

# Are you a Christian?

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 29 November 2015

Preacher: Rev Howard Stone

[ 0 : 00 ] Let's go back to Luke chapter 10. We'll read verse 1 and 2.

After these things the Lord were appointed to seventy others also, and sent them two by two before his face into every city and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few.

Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send their labourers into his harvest. Let's pray briefly and ask for God's blessing on his word. Lord God, we thank you again so much for this marvellous privilege of having your truth.

That as we read these words, do you yourself, the almighty God, are blessing us. Give us a year to hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

By your Spirit enable me to express these truths in a way that is faithful and true. And it will be a blessing to me, myself, but each one of us here.

[ 1 : 10 ] And most of all, Lord God, that you yourself will be honoured and glorified as we reflect on what you've revealed. For Jesus' sake, amen. Amen. Jesus was on his way up to Jerusalem for the last time.

As a good Jew, he would have attended the feasts in Jerusalem. God had required that the Jews went to worship in Jerusalem three times a year.

The biggest feast was, of course, Passover. And Jesus knew very well that as he was going up to Jerusalem, he himself was going to be the sacrificial lamb.

His disciples had been told a number of times by Jesus that that's what was to happen. But they had never really understood it. They never grasped the purpose of Jesus coming into this world. And it wasn't until after his death and resurrection that their understanding grew and they recognised Jesus as the Messiah, but the one who had to suffer and die in that role as Messiah.

[ 2 : 34 ] Jesus has, on a previous occasion, sent out his twelve apostles, his twelve disciples, with a many still at the same recognition to the seventy that are here.

They are sent ahead of Jesus, preparing the various towns and villages that Jesus is going to pass through on his way up to Jerusalem, to proclaim the same message that he himself has been preaching about the kingdom of God.

And as he sends them out, he gives them this commission to pray the Lord of the harvest, to send out labourers into the harvest field.

And I wanted to ask you four questions this morning. And the first is, do you see the harvest? Do you see the harvest? I've never been in Scalpy before.

I arrived in the dark last night. And seeing it this morning, in all the rocks and the ruggedness of the countryside there, I can't imagine there's many places where crops could have been grown.

[ 3 : 44 ] But, Israel was very different. It is a rich agricultural land, but it was, perhaps it's not as much so now, as it was in Jesus' time.

So when Jesus uses this image of a harvest, it was something that the people would have been very familiar with. They were profeters. They had their own little area for cultivating crops.

They had their vineyards as well. And so Jesus says, there's a big harvest out there. There's a crop to be brought in. But there aren't enough people to do it.

Now Jesus, of course, was not talking about things that grow into the ground. He wasn't talking literally about fields to be harvested.

He was talking about all the people that surrounded him. There were hundreds, there were thousands of people who needed to be brought in. They needed to be harvested, they brought into the barn, so to speak.

[ 4 : 46 ] Into the kingdom of God. We were reflecting on that last night, that that was the heart of Jesus' message, the kingdom of God. He was proclaiming the kingdom of God.

He said, the way to enter the kingdom of God is through repentance. By acknowledging your own sin, acknowledging that you've messed up the law of God. You have not kept what God requires. You're under the judgment of God, acknowledging that.

And turning to go God's way. He says, that's how you enter the kingdom. And here's Jesus saying to these 70, there are all these people out there who need to be brought into the kingdom.

And there are simply not enough people to tell them of the way of salvation. And as Jesus is saying that, he's saying, you're workers.

You're the laborers. I'm sending you it. I'm sending you to these towns and villages with this message of the kingdom. But as you go, you'll recognize, we can't do this on our own.

[ 5 : 52 ] The harvest is just too big. There are far too many people. We cannot reach them all. And Jesus says, so you, as you're working, as you're laboring and bringing this harvest in, pray the Lord of the harvest that he'll send him more people with this message.

Christ's faith, do you see the harvest? Do you recognize that there are people you know? People you share your home with. People you work with. People you've known for decades in the community. Do you recognize that these people need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ need to be brought into the kingdom?

