples, 70 altogether, to go to every town or hamlet where Jesus was planning to teach. In this section of Luke’s Gospel, Jesus is beginning his journey towards Jerusalem where death on the Cross awaits him. All along the way, as he travels with his apostles, Jesus will teach the people the Gospel – the “Good News” of the Lord. Jesus will be visiting many places and so he needs to send out a large number of disciples and cannot rely on just the 12 apostles to go before him. Seventy disciples (also recorded as 72 in some translations) was likely the majority of Jesus’ disciples. It is expected that, at the time of his Ascension, Jesus had about 200 to 250 followers. Keeping in mind that this event in Luke takes place before the Ascension, it is likely that at the commissioning of the 70 Jesus is sending out nearly everyone who would be considered to be a disciple.

As you read through this passage from Luke, notice also that the 70 disciples were sent out without much preparation and were told to expect some tough audiences. When they are sent with no purse, bag or sandal what this suggests is that they are to go with what they have and not wait until they are fully prepared. The 70 disciples did not know everything about Jesus, they had not witnessed the cross or resurrection, did not have the Gospels to fall back on, and had probably not even been disciples for very long. But they were sent anyway because the Good News of Jesus had to get out.

Jesus is sending us out ahead of him today just as he did with those 70. Sisters and brothers, Jesus is sending us out on mission! There are so many people who do not know much or anything about Jesus, have fallen away from Jesus, have grown indifferent to the Church. We know that Jesus loves them and we need to carry this message to them.

How do we know Jesus is calling you? Pope Francis instructs us that because we have been baptized we have all become missionary disciples who are meant to go and share the love of Jesus with the world. As he wrote in *The Joy of the Gospel*,

“In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization... The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized”
(*Joy of the Gospel* 120)

Not only are all Catholics called to evangelize (proclaim) the Good news, but Pope Francis also encourages all parishes to prepare Catholics to be missionary disciples. This is why the Diocese of Crookston put this Bible study together: this series of reflections on Sacred Scripture is meant to help form you to be a missionary disciple for Jesus.

We are each being called to reach out to others. This does not mean that we need to preach to hundreds, bring 20 people to Church this Sunday, or travel to some far distant location. No, we are to engage one or two people at a time, to share the love and good news of Jesus with them, to be with them as they seek the living God. We are each being called to become “one of the 70” who prepare people to encounter Jesus.

Just think, if everyone in this Bible study group shared Jesus’ Love and the Gospel message with one other person this week and then kept doing this every week of the year. There would be hundreds or even thousands of people who would be brought closer to Jesus and his Church over the next few months. Keep engaging in this Bible Study. Its purpose is to help you see that there is a very simple way to go about the work of the 70. You don’t need months or years of preparation, you just need to be willing to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others.

Thank you for preparing yourself to be one of the next group of 70 that Jesus is sending out as his missionary disciples.

PAUSE FOR SILENT PRAYER

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What is the Good News we are called to share. Here is a basic proclamation of the Gospel to try out. You do not need to share every point with everyone you meet but if you have thought about these points you will be ready to share one or two of them with someone you encounter who is seeking the Lord. The points are followed by a reflection question that will help you practice how to talk about each point. If you are in a Bible study group, you may not have time to get through all of these questions now and so each person finish answering the questions at some point this week.

1. God loves you and has a plan for your life.

Reflection question: How have you felt the love of Jesus and how can you share His love with others?

2. We separate ourselves from God through sin.

Reflection question: When are there times when you feel distant from God?

3. Christ Jesus died and rose from the dead to save you.

Reflection question: How would you explain this to someone else?

4. Repent and believe in the Gospel.

Reflection question: Why is it important to say “I am sorry” to God and to others?

5. Be Baptized and receive the Holy Spirit.

Reflection question: How do you use prayer and the Sacraments to open yourself to the Holy Spirit?

6. Abide in Christ and his body, the Church.

Reflection question: How does the Catholic Church help you stay close to Jesus?

CALL TO ACTION

Jesus sent out others in two-by-two ministry. For this first “call to action” ask one other person if you can share your answer for one or two of the above reflection questions with them. It could be your spouse, adult child, parishioner, or a friend. You could tell them that you are in this Bible study and, as part of your “homework,” you have to practice sharing these points with someone else.

CLOSING PRAYER

Missionary Discipleship Prayer

Leader: *“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed?
And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?
And how can they hear without someone to preach?
And how can people preach unless they are sent? –Romans 10: 13-15*

All: Heavenly Father,
Pour forth your Holy Spirit to inspire us
with these words from Holy Scripture,
so that we might be strengthened to go forth
and witness to the Gospel in our daily lives
through our words and actions.

In moments of hesitation, remind us:

- If not me, then who will proclaim the Gospel?
- If not now, then when will the Gospel be proclaimed?
- If not the truth of the Gospel, then what shall I proclaim?

Give us the grace
that we might hear the call of the New Evangelization
and become a Missionary Disciple, deepening our faith,
growing in confidence to proclaim the Gospel
and boldly witnessing to the saving grace of your Son,
Jesus Christ.

O Mary, our Immaculate Mother, pray for us.
Inspire us to imitate your example
as the first disciple of your son, Jesus,
who is Lord for ever and ever.

Amen.

Leader: *Mary, Star of the New Evangelization, All: pray for us.
St. Joseph, All: pray for us.
St. Thérèse of Lisieux, All: pray for us.
St. John Paul II, All: pray for us.*

