

WEEK 20 DAY 1

Today's Reading: Luke 10:1-12

When we think of a harvest, images that come to mind are overflowing baskets, trees adorned with fresh fruit, and perhaps even the iconic cornucopia of Thanksgiving. However, a lot more goes into the harvest than just picking fruit. There are hundreds of hours of care and cultivation leading to the overall yield of the crop.

In Luke 10, we see the laborers of the harvest being sent to gather the fruit of God's labor. Since the beginning of Genesis, God has pointed to and prepared the way for the coming of His Son to reconcile His people to Himself. The people's need for a Savior has become abundantly clear through the prophets and the Law.

The last element needed was the water of life - Jesus, the Son of God. The long-awaited harvest had come, and the disciples of Jesus were called as "pickers." Today, we get to see and enjoy the fruits of God's work through redemption, life change, freedom from the chains of sin, and so much more! Let's prepare and get to work so we might bear witness to all He has done.

Questions

- How have you seen God's work bear fruit in those around you? How long did it take for the harvest to be ready?
- How can you pray for the harvest in your community, and what do you need to do to be ready?

PRAYER:

God, thank You for Your faithfulness and care in preparing us; open our eyes to the fruit of what You are doing and how we can be laborers honoring You. Amen.

Bonus Reading: Hosea 6:11

WEEK 20 DAY 2

Today's Reading: Luke 10:13-20

Typically, an ambassador is a formal representative of a country, organization, or cause; usually in a foreign country or within specific communities.

Ambassadors are the primary diplomatic link between the entity they represent and the host country or audience. Their actions and words carry the weight of the entity they represent.

We are Christ's ambassadors to the world by representing Him to those we encounter. This can be daunting, especially when we feel we've done a poor job. We can find comfort in what Jesus told His disciples - whether they are heard or rejected, Jesus is the One whom the people turn away or accept. A relationship with God is forged individually, and as much as we try, we cannot change someone's heart. In fact, we can't change our own heart. Salvation and transformation are works of the Lord.

We can, however, speak truth with loving intent and trust the Holy Spirit to grow the seed. The greatest hope anyone can hold is to have his or her name written in heaven, even greater than the power over evil spirits. So, as we represent Jesus in our communities, may we remember the goal is not to win people over but to show the genuine love of our Lord that changed our heart.

Questions

- How can you represent Christ better today?
- Whom can you share what God has done in your life with today?

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for Your work in my life; help me tell others about Your goodness and faithfulness.

Bonus Reading: Ezekiel 36:26-27

WEEK 20 DAY 3

Today's Reading: Luke 10:21-24

Whatever makes us the happiest often reveals what we truly value. Do we get more excited about temporal blessings or eternal ones? Do we get more excited about a new car or a new brother or sister in Christ? Today's passage is unique in that it is the only record in the Bible of Jesus' greatly rejoicing. We see Him weeping and mourning several times, but only once did He rejoice.

The word rejoice alone may not paint the most vivid image for the English reader. The Greek word translated as rejoice means "to exult" or "to be exuberant." Jesus mentions "His joy" on at least two other occasions (John 15:11; 17:13), but here alone it says that He rejoiced. His joy was to do the will of the Father, and in the passages in John, He instructed His disciples how to experience the same joy He expressed as they live out the mission He gave them.

Jesus rejoiced greatly about the news that God's sovereign grace had saved souls through the disciples' ministry. If thinking on these matters of sovereign grace caused Jesus to exult, then the same should be true for us as we grow to be more like Jesus.

Question

What was the last thing that made you rejoice and celebrate? Why did it bring you such joy?

PRAYER:

God, thank You for this example of joy from Jesus, which shows me what is most important. Father, continue to transform me into the image of Jesus in every way.

Bonus Reading: Ezekiel 36:26-27

WEEK 18 DAY 4

Today's Reading: Luke 10:25-37

The parable of the Good Samaritan shows us that our good works cannot possibly save us because we could never fulfill the perfect demands of God's holy Law. While it is not the point of the parable, we can recognize what the Good Samaritan did for the half-dead traveler, Jesus Christ does for us. He found us dead in our sins. No means of this world or effort by man could help us. Even religious living cannot save us. We are utterly helpless.

A relationship with God begins when we see that our goodness falls far short of God's Law, and there is nothing we can do to earn our salvation. We must acknowledge our need for Christ Jesus, our Savior, who showed compassion toward us in that while we were yet sinners, He died for us (Romans 5:8). "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds, you were healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

The parable of the Good Samaritan also illustrates to us that if we have responded to God's grace through Jesus Christ, then we are obligated to show the love of Christ in practical ways toward those in need. As Jesus concludes, "Go and do the same."

Question

When have you felt the most helpless in your life?
Who helped you get back on your feet?

PRAYER:

Father God, thank You for pulling me up from the mud where I lay dead and broken, and for the healing power of Your Son. Help me love others as You have loved me.

**Bonus Reading: Nehemiah 9:29;
Galatians 6:10; Leviticus 19:18**

WEEK 20 DAY 5

Today's Reading: Luke 10:38-42

It's easy to read today's passage as an obvious admonition - a "well, duh" kind of moment. Most Christians today would relish sitting with Jesus and hearing Him speak. Of course, we would be more concerned with Jesus than whatever work was currently on our schedule, right? But, in practice, how often do we come to a church service, hear the teaching of God's Word, fight distraction while we listen, and then leave, struggling to internalize what we've heard?

Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet. It didn't happen accidentally because there were too many other things (good things) pulling at her in that moment. For us, it's the same today. We don't choose to sit at the feet of Jesus once and consider it settled. We must keep choosing to listen to Jesus, over and over again, day in and day out. This means, at times, saying no to other things and yes to this one, necessary thing.

The bottom line is that Jesus says sitting at His feet and listening to His Word are necessary for those of us who follow Him. Doing this well and consistently has significant positive results in our relationship with God and others. Today, may we be challenged to do whatever it takes to consistently make time to hear from Jesus. When we choose Jesus, we choose that which will not be taken away from us.

Question

What is your biggest hurdle in spending consistent time alone with God? How can you overcome it?

PRAYER:

God, may my time with You never grow stale.
Renew in me a passion for You and Your Word.

Bonus Reading: Psalm 16