I have the privilege of doing a school assembly in Cancelton every fortnight. And on Friday, just before I started to speak with all the officers who gathered there, about 120 of them, it struck me that these are people who are going to live or die forever.

They are wonderful individuals created in the image of God who have got an everlasting future. and they need desperately to be brought into the kingdom.

[ 7 : 32 ] Friends, how do you view your community? How do you view the people you work with, your family members, your friends, those you have interaction with? Are they just people or are they a potential harvest that need to hear Jesus Christ?

That need to hear the way of salvation? that need to be rescued from death and from hell. Jesus had this vision.

Why did he spend three and a half years on the road, so to speak, going around the whole of Israel, preaching to hundreds and thousands of people?

Why did he do that? Why didn't he just continue his own little life? in Nazareth? Because he saw the harvest. He recognized these are people who desperately need to hear the way of salvation.

And he did everything he could to bring that message to his time. But he knew he was not capable of doing it all. Friends, the number of people that you have meaningful contact with through your life through your life through your life time were probably just a few hundred.

[ 8 : 57 ] There are hundreds and thousands of people on this island in Harris, in Lewis. There are millions in our country. There are billions in our world.

we cannot do that. We can't reach them all. So pray, the Lord of the harvest send it workers.

I was at an induction service at the Baptist Church in Thurso just a little over a week ago. And the speaker there had had contact with a Chinese Christian.

He was actually a professor in a Bible college in China. And he was asked, how many Bible colleges are there in China now? Remarkably, the man said, probably over a thousand.

And then he asked him, how many Christians are there in China? And he estimated a hundred million Christians. It's wonderful to know that the church is growing like that in other parts of the world.

[ 9 : 57 ] But it's still these billions of people who need to hear the gospel. Friends, you see that harvest. These laborers, these workers will be sent out by Jesus and saying, pray as you go.

Be the answer to your own prayer. Go and tell people about Jesus. Share the gospel with them. Speak about what Jesus has done for you that they too might be brought in into the kingdom of God.

Now perhaps you're sitting there thinking, I can't do that. I can't speak to other people. How do you think these 70 people felt when Jesus said, I want you to go in verse 3 as lambs among wolves?

It's not an easy task. There's going to be opposition. There's going to be trouble. but Jesus says, I want you to go. You've got to go. This task is far too important to neglect.

And not only that, he says, carry me either money, bag, knapsack, or sandals to eat along the road. You may be feeling, I can't do this. But Jesus says, go in a sense completely unprepared and trust God.

[11:28] Recognize your own weakness but trust God. He's given you that commission. He's chosen you to take this message to the world.

Don't go in your own strength. You can't do it. That's often my feeling when I've been asked to preach every Sunday. I can't do this. I still remember the first time I ever took a church service in Perth when I felt there was I'd been thinking for a while that the Lord was calling me to the ministry. By nature I'm quiet and shy. And I still remember closing the service for dating the adult out the door into the car and off home.

I just felt that was so off. But I reckon it's actually that's a good way to be. That sense we can't do this.

We haven't got the strength. We haven't got the wisdom. Jesus says trust God. Recognize there's a harvest. There is a harvest.

[12:37] People need the gospel. But in darkness share that truth. That light. Even if you feel uncomfortable God will undertake for you.

Second question. Do you welcome, do you receive the kingdom? In verse 8 Jesus gave him this instruction. Whatever city you enter and they receive you, they welcome you.

Eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick then and say to them, the kingdom of God has come near to you. But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, the very dust of your city which claims to us we wipe off against you.

Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near to you. This was the message they had to proclaim, the kingdom of God is near.

It was the message that John the Baptist proclaimed, the message that Jesus himself proclaimed. But God wrote, God's the king, and he wants you to submit to that reign, to acknowledge your rebellion against the king, and to come under his care and protection and his love and his goodness.

[14:10] They were commissioned to go out and to heal the sick. They were to take the initiative. They were to show that God has power over sickness. To show that God is a God of compassion, a God who loves people in their troubles and trials and difficulties.

When we read of Jesus healing the sick, there are a number of occasions where we read that he was filled with compassion. That's what motivated him.

That's what motivated God still to bring healing. That's why these people were being sent out. Demonstrate the kingdom of God. Demonstrate the rule of God over sickness and illness and disease.

And he was sick. And here was Jesus sharing his authority, his power, will they send. Demonstrate that your words are not just empty words.

That God is in charge. God does reign. God is a God of compassion, of love, and goodness. That as he heals the sick, he will also heal souls. As he demonstrates his care and his love and his compassion over physical illness.

[15:26] so in a more even more wonderful way, he will heal souls. Forgiving, transforming.

One of the lasting phrases that stuck in my mind from my time in the free church college, quite a long time ago now, was now, but not yet.

That's true of so much of what God has revealed, that what he has given us is here, present, now, but not yet.

Not yet in its fullness. When you trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, when you confess your sins, seek his forgiveness, you will be saved.

We mention our prayers, the promise of God, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, guaranteed. The moment you do that, you will be saved.

[16:30] But scripture also speaks about being saved. And in the future, you will be saved. It's now, you're saved now, but not yet in its fullness.

You have received all the wonderful things that God has got in store for you. That's yet to come. And that's true of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is now, it is here now.

Whether you receive it or reject it, it is here. It's not here in its fullness, it's not yet. Complete. There's still the harvest to be brought in.

There's still much more to be enjoyed by God's people. And that will not be complete until Christ returns to this world and banishes all evil and all sin and recreates this universe. And there God will rule perfectly. And all his people will enjoy all his benefits forever and ever. Jesus commissioned his disciples, these 70 disciples, go out and proclaim the kingdom. [17:43] Demonstrate that kingdom by healing the sick. Show the power of God over sickness. Show the compassion of God for people in their troubles and fights. And demonstrate that God wants to heal men and women and young people from sin sickness through the death of the Lord Jesus' own son.

Jesus anticipated that his disciples, the 70s, said that we're going to get different receptions. He says if you go somewhere and are welcomed, stay there and continue to work. But there may be places where you're rejected, where you don't get a good reception at all. In those places, wipe off the dust against you.

We need to say to that community we want nothing to do with you. You've rejected the gospel, you've rejected the good news of Jesus, you've rejected the news of the kingdom of God, it is here, whether you reject it or not, and we want nothing more to do with you. And it will bring great responsibility and great judgment as a consequence. Then you're hearing the kingdom, you hear it every Lord's Day, whenever you read the Bible, whenever it's preached, you're hearing the kingdom of God.

[19:25] Do you welcome it? God's love to God's love to God's love to God's love to God's love to you. This is true. This is the message of God from heaven. I accept this.

I've made Jesus Christ my Lord. I'm part of that kingdom. Or do you reject it? God's love to love to you.

There's no alternative. There's no middle grade. Either you're in the kingdom of God or you're in the kingdom of Satan. There's no man's love.

Do you welcome this kingdom? Do you experience that kingdom now? Do you know the rule of God in your life? Do you recognise that God's in charge of what's happening in your life?

Just a little over four years ago I had a motorcycle accident which I wrote my neck. It was the rule of God in my life.

[20:44] struggle to go to God. There had been a particular sin that I had struggled with for decades that others didn't know about. But in my attempt to overcome this sin I had made a value to God.

I said to you with me ever so severely if I ever go back to that sin of God to that sin again. It was my struggle with that particular sin that led me to make such a value.

Friends, I went back to my sin, to my shame. And God respected my value. He dealt with me ever so severely.

I had an accident, I broke my neck, I was in a halo, a metal halo holding my head up for four months. And that actually brought healing to that. But the wonderful thing is that God has rescued me from that sin as well.

It's no longer a part of my life. That was the kingdom of God. That was God's rule in my life. God caused that accident to be good and that came.

[21:59] There was no other beautiful at all. It didn't make sense as to why I should have had an explanation. But I looked back and I said, that was the rule of God.

A gracious and loving rule. He did what I asked him to do. He dealt with me very severely because of my sin in the bed.

But the outcome has been so great. He is a gracious and loving God. So friends, do you welcome the kingdom? Do you welcome the fact that God rules over your life?

Do you trust him? Do you know his love? Thirdly, do you recognize your privilege?

You are so wonderfully privileged this morning to be here, to hear the message of God's grace.

Going on to verse 13. Woe to you, Chorazin.

[23:02] Let's go back to 12 as well. When I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city. Woe to you, Chorazin. Woe to you, Bethsinah.

For if the mighty works which had been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.

You'll be familiar with the city of Sodom, I'm sure. The grateful story of God's judgment on that city for its wickedness.

It was destroyed, supernaturally, miraculously destroyed with fire and brimstone. People. Perhaps less familiar with Tyre and Sidon, they were cities to the north of Israel, important fading places. They were renowned for their wealth, for their prosperity, identity, but also for their pleasure seeking society and for their cruelty.

[ 24 : 17 ] They were an oppressive place to be. And under the judgment of God, Tyre was destroyed by the Babylonians.

Jesus is saying that these people were wicked, they were sinful, and they suffered the death of God.

But he says if they had had the privilege that the places like Corazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum had had, they would have repented. They would have acknowledged their sin and turned from it. But these places did not have the marvellous privilege that is that the times it had. Jesus had done wonderful things in these times.

The disciples, the twelve disciples had done wonderful things. They preached the kingdom. They healed the sick. This, the 70s, they were going out as well and they were going to do even more of the works of God for creating the kingdom.

[ 25 : 27 ] these places had such an enormous privilege that God was working amongst them. God was bringing them the message of his salvation.

And Jesus says those people who reject it, who say, I don't believe that. I don't need that. Life is alright as it is. Those people in the face of such an incredible privilege will face great judgment. And you and I, we have this incredible, amazing privilege of hearing the truth of God. It's fairly accessible to us.

Two or three weeks ago there was an international day of prayer for the persecuted church. I saw a video online of a young man in Nigeria.

The Boko Haram terrorist had broken into his home, threatened to kill him, and then had shot him in the face in front of his wife and six-year-old son.

[ 26 : 48 ] Mercifully, he survived. But the video I brought on or another video I brought on to describe how the church continued to worship in spite of such threats.

They recognised it was such an important thing. It was such a glorious privilege to have the truth of God that they wanted to continue in spite of the threat of death and persecution.

Friends, we share something of that privilege. You have got, I have got the message of the kingdom of God and the power of God and the salvation freely available.

No one's going to kill you, no one's going to threaten you, no one's going to stop you coming to worship. You have such a privilege.

So what are you doing with that privilege? The people of Sodom did not have that privilege.

[ 27 : 58 ] Sodom and Gomorrah are used to write the Bible as a demonstration of the anger of God, the judgment of God against sin.

And here's Jesus saying, actually, yes, they were dreadful sinners, but their sin is not as serious as the sin of Capernaum and Bethsaida and Cholazin and Scalpi if these people hear the gospel and reject it.

Because the more God gives to me, the more God gives to you, the greater your privilege, the greater your responsibility. And if you don't make use of that responsibility, if you don't make good use of that privileged honor, the only consequence is greater judgment.

Friends, do you recognize your privilege? Do you agree with me that you have this marvelous privilege? When I was preparing for this and considering verse 16, he who hears you hears me, he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects me who sent me.

I recognize the awesome responsibility that is given to me, and to Andrew, and to other preachers of the gospel.

[ 29 : 43 ] But as you're hearing me this morning, you're hearing Jesus. I don't say that lightly, it sounds somewhat boasting.

that by the Spirit of God, as I proclaim the truth, as Andrew is proclaiming the truth, week by week, Jesus is speaking.

And here is Jesus saying, those who hear you, he's talking to the 70, they hear me, they listen to me. If those that the 70 spoke to accepted the message, they were accepting the message from

Jesus himself.

But the other side is if you're rejecting it, if you reject what you hear this morning, do you reject what you're hearing week by week? You're not rejecting us, you're not rejecting the speakers in the pulpit here.

We're just messengers, we're just voices. Remember John Baptist, when he was asked who he was, he said, I'm just a voice in the wilderness. It's the message that's important, because that message is coming from none next to God himself.

[ 30 : 58 ] That's what Jesus says, whoever rejects you, rejects me. And if you're rejecting what you hear this morning, you say, no, I don't want that, I'm not interested in that.

I'm not going to turn to my soul. I'm not going to become part of the kingdom of God. If you reject that, you're not rejecting simply what I'm saying, you're rejecting the words of Jesus.

And if you're rejecting Jesus, you're actually rejecting the one who sent me. You cannot come to worship God this morning and then reject him.

God's God's truth. If you're truly come to worship God, you accept what he says. You believe what he says.

You submit to what he says. You follow what he says. You put into practice what he says. You live your life in submission to the king. Things do regret.

[ 32 : 03 ] God's truth. Or do you accept it, receive it, and live by it. One last question.

Do you have your name in heaven? Do you have your name in heaven? Verse 17, the same day, returning with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.

He said to them, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to travel on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. Nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. Your citizenship is in heaven.

Where do you have your name written? The electoral roll? On a DVLA computer? All kinds of places.

[ 33 : 11 ] Your name is written, is registered. Is it written in heaven? These 20, 70, they came back, they had a wonderful time.

They'd seen the power of God. Jesus had sent them out to preach the kingdom, to heal the sick. They'd done that. They'd experienced the power of God. They'd said even demons are cut to egg whites.

Jesus said, that's wonderful, but that's not the most important. The most important thing is that your name is written in heaven. That you have, you know the confidence that you're a citizen of heaven. That when life comes to a end, that's your hope, and you'll be there. Jesus had seen the vision, it appears, of Satan falling like lightning.

As the kingdom was being proclaimed, as the 70 were going out with this message of God's grace and love, the kingdom of Satan was being rocked. His authority, his power over the people of his time, of Jesus' time, was being undermined.

[ 34 : 31 ] Jesus knew that finally the old throw of Satan would come through his death. That was going to be the one thing that is sure that Satan will not last.

His kingdom and his authority will be overthrown forever. But he said to these 70 disciples, rejoice, first and foremost, in the fact that you have your name written in heaven.

you're a citizen in heaven. You're a child of God. You've been saved by God's grace. You've been transformed by his spirit.

You're no longer in the kingdom of Satan. Rather, you're on your way home, to be at home with the Lord.

Friends, that is the greatest most amazing blessing that God can give to me or to you or to any human being, to write your name in heaven.

[ 35 : 57 ] Because it's come at the cost of his own son. He has done everything for you. Jesus went to that cross and suffered and died, having lived a perfect life, so that all your corruption, all your wickedness, all your sin could be atoned for.

And you received his righteousness, and your name is then written in heaven. It's not boastful to say, I'm going to heaven.

Heaven's my home. It's not self-confidence. It's simply based on the truth of God. God has said, trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you'll be safe.

God's word. And God's word is true. It's nothing to do with self-confidence. It's nothing to do with my own assurance. God has said, trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you'll be safe.

I have trusted in the Lord Jesus, and therefore I have been saved. Jesus is coming back again because God has said. that's where we stand on the truth of God.

[ 37 : 25 ] So friends, are you able today to say, my name is written in heaven? If you can, then praise God for that.

Whatever wonderful things God may do in your life, however he may use you to work at the kingdom, as he does it in these 70 here, and rejoice first and foremost in the fact that you've been saved.

Friends, what if your answer is no? My name's not written in heaven. I urge you, don't rest until you can say yes to that question.

I have been saved. my name's in heaven. On one day I'm going to be there with all God's people, from all the nations of the world, redeemed by the blood of the Lord.

It's your name written in heaven. That's great. Harbor. Hi.

[ 38 : 49 ] Hi. How else? You Optimized, I love you, man.

I'm handing over all the families, myOpenE ■ yesterday, vegkan and tips on the earth. I have to be gab ■■.